

# **Tees Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment**

## **Final Report**

**Philip Brown, Lisa Hunt and Jenna Condie**  
Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit  
University of Salford

**Pat Niner**  
Centre for Urban and Regional Studies  
University of Birmingham

January 2009



## About the Authors

Philip Brown and Lisa Hunt are Research Fellows and in the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford. Jenna Condie is a Research Assistant in the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford.

Pat Niner is a Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) at the University of Birmingham

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

## Study Team

<b>Core team members:</b>	<b>Community Interviewers:</b>
Dr Philip Brown Dr Lisa Hunt Jenna Condie Pat Niner	Louise Adams Emily Clarke Rachel Francis-Ingham Valarie Moody MBE Rachel Welch

## Steering Group

Louise Adams	Society for the Promotion and Advancement of Romany Culture (SPARC)
Catherine Beard	UK Association of Gypsy Women
Andrew Carter	Darlington Borough Council
Susan Clark	Northern Network of Travelling People
Emily Clarke	Society for the Promotion and Advancement of Romany Culture (SPARC)
Matthew Clifford	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Sue Collingwood	Durham Constabulary
Donna Cotterill	Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Paula Craddock	Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Rachel Francis-Ingham	UK Association of Gypsy Women
Rob King	Cleveland Constabulary
Fay MacKenzie	Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit
David Marjoram	Middlesbrough Borough Council
Valarie Moody MBE	Northern Section Showmen's Guild
Margaret Reynolds	Traveller Education Service Middlesbrough
Simon Rogalski	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Martin Shallow	Cleveland Constabulary
John Smalley	Hartlepool Borough Council
Linda Watts	Traveller Education Service Darlington
Rachel Welch	UK Association of Gypsy Women

## **Acknowledgements**

This study could not have been completed without the expertise and contributions of a number of individuals and organisations whose assistance is greatly appreciated. . Members of the project steering group provided guidance and assistance throughout the project and thanks must go to all of them for their support to the study team throughout the duration of the project.

Special thanks are also due to all those who took the time to participate in the study, helped organise the fieldwork and provided invaluable information and support in the production of this report.

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, Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) have been undertaken across the UK, as local authorities respond to these new obligations and requirements.
2. This research and report was commissioned by a number of partner authorities (*Darlington Borough Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Middlesbrough Borough Council, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit<sup>1</sup>*) in July 2007. The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit at the University of Salford with assistance by staff at the Centre for Urban and Regional Research 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 and other key stakeholders including representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller communities.
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 149 interviews with Gypsies and Travellers from a range of tenures and community groups.

## Background

4. Following the Housing Act 2004 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase 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, planning policies and the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) and Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). 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

---

<sup>1</sup> For ease, these are referred to only by the borough name throughout this document

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 North East Assembly (NEA), for inclusion into the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS then specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for local planning authorities (LPAs) in light of the GTAA's produced, and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region is taken. The local planning authority's Local Development Framework (LDF), composed of Development Plan Documents (DPDs), then identifies specific sites to match pitch numbers from the RSS or outlines criteria against which future sites can be assessed.

## **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 1320 local Gypsies and Travellers.
6. There are **2 socially rented sites** in the Study Area (Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees), together providing 43 pitches. These sites accommodate 106 individuals. All residents have access to amenity blocks, WC and a water supply. Residents on Metz Bridge (socially rented site in Middlesbrough) were, generally speaking, more dissatisfied with their accommodation than were residents on Mount Pleasant Grange (socially rented site in Stockton-on-Tees). In addition, all of the Metz Bridge residents had concerns about health and safety compared to only 2 residents from Mount Pleasant Grange. At the time of the fieldwork there were plans to re-open a previous socially rented site in Redcar & Cleveland on a leased basis.
7. There are **15 authorised private sites** in the Study Area, together providing an estimated 75 residential pitches and 24 transit pitches. The spread of the provision of authorised pitches throughout the Study Area is uneven as only two local authorities (Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees) have private sites. Only Darlington expected the number of authorised private sites to increase in their area over the next 5 years.
8. All 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, 1.6 caravans per household with all but one respondent 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.
9. There are **5 unauthorised developments** (land owned by Gypsies and Travellers but developed without planning permission) within the Study Area accommodating approximately 12 separate households. Four of the 5 unauthorised developments are in Darlington – one is in Stockton-on-Tees. Unfortunately only one interview was achieved on unauthorised

developments. The respondent viewed the site positively and had access to all facilities with the exception of waste disposal/collection and postal service.

10. There is one yard for **Travelling Showpeople** in the Study Area. The yard is in Middlesbrough and is used for residential purposes. The yard is privately owned and accommodates approximately 10 extended families. In total ten interviews were achieved on the yard. Although only one household was thought to require independent accommodation in the next five years, the respondents were keen to mention that the current yard is full to capacity and there were not enough yards for Travelling Showpeople in the Study Area.

### **Unauthorised encampments**

11. The Caravan Count in January 2007 recorded 15 caravans on unauthorised encampments (on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers). January figures are regarded as a more reliable 'base' than July figures which may be affected by seasonal travelling. Records kept by the local authorities show that the Study Area experienced around 44 encampments over the previous full calendar year (2006). The average encampment size was just over 5 caravans. Most encampments stayed for a relatively short period of time with the average duration being almost exactly two weeks. Most of the encampments occurred in Darlington, Stockton-on-Tees and Redcar & Cleveland.
12. A total of 11 interviews were carried out with people on unauthorised encampments. The average number of caravans owned by households on unauthorised encampments was 1.5 with around 2.2 people living in each caravan. Most households felt that they had enough living space for their needs apart from one household who required more/bigger trailers.
13. Access to facilities was largely restricted for households on unauthorised encampments with respondents commenting that they obtain water from nearby garages and used the toilets in local supermarkets. Just over half of the respondents had access to waste disposal/collection.
14. Four respondents on unauthorised encampments had a base elsewhere. Two respondents currently lived on Mount Pleasant Grange, Stockton-on-Tees and were visiting Yarm Fair; one respondent had a base in York and one respondent had a base in Morecambe. This highlights the complex nature of unauthorised camping.

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

15. All authorities make specific reference to Gypsies and Travellers in local authority housing strategies. There is no mention of Gypsies and Travellers in homelessness and BME housing strategies by any of the five local authorities. Most local authorities (with the exception of Middlesbrough) were unable to quantify the number of Gypsies and Travellers in social or private bricks and mortar housing. Middlesbrough estimated that 10–50 Gypsy and Traveller families live in social housing in the area. From information gathered via the

Traveller Education Service and from fieldwork experience it is estimated that there are at least 267 families in housing within the Study Area – however, it is acknowledged that this is probably a significant underestimate.

16. A total of 53 households were interviewed who were living in bricks and mortar housing across the Study Area. Over half of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed were owner-occupiers; the remaining households were tenants of some kind (socially rented or private). Around four in ten of households still retained a trailer. The majority of respondents viewed their house positively and had access to all the basic facilities that we enquired about. Overall most of the respondents had lived in their accommodation for a number of years – just under half had lived there for 5 years and over. Five respondents had lived in their bricks and mortar accommodation for less than one year. Just one respondent was planning to move in the near future to a bigger house. Over a third of households thought they would remain in the house indefinitely. The remainder did not know how long they would stay in their current accommodation.
17. A quarter of all respondents had lived in a house at some point in the past. Just under a fifth of these viewed it as a positive experience, with over a third viewing bricks and mortar living in a negative light. Respondents tended to cite cultural reasons or feelings of being enclosed and constrained as reasons for leaving bricks and mortar housing. Just over one in ten respondents said they would consider living in a house in the future.

### **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 3.3 persons across the whole sample.

A significant minority of the sample (13%) 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 and Travelling Showpeople Yards.

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 (75%), followed by Irish Travellers (14%), then by Travelling Showpeople (7%) with much smaller numbers of others who described themselves as Traveller (non-specified) and Scottish Gypsy or Traveller.

Overall, 90% of school-age children 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, over half of settled or authorised households still travelled seasonally – with some travelling more often than this. Feeling settled, getting older 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 Study Area) with two-thirds 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, landscaping, carpet related trades, uPVC and guttering, roofing and tarmacing.

### **Gypsies and Travellers and housing-related support**

19. Each of the five authorities mentioned Gypsies and Travellers in their Supporting People 5 Year Strategy. Reference is commonly made to the lack of services that are specifically provided for Gypsies and Travellers and also to the lack of awareness of evidence of the need for services for this group. Redcar & Cleveland have a Minority Needs Support Officer who provides support to Gypsies and Travellers.
20. The kind of housing-related services Gypsies and Travellers expressed an interest in receiving assistance with included: accessing legal services, harassment issues, accessing health care, support with planning and filling in forms.
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 was likely to want their own accommodation over the next 5 years. Overall, 37 households reported that there was, which equated to 60 individuals (41 of which were on site-based accommodation) 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 around a third of respondents interested in moving to a new residential site. Respondents voiced a preference for residential sites with pitch capacities of between 10-15 pitches.
24. A total of 61 respondents, just under half of the sample, 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 a site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller and then by 'group housing' (site with long-stay and short-stay provision). Travelling around often staying on authorised transit sites and living in a privately owned house were both rated reasonably favourably. Living in a local authority or RSL house was the least favoured option, followed by living on a site owned by a private landlord (not a Gypsy or Traveller).

### **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 (North East Assembly) has the role of ensuring that all local authorities contribute, by working together, 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<sup>2</sup> with input from work the authors have been involved in around testing the robustness of

---

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

GTAAs.<sup>3</sup> 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, 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. This follows commonly accepted assumptions as to the growth of the population.<sup>4</sup>
29. Numerical transit requirements have not been provided although an indication of how to provide for short-stay households is provided on a local authority basis. This indicates that all local authorities should look to provide accommodation for short-term users. More formal provision should be provided in Darlington, Stockton-on-Tees and Redcar & Cleveland. However, Hartlepool and Middlesbrough should also look to provide options for transient Gypsies and Travellers.
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 further compound these inequalities in site provision. For example, authorities which already provide Gypsy and

---

<sup>3</sup>CLG (2007) *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy Reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies*. Wetherby, CLG.

<sup>4</sup> Household growth rates of 2% and 3% a year were suggested as appropriate in Pat Niner, *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, ODPM, 2003. 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.

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 and the North East 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 whilst being informed by the views of the Gypsies and Travellers who participated in this study. Table i below presents the 'needs where they arise' requirements.

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

	Study Area Total	Darlington	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough	Redcar & Cleveland	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Current authorised residential provision<sup>5</sup> (pitches)</b>	128	62	0	25	0*	41
<b>Additional residential need 2007–2012 (pitches)</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Additional residential need 2012–2016 (pitches)</b>	26	15	1	3	1	7
<b>Additional residential need 2016–2021 (pitches)</b>	38	22	1	4	2	10
<b>Estimated total additional residential pitch need 2007–2026</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>34</b>

Note: For pragmatic reasons these figures have been rounded up to the nearest whole pitch  
 \* Redcar & Cleveland has a site which was temporarily closed at the time of the assessment. This is to be re-opened after refurbishment and has been included in the requirements as an element of supply.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

## **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.



## Contents

Glossary	16
List of Acronyms	19
1. Overview	21
2. Assessment Methodology	27
3. Planning and Housing Policy Context	34
4. Gypsy and Travellers in the Study Area: the current picture	39
5. Size and characteristics of the local Gypsy and Traveller population	42
6. Authorised site provision – findings	48
7. Planning and unauthorised development of sites – findings	61
8. Unauthorised encampments – findings	65
9. Gypsy and Travellers in social and private bricks and mortar accommodation – findings	74
10. Housing-related support service and general services – findings	81
11. Employment, Education, Health, Policing – findings	86
12. Mobility: Accommodation Histories and Intentions	91
13. Household Formation and Accommodation Preferences and Aspirations	96
14. Travelling Showpeople	104
15. An Assessment of Need for Residential Pitches	108
16. An Assessment of Need for Transit Pitches	120
17. An Assessment of Need for Travelling Showpeople pitches	123
18. Recommendations	125
Appendix 1: Local Plan Policies on Gypsy Site Provision	133
Appendix 2: Core Strategy etc. Policies on Gypsy Site Provision	135
Appendix 3: Summary of Planning Applications and Outcomes Since 2001	138

## 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.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Amenity block/shed</b>	On most residential Gypsy/Travellers sites these are buildings where basic plumbing amenities (bath/shower, WC and sink) are provided at the rate of one building per pitch.
<b>Areas of toleration</b>	An area or zone identified by the LPA where Temporary Stopping Places and encampments may be tolerated. These sites may be seen as authorised.
<b>Authorised local authority site/Registered Social Landlord site</b>	An authorised site owned by either the local authority or a Registered Social Landlord.
<b>Authorised Private site</b>	An authorised site owned by a private individual (who may or may not be a Gypsy or a Traveller). These sites can be owner-occupied, rented or a mixture of owner-occupied and rented pitches.
<b>Bricks and mortar</b>	Permanent mainstream housing.
<b>Caravan</b>	Mobile living vehicle used by Gypsies and Travellers. Also referred to as trailers.
<b>Chalet</b>	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.
<b>Country People/Buffers</b>	Term used by Irish Travellers to refer to settled people/non-Travellers.
<b>Development Plan Documents (DPDs)</b>	Documents which outline the key development goals of the Local Development Framework.
<b>Doubling-up</b>	To share a pitch on an authorised site
<b>Gaujo/Gorger</b>	Literal translation indicates someone who is not of the Romany Gypsy race. Romany word used mainly, but not exclusively, by Romany Gypsies to refer to members of the settled community/non-Gypsy/Travellers.
<b>Green Belt</b>	There is no "Green Belt" in the Tees Valley area. Green Belts are nationally designated areas usually around major cities that provide long term protection from development. There are special planning rules for Green Belts set out in PPG2. Within the Tees Valley, the "Green Belts" are locally designated areas defined as "Green Wedges" and "Strategic Gaps" in the Structure Plan and RSS Policy 7.

<b>Gypsy</b>	Members of Gypsy or Traveller communities. Usually used to describe Romany (English) Gypsies originating from India. This term is not acceptable to all Travellers.
<b>Gypsies and Travellers</b> (as used in this assessment)	Consistent with the Housing Act 2004, inclusive of: all Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers, Show People, 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.
<b>Local Plan/Local Development Framework (LDF)</b>	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.
<b>Mobile home</b>	Legally classified as a caravan but not usually moveable without dismantling/or lorry.
<b>Pitch/plot</b>	Area of land on a site/development generally home to one licensee household. Can be varying sizes and have varying caravan occupancy levels. Often also referred to as a plot, particularly in relation to Travelling Showpeople. There is no agreed definition as to the size of a pitch.
<b>Pulling-up</b>	To park a trailer/caravan.
<b>Settled community/people</b>	Reference to non-Travellers (those that live in houses).
<b>Site</b>	An authorised area of land on which Gypsies and Travellers are accommodated in trailers/chalets/vehicles. Can contain one or multiple pitches.
<b>Static caravan</b>	Larger caravan than the 'tourer' type. Can be moved but only with the use of a large vehicle. Often referred to simply as a trailer.
<b>Stopping place</b>	Locations frequented by Gypsies and Travellers, usually for short periods of time.
<b>Supporting People</b>	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.
<b>Suppressed/concealed household</b>	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.
<b>Temporary Stopping Places</b>	These are for temporary stops – stays of a maximum of 7 days, but usually only 2 to 3 days. This is usually a piece of land identified by the LPA to prevent unauthorised encampments. Minimal facilities are provided.
<b>Trailer</b>	Term commonly used by Gypsies and Travellers to refer to a moveable caravan.

<b>Transit site</b>	Site intended for short stays. Such sites are usually permanent, but there is a limit on the length of time residents can stay.
<b>Travelling Showpeople</b>	Commonly referred to as Showmen, these are a group of occupational Travellers who work on travelling shows and fairs across the UK and abroad.
<b>Unauthorised Development</b>	This refers to a caravan/trailer or group of caravans/trailers on land owned (possibly developed) by Gypsies and Travellers without planning permission.
<b>Unauthorised Encampment</b>	Stopping on private/public land without permission (e.g. at the side of the road).
<b>Yard</b>	Term used by Travelling Showpeople to refer to a site.

## List of Acronyms

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

**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 Tees Valley Study Area. This research and report was commissioned by a number of partner authorities (*Darlington Borough Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Middlesbrough Borough Council, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit*<sup>6</sup>) in July 2007. The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit at the University of Salford with assistance from staff at the Centre for Urban and Regional Research 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 and other key stakeholders including representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Figure 1: Map of the Study Area.



## Background and study brief

- 1.2 One of the most significant historical developments in terms of site provision for Gypsies and Travellers was introduced in part 2 of The 1968 Caravan Sites Act which placed a requirement on local authorities to provide sites for local Gypsies 'residing in or resorting to their areas'. At the same time, however, it gave local authorities the power to designate 'no-go' areas for Gypsies and Travellers. The obligation on local authorities in England and Wales to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers ceased in January 1994 with the introduction of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPOA). This Act strengthened the law related to trespass, which the then

<sup>6</sup> For ease, these are referred to only by the borough name throughout this document.

Conservative Government deemed necessary to tackle 'the destruction and distress caused mainly to rural communities by trespassers'.<sup>7</sup> The Act repealed part 2 of the 1968 Caravan Sites Act and also repealed section 70 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, which gave powers to central government to meet the capital costs of the development of sites. Although local authorities still had *powers* to provide caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers under section 24 of the 1960 Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act, they were under no legislative *obligation* to do so, and few used this power.

- 1.3 Gypsies and Travellers were therefore encouraged to apply for planning permission to create their own sites in areas they frequent. Over the subsequent years, coupled with continued migration, travelling patterns and household formation, this has meant that the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers requiring authorised places to live/stop far outweigh the number of authorised pitches available. In addition to the lack of available authorised pitches, Gypsies and Travellers have also found gaining planning permission a major obstacle to providing a site for themselves and their families, particularly as the areas they frequented were often already identified for other use or were not deemed suitable for Gypsy and Traveller use. 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 often evicted, frequently resorting to the use of further unauthorised land/accommodation.
- 1.4 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) from the government indicates a commitment to taking steps to resolve some of these long-standing issues for members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. This legislation has an overarching aim of ensuring that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities have equal access to decent and appropriate accommodation options akin to each and every other member of society.
- 1.5 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 (GTAAAs) are designed to provide the evidence needed to inform these strategies. However, as well as presenting evidence and information on accommodation needs at an immediate local level, the evidence collected and analysis produced has a wider regional role. The assessment of accommodation need and pitch requirements are also to

---

<sup>7</sup> The then Home Secretary, Michael Howard MP, cited in Sibley, D. (2001) 'The Control of Space: Travellers, Youth, and Drug Cultures' in Morley, D. and Robins, K. (eds) *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality and Identity*. Oxford:OUP.p.425.

be fed into the Regional Planning Body (RPB), in this case the North East Assembly (NEA), for inclusion into the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS then specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for local planning authorities (LPAs) in light of the GTAA's produced, and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region is taken. The local planning authority's Local Development Framework (LDF), composed of Development Plan Documents (DPDs), then identifies specific sites to match pitch numbers from the RSS or outlines criteria against which future sites can be assessed.

- 1.6 Each DPD is subject to examination in public and will be tested for 'soundness'. There are nine tests of soundness which are divided into procedural tests, conformity tests and coherence, consistency and effectiveness tests. In terms of GTAA's specifically, one of the tests of soundness will be whether it is founded on robust and credible evidence; the data received and analysed through a GTAA is fundamental in providing a robust evidence base for the RHS, RSS and LDFs.
- 1.7 The regional dimension to GTAA's 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 objective<sup>8</sup> 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.
- 1.8 The vast majority of the first round of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA's) across England are now completed.
- 1.9 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 good practice for several authorities to commission such work jointly. Thus, for the Partner Authorities this study aims to generate a credible evidence base and robust sub-regional understanding of the current provision, gaps and accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area.

---

<sup>8</sup> 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](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/400/LocalAuthoritiesandGypsiesandTravellersGuidetoresponsibilitiesandpowersPDF223KB_id1163400.pdf)

## **Aims of the assessment**

- 1.10 The broad aims and objectives of the study were to produce:
1. an Accommodation Needs Assessment capable of desegregation to district level with a comprehensive assessment of existing and future accommodation and wider service needs within each area;
  2. an assessment of the current need for different types of accommodation available to the Gypsy and Travelling communities across the Tees Valley Sub-Region;
  3. an assessment of the mobility patterns and the drivers of mobility within communities; and
  4. an understanding of the demographic profile of the Gypsy and Traveller communities, household formation within them, routes into accommodation, and housing and wider support needs.

## **A note on terminology**

### **Gypsies and Travellers**

- 1.11 Defining Gypsies and Travellers is not straightforward. Different definitions are used for a variety of purposes. At a very broad level the term 'Gypsies and Travellers' is used by non-Gypsies and Travellers to encompass a variety of groups and individuals who have in common a tradition or practice of nomadism. More narrowly, both Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised minority ethnic groupings.
- 1.12 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).*
- 1.13 There is a separate definition for planning purposes as specified in ODPM Circular 01/2006 which offers a narrower definition and excludes Travelling Showpeople.

1.14 This assessment has adopted the Housing Act 2004 definition and has sought to be inclusive in the Gypsy and Traveller groupings. More specifically it sought to include all Gypsies and Travellers (including New Travellers) living in caravan based or bricks and mortar accommodation. As the Housing Act 2004 definition indicates, this study has also sought to include Travelling Showpeople living on their permanent base within the Study Area.

### **Housing/accommodation need**

1.15 Crucially for Gypsies and Travellers, the definition of housing need is varied slightly to acknowledge the different contexts in which members of these communities live. The general definition of housing need is “households who are unable to access suitable housing without some financial assistance”, with housing demand defined as “the quantity of housing that households are willing and able to buy or rent.”<sup>9</sup>

1.16 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:<sup>10</sup>

- 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; or
- 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.

1.17 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).

1.18 This assessment has used a definition of accommodation need which encompasses all the circumstances detailed above. It is based on Gypsies and Travellers’ own perception of their need and the sort of accommodation they would look for to meet that need. While some may see this as a measure of ‘aspiration’ or ‘demand’ rather than ‘need’, the authors believe that this is justifiable for two different reasons:

---

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

<sup>10</sup> CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments – Guidance*. London: HMSO.

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

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

1.20 Needs are estimated in Chapter 15 as at February 2008, and are expressed for the periods 2007–2012, 2012–2016 and 2016–2021.

## **Conventions**

1.21 Two conventions are followed in this report:

- Percentages in text and tables are rounded to the nearest whole number. This means that they do not always sum to exactly 100.
- 'Quotes' included from Gypsies and Travellers are sometimes in first and sometimes in third person form because interviews were not recorded. They are distinguished by being in italic type and usually inset.

## 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 made available in October 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 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), 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 following:
- The bi-annual Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans.
  - Local Plans, Core Strategy papers and other documents forming part of emerging Local Development Frameworks were reviewed. Housing Strategies and Homelessness Strategies were examined. These provide a local policy framework for the study.
  - 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. 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 total of 15 stakeholders, representing a variety of backgrounds across the Study Area, took part in in-depth discussions about Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision. These discussions were largely structured around two broad issues:
- the particular experiences that certain stakeholders have in relation to the accommodation and related needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area; and
  - stakeholder perspectives on what the priority needs are for Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area.
- 2.8 Where required these discussions were more focused upon clarifying information provided during stage one.

## **Stage three: Survey with Gypsies and Travellers**

- 2.9 One of the most important aspects of the assessment was consulting with local Gypsies and Travellers; this took place between August 2007 and January 2008. These consultations took the form of face-to-face interviews in order to gather information about their characteristics, experiences, accommodation and related needs and aspirations. The survey with Gypsies and Travellers is discussed below under three sections: sampling strategy and response rates; questionnaire design; and fieldwork and interviewers.

### **Sampling and response rates**

- 2.10 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, a sample frame was compiled from information provided by the local authorities about all known sites within the Study Area. The authors endeavoured to interview at least one household on all these sites. Where there was more than one

pitch on a site an aspirational quota for the interviews was set for interviews of 50% of the occupied pitches. This was particularly aspirational given the number of pitches on private sites in the Study Area. However, due to the difficulty that engaging households on private sites usually incurs this was deemed appropriate. Repeat visits were made to locations in order to achieve interviews if households were away from the site, it was not convenient for the household in question or the fieldworkers ran out of time.

- 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 which the team was notified of. Fieldwork team members also sought to utilise their own contacts to trace any unauthorised site. The numbers and location of unauthorised encamped households interviewed may not reflect the broad pattern of unauthorised encampments throughout the Study Area. 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 occasionally vacated before fieldworkers 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 three main methods: contacts of Gypsies and Travellers who had already been interviewed as part of the assessment, the contacts of the Gypsy and Traveller Community Interviewers on the fieldwork team and contacts provided by stakeholders such as Traveller Education Services.
- Travelling Showpeople – contact with Travelling Showpeople was made possible by links provided by the local section of the Showmen's Guild and the networks of a Community Interviewer who was a member of the Guild.

2.11 A total of 149 Gypsy and Traveller households were involved in the assessment within the boundaries of the authorities comprising the Study Area. Each respondent was interviewed once only; there was no double counting of respondents.

2.12 Table 1 below shows the aspirational target number of household interviews by achieved household interviews for each accommodation type. The targets were devised from information supplied by the authorities and informed by local knowledge as to actual pitches/households in area. As can be seen, four of the targets for accommodation type were either achieved or exceeded. In spite of the general uncertainty surrounding contacting households on unauthorised encampments the target was met. 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. Indeed, in general terms the fieldwork team, which included members of the Gypsy and Traveller community, were well received by most of the individuals they endeavoured to engage with. 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. The operational experiences of the fieldwork team appear to have supported this initial assertion and it is valuable that the views and needs of this often hidden section of the population are reflected in the study.

Table 1: Achieved household interviews by target

Type of accommodation	Target (No.)	Achieved (No.)	%
Socially rented sites	22	20	91
Residential private authorised pitches	41	35	85
Transit private authorised pitches	12	19	158
Unauthorised developments	7 <sup>11</sup>	1	14
Unauthorised encampments	11 <sup>12</sup>	11	100
Housed	50	53	106
Travelling Showpeople	5	10	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>101</b>

- 2.13 Table 2 below illustrates how the assessment sample relates to the known number of pitches and estimated population by accommodation type. Although we endeavoured to include all known sites during the survey, a number of private sites and unauthorised developments are not represented. The reasons for this include: an inability to locate a household to be interviewed on the site, an inability to access the site (in terms of physical barriers) or the resident simply declining to be involved in the study. Interestingly, the fieldwork team managed to consult with every single ‘known’ Travelling Showpeople household currently resident in the Study Area – this was significantly aided by a community interviewer from the Travelling Showpeople community assisting with the fieldwork team.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> There were 16 caravans on 6 separate unauthorised developments at the time of the assessment. The number of caravans is divided by a standard 1.7 caravan to household/pitch ratio in order to arrive at an approximation as to the number of households present in the Study Area.

<sup>12</sup> This estimate is based on the average number of encampments in the area over five periods of the Caravan Count (18 caravans) and divided by a 1.7 caravan to household ratio.

<sup>13</sup> It is possible that there are Travelling Showpeople who are not members of the Guild who are resident in the area but we are not aware whether this is the case – if so it is likely that this is a very small proportion of the population.

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

Type of accommodation	No. of sites			No. of pitches/households		
	Total	Sample	%	Total	Sample	%
Socially rented sites	2	2	100	22	20	91
Residential private authorised sites	14	5	36	83	35	42
Transit private authorised sites	1	1	100	24	19	79
Unauthorised developments	5	1	20	13	1	8
Unauthorised encampments	NA	NA	NA	11	11	100
Housed	NA	NA	NA	50 <sup>14</sup>	53	106
Travelling Showpeople	1	1	100	10	10	100

- 2.14 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 Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees. It should be noted that all local authorities have Gypsies and Travellers living within their boroughs in some form of accommodation – although this is in a less diverse form in Hartlepool.

Table 3: Number of achieved interviews by local authority area

Accommodation Type	Local authority area					Total
	Darlington	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough	Redcar & Cleveland	Stockton-on-Tees	
Socially rented sites	0	0	9	0	11	20
Residential private authorised sites	34	0	0	0	1	35
Transit private authorised sites	19	0	0	0	0	19
Unauthorised developments	1	0	0	0	0	1
Unauthorised encampments	1	0	3	1	6	11
Housed	14	10	5	16	8	53
Travelling Showpeople	0	0	10	0	0	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>149</b>

- 2.15 In terms of the gender split between interviewees we spoke to 115 women (77%) and 34 men (23%). 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

<sup>14</sup> This figure was an estimate based on pre-fieldwork understanding of the Study Area.

undertake fieldwork outside of normal working hours, as men are often out working during normal working hours. This assisted in engaging with a small number of male respondents as well.

- 2.16 Overall, it is believed that the findings for the assessment are based on reliable and reflective response rates from accommodation types, geographical areas and gender within the Study Area. 37% of the estimated Gypsy and Traveller community across the Study Area were consulted.

### **Questionnaire design**

- 2.17 All interviews with Gypsy and Traveller households have 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 the authors to gather quantifiable information, but also allowed for contextualisation and qualification by the more narrative responses. There were 3 questionnaires produced: one for Gypsies and Travellers on sites, one for Gypsies and Travellers in housing and one for site-based Travelling Showpeople. 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.

- 2.18 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 with the communities.

- 2.19 The questionnaires used in the assessment are available in a separate document entitled 'Survey Instruments'.

### **Fieldwork and interviewers**

- 2.20 In addition to SHUSU fieldwork staff, and of crucial importance to engaging as effectively as possible with the Gypsy and Traveller population, was the involvement of Gypsy and Traveller Community Interviewers. A number of Gypsies and Travellers were recommended to us and volunteered to become Community Interviewers. In total, five members of the Gypsy and Traveller community were involved in the assessment as Community Interviewers.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Including one Travelling Showperson interviewer.

- 2.21 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 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. By taking this approach the fieldwork team 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.
- 2.22 Broadly speaking, SHUSU staff had particular success interviewing people on local authority sites, whereas the Community Interviewers had much better responses with households on unauthorised sites, private sites and with households in bricks and mortar accommodation.
- 2.23 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.

### **3. Planning and Housing 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 that 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 from 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 North East, a total of £605,000 has been agreed over the 2006–08 period. A total of £3m has been made available over the 2008–11 period for the North East. 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 Homelessness<sup>16</sup> 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 considered when considering accommodation applications.
- 3.7 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 updated fundamental planning legislation. The existing system of using Development Plans to set out Local Planning Policies was revised and made way for the Local Development Framework (LDF). Within this, Core Strategies set out the overall planning framework for each district and all other Local Development Framework policy documents will build on the principles in it and need to comply with it.

## **Regional policy**

- 3.8 In terms of regional planning policy, a section within Improving Inclusivity and Affordability (Policy 30) of the North East of England Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 reads:

*Provision of sites for gypsies and travellers*

*a. Local authorities should carry out an assessment of the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Showpeople. Collaboration between authorities on these studies is encouraged to more fully understand the patterns of need and the adequacy of current provision; and*

*b. Local development frameworks / documents should provide the criteria following the plan, monitor and manage and sequential approaches for the provision and release of pitches for the Gypsy and Travelling and Showpeople communities and, where appropriate, identify locations for these pitches.*

- 3.9 The North East Assembly's *Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment Final Report* was published in March 2007. This is based on information from secondary sources or provided by local authorities, together with a small

---

<sup>16</sup> See Homelessness & Housing Support Directorate (2006) Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, CLG.

survey of Gypsies and Travellers. It provides preliminary assessments of need for additional pitches to 2025 calculated from current shortfalls evidenced by the Caravan Counts with a 15% uplift for under-counting, and assumed family growth at 2.5% a year. Needs are quantified at regional and sub-regional levels. Hartlepool is in a sub-region with Easington and Sedgfield, while the remaining four authorities make up a sub-region themselves – these authorities are illustrated in Figure 2 below. Table 4 below summarises the findings of this report for the relevant sub-regions and the whole North East region. The requirements identified in this regional study are considered provisional and are to be superseded by the more local level GTAA's, of which this report forms one.

Table 4: Pitch Requirements from the North East Assembly Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment

Date	Hartlepool/ Easington/ Sedgfield	Darlington/ Stockton/ Middlesbrough/ Redcar & Cleveland	North East Region
Current shortfall	4	23	49
By 2010	2	13	29
By 2015	3	18	42
By 2020	3	20	46
By 2025	4	23	53
<b>Total requirement to 2025</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>219</b>

3.10 The Study Area contributes almost half of the required regional total both in terms of current shortfall and additional requirements to 2025.

Figure 2: Map of authorities involved the North East Regional Assessment of Gypsy and Traveller Needs



- 3.11 The regional Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment suggests that the total additional pitch requirement might be split in a 3:1 ratio between residential and transit provision. This would give a requirement to 2025 for the Study Area of roughly 75 additional residential and 25 additional transit pitches.
- 3.12 It should be noted that the Tees Valley LPAs reportedly rejected the findings of this regional study due to the joint belief that this was not based on sound and robust local evidence.

### **Local planning policies**

- 3.13 When asked what sorts of areas would be deemed suitable for Gypsy and Traveller site provision, LPAs said that any site which is identified or proposed would be assessed against the current advice and guidance such as the policies and criteria set out in their Local Plans or LDF Core Strategies and other DPDs, or to ODPM Circular 01/2006.

### **Local Plans**

- 3.14 Each of the 5 LPAs has a policy towards Gypsy and Traveller site provision in its Local Plan. These are shown in Appendix 1. Although the Local Plan policies in use are in line with the previous government guidance and advice, it is clear that none are pro-active.

### **Emerging policies in Local Development Frameworks**

- 3.15 In terms of Core Strategies most constituent LPAs are at a fairly advanced stage within the new Local Development Framework system. A summary of policy proposals can be found in Appendix 2.
- 3.16 Stockton-on-Tees is the only LPA currently considering a specific location as suitable for Gypsy and Traveller site development. A planning application was submitted by the Council for a transit site at Belasis Avenue/Leven Street in the Haverton Hill area. This application was withdrawn due to changes to the design following discussions with the CLG. It was also suggested that there was considerable opposition from the business community and Billingham residents. An alternative location for a site on Bowesfield Industrial Estate for the provision of a proposed transit site was identified. However, it was deemed unsuitable by the Council's Scrutiny Committee and work is currently ongoing to investigate alternative sites.

### **Key themes in local planning policies**

- 3.17 In order to provide an overview of the planning policies in place across the area some key themes have been drawn out. These are:
- All current policies set out criteria against which applications for sites will be judged.
  - There is considerable similarity in the sort of criteria included across Local authorities. Broadly, these include that:

- sites should not be in open countryside or high landscape quality areas etc.;
  - sites should not have a detrimental effect on neighbouring land-uses or land-users, especially residential;
  - sites should be screened;
  - sites should be located with 'reasonable' access to schools, shops, health services etc.;
  - sites should have reasonable highway access and utility supply; and
  - sites should provide safe living conditions for their residents (i.e. environmentally and through internal design).
- Such criteria are worded differently in different policies and some Local authorities include more than others.
  - Most of the criteria are quite common in other policies in other GTAA areas.
  - There are no obvious contradictions between policies in different Local authority areas. However, there is one criterion which warrants query:
    - The Redcar & Cleveland Policy H15E refers to 'some separation and isolation exists between the proposed development and existing or proposed housing areas'. Internally this could conflict with criterion C regarding access to schools etc. It is certainly counter to current CLG thinking regarding social inclusion and possibly using s106 to get sites provided with housing schemes. It is expected that Policy H15E will be superseded by the Communities DPD Policy CM10. The Communities DPD is currently at the preferred options stage and draft Policy CM10 reflects the criteria set out in Circular 01/2006.

## 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, but when tempered by locally held knowledge it can be extremely useful as a broad guide. Furthermore, it provides a vital starting point in the attempts of local authorities to ascertain levels of need given the general absence of increased provision since 1994.
- 4.3 Table 5 shows the distribution of caravans in the Study Area by type of site at January 2007.<sup>17</sup> The proportions are compared with the North East Region and England as a whole. The North East Region has a distinctive profile compared to the national average with higher than average proportions of caravans on socially rented sites and lower than average proportions on unauthorised sites and particularly on unauthorised developments on Gypsy-owned land. The Study Area resembles the Region in terms of low proportions of caravans on unauthorised sites. It appears to have extremely high proportions of caravans on private sites compared to both England and the North East.

Table 5: Caravans by Type of Site, January 2007

Type of site	Study Area		North East	England
	No.	%	%	%
Social rented	75	28	60	40
Private	174	66	36	39
Unauthorised – Gypsy-owned land	1	*	1	14
Unauthorised – other land	15	6	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

- 4.4 Table 6 summarises caravan numbers for the Study Area by type of site for January 1994 and 2007, and July in 1994 and 2006. The type of unauthorised sites was not distinguished in 1994 and 'unauthorised site' includes both Gypsy-owned and other land.

<sup>17</sup> January figures are regarded as a more reliable 'base' than July figures which may be affected by seasonal travelling.

Table 6: Summary of Caravan Numbers 1994 and 2007

Type of site	January			July		
	1994	2007	% change	1994	2007	% change
Social rented	80	75	-6%	78	72	-8%
Private	82	174	+112%	48	119	+148%
Unauthorised	27	16	-41%	22	15	-32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>+40%</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>+39%</b>

4.5 Table 6 shows the following:

- Overall caravan numbers have increased by about 40% whether measured in January or July.
- A significant increase in caravans on authorised private sites is shown in both January/January (+112%) and July/July (+148%). This increase appears to be mainly due to the treatment of the Darlington leased sites, one of which became privately leased in 1998, and a growth in caravans which is assumed to be linked to the provision of transit pitches in the period. Because of this it is hard to identify trends in 'orthodox' private sites developed by Gypsies and Travellers.
- The number of caravans on social rented sites has decreased slightly whether measured in January or July. The 2007 figures are lower than those of 2006 because of the temporary closure of The Haven in Redcar & Cleveland.
- The number of caravans on unauthorised sites has not changed significantly or consistently over the period and was relatively low in both 1994 and 2006/7. While the percentage change looks large, the absolute figures are small.

### Unauthorised Sites

4.6 Because unauthorised sites include both unauthorised developments and unauthorised encampments, overall trends can hide significant shifts between the two forms of unauthorised site. However, because caravan numbers on unauthorised sites are so low and so variable from one time period to the next, it is not reliable to present changes over time since these could be very misleading.

### Geographical Patterns

4.7 Table 7 shows the distribution of caravans between local authorities by type of site at January 2007.

Table 7: Caravans by Type of Site by Local Authority, January 2007

Type of site	Study Area	Darlington	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough	Redcar & Cleveland	Stockton-on-Tees
Socially rented	75	0	0	30	0	45
Private	174	174	0	0	0	0
Unauthorised – Gypsy-owned land	1	1	0	0	0	0
Unauthorised – other land	15	6	0	0	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>51</b>

- 4.8 Darlington has the highest caravan numbers, followed by Stockton-on-Tees and Middlesbrough. Table 8 shows the number of caravans in each local authority by type of site in January 1994.

Table 8: Caravans by Type of Site by Local Authority, January 1994

Type of site	Study Area	Darlington	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough	Redcar & Cleveland	Stockton-on-Tees
Socially rented	80	21	0	16	0	43
Private	82	80	0	0	0	2
Unauthorised	27	0	0	0	20	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>52</b>

- 4.9 A comparison between these tables shows that:

caravan numbers have increased in Darlington and Middlesbrough; caravan numbers have decreased in Redcar & Cleveland (reduction in numbers on unauthorised sites from 1994 and the temporary closure of The Haven council site); and numbers of caravans have been stable in Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees.

## 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 make 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 9. The 25–39 age group was the most consulted during the assessment, forming 36% of the total sample. This was followed by the 40–49 age group (20%) and then the 50–59 age group (18%). A total of 13% of the sample were aged 60 years and over.

Table 9: Age of interviewees

Age Group	No.	%
16–24	19	13
25–39	53	36
40–49	30	20
50–59	27	18
60–74	17	11
75–84	2	1
85+	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	

#### Household size

- 5.4 In total, the survey sample accounts for 491 members of the Gypsy and Traveller community in the Study Area. The average household size for the whole sample is 3.3 persons – larger than the household size of the non-Traveller population. However, this hides a range in household sizes as indicated in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Household size distribution

Household Size	No.	%
1 Person	26	17
2 Persons	28	19
3 Persons	25	17
4 Persons	36	24
5 Persons	21	14
6 Persons	8	5
7 Persons	3	2
8 Persons	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	

- 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 11, respondents from authorised private sites (residential and transit) tended to have the largest households. This is followed by households living in bricks and mortar accommodation (3.3 persons) and then by households from unauthorised sites (3.1 persons). Those households living on socially rented sites had slightly smaller households (3.0 persons). Travelling Showpeople living on yards had a significantly smaller household size (1.8 persons) in comparison to the other types of accommodation.

Table 11: Average household size by accommodation type

Accommodation type	Average household size
Private sites	3.7
Bricks and Mortar	3.3
Unauthorised sites <sup>18</sup>	3.1
Socially rented sites	3.0
Travelling Showpeople	1.8

### Household type

- 5.6 Table 12 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

<sup>18</sup> Unauthorised encampments and unauthorised developments have been grouped together due to the small sample size (1 respondent) of households on unauthorised developments.

Table 12: Household type by type of accommodation

Household type	Socially rented sites	Private sites	Showpeople Yards	Bricks and mortar	Unauthorised sites <sup>19</sup>	Total
Number in sample	20	54	10	53	12	149
Percentage	%	%	%	%	%	%
Single	30	11	40	13	25	17
Couple	10	11	40	15	8	14
Young family	50	39	10	58	42	46
Older family	5	17	10	4	8	9
Mixed family	-	20	-	8	8	11
Other	5	2	-	2	8	3

5.7 Table 12 shows that:

- Young families are currently the predominant household type in the Study Area.
- There are a large number of small households on the Travelling Showpeople Yards 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 in any other accommodation type.
- There are a number of older families from pitch-based households in the Study Area which may indicate that there is some pressing need for additional pitch accommodation from household growth.

### Marital status

5.8 In total, 65% of the interviewees were married with a further 2% (3 respondents) living with their partner. The remainder described their marital status as divorced/separated (14%), widowed (11%) or single (7%).

Table 13: Marital status of the interview sample

Marital status	No.	%
Married	97	65
Divorced/Separated	21	14
Widowed	16	11
Single	11	7
Living together	3	2
Missing information	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	

<sup>19</sup> The data for unauthorised developments and unauthorised encampments has been combined as a result of the small number of interviews conducted on unauthorised developments.

## Local connections to the Study Area

- 5.9 When asked, the majority of households felt that they were local to the area where they were currently accommodated (71%). See Table 14 for a breakdown by current accommodation type.

Table 14: Local to the area?

Accommodation type	No. households local	% of total sample
Private sites	42	78
Bricks and Mortar	39	74
Socially rented sites	13	65
Unauthorised sites <sup>20</sup>	5	42

- 5.10 As Table 14 shows, the majority of all households consider the area of residence, the area where they were interviewed, their 'local' area – different respondents may, of course, have interpreted 'this area' more widely than others. However, being 'local' was particularly the case for households on private residential sites and bricks and mortar housing. Interestingly, households on private transit sites and socially rented sites all report similar levels of local connection to the area. Households on unauthorised sites were the least local to the area. Table 15 below looks in further detail at the reasons households gave for living in the Study Area.

Table 15: Reasons for residing in the Study Area (figures in % of sample)

Reason	Current Accommodation Type				Total
	Bricks and mortar	Socially rented sites	Private sites	Unauthorised sites	
Family lives here	92	85	85	58	119
Place of birth	38	35	37	25	50
Work	36	5	19	25	33
Schooling	32	10	11	25	28
Other	4	10	2	33	9
Family/community event	9	10	-	25	8
Only place available	2	5	6	17	7
Holiday	-	-	-	-	-

- 5.11 The presence of family in the Study Area was a major reason why households were residing where they were. This was particularly the case for households in bricks and mortar accommodation, socially rented sites and private sites. These findings are broadly consistent with findings from other GTAA's. Households on unauthorised sites cited both family presence and 'other' as major reasons for being where they were. Family links is a factor which reverberates through all Gypsy and Traveller groups and is a consistent finding from the majority of GTAA's the authors' have been involved in. We asked households on unauthorised sites to specify what their 'other reasons'

<sup>20</sup> Again, the data for unauthorised developments and unauthorised encampments has been combined as a result of the small number of interviews conducted on unauthorised developments.

were and we received a variety of responses. For example one household staying in Billingham were there because they kept getting evicted from areas of Stockton-on-Tees. Another respondent told us she was in the area to attend hospital appointments as she had just had a baby.

- 5.12 The second most cited reason for being local to the area was because the respondents were born in the Study Area. Interestingly, no households said they were in the area due to a holiday. 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**

- 5.13 The largest single group was from the Romany/Gypsy (English) community (75%), followed by Irish Travellers (14%), Showpeople (7%), and smaller comparable numbers of Traveller (not specified) (4%) and Scottish Gypsy/Traveller (1%).

Table 16: Interviewees by Gypsy and Traveller group

<b>Gypsy and Traveller groups</b>	<b>No. of households</b>	<b>%</b>
Romany/Gypsy (English)	111	75
Irish Traveller	21	14
Showperson	10	7
Traveller (not specified)	6	4
Scottish Gypsy/Traveller	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	

### **The size of the local Gypsy and Traveller community**

- 5.14 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 at the time of the assessment (see Table 17). Due to their mobility levels this estimate does not include households on unauthorised encampments or households residing on the private transit pitches.

Table 17: Estimated Study Area Gypsy and Traveller population

<b>Type of accommodation</b>	<b>Families/Households</b> (based on 1 pitch = 1 household)	<b>Individuals</b>	<b>Derivation</b>
Socially rented sites	43	106	Based on occupied pitches at the time of the assessment and the actual number from local authority records.
Private sites	75	278	Estimated number of pitches multiplied by average household size from the survey (3.7)
Unauthorised developments	12	37	Estimated number of pitches multiplied by average household size from the survey (3.1)
Housing	267	881	Number of families estimated to live in the area multiplied by average household size from the survey (3.3)
Travelling Showpeople	10	18	Number of plots multiplied by the average household size for Travelling Showpeople (1.8)
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>1320</b>	

- 5.15 It is estimated that there are at least 1320 Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area, although the estimate for housed Gypsies and Travellers 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 together with stakeholder views and knowledge. The chapter deals first with socially rented accommodation and then authorised private sites.

### Socially rented sites

- 6.2 There are 3 socially rented sites in the Study Area:

**Metz Bridge**, Riverside Park Road, Middlesbrough, owned and managed by Middlesbrough Council.

**The Haven**, South Bank, Middlesbrough, owned by Redcar & Cleveland; the site was closed due to vandalism and pending refurbishment. It was re-opened on a leased basis in January 2008.<sup>21</sup>

**Mount Pleasant Grange**, Bowesfield Lane, Stockton-on-Tees, owned and managed by Stockton-on-Tees Council.

- 6.3 Darlington owns two sites (**Honeypot Lane** and **Neasham Road**) which are leased out and are considered under private sites below. Honeypot Lane has been privately leased since 1979 and Neasham Lane since 1998. As above **The Haven** has now been leased – as of January 2008.
- 6.4 Pitch numbers at the 3 local authority sites are summarised in Table 18.

Table 18: Council Gypsy and Traveller Sites at October 2007

	<b>Metz Bridge, Middlesbrough</b>	<b>The Haven, Redcar &amp; Cleveland</b>	<b>Mount Pleasant Grange, Stockton- on-Tees</b>
<b>Total pitches</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>28</b>
Residential: All	15	17	28
Occupied	15	0	28
Closed	0	17	0
Transit: All	0	0	0
Occupied	0	0	0
Vacant	0	0	0

<sup>21</sup> As the vast majority of this assessment took place when this site was closed, this site is not considered as a form of current supply of pitches in the area. Instead, the opening of this site will count towards future supply of pitches for Redcar & Cleveland and the Study Area as a whole – see Chapter 15 for more information.

- 6.5 There are a total of 60 pitches, all residential. No pitches were identified as 'vacant' (empty but available for letting), but at the time of the assessment 17 were 'closed' (not currently in use and not available for letting) at The Haven. These pitches came back in use in early 2008 when site management arrangements were finalised.
- 6.6 There has been no change in the number of pitches over the past 5 years at Metz Bridge or Mount Pleasant Grange. There has been a loss of 13 residential pitches at The Haven when single pitches were reconfigured to create double pitches and pitch numbers generally reduced in response to management difficulties. Since the refurbishment of The Haven there are now 17 pitches available which are described as single pitches (this refers to there being one amenity block per pitch) but can in practice hold 3 caravans per pitch.
- 6.7 The respective local authorities were asked about the ethnicity, number and ages of site residents (Table 19). The Haven is omitted since it was not open at the time of the assessment.

Table 19: Details of Site Residents: Metz Bridge and Mount Pleasant Grange

	<b>Metz Bridge</b>	<b>Mount Pleasant Grange</b>
<b>Site population</b>	31	75
<b>Number of children</b>	12	40
<b>% children</b>	39%	53%
<b>Average persons per occupied pitch</b>	2.1	2.7
<b>Doubled-up pitches</b>	2	0
<b>Number of living units</b>	0 chalets 100% static caravans 0 trailers/tourers	0 chalets 40% static caravans 60% trailers/tourers
<b>Ethnic groups among site residents</b>	English Gypsy or Traveller Irish Traveller	English Gypsy or Traveller
<b>Pitch occupancy in year</b>	100% most of year	100% most of year
<b>% of site residents lived on site 5+ years</b>	Over 90%	60% to 90%

- 6.8 The total site population across the two occupied sites is 106 people, of whom 52 (49%) are children aged up to 16. Significant points from the table are:
- Compared with local authority sites in other areas, the average number of persons per occupied pitch is quite low at 2.1 and 2.7 persons. The demographics and especially the proportions of children among the site population are obviously very different between the two sites.
  - Metz Bridge is ethnically mixed while Mount Pleasant Grange is not.
  - There are only 2 'doubled up' households identified by local authority officers who would ideally like a separate pitch or house of their own on either site as evidence of need.

### ***Residents' views:***

- 6.9 All respondents on the socially rented sites provided details about how many living units (caravans/trailers) they had. Thirteen respondents (65%) had 1 trailer, 5 respondents (25%) had 2 trailers and 2 respondents (10%) had 3 trailers. The relative proportion was generally equal across the two occupied sites.
- 6.10 The average number of living units (trailers) was 1.5 per household. A total of 70% felt they had enough space for their needs – residents on the Metz Bridge site were more likely to answer negatively than residents on Mount Pleasant Grange. For Metz Bridge it was generally the size of pitch they had which was the issue; for Mount Pleasant Grange residents it was the requirement for bigger or more trailers.
- 6.11 When asked, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, how they viewed their neighbours on the sites, all the residents of Mount Pleasant Grange thought their relationships with neighbours were either very good or good. However, respondents from the Metz Bridge site tended to view their relationships with neighbours ambivalently (neither good nor poor), with just 2 respondents providing a positive response and 1 respondent saying they had very poor relationships with other site residents.
- 6.12 Every household that was consulted with on the socially rented sites had been on the site for significant periods of time; none had been on the site for less than 12 months; 70% had lived there for five or more years, 25% for between 1 and 5 years – one respondent could not remember.
- 6.13 No households on socially rented sites had bases elsewhere.

### **Site Management Arrangements**

- 6.14 **Metz Bridge** and **Mount Pleasant Grange** are both managed in-house by the respective local authority. **Metz Bridge** had an on-site warden, but on his retirement on grounds of ill health it was decided not to replace him with a similar site warden but to assign a technical officer/handyman. A variety of management arrangements have been tried at **The Haven** including an arrangement with a local RSL in 2001. This was unsuccessful and the site was closed because of vandalism in 2003. In 2004 the Council created a new post of Minority Needs Support Officer whose responsibilities were primarily to work with the Travelling communities, to re-open the site and to create a more consistent approach to Gypsy and Traveller issues (encapsulated in the Gypsy & Traveller Strategy 2005 – revised in 2007). During consultation with the Travelling communities, it was agreed that leasing The Haven site would be the most practical approach to take, and this is currently being implemented following a further episode of vandalism leading to the closure of the site. The site re-opened on a lease basis in early 2008 – although this was after the fieldwork was completed.

**Residents' views:**

- 6.15 Respondents were asked, from the two sites, 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 60% viewing management as either very good or good; 10% were ambivalent; with 30% viewing site management as poor or very poor. All the negative views about site management were raised from the consultations from the Metz Bridge site.
- 6.16 Only one comment was received elaborating on the site management; this was from a resident on the Metz Bridge site and it seemed to indicate that things were improving:

*“Now [name] is running it, it’s absolutely fantastic. He’ll go to the ends of the earth for us. He actually cares, which is refreshing.”*

**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 the officers’ view of site facilities and the local area (see Table 20 below).

Table 20: Socially rented sites – facilities and assessment of quality by the local authorities

	<b>Metz Bridge</b>	<b>The Haven</b>	<b>Mount Pleasant Grange</b>
<b>Site facilities</b>	Amenity units for each pitch Designated work areas	Amenity units for each pitch Site office Meeting room	Amenity units for each pitch Site office Meeting room (not currently in use)
<b>Facilities in amenity units</b>	Bath (no shower) Space/provision for cooking and laundry Effective heating	Bath (no shower) WC with entrance from outside Space/plumbing/provision for cooking and laundry Space for eating/sitting in double units	Bath (no shower) WC with entrance from outside Space/plumbing/provision for laundry
<b>Quality of surroundings/environment</b>	Average	Average	Very poor
<b>Location and access to schools/shops</b>	Average	Good	Good
<b>Site condition and maintenance</b>	Average	Average	Good
<b>Any known disputes etc. over last year?</b>	Disputes between residents, intimidation and other ASB	Disputes between residents and vandalism – this occurred before the temporary closure of the site	Dispute regarding unauthorised stable block

6.18 From the officers' perspective amenity provision on the sites appears to be average. In the view of officers completing the questionnaires, sites score better on location and access to schools/shops than on quality of surroundings or site condition and maintenance.

6.19 All sites have experienced some disputes between residents, intimidation or vandalism:

**Metz Bridge:** issues arose over the previous site warden who was part of a small controlling group. This group's power was reduced with the retirement of the site warden. The site is now monitored more regularly and ASB enforcement fully supported.

**The Haven:** some residents were involved in disputes and ASB in September 2006 which led to residents not involved leaving the site. The severity of vandalism led to temporary site closure. The site has a history of vandalism.

**Mount Pleasant Grange:** dispute regarding the erection of an unauthorised stable block. This was subsequently removed following discussions with the local authority'.

***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 (Table 21). The majority of respondents on the sites viewed the location of the sites as positive. Both the design of the sites and the facilities available were viewed as being quite poor. All those respondents who rated the design of the site as poor or very poor lived on the Metz Bridge site. There were mixed views as to the size of pitches on the sites.

Table 21: Views on the site (in %)

Issue	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor
Size of pitch	20	30	20	10	20
Design of site	10	25	10	10	35
Location of site	15	60	0	10	15
Facilities on site	5	10	0	30	55

6.21 On each issue it was more common for residents on the Metz Bridge site to have a negative view than residents of the Mount Pleasant Grange site.

6.22 Experiences around access to basic facilities were sought from those who were spoken to on the two sites (see Table 22 below). As can be seen, access was reportedly good across the sites with some slight access problems to certain areas. Access to heated sheds was a particular issue on Mount Pleasant Grange and only a quarter of residents had access to a shower – compared with all those asked on Metz Bridge. Space for

eating/sitting was seen as a particular concern for residents on Metz Bridge and, to a lesser extent, residents on Mount Pleasant Grange. Respondents from both sites reported varied access to adequate fire precautions (however, this may also indicate a lack of awareness about where they are situated) and respondents also reported poor access to somewhere safe for children to play.

Table 22: Access to facilities on socially rented sites (% of sample that have access)

	<b>Metz Bridge (Middlesbrough)</b>	<b>Mount Pleasant Grange (Stockton-on-Tees)</b>
Water	100	100
Electricity supply	100	100
Rubbish collection	100	100
Shed (% heated)	100 (100)	91 (50)
Shower	100	27
Bath	100	100
Kitchen facilities	100	100
WC	100	100
Laundry	89	100
Eating/sitting space	22	82
Postal service	100	100
Fire precautions	33	64
Children's play area	11	9

- 6.23 All residents were asked to comment on whether they had any concerns around health and safety on the sites. All residents on the Metz Bridge site said they had concerns. Just 2 residents on the Mount Pleasant Grange site (16%) said they had such concerns. When asked, a few people expanded upon the concerns they had. In terms of Metz Bridge a number of people mentioned fire precautions being an issue:

*“Fire is a real risk the site is over crowded”*

*“There’s not enough fire equipment here”.*

- 6.24 Other comments related to road safety issues:

*“There’s no barrier on the site and others’ are coming on the site and skidding, the children are not safe when they’re playing”*

*“People are flying on and off all night, they’re supposed to be putting speed bumps up”*

- 6.25 Similar to Metz Bridge, Mount Pleasant Grange residents talked about the need for greater safety on the roads and for children:

*“The kids run up and down the roads which is dangerous, they have nowhere to play”*

*“There’s always motorbikes flying around”*

6.26 Very few residents expanded upon their views and concerns with the sites. One long-term respondent of the Metz Bridge site did take the opportunity to provide some more detailed views on the site:

*“I think they should start again and redesign the site. It’s like the land that time forgot, it’s disorganised and unclean, I’ve never seen a site like it. You have to drive over other peoples’ plots and you don’t know whose plot is whose. The sites’ been here for 20 years and not a lot has been done to it in that time”.*

**Travelling and visitors**

6.27 One of the ways in which site rules can help or hinder Gypsies and Travellers’ way of life are the restrictions placed upon absence for travelling and ability to accommodate visitors on site in caravans. Table 23 summarises answers.

Table 23: Permitted Absence and Visitors

	<b>Metz Bridge</b>	<b>The Haven</b>	<b>Mount Pleasant Grange</b>
<b>Normal maximum absence allowed in a year</b>	12 weeks	Site closed	No normal maximum period
<b>Rent payable during absence?</b>	Full	Site closed	Full
<b>Can licensees have visitors with caravans?</b>	Yes	Site closed	Yes with some restrictions
<b>Circumstances</b>		Site closed	If there is space If they are willing not to have electricity supply

6.28 Permitted absence periods are relatively generous when compared to rules imposed on other sites across the country. Visitors are permitted for a period on the two open sites providing there is space available.

***Residents’ views:***

6.29 A significant number of residents on the socially rented sites reported that they no longer travelled (30%); however, this is actually a lower rate than some other GTAA’s have found, which may suggest that the generous site rules help to maintain a travelling way of life. The remainder travelled either once every year (10%), seasonally (55%) or every couple of months (5%). Just over half of respondents (60%) on these sites thought that travelling for them had changed in the last few years.

6.30 When asked to comment on why they had not travelled recently, there were diverse response received which covered a lack of sites, safety, getting older and marriage. Here are some of the comments made:

*“All the community just keeps getting evicted”*

*“I can't do with the hassle anymore, too old”*

*“Thieves are always taking things when you're on roadsides so that's why we stay here”*

*“Once I married I settled”*

*“Used to travel more when I was younger but there's nowhere to stay nowadays. You really need a few of you or you can't leave the caravan safely”*

## Waiting lists and pitch allocation

- 6.31 A sequence of questions explored pitch allocation policies, waiting lists and numbers of pitches allocated. These are all relevant factors in understanding both demand for and access to existing local authority sites. Table 24 summarises answers and indicates small but positive demand for pitches.

Table 24: Waiting Lists and Allocation Policies

	Metz Bridge	The Haven	Mount Pleasant Grange
<b>Waiting list?</b>	Formal list	Formal list	Informal list
<b>Numbers on list</b>	1	4	Not known
<b>Trends in numbers</b>	Static	Static	Static
<b>Pitches vacated 2004–2006 (3 years)</b>	1	21 (from May 2005)	21 (all let)
<b>Formal allocation policy?</b>	No (being developed)	Not applicable	No
<b>Most important factors taken into account (in order of importance)</b>	1. Previous known behaviour 2. Family/personal compatibility 3. Family size	Not applicable	1. Local connection 2. Family/personal compatibility 3. Need for accommodation

- 6.32 With the exception of Metz Bridge, the sites have experienced relatively high turnover rates. Allocation policies are currently informal with some emphasis on compatibility (perhaps understandable given the incidence of disputes between residents noted above).
- 6.33 None of the respondents on these sites were 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 25 shows, where possible, rents charged, damage deposits charged, proportion of residents receiving housing benefit (HB) and any Supporting People payments received.

Table 25: Pitch Rent and Other Financial Matters

	<b>Metz Bridge</b>	<b>The Haven</b>	<b>Mount Pleasant Grange</b>
<b>Pitch rent (residential)</b>	£55 (double pitch)	NA	£81.50 (double pitch)
<b>Damage deposit?</b>	No	NA	£200
<b>% of residents receiving HB</b>	Over 90%	NA	Over 90%
<b>Supporting People payments?</b>	No	NA	No

- 6.35 Rents vary widely and are significantly higher at Mount Pleasant Grange where there is also a £200 deposit charged upon taking up a place.
- 6.36 No Supporting People payments are received for any site residents. Almost all (over 90%) of residents receive housing benefit towards their rent; similar to households in mainstream housing, housing benefit is obviously important in making site places affordable.

### **Refurbishment history and plans for existing and new sites**

- 6.37 All three sites have been the subject of bids for Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant (formerly Gypsy Sites Refurbishment Grant):

**Metz Bridge** received the Grant for boundary fencing, barrier gate access and speed limiters. A further application is planned for further refurbishment and amenity improvements.

**The Haven** received the Grant to provide connections/hard standing for community buildings (portacabins) and demolition of amenity blocks and reconfiguring 6 single pitches to double units. Pitch numbers were reduced to address previous site management issues. A further application is planned.

**Mount Pleasant Grange** was subject to an unsuccessful Grant bid. There are plans to bid for a Grant to provide stables, but an application will not be made until the outcome of the Council's transit site bid is known.

- 6.38 Local authority respondents were asked whether certain specified changes were planned during the next 3 years. Stockton-on-Tees reported no plans for Mount Pleasant Grange. Middlesbrough reported plans to undertake major repairs or improvements at Metz Bridge. Redcar & Cleveland are currently leasing The Haven; major repairs, improvement and increase in pitch numbers are possible for this site for the future.
- 6.39 All 5 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. The only plan reported was by

Stockton-on-Tees which plans to develop a 14-pitch transit site – this is currently out for consultation and 1 additional pitch at its Mount Pleasant Grange site is subject to a CLG funding bid.

- 6.40 Authorities were also asked to provide details of any aspects of site provision, design or management which works well and is worth sharing with others. Stockton-on-Tees quoted working with the Gypsy and Traveller community to identify need for adequate provision for animals (i.e. the provision of secure grazing and stabling).

***Residents' views:***

- 6.41 In terms of the improvements residents would like to see, a variety of comments were received. On the Metz Bridge site we received comments which tended to underline the belief that extensive work was required; these comments included:

- Increase in security
- General clean-up of the site
- Total refurbishment
- Fencing
- Partitioning of plots
- Bigger kitchen
- New layout
- Reduce the number of plots

- 6.42 Improvements residents would like to see on the Mount Pleasant Grange site included:

- Somewhere for children to play
- Bigger amenity blocks
- Windows in all sheds
- Road humps
- Fences
- Refurbishment of amenity blocks

- 6.43 It should be noted that a number of residents on Mount Pleasant Grange said they were happy with the site just as it was.

**Private Gypsy and Traveller sites**

- 6.44 This section looks at private sites across the Study Area. Table 26 summarises reported private sites either with planning permission or in existence for many years and tolerated. There are a total of 15 sites providing provision for approximately 82 residential caravans/pitches and 24 transit pitches.

6.45 Features of this provision include the following:

- The spread of private sites is obviously very uneven with private sites only in Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees. On the basis of postcodes, sites in Darlington do not seem to be clustered; in Stockton-on-Tees three of the seven sites are in Maltby (Yarm).
- Pitch numbers are obviously significantly boosted by the inclusion of the sites owned by Darlington and leased to individuals (The Haven in Redcar & Cleveland will fall into this category as well when leasing arrangements are in place).
- All the 13 more orthodox private sites are small (the largest, in Darlington, accommodated 6 caravans) and all but one are owner-occupied. All save one (1 pitch in Stockton-on-Tees) have either permanent planning permission (9) or a certificate of lawful use (1 site in Darlington). The temporary planning consent in Stockton-on-Tees expired in July 2007 and the site is the subject of planning applications for continuation of use and expansion by 1 caravan.

6.46 A number of the consultations with stakeholders indicated that the private sites within the Study Area tend to be populated almost entirely by Romany Gypsies. A number of stakeholders claimed that existing sites tend to refuse to accommodate Irish Travellers. This has reportedly meant that a number of Irish Travellers who pass through the area either stop on unauthorised land or simply bypass the area altogether. However, this remains unconfirmed by this research.

6.47 It proved difficult to accurately establish the pitch capacity of all private sites. The pitch capacity which is stated in Table 26 below is drawn from information held by local authority officers where planning permissions are often based on maximum caravan occupancy rather 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.

Table 26: Private Sites and Pitches by Local Authority

Local Authority	Sites	Pitches	Comments
<b>Darlington</b>	6	69*+24 transit	Includes Honeypot Lane and Neasham Road owned by DBC. 13 caravans on owner-occupied sites, rest rented
<b>Hartlepool</b>	-	-	
<b>Middlesbrough</b>	-	-	
<b>Redcar &amp; Cleveland</b>	-	-	
<b>Stockton-on-Tees</b>	9	13	All owner-occupied, 1 temporary consent (1 pitch) till 30/07/07
<b>Study Area</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>82+24 transit</b>	

Note: \* Honeypot Lane (31 residential and 24 transit pitches) and Neasham Road (20 pitches up to 40 caravan capacity) are the largest; the four remaining sites have permissions for 18 caravans in all. In the table 'caravans' are treated as equivalent to 'pitches' – if there was an average of 1.7 caravans per pitch, there would be around 11 pitches on these sites giving a residential pitch total for Darlington of 62 and 75 for the Study Area.

- 6.48 The number of private sites/pitches since 2001 has changed only in Darlington where the number of pitches (not sites) had increased. Only Darlington expected the number of authorised private sites in their area to increase over the next 5 years.
- 6.49 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 it has been assumed that all developed sites were at 100% occupancy during the assessment period. This, combined with the pitch to caravan ratio, provides an estimated that the base figure for private residential sites in the Study Area is 75 pitches.

**Residents' views:**

- 6.50 A total of 33 respondents on the private sites provided details about how many living units (caravans/trailers) they had. Eleven respondents (33%) had 1 trailer, 20 respondents had 2 trailers (61%) and 1 respondent had 3 trailers. The average number of living units per household was 1.6 trailers – which is slightly more than households on socially rented sites.
- 6.51 All but one household thought they had enough space for their needs. The one household who commented that they did not have enough space attributed this to needing a bigger pitch – they were currently accommodated on a rented pitch in Darlington.
- 6.52 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 (see Table 27). The vast majority of respondents on the sites viewed these issues positively. Owner-occupiers were more likely to view these issues as very good, whereas residents who rented pitches were likely to provide 'good' comments – although the small sample of owner occupiers needs to be taken into account. It was both the design of the site and the facilities present on the site which generated the majority of the negative comments.

Table 27: Views on the site (in %)

Issue	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor
Size of pitch	60	26	14	0	0
Design of site	54	40	6	6	20
Neighbours on site	83	14	0	0	0
Location of site	86	14	0	0	0
Facilities on site	77	3	0	3	17
Management	80	20	0	0	0

6.53 Experiences around access to basic facilities were sought from those we spoke to on all private sites (see Table 28 below). As can be seen, most households had access to the services 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.

Table 28: Access to facilities on private sites

facilities	% of sample have access
WC	100
Postal service	100
Rubbish collection	100
Water	100
Electricity supply	100
Fire precautions	97
Shed (% heated)	97 (76)
Laundry	97
Shower	94
Children's play area	80
Kitchen facilities	80
Eating/sitting space	80
Bath	26

6.54 Five households on private sites (14%), all tenants, mentioned concerns they had around health and safety on their sites. These all referred to the proximity to a railway line on one of the sites in Darlington:

*“There’s a gate off at the top of site leading to the railway lines we have small children and we’re concerned for their safety”.*

6.55 No respondent on the private sites reported having an additional base elsewhere.

6.56 In terms of the households on the private transit sites, the pitches where they were staying were equipped to a similar degree as to the residential pitches with the exception of access to a shed. It was unclear how these pitches were being used by these households as 63% of residents had been there for between 1 month and 6; 11% had been there for around 1 year; and 16% for between 1 year and 5. Just one of the households from the transit pitches had a base elsewhere. From this it seems as though the transit pitches were being used as residential accommodation by a significant number of households.

## 7. Planning and the unauthorised development of sites – findings

- 7.1 Unauthorised developments are a major source of tension between the settled population and Gypsies and Travellers. 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. In addition, this chapter focuses upon the development of Gypsy and Traveller sites without planning permission.

### Planning applications

- 7.2 Similar to the pattern of authorised private sites the pattern of planning applications received since 2001 is also very uneven with applications confined to Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees. The survey of local authorities asked how many planning applications had been received, granted, granted on appeal and refused since 2001. The table in Appendix 3 summarises the answers.
- 7.3 A total of 20 applications were received in 2 out of 5 LPAs, involving 11 different locations. Two applications (both granted) were for certificates of lawful use and two were for amenity blocks on an existing site rather than additional caravans.
- 7.4 In summary the outcomes of the 17 applications involving caravans or chalets were:

Approved	4 applications, 2 on same land for chalet and continuing use as Gypsy site; 1 for Gypsy site with unknown number of caravans
Allowed on appeal	2 applications, 5 caravans
Refused	4 applications affecting 2 locations
Current appeal	1 application, 1 caravan
Dismissed on appeal	1 application, 1 caravan
Withdrawn	1 application, including transit site
In progress	4 applications

- 7.5 It is clear that only about a third of the applications were approved directly or on appeal.
- 7.6 Reasons given for refusal were generally around the contention that the development would be contrary to Local Plan policies. In Stockton-on-Tees the Elton site was refused because of its impact on the character and appearance of its surroundings and on the living conditions of nearby residents. The Yarm site was refused as unacceptably intrusive and having a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the rural area.

## Unauthorised development of Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites

- 7.7 Details of current unauthorised developments were given and are summarised in Table 29. There are 5 sites in all, involving some 15 caravans/pitches, in 2 authorities. Using a 1.7 caravan to pitch ratio it is estimated that there are approximately 12 households accommodated across these sites.

Table 29: Current Unauthorised Developments as of January 2008

Site	Pitches/caravans	Comments
<b>Darlington</b>		
Swan House	6 caravans (2 occupied)	No details
Sadberge	1 caravan	Enforcement action taken in 2004 after refusal of planning application and dismissal of appeal; new application submitted 2006. Not included in Caravan Count as occupier says he is not a Traveller
Forge Way	1 caravan	No details
Middleton St George	5 pitches	No details. Not included in Caravan Count as occupiers claim not to be Travellers
<b>Hartlepool</b>		
None		
<b>Middlesbrough</b>		
None		
<b>Redcar &amp; Cleveland</b>		
None		
<b>Stockton-on-Tees</b>		
Junction A67/Urlay Nook Road, Eaglescliffe	2 pitches	Planning application submitted

- 7.8 Only Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees had experienced any unauthorised development of Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites since 2001. Both had taken enforcement action as outlined above. Both anticipated the number of unauthorised developments to increase over the next 5 years. None of the remaining authorities anticipated an increase. This tends to reinforce the current pattern of unauthorised and authorised provision of private sites in the Study Area. There are no differences in Local Plan policies which might account for this geographical pattern which appears to reflect Gypsy and Traveller demand.
- 7.9 There was some indication from stakeholders that there may be a number of households currently living within 'housed' Gypsies and Travellers' gardens in the Study Area. The Study Team was unable to achieve any quantification of this, their whereabouts or the needs/preferences of such households.

**Residents' views:**

- 7.10 Although attempts were made to consult with residents on all the unauthorised developments and numerous visits were made in order to achieve this, the fieldwork team only managed to consult with one household on one of the developments. As a result, the views of this respondent are summarised below.
- 7.11 This respondent was currently living on a development within Darlington and had lived on the site for around 3–5 years. They owned 1 trailer which apparently gave the household enough living space. All aspects of their site (i.e. size of pitch, design, neighbours, location and facilities) were deemed very good. They reported having access to all services with the exception of rubbish collection and postal service.
- 7.12 The respondent wanted to stay on the site, but if this was not possible – due to being 'forced off' – they wanted to stay in the area. They did not travel any more.

**Planning issues**

- 7.13 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 Darlington gave an example of good practice which stated that:

*Pre-application discussion on site selection before purchasing land is essential in ensuring a sustainable location for a new Traveller site.*

- 7.14 It is not clear whether this was an aspiration for the authority or something which currently works in practice. Redcar & Cleveland asserted that pre-application advice is something which is offered as standard to all applicants by this authority.

**Residents' views:**

- 7.15 The experience Gypsies and Travellers have of buying land and/or going through the planning process was also explored.
- 7.16 All respondents were asked if they had ever purchased their own land; a total of 13 respondents had – this included the household on the unauthorised development and some households on private owned pitches (3). Two of the households on unauthorised encampments had also bought land and 3 (6%) of the households currently in bricks and mortar housing had bought their own land at some time in the past. All of those who had bought land had applied for planning permission. However, only 1 planning application was made before the land was developed, with the remaining respondents applying for permission retrospectively.

- 7.17 Respondents were asked to elaborate on their experiences of the planning system in order to gain some insight into the process from their perspective. A number of the respondents talked about how their application was refused:

*"I applied for planning permission but was refused"*

- 7.18 Other respondents talked about how difficult they found getting the permission they were after:

*"[Name of individual] fought for us. The Council didn't want us on here. It used to be a tip and we cleaned it up. The people from the village didn't know what we'd be like but now they all like us. Once they passed it the Council have been OK."*

*"The Council refused permission, it went to appeal and the inspector granted permission"*

- 7.19 Others alluded to perceived discrimination towards Gypsies and Travellers in the planning process:

*"It's in progress but it's very slow, the Council aren't bothered about Gypsies and Travellers"*

*"They won't let you build. The Council are very arrogant to 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 of tension, unauthorised encampments are often the type of accommodation which have become synonymous with Gypsies and Travellers and are 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.

### Policies on managing unauthorised encampments

- 8.3 The survey showed that all 5 authorities have written policies for managing unauthorised encampments. Particular features of policies include recognition in Darlington that in certain circumstances encampments may be tolerated for a period while ‘encampers’ adhere to a code of conduct; there is a list of unacceptable locations. Redcar & Cleveland Gypsy & Traveller Strategy 2005, revised in 2007, has a section on unauthorised encampments which covers welfare needs; information and communication; provision of toilet facilities and refuse collection, for which a charge is made; and a decision process involving a Case Conference Group of officers from different departments.
- 8.4 Authorities are currently party to joint agreements or protocols with other agencies for managing unauthorised encampments as follows:

Darlington	Police and other agencies
Hartlepool	Police and other LAs
Middlesbrough	Other agencies
Redcar & Cleveland	Police, other LAs and other agencies
Stockton-on-Tees	No formal protocols

- 8.5 First contact with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments is normally made by:

Darlington	Council officer
Hartlepool	Council officer
Middlesbrough	Council officer, Traveller Education, Social Services or representative from Primary Care Trust
Redcar & Cleveland	Council officer
Stockton-on-Tees	Council officer

- 8.6 In all areas council officers are normally involved in the first contact.
- 8.7 There was some concern by a number of different stakeholders that there was a lack of co-ordination in the approach the authorities take to unauthorised encampments and that within certain authorities there is a great deal of duplication of work:

*“It’s not unusual for 3 or 4 different agencies to go out to an encampment, which is just wasting time and money. Duplicating this work is just unproductive and not really an efficient way of dealing with Travellers”*

**Good practice on managing unauthorised encampments**

- 8.8 All authorities identified some element of their approach to managing unauthorised encampments as good practice. The answers are summarised in Box 1 below. Several examples include instances of inter-departmental or inter-agency working. As a result of some of the interesting and unusually comprehensive information and practice available, when compared to other pre GTAA local authorities across the country, these examples are presented in detail here.

Box 1: Good Practice Identified on Managing Unauthorised Encampments

<p><b>Darlington</b></p> <p>The Policy makes the Environmental Health Manager responsible for liaison with Travellers, Councillors and occupiers of nearby housing/buildings. Enforcement Officers work to detailed written procedures when managing and making decisions relating to encampments. Decisions are recorded with reasons.</p> <p>An e-mail system has been established with the Police. Environmental Health staff ensures they are fully informed about all unauthorised encampments that arrive or leave. Health Visitor and Education Welfare are informed of the arrival of Travellers and asked for their opinion on the needs of Travellers that may be relevant on the decision to tolerate or evict. The Housing Section have written procedures for dealing with homeless Travellers.</p>
<p><b>Middlesbrough</b></p> <p>For unauthorised encampments there is daily contact with the sites. It is good practice to establish good relations with the Gypsies as soon as possible after they arrive which allows the Council to try and establish the Gypsies’ intentions and needs (in terms of length of stay etc.). Local authorities need to be flexible in their approach.</p>
<p><b>Redcar &amp; Cleveland</b></p> <p>In 2004 the Council took the decision to work on a more pro-active and strategic approach regarding the Travelling communities. With new management and the new post of Minority Needs Support Officer, the Council’s first <b>Gypsy and Traveller Strategy</b> was adopted in 2005, revised in 2007. Following Cabinet approval of the reviewed Strategy in 2007 the list below indicates some of the areas where improvements have been made:-</p>

- Adoption and implementation of the reviewed Strategy.
- Provision of Health Drop-in Services at the Haven Residential Site, South Bank and improvement of access to health care for the Gypsy and Traveller population within the Borough.
- Re-introduction of the Homeworking Group and/or homeworking facilities for Gypsy/Traveller children with an existing local voluntary group.
- Provision of comprehensive advice and information to the Gypsy and Traveller community.
- Regular reviewing/updating of local policies and procedures associated with Gypsy/Traveller issues.
- Improved Ethnic Monitoring – ensuring all Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council ethnic monitoring information includes English Gypsies and Irish Travellers.
- Establishment of a group of Gypsy/Traveller representatives to attend local community group meetings such as Community Cohesion, Multi-cultural Association, Awareness Raising Training sessions, etc.
- Supporting the improvement of facilities at the Haven site and its full re-occupation.
- Monitoring and recording the movement of Travellers in, out and within the Borough.
- Unauthorised Encampment Procedure.
- Unauthorised Encampment Code of Conduct – provided to each encampment each time they move into our borough.
- Case Conference Group consisting of representatives from relevant council departments such as Planning, Legal, Housing Services, Area Management, Regeneration, and now also including representatives of the Fire Services, Police and Travellers Educations Services. This Group meets and decide appropriate course of action to be taken using the Unauthorised Encampment Framework and Summary who meet and decide appropriate course of action to be taken using the Unauthorised Encampment Decision Framework and Summary.
- Gypsy and Traveller Record – which collates relevant information from each family entering our borough on both authorised and unauthorised sites.
- Tees Valley Officer Communications Group – membership includes relevant council officers from each local authority within Tees Valley. This was set up in order to address the lack of consistent working arrangements within the Tees Valley area for Unauthorised Encampments (initially). At present this Group has succeeded in establishing a Nominated Contact Officer and an Inter-authority Notification protocol.
- Tees Valley Communications Group (in conjunction with SPARC – a local Gypsy/Traveller organisation) is an extension of the Officer Group above. These meetings include representatives from all agencies/organisations who have an interest/involvement with the Travelling communities (Health/ Surestart/Police/Fire Services/Travellers and Adult Education Services/LA Officers/voluntary organisations/members of the Travelling communities, etc). These are well attended and have included LA Officers from Co. Durham also. The meetings enable an exchange/sharing of information and best practice whilst also pursuing the way forward for a more consistent approach across the Tees Valley.
- A Gypsy/Traveller webpage accessed via the RCBC website. There are pages linking to the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy, Education and Information Exchange. The latter page informs the public about the permanent residential site and any unauthorised encampments. It may also include information about updated/new government legislation/consultations, local news

- pertaining to the Tees Valley area, etc.
- An Unauthorised Encampment Database – recording all encampments including non-travellers.

**Stockton-on-Tees**  
 A very clear acceptable behaviour protocol is handed to Travellers which openly sets out our expectations, contact and partnerships and sanctions if any unacceptable behaviour is experienced.

Stockton Borough Council Enforcement Officers have utilised generic roles and broad enforcement powers to interrupt and deter anti-social behaviour, environmental crime and vehicle offences. The use of onboard sound and vision vehicle CCTV when interacting has markedly improved the relationship between officers and Travellers. The Police have taken a more supporting role, only when needed in very few aggravated cases which have also helped develop a better relationship of trust and respect between the Local Authority Officers and Travellers.

**Hartlepool**  
 An Unauthorised Encampments Policy which outlines areas unsuitable for encampments and the matters and conditions to take into account when making enforcement decisions. A wide-ranging liaison group meet to discuss improvements in policy and procedure, including officers from Supporting People, Education, Diversity, Fly-tipping, Planning, Adult and Children’s Services, Housing Advice and Homelessness and Private Sector Housing.

Rather than an ‘enforcement’ officer being the first point of contact, a member of the Housing Advice Team will attend as soon as possible to provide information and, where possible, carry out a needs survey. They are also involved in the Tees Valley notification protocol.

8.9 It was clear that some authorities were able to evidence more good practice and service developments than others. From this information Redcar & Cleveland was able to articulate a significant number of areas where they were exhibiting good practice and cross-departmental strategic planning in their dealings with Gypsy and Traveller issues.

**Geographical patterns and incidence of unauthorised encampments**

8.10 All authorities keep a log of unauthorised encampments: Middlesbrough log some encampments while others log all that are known.

8.11 In order to attempt to ascertain the experience of the local authorities with regard to unauthorised encampments, each authority was asked to comment on the number of separate encampments they had experienced during 2006; this was as follows:

Darlington	16 (normally 1 in the area at any time)
Hartlepool	3 (normally none in area)
Middlesbrough	5 (normally none in area)
Redcar & Cleveland	9 (normally 1 in the area at any time)
Stockton-on-Tees	11 (normally 1 in the area at any time)

- 8.12 The distribution is thus quite uneven, with most encampments occurring in Darlington, Stockton-on-Tees and Redcar & Cleveland.
- 8.13 Officers from Redcar & Cleveland asserted their belief that a proportion of the encampments they experience are in fact households who are deflected from Middlesbrough due to a lack of provision in that borough. It is thought many of these households would prefer to be in Middlesbrough in order to be nearer to family/friends on the local authority site there.
- 8.14 Hartlepool also suggested that their history of 'designation' has meant that their enforcement of unauthorised encampments tends to be comprehensive and that this may have historically impacted upon the numbers of unauthorised encampments featuring within the borough. This highlights the complex nature of unauthorised encampments in the current climate of underprovision of both residential and transit pitches coupled with enforcement action.
- 8.15 Authorities were asked how the number of unauthorised encampments has changed over the past 5 years. Experience seems to have varied: numbers have decreased in Redcar & Cleveland and remained broadly the same elsewhere. Darlington commented that each year is different with no trends discernible.
- 8.16 Consultations with one officer who deals with unauthorised encampments revealed that the clean-up costs associated with unauthorised encampments were '*massive*', particularly when there are significant numbers of caravans involved.
- 8.17 Details of location, number of caravans, duration and action taken for encampments during 2006 were provided by all authorities. Stockton-on-Tees recorded the size of some encampments but the duration of none. Information is analysed below for 38 encampments, excluding Stockton-on-Tees.
- 8.18 The average encampment size was around 5 caravans (range 1 to 22). Most encampments are small – 26 of the 38 (68%) encampments where size is known involved 4 caravans or fewer. There is little difference in average encampment size by local authority other than in Hartlepool where the average (on 3 cases only) was 8.3 caravans and Stockton-on-Tees where the average (on 6 cases) was 7.7 caravans.
- 8.19 The duration was given for 30 encampments. The range was from 1 day to 24 weeks (Redcar & Cleveland), and the average was almost exactly 2 weeks. However, 20 of the 30 encampments of known duration lasted only up to 1 week. In Hartlepool and Middlesbrough the average duration of an encampment was about 3–4 days. In Darlington it was 1.6 weeks and in Redcar & Cleveland it was 4.8 weeks (boosted from 1.6 weeks by an unusually long encampment on Council land).

8.20 Insufficient information was given about locations to form a clear impression of areas most commonly subject to encampment. Most appear to be urban rather than rural. It is clear that a few sites experience repeat encampments; these include:

Wild Road and Forge Way in Darlington  
Meggits Lane/Hobson Avenue, Dormanstown in Redcar & Cleveland

8.21 Together these three locations accounted for 13 (41%) of all encampments during 2006.

8.22 In terms of repeat encampments, Redcar & Cleveland volunteered information which shows that the same families can be involved in encampments (3 of 9 encampments by the same family). They also noted encampments by people not identifying as Gypsies or Travellers.

8.23 In answer to more general questions:

- Stockton-on-Tees and Darlington experience more encampments in summer; the other areas note no clear variation over the year.
- Most involved in unauthorised encampments are said to be 'in transit' in areas other than Redcar & Cleveland, where most are said to be 'local'.

### **Trends in unauthorised encampments**

8.24 In terms of size of group, most said that encampments had decreased in size (Darlington, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland); others said that they had remained broadly the same size over the past 5 years.

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

- **Darlington:** council policies and actions may have affected the number and size of groups visiting: land protection; published policy on unauthorised encampment, which is actively enforced; and an increase in the number of transit sites available adjacent to Honeypot Lane.
- **Middlesbrough:** unauthorised encampments have led to three instances of planning enforcement action affecting 2 families between 2001 and 2006.
- **Redcar & Cleveland:** many encampments are caused by one family visiting friends. They asked for housing which was provided with ongoing support from the Minority Needs Support Officer, but they chose to leave and again move in and out of the Borough on unauthorised encampments. Encampments by non-travellers are caused by people who have lost tenancies for various reasons. They may be re-housed and have a further tenancy failure. Joint working

with the assistance and advice of the Minority Needs Support Officer is seeking to prevent this 'revolving door' syndrome. Land available for encampment may have been reduced due to recent investment.

- **Stockton-on-Tees:** families involved in unauthorised encampment now are mainly in building construction work rather than traditional Gypsy lifestyles. Many families have bought up low value housing as a base to return to from building expeditions in the UK or abroad. Encampments are more common on land owned by private retailers.

8.26 When asked how they expect the number of encampments to change over the next 5 years, Darlington, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees expected a decrease. Other authorities either did not know (Middlesbrough) or expected no significant change (Hartlepool).

8.27 The Study Area is also situated in close proximity to areas that have regular annual Horse Fairs; these are major draws for Gypsies and Travellers from all over the country. Such events may impact on the levels of unauthorised camping in the area at particular times.

- Appleby Horse Fair in Cumbria runs in early June and is the largest horse fair of its kind. Large groups of Gypsies and Travellers travel to and from the event in late May through to the end of June.
- Seaham Horse Fair in east Durham runs in late August. This event is a more recent event than Appleby's, but attracts a significant number of visitors over the Bank Holiday period.
- Yarm Fair in Stockton-on-Tees, which runs on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the third week in October. This was once a commercial fair predominantly for cheese, horse and livestock sales. There is now a fun fair in the High Street but Gypsy and Travellers' horses are still run up and down the High Street on Saturday morning to display those for sale, called the 'Riding of the Fair'.

### ***Living on unauthorised encampments – views from Gypsies and Travellers***

8.28 During fieldwork the number of unauthorised encampments the fieldwork team managed to consult with was at quite a low level – although the target number of households were interviewed. As a result the views of households on unauthorised encampments are discussed as real cases rather than as indicative percentages.

8.29 Eight of the encampments involved Romany Gypsies, with 3 encampments involving Irish Traveller families.

- 8.30 All households interviewed on unauthorised encampments provided details about how many living units they had; 5 households had 1 trailer and 6 households had 2 trailers. No households had more than 2 trailers. The average number of living units was 1.5 trailers per household.
- 8.31 When the average household size for encampments (3.3) is divided by the average number of trailers households possess, this provides an average of 2.2 people in each trailer on unauthorised encampments.
- 8.32 In terms of space their accommodation provided them with: 8 households felt that their trailers provided them with enough space, 1 felt that more space was needed, 1 household did not know and 1 household did not provide this information. A lack of space was attributed to a need for more/bigger trailers.
- 8.33 The majority of those interviewed had been on the encampment for a short period of time. Four had been there for less than one week; other respondents had been there for between two weeks and one month (4 respondents); 1 household had been there for between one month and three months; and 1 household had been there for between three months and six months.
- 8.34 With regard to how long they anticipated staying on the encampment, the vast majority (7 respondents) were intending to stay for 2–4 weeks, one respondent was intending to stay for up to one week, and another respondent was intending to stay for between 1 and 3 months. The remainder (2 respondents) did not know how long they would stay on the encampment.
- 8.35 Respondents were asked the reasons why they were leaving the encampment and we received some varied responses. Some of the comments are included below:

*“Eviction. We’re just here for the fair then we will return to the Bowesfield site where we live.”*

*“To travel plus you do get moved off these unofficial camps, there’s no sites around here.”*

*“Need to look for work.”*

*“Will probably be moved, plus we want to go back to Thornaby.”*

*“I have made an application to Darlington Borough Council for a house I don’t know how long I will have to wait.”*

- 8.36 Out of those respondents who were leaving the area, 3 (27%) would have liked to stay in the area, 6 were happy to leave and 1 household did not know whether they would like to stay. Four respondents had a base elsewhere: 2 respondents had a pitch on the Mount Pleasant Grange site in Stockton-on-Tees and were visiting Yarm Fair; 1 respondent had a base in Morecambe; and one respondent had a base in York. For those without a base elsewhere,

we asked what type of accommodation they were looking for. Two respondents were interested in a pitch on a socially rented site; 1 respondent said that they were interested in a house and were currently on the waiting list; 1 respondent said that they wanted their own site; and another respondent stated that they wanted to remain on the roadside. No households wanted to move onto a private site owned by someone else.

8.37 For those households currently living on unauthorised encampments, access to facilities was a major issue (see Table 30 below). Most of the very basic facilities were inaccessible to half of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed on unauthorised encampments. People who did have access to water, electricity and toilets made the following comments, which are representative of respondents' views on accessing basic services:

*"We go to Tesco's for the toilet. Water we get from somewhere else but don't know where as someone else gets it for us. I'm pregnant so other people get that".*

*"We go on Bowesfield [Stockton-on-tees local authority site] for water and have a generator for electric."*

*"I have a generator and get water off site at the garage."*

Table 30: Access to basic facilities on unauthorised encampments

Type of facility	Have access	
	Yes	No
WC/Toilet	7	4
Water	6	5
Waste disposal/collection	6	5
Electricity supply	5	6
Showers	1	10

8.38 Only six households on unauthorised encampments reported that they could access waste disposal facilities. From consultations undertaken as part of this and other GTAAs, 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 authority recycling centres 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.

## 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 approaches, 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.

### 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 said specific reference is made to Gypsies and Travellers (the Middlesbrough Strategy is still to be approved).

**Current homelessness strategy:** There is no mention of Gypsies and Travellers in any of the five homelessness strategies.

**Current BME housing strategy:** Only Stockton-on-Tees has a BME housing strategy. This does not currently refer specifically to Gypsies and Travellers. It is being revised but again will not specifically refer to Gypsies and Travellers.

Gypsies and Travellers are identified in **ethnic records and monitoring** of social housing applications and/or allocations in Darlington and Middlesbrough (and will shortly be identified in both Stockton-on-Tees and Redcar & Cleveland).

9.4 The Tees Valley Sub-Regional Housing Strategy 2006 refers to Gypsies and Travellers with emphasis on further research and a joined-up approach to understanding their housing requirements and addressing their housing aspirations (along with other BME groups). Research on needs is also the theme of references to Gypsies and Travellers in Stockton-on-Tees Housing Strategy 2008–2011.

9.5 Hartlepool Housing Strategy 2006–2011 makes several references to Gypsies and Travellers and includes as one of the overarching aims of the strategy:

*Provide for those who choose alternative lifestyles such as Gypsies and Travellers, but crack down on unauthorised development.*

- 9.6 The strategy quotes figures for unauthorised encampments between 1999 and 2004 and concludes that Hartlepool is not considered to be on a main Travellers' route and that there is little evidence to support the need for a permanent site. It is stated that it is not considered appropriate for the Council to identify a specific site at this time although this will be kept under review. Applications for private sites will be considered in the light of the Local Plan. The strategy also notes that unauthorised encampment policies have been reviewed. The decision framework provided by the policy is designed to balance the needs and safety of Gypsies and Travellers with the rights of Hartlepool residents to have enjoyment of their property.
- 9.7 **Redcar & Cleveland** Housing Strategy 2006–2010 refers to the Gypsy & Traveller Strategy of 2005 (this was revised in 2007). The objectives are:
- To balance the rights and needs of resident communities with those of Gypsies and Travellers
  - To manage unauthorised camping having regard to the level of nuisance and the rights and responsibilities of Gypsies and Travellers
  - To work with partners to address issues of social exclusion amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities
- 9.8 The Council will take lead responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the strategy. A full review will be undertaken, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, residents and members of the Gypsy and Traveller community during 2007.

### **Homelessness policies in relation to Gypsies and Travellers**

- 9.9 Authorities were asked to provide details of how homeless Gypsies and Travellers are supported through the homelessness process and any steps taken to provide Gypsies and Travellers with housing advice and assistance. Authorities normally reported on arrangements in place to support all homeless applicants. More specific additional services were noted:

**Darlington** Options Officers always provide advice about options in all sectors. A search of site pitches available is made for Gypsies and Travellers and details provided at interview.

In **Redcar & Cleveland** the Minority Needs Support Officer will work with the Homeless Team and support Gypsy Traveller applicants through the process and ensure that any particular needs are taken into consideration in allocations.

**Stockton-on-Tees** enforcement officers are asked to give out cards giving advice on how housing and homelessness assistance can be accessed when visiting unauthorised encampments.

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

- 9.10 Within the survey of authorities there was a sequence of questions about Gypsies and Travellers in social housing and among applicants and allocations. Most authorities were unable to provide any information:
- No authority was able to give the number of Gypsies and Travellers currently registered for social housing. Even where records are kept, these are too recent for analysis.
  - No authority was able to say how many Gypsies and Travellers were housed in 2006. Redcar & Cleveland volunteered that 1 family was known to have been housed but had left the property.
  - No homelessness presentations had been made by Gypsies and Travellers in the previous 12 months in Hartlepool, Middlesbrough or Redcar & Cleveland. One presentation had been made in Darlington and in Stockton-on-Tees. In the latter, the reason was dissatisfaction with previous accommodation. No reason was given in Darlington.
  - No authority was able to say whether/how the number of Gypsies and Travellers moving into social rented housing had changed over the past 5 years. Most were also unable to say how numbers might change in the future – only Middlesbrough expected numbers to remain broadly the same.
- 9.11 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:
- Inability to get a place on a site: Darlington, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland
  - Health reasons: Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland
  - Want to 'settle': Redcar & Cleveland
  - Unable to find stopping places while travelling: Redcar & Cleveland
  - Want to purchase, potentially as an investment while continuing travelling: Stockton-on-Tees (an additional reason added under 'other')
- 9.12 Authorities were asked to estimate how many Gypsies and Travellers live in social housing in their area. Only Middlesbrough made an estimate (10–50 families). There was no information provided about particular geographical concentrations of Gypsies and Travellers within social housing.

## **Gypsies and Travellers in private housing**

- 9.13 Answers to questions about Gypsies and Travellers in other forms of housing were almost entirely uninformative:

- No authority had information about any significant numbers of Gypsies and Travellers living in private housing in their area. Despite this, Darlington noted a concentration of Gypsies and Travellers in private housing (no further details) and Stockton-on-Tees also noted a concentration in one particular area of Thornaby. These are former council properties now in the Mandale Housing Regeneration Area. Property prices were extremely low when Gypsies and Travellers moved in.
- Only Stockton-on-Tees noted any issues arising in relation to Gypsies and Travellers living in private housing in their area. The issues that were cited related to an apparent clash with other residents. There are resident complaints about caravans on properties being eyesores, and properties not providing sufficient space for caravans.
- All authorities either said that Gypsies and Travellers do not live on caravan or mobile home parks not specifically designed for them in their area or had no information on the subject.

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

- 9.14 Neither the local authority officers nor members of the local Gypsy and Traveller communities in the area were able to accurately estimate the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population in bricks and mortar housing in the five boroughs. Therefore officers were asked from the various Traveller Education Services if they could estimate how many Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation they were aware of.
- 9.15 Darlington reported that there were around 293 children and young people from age 2 to 16 in the borough which they were aware of. Based on the average number of 0–16 years in a household (1.6) this indicates that there are at least 183 families in bricks and mortar housing in Darlington alone.<sup>22</sup> Information from the other TES areas indicates that there are:
- Stockton-on-Tees                      38 households
  - Redcar & Cleveland                19 households
  - Middlesbrough                        17 households
  - Hartlepool                                3 households
- 9.16 With regard to Hartlepool, a total of 10 households were interviewed during the course of this study within the boundary of Hartlepool and, as a result, it is this larger figure which is used in this study as a baseline.
- 9.17 It should be noted that the estimates from TES records will only include families who have school-age children and therefore exclude any households

---

<sup>22</sup> It should be noted that this will only include families who have school age children and therefore exclude any households who do not access TES including older people – this could be a significantly large section of the ‘housed’ population.

who do not access TES including older people and people with older families – this could be a significantly large section of the ‘housed’ population. However, it is estimated that the base population for Gypsies and Travellers in housing, for the purposes of this assessment, is 267 households.

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

- 9.18 Among the 53 respondents who were consulted who lived in bricks and mortar accommodation, 43 (80%) lived in a house, 6 (11%) lived in a bungalow and 3 (6%) lived in a flat/maisonette.
- 9.19 In total, 55% of bricks and mortar dwellers were owner-occupiers, 36% were council tenants and 9% were private tenants.
- 9.20 In terms of the size of the dwelling, 11% had 1 bedroom, 38% had 2 bedrooms, 47% had 3 bedrooms and two households (9%) had 4 or more bedrooms. All but 1 respondent thought that their property gave them enough space. The respondent who commented on needing more space raised concerns about how their household was changing:
- “Need to extend for the family growing up.”*
- 9.21 In total, 22 households (41%) in bricks and mortar accommodation still owned trailers. The majority of households (14 respondents) had just 1 trailer; 8 respondents had 2 trailers. The respondents stored their trailers in a variety of ways including on the driveway/garden of their accommodation, with family and friends on private sites, in storage and on farmers’ fields.
- 9.22 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 majority of respondents viewed these issues either positively or, in a few cases, ambivalently. Respondents were particularly happy about the facilities and the condition 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 31: Views on the house (in %)

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very Poor</b>
Size of house	64	26	8	2	-
Design of house	59	28	13	-	-
Neighbours	47	30	21	2	-
Location	57	38	6	-	-
Facilities	64	34	2	-	-
Condition/state of repair	62	32	6	-	-

- 9.23 All respondents had access to all basic facilities we enquired about, with the exception of 1 respondent who did not have a shower. Ten respondents commented that they did not have access to somewhere safe for their children to play.
- 9.24 Most respondents had lived in their accommodation for a significant period of time: 42% for 5 years or more; 47% had been there for between 1 and 5 years; the remainder (9%/5 households) had lived there for less than a year. One respondent (2%) reported that they did not know how long they had been living in their accommodation.
- 9.25 Generally speaking, when asked how long they were likely to remain in their house the vast majority said they did not know (57%); 42% thought they would remain indefinitely; and only 1 respondent (2%) was planning to leave within 1–3 years. When asked their reasons for leaving the respondent said:
- “My husband wants somewhere bigger, don’t know where in Darlington.”*
- 9.26 All Gypsies and Travellers were asked about their experience of living in bricks and mortar accommodation. A total of 53 households (36% of the overall sample) had experience of bricks and mortar housing. If the households who are now in bricks and mortar housing are removed, this indicates that 26% 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 6 out of the 12 households who are currently living on unauthorised sites (both encampments and developments) have had experience of bricks and mortar living.

Table 32: Previous experience of bricks and mortar housing by accommodation type

Current accommodation type	No. lived in a house	% sample lived in a house
Unauthorised sites	6	50
Socially rented sites	10	50
Private sites	20	37
Showpeople Yards	2	20
Bricks and mortar	15	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>36</b>

- 9.27 The majority of these households with previous experiences of bricks and mortar housing (56%) had owned their own property; 24% had lived in a house they had rented from the local authority; 17% had rented their property from either a private landlord or RSL; and two respondents (4%) did not know. Most of these had moved into this property with their family when younger.
- 9.28 As many people left bricks and mortar accommodation, the authors were keen to ascertain people’s views and experiences of living in houses, flats, etc. and why they had left. All respondents who had lived in a house at some point were asked, on a five point scale, very good to very poor, to rate their experience. A large number of people (39%) thought that living in a house

was either a very poor or poor experience; 34% had indifferent views; 19% thought that living in bricks and mortar accommodation was either a very good or good experience; and 3 respondents (8%) did not know.

- 9.29 Due to the number of households who had left bricks and mortar housing in the past, of particular interest was 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 give cultural explanations:

*"I felt like I was in prison."*

*"I'd always lived in a trailer so I just couldn't get used to a house."*

*"I hated it! I couldn't see anyone walking past it was too closed in, too hemmed in."*

*"Didn't like the house, didn't like the upstairs."*

*"Because I am a Gypsy, and prefer travelling."*

- 9.30 Equally comments from respondents were also received who rated their experience of living in a house positively:

*"Same as a chalet, very similar."*

*"I liked the comfort."*

*"You have more comfort in a house, everything you want is inside."*

- 9.31 Out of all the people who had previously lived in a house, just 13% would consider doing so again. Respondents were asked what the main reasons would be for considering living in bricks and mortar accommodation. The top 4 reasons were: stability, a lack of sites, health reasons and children's education.

- 9.32 Just three site/pitch based respondents were on a waiting list for a house with their local council. The respondents were waiting for houses in Middlesbrough, Darlington and Hartlepool. Two respondents were already living in bricks and mortar accommodation and one respondent was currently living on an unauthorised encampment.

## 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.
- 10.2 Each of the 5 authorities has a Supporting People 5 Year Strategy and all mention Gypsies and Travellers. Reference is commonly made to the lack of services provided specifically for Gypsies and Travellers and lack of awareness of evidence of need for services for the group. Redcar & Cleveland refer to the support given by the Minority Needs Support Officer.
- 10.3 When asked which services Gypsies and Travellers most frequently approach the Council about (with a list of general housing-related support categories provided) Darlington, Hartlepool and Middlesbrough said either that they did not know or that Gypsies and Travellers do not commonly approach the Council. There were two informative answers:
- **Redcar & Cleveland:** the main calls upon the Minority Needs Support Officer are for form filling, housing advice, support when moving to bricks and mortar and information and signposting to local schools, GPs and other services.
  - **Stockton-on-Tees:** cited planning applications and Housing Benefit.

### *Views from Gypsies and Travellers on housing-related support services*

- 10.4 It proved extremely difficult to find a suitable method to gain some idea 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. However, it is important to attempt to gain some idea about the levels of need for a number of services. Key stakeholders and key documents<sup>23</sup> were consulted from elsewhere to produce a list of the kind of services to gain views on.
- 10.5 All Gypsy and Traveller respondents were asked 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 33).

---

<sup>23</sup> See Supporting People Eastern Regional Cross Authority Group – Gypsy and Traveller Conference, 27<sup>th</sup> 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>.

Table 33: Likelihood of using housing-related support services (in %)

Support need	Would never use	Might use	Would definitely use	Don't know
Finding accommodation	59	20	15	5
Settling into new accommodation	73	13	7	7
Budgeting	82	8	3	7
Meeting people	89	3	4	4
Accessing a GP	24	24	50	1
Accessing legal services	22	39	36	2
Harassment	20	42	33	6
Claiming benefits	55	25	17	3
Finding a job	64	16	13	8
Accessing training (for adults)	63	17	14	7
Pregnancy	66	14	15	6
Parenting	80	7	7	6
Filling in forms	40	30	25	5
Support with planning	28	24	41	7

- 10.6 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 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 as a certain amount of familiarisation with such services may need to occur with community members in order to allow such individuals to fully understand their nature and scope. However, the results do seem to indicate where the current main concerns about service areas are. The services which elicited most interest were (in order of interest – ranked by combining people who ‘might use’ with ‘would definitely use’): accessing legal services, harassment, accessing a GP, support with planning and filling in forms. As can be seen, the majority of people require quite practical assistance, particularly around planning and legal services.
- 10.7 Respondents were asked if they felt that they had ever experienced harassment or discrimination in the Study Area because they were a Gypsy or a Traveller. A total of 37% of respondents thought that they had. Many people responded by simply saying ‘racism’ as well as numerous reports of being refused service in public houses, shops and cinemas. When asked to expand on the nature of the discrimination/harassment a variety of responses and experiences were provided including:

*“I was beaten up for being a Gypsy.”*

*“Daughters’ have difficulty finding work.”*

*“If you are a Gypsy you find it difficult as some taxi firms won’t accept fares going to the caravan site.”*

*“People sometimes refuse to serve you in the pubs. It’s ridiculous; I’m a normal person just like everyone else. No different.”*

*“There was a riot on the yard, local yobs throwing things and swearing. It was very frightening.”*

*“There was an unprovoked attack from local youths. The police eventually came, since then we’ve had improved support and help from police.”*

*“When my son was at James Cook hospital a house dweller wanted us moved off the yard as we were Travellers.”*

- 10.8 Some respondents also wanted to talk about experiences of discrimination/harassment outside of the Study Area:

*“We were on an unauthorised camp and a group of men came and threw bricks at the trailers, this was not in Darlington but I wanted to tell you about it”*

*“Not here in Darlington but I have in other places. I have been called a dirty Gypsy and refused service in shops.”*

### **Access to local services and amenities**

- 10.9 In order to gain some idea as to the interaction that the Gypsies and Travellers have with various local services, people were asked if they felt that they or their family had sufficient access to certain services and how important these services were to them (see Table 34). 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. It was encouraging to find that the vast majority of respondents reported having access to these services.
- 10.10 However, around 10% of people felt that there were barriers to access. When asked to comment further on what prevented them accessing such services we received a number of responses that referred to the location of the sites:

*“We are a bit far out. Without a car you can’t get anywhere. Our dentist is in Thornaby and our doctors in Yarm.”* (Respondent from an unauthorised encampment)

*“Taxi’s for the children. Buses need to come down here. We are isolated in the middle of an industrial estate on a dual carriageway.”* (respondent from Metz Bridge – Middlesbrough)

Table 34: Access to services and importance of service

Service	Have access (%)	Very important (%)	Quite important (%)	Not so important (%)	Not important at all (%)	Don't know (%)
GP/Health Centre	99	98	1	0	0	1
Dentist	93	92	3	1	1	4
A&E	97	91	4	2	1	2
Local Shops	95	88	8	2	1	1
Banks	92	69	16	9	3	3
Post Office	95	67	17	11	4	1
Health Visitor	83	64	12	12	9	3
Public Transport	86	62	19	9	8	3
Nursery Schools & Children's Services	83	54	7	18	19	3
Maternity Care	83	44	8	20	22	5
Services for Older People	71	42	11	20	20	8
Sports and Leisure Facilities	80	33	12	27	25	4
Youth Clubs	71	15	11	35	34	6
Social Worker	35	3	3	24	63	7

10.11 People were also asked whether officers who worked in the local authority, health service, education and other services should be more aware of issues affecting Gypsies and Travellers. Over half of the respondents (56%) felt that more awareness was required; 16% felt that awareness was not needed; and the remainder (28%) did not know. When asked to expand on their views, the majority of people spoke about the need to treat Gypsies and Travellers equally:

*“Trailers are our homes just like houses are theirs and we need somewhere to live just like them.”*

*“Gypsies and Travellers seem to get less help and promotion than others.”*

*“They need to recognise that we are like any normal human beings, just our homes are different. We're not poles apart.”*

*“We need to be classed the same as everyone else.”*

10.12 Many responses also referred to the lack of awareness of Gypsy and Traveller culture and traditions within the different services:

*“Sex education in schools is a problem for us. I would like them to understand why.”*

*“Just be aware of the differences between different groups of Travellers.”*

*“Health and education services need training in Romany Gypsy culture, traditions and taboos.”*

*“I always have to tell people not to wash their hands in the kitchen sink. We don’t do that.”*

*“They don’t think you can be a Traveller when you are in a house, but I’m still a Traveller always and forever. They need to know that ethnicity is not a fad.”*

## 11. Employment, education, health and policing – findings

- 11.1 This section presents findings relating to Gypsies and Travellers in the service areas of employment, education, health and policing.
- 11.2 In general there are a number of agencies and individuals in the Study Area who work with Gypsies and Travellers in the areas of employment, education, health, policing and general need. Many of these agencies appear to link with one another reasonably effectively – this has reportedly been significantly increased due to the appointment of a Minority Needs Support Officer within Redcar & Cleveland. There is an acknowledgement, from one of the officers we consulted with, that the authorities/services cannot operate effectively in isolation from one another. There have been attempts at establishing multi-agency working in the past but this needs added commitment, engagement and involvement from those agencies this concerns.

### 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, landscaping, carpet related trades, uPVC and guttering, roofing and tarmac. Six respondents reported that they worked as *'general dealers'*. 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 The survey also asked how many people were self-employed and employed in the households. Out of the sample of 85 respondents who volunteered information, 73 had self-employed family members and just 9 households had people who were employed by someone else. Clearly self-employment is a major mode of employment for Gypsies and Travellers.
- 11.5 Eleven households who currently travelled felt that travelling had an impact on their work. Some respondents expanded on why this was the case:

*"If my son travels he can't keep his job. Although they are very good with him when we go off as he works 6 days a week instead of 5 so we have more time off to travel."*

*"Husband travels for work regularly. I stay here with the children."*

*"Need to go [travel] to find work."*

*"It was very hard to get a job as I live on the site. When they find out they tell you no."*

- 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 4 households said they did for the following reasons:

*"I travel with my trailer. Transit sites would help."*

*"Van parking. There is never anywhere to park on sites."*

*"Would like some stables."*

- 11.7 In terms of a particular site in the Study Area – one respondent from the Metz Bridge site (Middlesbrough) commented:

*"My son works and gets scrap metal from the tyre shop and takes it to the scrap yard. It would be better if we could use our own slab to store them [items of scrap] on"*

- 11.8 In terms of training for work, only 15% of the sample had been on some form of training, either formal through the colleges or work (10 people) or informal through friends, family and social networks (8 people). A small number of people reported that they had some vocational qualifications from educational bodies such as City and Guilds and CLAIT. An additional 12 respondents (9%) wanted to take part in training at some point in the future – all but one of these respondents were women expressing interests in health and beauty, nail technician courses and IT training. Other respondents commented further by saying:

*"When my youngest starts school I want some part time work, I'll try anything really."*

*"I have a daughter who would like to take a training course to be a chef."*

## **Gypsies and Travellers and education**

- 11.9 The workers from Traveller Education Services (TES) provided the fieldwork team with some useful background information as to services in the area, as well as being able to offer their views on the education and related needs and experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in the area. One of the workers felt that although TES provide a specialist service this should not lead to complacency for the schools in the area – it was suggested that TES was treated as 'interpreters' and that both schools and teachers needed to take ownership of the children.
- 11.10 TES workers also expressed some concern as to the continued extraction of children from school, by their parents, which tends to occur at around 11 years of age.

- 11.11 A total of 67 households had school-age children (between 5yrs and 16yrs). A total of 56 households said their children regularly attend school (84% of households with school-age children) with an additional 4 households with children receiving education at home. Ten respondents said their children did not attend school regularly, and 1 respondent said they did not know if their children went to school regularly.
- 11.12 In terms of differences in attendance levels, children were most likely to attend school regularly if they lived on owner-occupied private sites, followed by households in bricks and mortar accommodation. All but one households living on private rented residential and transit sites reported regular school attendance. Respondents on unauthorised encampments reported the lowest levels of regular attendance (40%) in comparison to other accommodation types; this is followed by socially rented sites, where 1 in 4 (25%) of households with school-aged children did not attend school regularly or receive home education.
- 11.13 The survey 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 (54%) or good (32%), with 14% of respondents reporting that they felt the schools were neither good nor poor. No respondent viewed the schools negatively or gave the school a rating of poor or very poor. Respondents were asked to expand on why they had given the rating they had. All the comments we received expanded upon their positive rating:
- "Absolutely brilliant. Marvellous. Bought the house because it is on the same road as [name of school]. It's a good Catholic school."*
- "They accept our children the same as other races."*
- "There's a good understanding of Gypsy children."*
- "When we have been travelling they [teachers] help the children catch up."*
- "My child is doing very well, on a par with everyone else in the class."*
- 11.14 The survey also asked all of the respondents how easy or difficult they thought accessing children's education/schools was in the local area. Most people said they felt that access was either very easy (43%) or easy (22%). A large number of people responded that they did not know how easy or difficult access is (28%) and 5% of respondents felt that access was neither easy nor difficult. Only 2 respondents (2% of the sample) thought access was difficult; it was unclear why this was so.
- 11.15 Forty-three respondents (48%) with school-age children had contact with the local Traveller Education Service (TES). The majority of respondents that have contact with the TES thought the service was either very good or good

(71%); 9% thought that it was neither good nor poor; whilst the remainder did not know (20%). Similar to schools, no one viewed the TES negatively – the survey asked people to expand on what they thought about the service:

*“They’re always on the ball willing to help.”*

*“It helps because the teachers then know a lot about the children’s backgrounds.”*

*“They help the kids out at school. They sorted my eldest daughter out with a course.”*

*“They help with all kinds of problems, not just education.”*

- 11.16 The survey asked each respondent to comment on the level/standard of education that they themselves had obtained. A total of 82 people 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. Only 9 respondents reported having some formal qualifications such as GCSEs and A levels. 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 health**

- 11.17 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.
- 11.18 Consultations with health workers suggested that there was some need for health services but that in the past, attempts to contact and offer information about services had been declined (particularly on the Stockton-on-Tees site). There was also some concern expressed about how to help households who had nowhere to go (unauthorised encampments) improve their life chances. It was seen by certain workers that their transience/lack of residency impacted significantly on their health.
- 11.19 The survey 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 35, 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. In addition, a total of 5 households reported living with someone who had some sort of mental health problem. One household reported having three or more family members with learning disabilities and communication problems.

Table 35: % 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	91	8	1	-
Visual impairment	83	13	5	-
Hearing impairment	92	8	-	-
Mental health problems	96	4	-	-
Learning disability	87	5	5	2
Communication problems	99	-	-	1

- 11.20 A further 39 households (28% of the sample) had someone in their family who experienced some other kind of health problem. Conditions reported included (in descending order of prevalence): arthritis, asthma, diabetes, heart problems and blood pressure problems. One person mentioned that they suffer with agoraphobia and post-traumatic stress disorder.

### Gypsies and Travellers and Policing

- 11.21 The Police within the Study Area appear to be both involved and engaged in work relating to Gypsies and Travellers. A number of officers have significant contact with the community particularly in relation to the management of unauthorised encampments. The Police also commented that they would like to have a more involved relationship with the managers of sites – particularly in relation to the site in Redcar & Cleveland when this is re-established.
- 11.22 Respondents were asked about their views on policing in the Study Area. This was phrased as an open question in order to encourage respondents to feel free to discuss a range of issues. A large number of people felt that they could not comment or simply stated, for example, that they *'did not know'*, *'never had anything to do with them'*, *'no experiences with police'* or *'no comments'*. Many people thought that the policing was *'good'* or *'ok'*. Some respondents had rather negative experiences of the policing in the Study Area. The following comments were provided:

*"The Police helicopter comes over really low every day. It frightens the kids. No need for it just because it's a caravan site."*

*"Not good, supposed to be patrolling the site but nobody ever sees them."*

*"Anything that goes wrong in the area they blame us."*

*"They don't understand Gypsy lifestyle or culture."*

*"They stop you all the time for police questioning when you haven't done anything wrong."*

## 12. Mobility: Accommodation Histories and Intentions

- 12.1 This section looks specifically 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 36). However, 22% of households reported being on the site for less than 6 months. The majority of households staying in the Study Area for less than 6 months were staying on private transit sites. It is clear that private transit sites are acting as the main form of transit provision in the Study Area.

Table 36: Duration of residence on current site

Duration of residence	% of respondents
Less than 6 months	22
6–12 months	3
12 months–3 years	10
3–5 years	8
Over 5 years	57
Don't know	1

- 12.4 The previous accommodation of those on authorised sites, in order of significance, is shown in Table 37. As can be seen, the main form of accommodation that households on authorised sites had prior to their current site was on the roadside (unauthorised encampments) followed by a private rented site, and then by a socially rented site and private transit site. Interestingly, one in ten households had previously been accommodated in bricks and mortar housing – this may indicate that a move into housing is not always a permanent one and that site to housing and housing to site movement occurs, to varying degrees, over the life course.
- 12.5 Households from unauthorised sites came mostly from other unauthorised encampments (7 respondents). Other previous accommodation types include authorised accommodation such as a socially rented residential site (3 respondents) or a socially rented transit site (1 respondent).

Table 37: Prior accommodation of households on authorised sites (private and socially rented)

Type of prior accommodation	% of respondents
Roadside	23
Private rented site	21
Socially rented site	18
Private transit site	16
Bricks and mortar housing	11
Socially rented transit site	3
Caravan park	3
Farm land	3
Own land	1
Other	1

- 12.6 The survey 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 to get married or live with partner. 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 38 breaks this down by accommodation type.

Table 38: Frequency of travelling by current accommodation type

	Unauthorised encampment (%)	Unauthorised development (%)	Socially rented sites (%)	Private residential sites (%)	Private transit sites (%)	Bricks and mortar (%)
Every week	80	-	-	-	-	-
Every month	20	-	-	-	5	-
Every couple of months	-	-	5	6	32	6
Seasonally	-	-	55	63	53	47
Once per year	-	-	10	14	5	13
Never	-	100 <sup>24</sup>	30	17	5	34

<sup>24</sup> This is based on responses from one household living on an unauthorised development.

- 12.9 Unsurprisingly, unauthorised encampments are the most mobile, followed a long way behind, quite surprisingly, by people on authorised private transit accommodation. This may suggest that the private transit sites are also acting as a form of residential accommodation. Households from all accommodation types tended to engage in some form of travelling throughout the year. Although households from socially rented sites and bricks and mortar housing still travelled, around a third of households in these forms of accommodation reported that they no longer travelled.
- 12.10 The survey asked those who said they never travelled to tell us why, which resulted in some diverse replies. Some common themes were around being less physically mobile, being too old, widowed or general health reasons. Some female respondents also reported that they were separated from their partners so could no longer travel. Others talked about how they were 'too settled' or how they liked the place in which they were now living.
- 12.11 The majority of respondents felt that their current travelling patterns were typical (51%) with the remainder commenting that this had changed over the past few years. When asked in what ways this had changed we received a variety of responses including:

*"You can't get stopping places anywhere, the councils won't let you."*

*"My husband died. Until his death we travelled each summer. Now we go to the fairs and have a month in a field outside of Darlington, love to feel the grass under our feet."*

*"Travelled when I was younger when there was freedom on the roadsides. It's these sites that have ruined our culture."*

*"Until we were lucky to have our own land we travelled all over England and Scotland moving almost every month."*

*"I used to travel for work when I lived on sites, but we're settled now in the house which is better for the children and their education."*

- 12.12 Those who did travel, however, were asked where they liked to go. This was an open question designed to allow respondents to mention three of the places they visit most frequently. The most common destination seemed to be Appleby Fair and some other fairs such as Yarm and Stow. Other common destinations were places within the Study Area such as Stokesley, Darlington, Thornaby, Redcar, and South Bank. Respondents also travelled to a variety of places outside of the Study Area including York, Leeds, Manchester, Lancaster, Whitby, Penrith and Carlisle. A number of people stated that they travelled in a northerly direction to various places in Scotland. A small number of respondents also mentioned travelling to more southern places such as London, Essex, Cambridge, Bournemouth and Winchester. A number of respondents were less specific about where they travelled to with

comments such as ‘*countryside*’, ‘*anywhere*’, ‘*all over*’ or ‘*anywhere I can get work*’. It is difficult to ascertain and quantify a specific travelling pattern from these responses; however, it seems that there was a particular ‘northerly’ and Northern England route to peoples’ travelling, with quite a lot of travelling occurring within the Study Area itself.

- 12.13 For those people who still travelled, there was a wide variation in how many caravans/trailers they travelled with from 1 to 20, with most people travelling with between 1 and 5 caravans.
- 12.14 People tended to travel in significant numbers with a number of respondents travelling with 20–25 people. It was not uncommon for people to travel in groups of more than 5 people.
- 12.15 In total, approximately 76% 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 1-month period, households travelled for a number of other reasons. In order of popularity, after Appleby Fair, people tended to travel for work and to see and visit relatives. A number of respondents also stated that they travel because it is their “*way of life*” or it is “*traditional*”.
- 12.16 With regard to what type of accommodation people had used while travelling during the last 12 months, by far the most common type was pulling up at the ‘roadside’, which as a general rule would indicate unauthorised encampments. The second most common type of accommodation was staying with family or relatives on private sites, followed by public or private transit sites, and then by staying in farmers’ fields. 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, 18% had been forced to leave where they were staying, largely as a result of evictions or harassment issues. Four respondents reported that they had been forced to leave due to the closure of the site at South Bank.
- 12.18 In order to further understand people’s travelling patterns, the survey asked 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 outside of where they were based at the time. However, this was not the case for households on unauthorised encampments, where 70% of households on unauthorised encampments intend to return to the same local area and areas surrounding it (Table 39).

Table 39: Anticipated areas to travel to over the next 12 months

<b>Travel in the next 12 months?</b>	<b>% of travelling respondents</b>
Within same local area	22
Within the Tees Valley area	10
Other parts of the UK	65
Abroad	6

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 40).

Table 40: Popularity of preferred accommodation

<b>Type of preferred accommodation</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
With family on private sites	53
Public/private transit sites	36
Roadside	35
Farmers' fields	25
Caravan park	24
With family on socially rented sites	16
Hotels	14
Other	5

12.20 As Table 40 shows, when travelling, people would rather stay with family on private sites, followed by staying on private transit sites. More people wanted to stay on mainstream caravan parks and farmers' fields than actually used them in the last 12-month period. Interestingly, staying on socially rented sites was only slightly more preferable to staying in hotels when travelling. Some respondents (5%) reported that they wanted to stay on 'other' types of accommodation which was usually specified as authorised designated stopping places. One respondent stated that they would prefer a pitch on a residential site in the next 12 months.

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. A total of 20 respondents (15%) thought that they would travel less than they had done in the previous 12 months, and 4% thought they would travel more than they had done in the previous 12 months – a potential overall reduction of 11% in travelling.

## **13. Household formation and accommodation preferences and aspirations**

### **Household formation**

- 13.1 A total of 7 households (5% 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 11 separate households. This in effect means that 18 households currently occupy space meant for just 7 households. All of these were children who required their own accommodation. Two respondents thought that their children would want to stay in the area and two respondents thought that their children would move out of the area. The remaining three households stated that they didn't know where their children would want to live. All of these new households were expected to want 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 37 households (25% of the sample) said that there were people living with them who would require independent accommodation within the next five-year period. This amounted to 60 separate households (41 of which were on authorised site-based accommodation). The authors have confidence that there was no double counting between these different time periods.
- 13.3 The vast majority (92%) were thought to want trailer-based accommodation (including those households currently in bricks and mortar housing). One future household was expected to request bricks and mortar accommodation. Many of the respondents (66%) thought that these households would 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.

### **Keeping animals and related site needs**

- 13.5 The survey asked respondents about the types of animals/birds they keep and if they had any issues with regard to keeping them. A total of 58 households reported that they keep dogs, with the majority (52%) owning one dog; 34% owned two dogs; 9% owned three dogs; and 5% owned four dogs. No households reported that they owned more than four dogs. Most dogs were kept outside in kennels on the respondent's pitch or in gardens. One respondent commented that this was for "*security reasons*".

- 13.6 A total of 33 respondents reported that they own horses and chickens. The number of horses owned varied from 1 to 50 horses, as did the number of chickens which varied from 5 to 12 chickens. The respondents tended to keep horses in fields and stables near their accommodation and some were tethered on roadsides. One respondent living on a socially rented site (Stockton-on-Tees) had a significant issue with regard to where they kept their horse:

*“Need somewhere better for the pony, it’s tethered behind the wall at the entrance of the site at the moment.”*

### **Long-stay residential sites**

- 13.7 A total of 50 respondents (34% of the sample) said that they would like to move to either a long-stay residential site or a different residential site. Five out of the 11 respondents living on unauthorised encampments were interested in this. A total of 13 households from socially rented sites would consider moving to another site (68% of the sample from socially rented sites). Interestingly, all of the households (8 respondents) from the Riverside Park caravan site at Metz Bridge in Middlesbrough would consider moving to another long-stay residential site. Five of the 12 households interviewed on Mount Pleasant Grange in Stockton-on-tees would consider moving to another long-stay residential site. This may indicate some considerable dissatisfaction with the current quality of these sites (see Chapter 6).
- 13.8 Eleven households from private sites expressed an interest in moving to a different site (21% of the sample from private sites in the Study Area). Seventeen households from bricks and mortar accommodation (7 from Redcar & Cleveland, 5 from Middlesbrough, 3 from Stockton-on-Tees, 1 from Hartlepool and 1 from Darlington) reported a desire to move to site-based accommodation (33% of the bricks and mortar sample).
- 13.9 The survey 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 thought they would stay on a site for 5 years and over (45%); 43% could not indicate a time and simply answered ‘don’t know’; 5% thought they would stay on a site for more than 3 years but less than 5 years; the remainder of the sample stated an expected duration of stay of 3 years or less.
- 13.10 The survey 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 their local area (74%). Nine of the respondents stated that they would want the site to be in Middlesbrough. More specifically, 3 respondents stated they would like to live in South Bank (2 were, at the time of the assessment, on unauthorised encampments within Middlesbrough; the other was in bricks and mortar housing within Redcar & Cleveland).

- 13.11 In total, 25% indicated that they would like a site within Tees Valley generally. Many of the respondents (42%) also stated that they would consider moving to a site in other parts of the UK. Respondents stated particular places they would like the site to be, such as Doncaster, Wakefield, York and Birmingham.
- 13.12 The survey 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. Some respondents who currently lived on authorised private sites reported that they preferred larger sites of between 40 and 50 pitches – however, this probably reflects the individual experiences of living on one particular site in the Study Area. It should be noted, however, that this is contrary to government guidance and findings from other GTAAs which tend to indicate that a site of around 20 residential pitches should be the maximum.

### **Transit/short-stay sites**

- 13.13 There was significant demand for an increase in the provision of transit pitches. A total of 61 respondents said that they would be interested in stopping at a short-stay or transit private site (41% of the sample). This comprised: 5 households on unauthorised encampments; 1 household on a socially rented site; 23 households from private residential sites (mainly from private rented pitches); 15 households from private transit sites; 11 households from bricks and mortar accommodation; and, interestingly, 6 Travelling Showpeople living on yards in the Study Area who would want specific areas to reside whilst operating fairs if they were not allowed to reside with their equipment on 'Fair land'.
- 13.14 The survey also asked respondents if they would be interested in staying on a short-stay or transit site owned by the council. A total of 19 respondents (just 31% of those interested in transit provision as a whole) expressed an interest in this type of transit provision. This comprised 10 households living in bricks and mortar accommodation; 6 households on unauthorised encampments; 2 households from authorised private sites; and 1 household from a socially rented site. Therefore it appears that there was more interest in staying on a transit or short-stay site which is privately owned rather than run by the council.
- 13.15 The survey also asked respondents whether they would be interested in stopping in designated stopping places. A total of 51 people expressed an interest (34% of the sample). This included 18 households from bricks and mortar accommodation; 13 households from socially rented sites; 8 households from privately rented sites; 6 households from private transit sites; and 6 households from unauthorised encampments.

13.17 The survey asked all respondents who expressed an interest in staying on short-stay transit sites how long they would expect to stay on such a site. The vast majority of respondents stated a time that was more than 1 week and less than 4 weeks. However, some respondents did state longer periods of time between 2 and 3 months.

13.18 There were mixed views on the preferred size a site should be. A small number of people thought a site should be around 5–10 pitches in size, with a few indicating that 20–30 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**

13.19 The survey also asked people what their thoughts were about sites that incorporated both long-stay pitches and short-stay pitches. The majority of respondents (66%) thought it was a good idea, with only 7% viewing it as a bad idea. The remainder of the respondents (27%) did not know whether it was a good or bad idea. Comments in favour of such a site included:

*“Families that have settled can have other members of the family staying for a short time.”*

*“Good idea for those living in chalets so friends could pull on.”*

*“Helps to get off the roadside and keep our lifestyle as well.”*

*“I think this would be the way forward for the community.”*

*“Old ones can settle and young ones can visit.”*

13.20 More tentative comments included:

*“Good idea for those who don’t want to stop [permanently] but you have to know who’s running it and who’s coming on.”*

*“Must not be too big, short-stay/transit [site] no more than 5 pitches.”*

13.21 Views against such a site included:

*“Good and bad among us. Should have a transit site to separate us from those who travel.”*

*“People ruin everything, don’t look after the site. Then they leave and give the people on the site permanently a bad name.”*

13.22 Overall, it was clear from the people spoken to that the majority of respondents were positive about a site with both residential and transit provision. In addition, respondents that currently live on a private site with both residential and transit plots reported that the mix worked well. However,

it was clear 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 and friends 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

13.23 All respondents were asked to comment on their preferences for 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)

13.24 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) answers for each scenario are presented in preference order in Table 41 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 a site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller and then by 'group housing'. Both travelling around often staying on authorised transit sites and living permanently in a privately owned house were viewed favourably. Living in a local authority or housing association house was regarded as the least favoured option, followed by living on a site owned by a private landlord (not a Gypsy or Traveller).

Table 41: Views on the type of accommodation preferred

Type of site	Mean answer
A private site owned by them or their family	9.3
A site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller	7.8
'Group housing' <sup>25</sup>	7.4
Travelling around on authorised transit sites	7.0
A family-owned house	7.0
A site owned by the local council	4.8
A site owned by a private landlord (not a Gypsy or Traveller)	4.5
A local authority- or housing association-owned house	3.8

<sup>25</sup> On the questionnaire this was phrased as 'A site incorporating long stay/permanent plots/housing with short stay/transit facilities'.

13.25 Of course, one of the dilemmas of attempting to provide a comprehensive assessment of the current and future accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers is that you are only able to assess the needs of those households currently resident in the area. In doing so there is a risk that those households not in the area are excluded from having their needs assessed and preferences presented. These may be households who have traditionally not been welcome or able to stop in the area – such households may be from certain travelling groups (i.e. Irish Travellers/New Travellers – the population of Irish Travellers in the Study Area is at quite a low level compared with other GTAA areas) or from certain families from the Romany Gypsy population. This issue is discussed again in Chapter 15 with regard to pitch requirements, and in Chapter 18.

### **The best and the worst ...**

13.26 This final section looks at some of the qualitative information obtained about the kind of places people prefer and aspire to live in. The survey asked all respondents to talk openly about both the best and the worst place they had ever lived in. In terms of the worst place people had lived in, a variety of responses were received. A number of people reported that where they currently live is the worst place for them – two of these were from the socially rented sites:

*“Here. I’ve never been on a site as bad as this in my life. Put fencing up and painted sheds to try and make it nicer. Don’t like its appearance. OK for now but when I get older I won’t be able to walk into town.”*

*“Stockton, here. But got to live where husband says.”*

*“You do get a lot of bother in Darlington from town people.”*

13.27 Many people talked about how living on the roadside was the worst place for them:

*“All the unauthorised camps I have been on since I’ve been married.”*

*“When on the road on unauthorised sites there is no good place. That’s why we went into a house.”*

*“On commons, getting pulled off through the night.”*

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

*“Some parts of London. People were very prejudiced.”*

*“Leicester roadside. The people weren’t friendly, no respect for us even though we were clean and tidy. We used to tidy up after other travellers to stop ourselves getting a bad name.”*

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

*“House, couldn't sleep at night. Had to leave lights on, couldn't settle. Felt isolated, no friends.”*

13.30 Others were more specific about their experiences on particular places:

*“The farm. It was lonely and had no facilities there”*

*“On [site name]. Warden is very disrespectful to Travellers. Amenities were very dirty.”*

*“South Bank. Was a council site, closed now, it never works. It just gets trashed all the time.”*

*“On a site in London with a big fence, felt like a prisoner.”*

*“[site name], amenities are too far away. If the children are ill, it's miles to the doctors.”*

*“[site name], in Cumbria. Facilities on the site were very, very poor.”*

13.31 Similarly, in terms of the best places people had lived a variety of comments – most of which were rather specific about particular places with good facilities – were received:

*“Blackpool local authority site. A Romany Gypsy man was the warden. The site was well maintained, very good utility blocks, nice people on the site.”*

*“Cambridge council site. It was brilliant. All fenced in with lawns, beautiful sheds and excellent facilities.”*

*“Honey Pot Lane, Darlington. Knew everyone on the site. Had water and electric and the site was very clean.”*

*“Middlewich, Cheshire, on a private site. Good toilets and showers.”*

*“Carlisle. Had a school bus for the children and my own shed.”*

13.32 From the responses it was clear that the presence and proximity to family and friends was a major reason why certain areas and experiences were viewed as positive:

*“In the house, more settled than when you're on the go in the caravan. Got more of a home life. Kids like it better. We have friends round us and family are near us in the houses.”*

*"In Scotland when I was a child. Had all my family there."*

*"I have always lived around Hartlepool, all my family live there."*

*"I like it here, so I can see my family at Christmas."*

- 13.33 Other people mentioned that the best place for them was when going to horse fairs and many reminisced about travelling around often during their childhood:

*"All the Traveller's fairs in the North East as they are very friendly people."*

*"Appleby Fair meeting all our people."*

*"I Remember summers in farmer's fields when 15 or 20 caravans were allowed. This was the life."*

*"Roadsides when you didn't get hassled. Kent, London, Wales, it was fun, freedom. It was fantastic."*

- 13.34 However, the place where the vast majority of people talked about as being the best was where they were currently living, particularly if they lived on an authorised site:

*"Here where I am now. I like my kitchen and bathroom."*

*"Here. Settled. Got facilities, family, friends and doctors."*

*"Here. Better than a house, it's more social."*

*"Neasham Road Caravan Site where I am living now. Nice people on the site, very clean and quiet."*

*"Here, Honey Pot Lane. It's very safe and run by our own people."*

## **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 No current development plans include policies specifically aimed at sites for Travelling Showpeople (Middlesbrough's Policy HO18 on Gypsies/Travellers applies – see Appendix 1). No planning applications had been received relating to a site for Travelling Showpeople since 2001. There have been no incidents of unauthorised development of sites for Travelling Showpeople in the Study Area since 2001.
- 14.3 There is one yard for Travelling Showpeople in the Study Area in Middlesbrough. The yard in North Ormesby accommodates approximately 10 extended families. It has established use rights and did not require full planning permission.
- 14.4 The level of provision of sites for Showpeople has been static across the Study Area since 2001. No authority expects the number of sites to increase in the next 5 years.

### **Views from Travelling Showpeople**

- 14.5 In total, ten interviews were achieved with yard-based Travelling Showpeople. Although all households on the yard were consulted, because of the statistically low number of interviews, the views of residents are discussed as real cases rather than as indicative percentages.
- 14.6 All households provided details about how many living units and vehicles they possessed. Eight households had 1 living unit and two households had 2 living units. These tended to be larger static units rather than smaller trailers/tourers. Most households had more than one vehicle (including vans and lorries) with the average number being 2. This number of vehicles is lower than that of Travelling Showpeople in other assessments the Study Team have been involved in. This may be because three of the ten households were retired or no longer working due to health reasons. In addition, five respondents reported that they had a catering unit for when they were working on fairgrounds, rather than a number of individual fairground rides.

- 14.7 Only one out of the ten households reported not having sufficient room for their living quarters. This respondent commented that the site was too small and at full capacity. All ten households reported having enough room for vehicles.
- 14.8 Generally speaking, the majority of households viewed their yard in a positive light in terms of the size of the plot, the design of the yard, the neighbours, location, facilities and management of the yard. All households had access to most of the facilities the survey enquired about (including water and electric supply, WC and rubbish collection). Although all households had access to electricity and water supplies it was commented that these were 'sub-standard' as there is a need for more taps and better electricity boxes.
- 14.9 The survey asked all households to comment upon what improvements they would like to see made to their yard. These included:
- Tarmac/hard standing
  - Improved electricity boxes
  - Better water supply
  - Amenities building
- 14.10 All but two of the households had lived on the yards for 5 years or more. Three households thought they would remain on the yard indefinitely; the remaining respondents did not know how long they would stay on the yard.
- 14.11 All of the households were local to the area in some way and those respondents who still worked fairs travelled between 3 and 8 months of the year. A number of people reported that the amount they travelled had changed for a number of reasons, such as the loss of fairground sites, retirement and ill health.
- 14.12 Respondents worked most frequently on fairs in the North East region, particularly within Tees Valley, Tyne and Wear and County Durham. Some respondents also worked in Yorkshire, Humberside and Northumberland.
- 14.13 There was a mixture in preferences for how people preferred to live when working; the majority of households preferred to stay on 'Fairland' in their trailers, one household commuted from their residential yard to their workplace, and two respondents preferred to stay on 'Fair land' or commute to and from their permanent yard if the fair was local.
- 14.14 Only one household was thought to require independent accommodation over the next 5-year period. This was for a respondent's daughter and it was thought she would want to live near to her family in trailer-based accommodation. Although only one additional household was formally reported, many of the respondents commented there was not enough accommodation for Travelling Showpeople in the area:

*“We are a young couple. We need room to put down roots. We hope to have children and there aren’t enough yards for Showpeople. The yard we are in now is full up.”*

*“We need help from local councils to establish more yards as travelling sites are harder to find.”*

- 14.15 Because so little is known about how Travelling Showpeople live and want to live, rather than confine respondents to tick-box answers, the fieldwork team provided respondents with as much chance to talk to us about their needs as was possible. Many of the respondents felt that the council needed to do more to provide accommodation for Travelling Showpeople:

*“Councils should provide yards for Showpeople. They do it for all the other travelling groups.”*

*“There should be land made available to buy or rent or lease from the council as permanent quarters. We are retired and would welcome our own yard to live in.”*

- 14.16 It was clear that Travelling Showpeople were keen for the local authorities to offer them greater acknowledgement and recognition in planning for yards. Some of the respondents’ comments are below:

*“I feel more awareness about Showpeople should and would help in planning applications. If people don’t understand that we are from a cultural community they make decisions based on ignorance.”*

*“They need to understand we are a transient community, who don’t want to live in a house.”*

- 14.17 In addition many of the respondents commented that they want to be treated equally to other travelling groups and to be recognised as a cultural minority:

*“I am sick of remarks like ‘I didn’t know there was a different group of people like Showpeople’.”*

*“We are lumped with other travelling groups.”*

*“I wish local authorities would treat us as a cultural group and not as riff raff.”*

- 14.17 Broadly speaking there were two main messages. Firstly, respondents wanted more yards and land made available so that they could purchase and develop a yard for their own needs. Secondly, respondents were keen to be recognised as a travelling group in their own right, different to Gypsies and Travellers.

- 14.18 In addition to the Travelling Showpeople who were resident in the area, the Study Team were also made aware of a circus family that was currently residing within Darlington. The circus was currently renting a piece of land which is usually used for the storage of transport. It emerged from consulting with the residents of this yard that they have temporarily resided on the site in order to avoid any restrictions which would be imposed on them by the movement restrictions by DEFRA related to bluetongue in Shropshire where they own a private yard. By remaining on this land they are able to travel as a circus throughout the year whereas in Shropshire they would not be allowed to move the animals. The main respondent of the yard is a member of the Showmen's Guild. They are due to leave the site in Darlington in March 2008 to go back on tour. If all is clear in Shropshire later in the year they will go back to their Shropshire site for winter 2008. If there are still restrictions they will still return to Shropshire, but look to accommodate their animals over the Welsh Border if possible.
- 14.19 There were no accommodation needs identified within the Study Area from this household.

## 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 point to the fact that the formation of new households is inevitable.<sup>26</sup> 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.<sup>27</sup> The Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments also contained an illustration of how need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation might best be calculated.<sup>28</sup> 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 range of factors.<sup>29</sup> It is from this latter guide that this estimation of supply and need is drawn. In particular, residential accommodation need is considered by carefully exploring the following factors:

---

<sup>26</sup> Niner, P. (2003) *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, London: ODPM.

<sup>27</sup> Niner, P. (2003) *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, London: ODPM.

<sup>28</sup> CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments – Guidance*, London: HMSO.

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings\\_id1508209.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings_id1508209.pdf)

### **Current residential supply**

- Socially rented pitches
- Private authorised pitches

### **Residential need 2007–2012**

- Temporary planning permissions that 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 that 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 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 as the number of households on unauthorised encampments and number of households on the transit pitches has shown. On the other hand, Gypsies and Travellers spoke about the 'draw' of major urban areas within the Study Area and the possibility of short-term employment opportunities in these areas; they also spoke about family links in the area and proximity and routes to a number of horse fairs.
- 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.

- 15.8 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, a simple estimate of family/household growth has been applied in order to illustrate likely natural increase in the Gypsy and Traveller population. This is applied to both a Study Area and local authority level.
- 15.9 Each one of these factors outlined above is taken in turn, and illustrated at both a Study Area level and local authority level. It has been necessary for a number of these factors to be moderated by assumptions based on the authors' experience of conducting GTAAs elsewhere and benchmarking GTAAs as part of RSS processes across the country. To aid transparency these assumptions are detailed where they occur.

### **A cautionary note on local authority pitch allocation**

- 15.10 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 are authorities with little or no pitch provision. This is compounded further the longer-term the assessment is made (i.e. to 2016).
- 15.11 As requested in the research brief, the project team 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 and the North East 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 whilst being informed by the views of the Gypsies and Travellers who participated in this study.

## **Additional residential pitch requirements**

15.12 Table 42 on the following pages presents the Study Area requirement of need and the local authority apportionment based on the 'need where it arises' approach. The following section looks at Table 42 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. This excludes the site in Redcar & Cleveland.

**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 Gypsy and Traveller households 'known' to occupy bricks and mortar housing.

**Row 5:** The total number of authorised plots provided for Travelling Showpeople.

### **Residential pitch need 2007–2012**

**Row 6:** The number of pitches affected by temporary planning permissions ending within the assessment period 2007–2012 – this is thought to consist of 1 pitch within Stockton-on-Tees. This is assumed to count towards estimated need. Establishing the permanency of this site would count towards additional pitch provision.

**Row 7:** 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.

15.13 For clarity purposes household formation findings from sites and houses are calculated and explained separately. These figures are then combined within Row 7.

Table 42: Summary of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople requirements by local authority area (2007-2021)

Element of supply and need		Study Area Total	Darlington	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough	Redcar & Cleveland	Stockton-on-Tees
	<b>Current residential supply</b>						
1	Socially rented pitches	43	0	0	15	0	28
2	Private authorised pitches	75	62	0	0	0	13
<b>3</b>	<b>Total authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41</b>
4	Housed Gypsies and Travellers	267	183	10	17	19	38
<b>5</b>	<b>Total Travelling Showpeople plots</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Residential pitch need 2007–2012</b>						
6	End of temporary planning permissions	1	0	0	0	0	1
7	New household formation	90	55	2	8	4	21
8	Unauthorised developments	12	10	0	0	0	2
9a	<i>Movement from sites to housing</i>	-6	-3	0	-1	0	-2
9b	<i>Movement from housing to sites</i>	27	18	1	2	2	4
9c	Net house–site movement	21	15	1	1	2	2
10	Closure of sites	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	Unauthorised encampments	19	7	1	2	4	5
<b>12</b>	<b>Additional residential need</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>31</b>
	<b>Additional supply 2007–2012</b>						
13	Pitches currently closed but re-entering use	17	0	0	0	17	0
14	Pitches with permission but not developed	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	New sites planned	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	Vacancies	48	26	0	8	0	14
<b>17</b>	<b>Supply 2007–2012</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Requirement for extra residential pitches (2007–2012)</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-7*</b>	<b>17</b>

19	<b>Requirement for extra residential pitches (2012–2016)</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>
20	<b>Requirement for extra residential pitches (2016–2021)</b>	38	22	1	3	2	10
21	<b>Total requirement for extra residential pitches (2007–2021)</b>	142	98	6	8	–4	34
22.	<b>Requirement for plots for Travelling Showpeople (2007–2012)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
23	<b>Requirement for plots for Travelling Showpeople (2012–2016)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
24	<b>Requirement for plots for Travelling Showpeople (2016–2021)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
25	<b>Total requirement for plots for Travelling Showpeople (2007–2021)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

\* This means that once the closed site (The Haven) is re-opens there will be an estimated surplus of around 7 pitches. However, this may not necessarily follow if underprovision across the Study Area continues.

### ***Pitch requirement from 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 56% of respondents.

#### **Assumptions:**

- Treating all individuals as requiring separate accommodation may usually overstate need as there may be some intermarrying within the Study Area of individuals.
- There may have been some overclaiming of need.
- Adjust these figures by 10% to account for possible inter-area household formation (i.e. 1 in every 10 young adults will marry another young adult in the Study Area) and possible overclaiming of need.
- Based on survey responses all are assumed to require pitch-based accommodation.
- From survey findings we assume 66% of new households will stay in the local area.

**Calculation:** 56% grossed to total current population on sites = 56% of site-based population = 66 households minus 10% minus, minus 34% = **39 households requiring pitches.**

### ***Pitch requirement from 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 42% of respondents.

#### **Assumptions:**

- Treating all individuals as requiring separate accommodation will probably overstate need as there may be some intermarrying within the Study Area of individuals.
- There may have been some overclaiming of need.
- Adjust these figures by 10% to account for possible inter-area household formation (i.e. 1 in every 10 young adults will marry another young adult in the Study Area) and possible overclaiming of need.
- Based on the survey all are said to require pitch accommodation.
- 100% requirement for pitch accommodation is unrealistically high based on professional experience. Adjust figures by 25% to account for a number of households arising from bricks and mortar accommodation remaining in housing (i.e. 2.5 in every 10 new households will remain in housing).
- From survey findings we assume 66% of new households will stay in the local area.

**Calculation:** 42% of estimated housed population (267 households) = 42% of 267 = 112 households. 112 households minus 10% (inter-area household

formation) minus 25% (remaining in bricks and mortar housing) minus 34% (movement outside of area) = **50 households**. These households represent an estimation of the proportion of housed Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area. As a result this figure may be an understatement.

- 15.13 Total pitch need from household formation on authorised sites and bricks and mortar housing = **90 pitches across the Study Area**.<sup>30</sup>
- 15.14 **Row 8:** This is the level of need arising from current unauthorised developments. According to our survey there were 5 unauthorised developments at the time of the assessment comprising approximately 12 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.
- 15.15 It is estimated that there is a need for approximately **12 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.
- 15.16 **Rows 9a, 9b and 9c:** This is the estimation of the flow from sites to houses and vice versa.
- 15.17 **Row 9a:** 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 number of qualitative comments we received demonstrating some desire for bricks and mortar housing; and
  - the finding that households are known to move into housing as young families and as older people.
- Suggest 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 (118 households) = 6 households over the Study Area.

<sup>30</sup> Rounded up from 89 to account for the need to round to the nearest whole pitch at a local level.

15.18 **Row 9b:** 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:** 33% of families/households in bricks and mortar families expressed an interest in a site place in the Study Area.

**Assumption:**

- 33% may be unrealistic based on survey responses as expressed satisfaction with housing were high and firm movement intentions were at a very low level.
- The sample may be biased to the less settled Gypsies and Travellers who have maintained contact with professionals and Gypsy and Traveller support groups. Simply grossing up to the total population may overstate need.
- Experience suggests that it would require particularly attractive site provision to encourage some Gypsies and Travellers to actually move from housing.

Bearing all these points in mind we assume that 10% of Gypsies and Travellers in housing need site accommodation.

**Calculation:** 10% of estimated bricks and mortar population = 10% of 267 = 27 families/households over the Study Area.

15.19 **Row 9c:** This is the net movement from housing to sites and sites to housing. This indicates that **21 households** would require pitch-based accommodation over the assessment period.

15.20 **Row 10:** 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.

15.21 **Row 11:** 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 44 separate encampments. Based on the comments provided by the local authorities it is believed that this is broadly reflective of previous years (although it is noted that Redcar & Cleveland had experienced higher numbers of encampments in the past).

#### **Assumptions:**

- The average encampment size during 2006 was 5 caravans. The survey showed an average of 1.5 caravans per household. There was an average of 3 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) from information provided by the local authorities we assume this to be the case in 50% of encampments.

**Calculation:** Number of encampments during 2006 multiplied by average encampment size (in households) minus 50% = 66 separate households.

### ***Need for residential pitches from unauthorised encampments***

**Finding:** 46% 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 (11 interviews) and therefore may not be reflective of the entire population who tend to feature as unauthorised encampments.

#### **Assumptions:**

- 46% is likely to be high because of the small sample size this is drawn from, overclaiming, likelihood of interest in other areas outside of the Study Area, and from what seems reasonable.
- LA officers and stakeholders reported that in their experience only a small number of encampments that they encountered were looking for residential accommodation in the area.
- Assume need for residential pitches will be the equivalent to 30% of unauthorised encampments.
- 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:** 30% of households involved in unauthorised encampment = 30% of 66 = **19 households/pitches across the Study Area.**<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Figure adjusted from 20 pitches to account for rounding to nearest whole pitch at the local level.

15.22 **Row 12:** Sum of rows 6, 7, 9c, 10 and 11.

### **Additional supply 2007–2012**

- 15.23 **Row 13:** These are the pitches which are closed which are due to be re-opened for re-use = 17 pitches on The Haven (Redcar & Cleveland).
- 15.24 **Row 14:** These are the pitches for which planning permissions have been granted but are not yet developed.
- 15.25 **Row 15:** This is the number of pitches on sites which are planned to be delivered within the assessment period.
- 15.26 **Row 16:** This is the number of pitches likely to become vacant over the 2007–2012 period. A vacancy rate of 10% (derived from the Stockton-on-Tees site) has been applied across all authorised sites. This provides 48<sup>32</sup> pitches becoming available over the 5-year period.
- 15.27 **Row 17:** Sum of rows 13, 14, 15 and 16.
- 15.28 **Row 18:** This is the total requirement for additional residential pitches over the 2007–2012 period. Row 12 minus Row 17 = total residential pitches required = **78 pitches over the Study Area.**

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

15.29 The current shortage of sites and pitches for Gypsies and Travellers 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. 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 an assumed rate of household growth of 3% a year compound is applied to the projected number of pitches which should be available by 2012.<sup>33</sup> This figure is also quoted in the recent CLG report.<sup>34</sup> 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

---

<sup>32</sup> Rounded from 47 to nearest whole pitch to account for local level vacancies.

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

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings\\_id1508209.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings_id1508209.pdf)

households on unauthorised encampments will not require permanent residential accommodation in the Study Area.

- 15.30 **Row 19** (of Table 42): the total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2012–2016** is approximately an additional **26 residential pitches**.<sup>35</sup>
- 15.31 **Row 20** (of Table 42): the total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2016–2021** is approximately an additional **38 residential pitches**.<sup>36</sup>
- 15.32 **Total additional residential pitch need 2007–2021 = 142 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 42.
- 15.33 These requirements are those at February 2008. Any provision made after this date contributes to the overall need.

### **Types of Site**

- 15.34 The survey highlighted two more qualitative findings which have implications for site provision:
- Chapter 13 showed a strong preference for family-owned small sites. This is equivalent to the widespread desire for owner-occupation in the settled community. While the survey did not explore income or savings to establish how many Gypsies and Travellers could actually afford to buy land and develop their own sites, it is clear that not all families will be able to do so. There is likely to be a continuing need for social rented sites provided by either local authorities or RSLs. Both types of site tenure will be required. Local planning authorities should seek to make it as simple as possible for Gypsies and Travellers to get planning permission on their own sites in order to meet aspirations as well as need to ensure sustainability.
  - There are clear ethnic differences within the Gypsy and Traveller communities in the Study Area between Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers. While mixed sites can work, segregated sites are more common and apparently more acceptable to most Gypsies and Travellers. New provision across the Study Area should cater for both groups.

---

<sup>35</sup> The 3% household growth is also applied to the re-opened site in Redcar & Cleveland.

<sup>36</sup> The 3% household growth is also applied to the re-opened site in Redcar & Cleveland.

## **16. An assessment of need for transit pitches**

16.1 Although nomadism and travelling is currently restricted to a certain extent, this remains an important feature of Gypsy and Traveller identity and way of life, even if only to 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 and have difficulties in accessing education and health services.

### **Need for Transit Sites and Stopping Places**

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

16.3 A proportion of unauthorised encampments were considered as an element in the calculation of need for residential sites, implying that needs should be met in part through a combination of residential and transit provision. Chapter 8 presented information on the current pattern of transient unauthorised encampment which suggests that the Study Area might expect around 44 encampments in a year (mostly in Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees), with an average size of 5 caravans (including some repeat visits by the same Travellers and some probable shifting between locations by the same group in response to enforcement action). Levels of encampment are higher in summer although encampments can occur at any time of the year.

16.4 During the course of this assessment we have found clear evidence as to the need for authorities to make some sort of 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 transient Gypsies and Travellers;
- The fieldwork experiences of the study team who found a number of unauthorised encampments whose inhabitants 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 by households on authorised sites and bricks and mortar housing to allow family and friends to visit them legally.

16.5 There is no simple way of translating encampment information into estimates of transit need. The following comments indicate general requirements. These are all additional to residential pitch needs set out above and based on the incidence of unauthorised encampments currently, not potential future increases in travelling.

- In **Darlington**, the scale of encampment is sufficient to suggest a need for further formal transit provision. While there is transit provision already within the area it appears as though there is a need for additional provision – this is perhaps unsurprising given the potential size of the Gypsy and Traveller population living within the borough.
- In **Hartlepool and Middlesbrough**, the scale of encampment experienced recently is relatively small to merit provision of formal transit provision. It would be more appropriate to ensure that future residential site provision has space to provide temporary accommodation for people visiting site residents (not strangers or other Gypsies and Travellers in transit). In addition, pieces of land should be identified to which other Gypsies and Travellers coming into the area could be encouraged to move.
- In **Stockton-on-Tees and Redcar & Cleveland**, similar to Darlington the scale of encampment is sufficient to suggest that there may be need for further transit provision. Again, this is perhaps unsurprising given the potential size of the local populations in these areas and the pull that family connections tend to have within the communities.

16.6 It is recommended that each authority provides some form of transit provision in order to facilitate the travelling way of life. Although the development of one 10–15-pitch transit site may 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. This is because:

- the nature of the Study Area – encampments occur in all local authorities – means that 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; and
- the needs of the groups for travelling is often a mixture of motivations (i.e. work, family and holiday). A uniform transit site may not meet the differing requirements.

- 16.7 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. A number of households would prefer the provision of designated stopping places.
- 16.8 Requirements for provision of transit accommodation in the period 2012–2016 are impossible to predict. Additional provision would only be required if the level of travelling were to increase markedly. This underlines the general importance of monitoring and reviewing travelling patterns and the incidence of transient unauthorised encampments regularly, and re-assessing provision usage and requirements.

### **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 need 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 needs to go hand in hand with appropriate management arrangements. It is clear from the experience of many local authorities 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 the local 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 GTAA's 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 (commonly referred to as 'plots') for Travelling Showpeople 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 survey 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 the 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 42 in Chapter 15 shows the numerical need for residential plots in the Study Area for the 2007–2021 period for Travelling Showpeople.

- 17.5 From consultations undertaken with Travelling Showpeople there was need for 1 additional plot over the 2007–2012 period arising from household formation from the existing Middlesbrough yard. There were no plans by any local authority to provide plots over this period. There were no other indicators of need for residential Travelling Showpeople plots.
- 17.6 However, there were some concerns that there were minimal accommodation options for Travelling Showpeople, compared with other areas, and that more options should be available to Travelling Showpeople who wanted to live in the Study Area.
- 17.7 In addition, there was some interest in the creation of short-stay facilities for Travelling Showpeople when they were operating fairs in the area and were unable to stay on 'Fair land'. At this stage it is, however, impossible to quantify this in terms of additional provision.

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

- 17.8 Similar to 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.<sup>37</sup> All households on yards sites are assumed to require plots. It is assumed there will be no unauthorised developments over the next period.
- 17.9 The total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2012–2016** is an additional **1 residential plot** (see Row 23 of Table 42).
- 17.10 The total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2016–2021** is an additional **1 residential plot** (see Row 24 of Table 42).
- 17.11 **Total additional residential plots need 2007–2021 = 3 plots** (see Row 25 of Table 42).

---

<sup>37</sup> 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 To a certain extent, meeting the accommodation requirements outlined in the assessment is only one part of a very complex agenda. 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 be best met. There are six broad headings: overall strategy, systems and policy framework; accommodating transient Gypsies and Travellers; communication and engagement; developing accommodation; health and housing-related support issues; and Travelling Showpeople accommodation.
- 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 across various parts of the country. The project team have brought their experience of practice (both good and bad) to this assessment in order to make these recommendations. It is believed that it is important for all local authorities to 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.
- 18.5 It should be noted that Redcar & Cleveland is considered to be the pioneering authority within the Study Area in their approach to Gypsy and Traveller issues – most of which are wider than accommodation needs. Although there is good practice evident in all authorities, Redcar & Cleveland has made a number of positive and effective steps forward.
- 18.6 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, and those authorities already engaged in such work should continue to do so.

## Strategy, systems and policy framework

- 18.7 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 Tees Valley co-ordination group on Gypsy and Traveller issues comprising 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 officers who comprise the Steering Group for this GTAA would provide an excellent foundation for such a group, together with the multi-agency group formulated by Redcar & Cleveland.

**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.

- 18.8 It is recognised that the final apportionment of pitch requirements depends on a degree of partnership working between the GTAA partners and the North East Assembly. It is likely that the requirements identified here will be accommodated more widely than the 'needs where it arises' approach specifies and that need will be met on a sub-regional basis. This, and continuing issues, will require extensive co-ordination.

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

- 18.9 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.

- 18.10 There is also a need to improve the quality of the information collected about Gypsies and Travellers.

**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 on-going monitoring, authorities should ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are recognised in all their ethnic monitoring forms, most urgently in relation to housing and planning.

18.11 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 embrace 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.

- 18.12 Although the existing management of the two socially rented sites was broadly seen as good, the management of Gypsy and Traveller sites requires careful attention. Inappropriate management can foster and encourage a perception of partisanship and divisiveness, and does little to build social cohesion on the sites or 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 socially rented sites needs to be evaluated at regular intervals, and similar mechanisms should be adopted in order to evaluate the management of private rented sites.

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

- 18.13 It is clear that travelling and any resulting unauthorised encampment are complex phenomena. In order to assist Gypsies and Travellers in maintaining their way of life, 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).
- 18.14 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.
- 18.15 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 and a GTAA should be conducted concurrently with the wider Housing Needs Assessments.

## **Communication and engagement**

18.16 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.

18.17 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 Gypsies and Travellers seeking to develop private sites and planning authorities. Initial and appropriate discussions with the planning authority could avoid the economic fallout which occurs when land is developed and planning permission is later refused.

**Recommendation 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.

**Recommendation 20:** Planning departments should provide an educational/information pack for Gypsies and Travellers in order to provide user-friendly guidance on the most effective way to apply for planning permission.

## Developing accommodation

18.18 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. It is important to note that Gypsies and Travellers are not homogeneous and the individual needs within this broad 'community' should be considered if accommodation provision is to be successful.

**Recommendation 21:** 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) 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:

- location to local services and transport networks
- pitch size
- amenities
- sheds
- management
- mixture of accommodation (chalet, trailer, etc.)
- utility of outside space (driveways, gardens, etc.)
- homes for life principles
- health and related support issues
- tenure mix
- space for short-term visitors

**Recommendation 22:** 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.

18.19 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.

**Recommendation 23:** 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.

18.20 It was clear that the limited number of sites in the Study Area, coupled with the significant number of pitches which are in private ownership, meant that a number of families/households felt excluded from pitch-based accommodation. It is also clear that this created some suppressed need from families in bricks and mortar housing who would rather be in trailers on pitches.

**Recommendation 24:** The authorities should provide more socially rented pitches and retain a stake in the allocation process.

**Recommendation 25:** The requirements identified as a result of this assessment should be met by new site development. As a result of the exclusion that has occurred in the past, together with the design and size of the existing sites, these sites should not be extended unless there is a pressing case for this to happen.

18.21 At the same time, of new sites 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 26:** The Metz Bridge site in Middlesbrough should be significantly refurbished/re-designed in order to improve the living situation of resident Gypsies and Travellers.

**Recommendation 27:** The Mount Pleasant Grange site should be improved in accordance with the issues raised by site residents.

### **Health- and housing-related support Issues**

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

**Recommendation 28:** 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 29:** 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 30:** Supporting People teams should network with Supporting People teams locally, regionally and nationally in order to share and disseminate good practice on meeting the housing-related support needs of Gypsy and Traveller community members.

**Recommendation 31:** 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 32:** 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 33:** 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**

18.23 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 34:** 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. Issues of tenure, management and size are important issues which will need to be discussed fully if additional provision is to be made.

**Recommendation 35:** Authorities should be aware of and implement the guidance issued by the CLG around planning and Travelling Showpeople sites.

**Recommendation 36:** 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

<b>Darlington Borough Council Local Plan, 1997</b>	
	<p><b>Policy H20 – Gypsy Sites</b>  <i>The Council will continue to make provision for gypsies at Honeypot Lane and Neasham Road.</i></p> <p><b>Policy H21 – Additional Gypsy Sites</b>  <i>Private sites for settled occupation by gypsies will be permitted provided that all of the following criteria are met:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. The site does not encroach on open countryside;</i></li> <li><i>2. The site is not in the Area of High Landscape Value;</i></li> <li><i>3. The site is not prominent and the occupied part of the development can be adequately screened by establishing new, or re-modelling existing, planting and earth mounding;</i></li> <li><i>4. The development will not result in disturbance affecting the occupiers of existing land or buildings;</i></li> <li><i>5. The site has convenient access to public transport and local services such as shops, hospitals and medical facilities;</i></li> <li><i>6. The development incorporates adequate arrangements for access to and from adjoining highways, for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles, for outdoor amenity areas and storage, and for the security of the site during periods when it is unoccupied;</i></li> <li><i>7. The development can be provided with adequate utility services; and</i></li> <li><i>8. The development will not adversely affect any buildings or areas of agricultural land quality, architectural, historic or scientific importance.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Hartlepool Local Plan Adopted Plan, April 2006</b>	
	<p><b>POLICY Hsg14 - Gypsy Site</b>  <i>Proposals for the provision of gypsy sites will be approved where there is no significant detrimental effect on the amenity of the occupiers of adjoining or nearby properties and provided that:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. There is adequate access to the site and provision for parking, turning and servicing within the site,</i></li> <li><i>ii. The site is accessible to facilities including schools, medical facilities and shops,</i></li> <li><i>iii. The site is neither subject to unacceptable pollution by reason of noise, dust, fumes or smell, nor to potential nuisance or hazard created by existing or approved commercial or industrial activities,</i></li> <li><i>iv. The site is adequately screened and landscaped,</i></li> <li><i>v. If required, the size of the site is large enough to accommodate separate residential and business uses and additional parking space for extra caravans, cars and lorries.</i></li> </ol>

**Middlesbrough Local Plan (adopted August 1999)**

**Policy HO18 Gypsies / Travellers**  
*Planning permission for gypsy and traveller sites will be granted provided that the proposed site:*

- i.) Is not beyond the limit to development or within a Green Wedge or in an area identified as protected open space;*
- ii.) Parking provision is in accordance with adopted standards (Appendix 15);*
- iii.) Is conveniently located for access to schools, shops and other local facilities;*
- iv.) Has no significant detrimental impact upon residential amenity;*
- v.) Provides the occupants with an acceptable standard of residential amenity;*
- vi.) Is landscaped and screened to provide privacy and maintain visual amenity; and*
- vii.) Suitable highway access is provided to the site.*

**Redcar & Cleveland Local Plan, June 1999**

**Policy H15**  
*Applications for gypsy caravan sites will be granted planning permission where the following criteria can be met:*

- A. The size of the site is adequate for the number of pitches proposed and to accommodate sufficient screening;*
- B. The site is capable of being adequately serviced;*
- C. The site is reasonably close to schools and medical services;*
- D. The site provides a suitable residential environment; and*
- E. Some separation and isolation exists between the proposed development and existing or proposed housing areas.*

*Paragraph 5.41 draws attention to Circular 22/91 and the needs of travelling showpeople. 'Within Redcar and Cleveland at present, such accommodation is not required, though the situation will be kept under review.'*

*It is noted that this policy is saved until the communities DPD and the results of this GTAA are taken forward.*

**Stockton Borough Council: Adopted Local Plan, 1997**

**Policy H07**  
*Proposals for gypsy sites will not be permitted in areas identified as sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, local Nature Reserves, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Special Landscape Areas or Ancient Woodland.*  
*In addition sites for gypsies will not be permitted on land specifically allocated for other development.*  
*Elsewhere in considering proposals for gypsy sites the Council will pay particular regard to the following factors:*

- i. The effect on the amenity of adjacent property through, for example, noise, dust, smell, smoke;*
- ii. The effect on the development potential of adjacent land;*
- iii. The effect on the appearance of the surroundings;*
- iv. Sites are not isolated from local facilities;*
- v. Traffic generation and access requirements.*

## Appendix 2: Core Strategy etc. Policies on Gypsy Site Provision

<b>Darlington Local Development Framework : Core Strategy: Preferred Options, October 2005</b>	
	<p><b>Preferred Option CP3.1 Housing for All</b>  <i>Under this policy, provision will be made for enough new homes to be built and enough existing homes retained and improved to meet existing and new residents' needs and aspirations.</i>  <i>The policy will outline:</i></p> <p>a) <i>the broad criteria for assessing the housing needs of groups such as first time buyers, key workers, people with impaired mobility, older people, <b>Gypsies and Travellers</b>;</i>  b) <i>the broad criteria for assessing the balance of provision between affordable and market housing, based on the relationship between local incomes and house prices; and</i>  c) <i>the broad balance between the numbers of different household types to be provided for across the Borough.</i>  <i>This will be in conjunction with analyses of the composition of the existing housing stock, household projections and local housing assessments, all of which will be regularly reviewed and updated. These will inform consideration of the mix of dwelling size, type, tenure and affordability to be sought in both new development and change-of-use/conversion of existing buildings in different parts of the Borough.</i></p> <p><b>Preferred Option CP3.3 Making Most of the Existing Housing Stock (extract)</b>  <i>This policy will promote improvement of the existing stock of housing to better meet the needs and aspirations of existing and new residents by:</i></p> <p>b) <i>Encouraging the extension, subdivision, amalgamation, disabled adaptation or other alteration of existing residential accommodation (including for example specialist communal accommodation, accommodation for <b>Gypsies and Travellers</b>) to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <i>meet changing and differing household characteristics, needs and aspirations . . .</i></li> <li>2) <i>rehabilitating obsolete housing stock or otherwise providing decent living conditions</i></li> </ol>
<b>Hartlepool – Comment from the Local Authority</b>	
	<p>Hartlepool's Core Strategy is currently at the Issues and Options stage with consultation around the Preferred Options programmed to take place in Spring 2009. This Needs Assessment will form part of the evidence base which will be used to formulate specific planning policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers. In the meantime Policy Hsg14 of the Hartlepool Local Plan which was adopted in 2006 will provide the basis for assessing proposals relating to Gypsy and Traveller sites. The policy criteria are set out on page 131 of this report.</p>

**Middlesbrough Core Strategy Submission Draft, May 2007**

**Policy CS12 Gypsy and Travelling Show People Sites**  
*When considering proposals for Gypsy and travelling show people sites regard will be had to an up to date assessment of need and the level of existing provision. Where a demonstrable need cannot be met by existing provision sites will be identified, provided that they:*

- a) *are not beyond the limit to development or within a green wedge or in an area identified as protected open space;*
- b) *are conveniently located for access to schools, shops and other local facilities;*
- c) *have no significant detrimental impact upon residential amenity;*
- d) *are landscaped and screened to provide privacy and maintain visual amenity;*
- e) *have suitable highway access; and,*
- f) *have parking provided in accordance with adopted standards.*

**Redcar & Cleveland Local Development Framework: Core Strategy DPD Adoption, July 2007 and Communities DPD – Emerging Options, October 2007**

**Core Strategy DPD**  
**Paragraph 5.11**  
*It is important for the LDF to provide homes to meet the aspirations of local people and to attract new people to live in the Borough to support our economic objectives. . . Detailed policies on specific housing needs will be brought forward in the Communities DPD, including a criteria based policy for the location of gypsy and traveller sites.*

**Communities DPD**  
**Paragraph 2.8.1**  
*The LDF needs to ensure that adequate provision is made to meet the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople who wish to reside in the borough, whether on private or publicly owned sites. The adopted Local Plan policy (H15) sets out the criteria against which applications for gypsy caravan sites would be considered. Since then, there has been a change to the national planning policy context that links the requirement to identify sites directly to the findings of local accommodation needs assessments.*

**The DPD outlines two options**

**Option 1:** *A policy safeguarding the existing site called 'The Haven' at King George Terrace, South Bank, together with criteria against which planning applications for new sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people will be considered.*

**Option 2:** *Allocate and protect from other development a suitable site (or sites) for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people.*

**Paragraph 2.8.8**  
*Option 1 would provide a transparent framework for considering all planning applications for sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people, whereas Option 2 would indicate the only locations for such purposes.*

**Stockton-on-Tees: Core Strategy Policy 9 (CS9): Provision For Gypsies And Travellers And Travelling Showpeople**

1. Joint working with the Tees Valley Local Authorities will identify need for gypsy and traveller accommodation. In deciding where to provide for gypsy and traveller sites, locations in or adjacent to existing settlements will be considered in the first instance.
2. Proposals for any new sites will be permitted where the proposed development:
  - i) is accessible to schools, shops, health care and other local facilities;
  - ii) is large enough to provide for adequate on site facilities for parking, storage, and residential amenity;
  - iii) reflects the scale of and does not dominate the nearest settled community;
  - iv) would not be detrimental to the amenities of adjacent occupiers.
3. The Council will safeguard the existing site for gypsies and travellers at Bowesfield Lane unless the Council is satisfied that there is no longer a need for the provision

### Appendix 3: Summary of Planning Applications and Outcomes Since 2001

Year	Address	Pitches/caravans	Outcome
<b>Darlington</b>			
2001	Hurworth Moor	4 caravans	Granted on appeal
2001	Blackwell Moor*	6 caravans	Refused
2002	Blackwell Moor*	6 caravans	Refused
2002	Honeypot Lane <sup>#</sup>	Cert. of lawful use	Granted
2003	Honeypot Lane <sup>#</sup>	Amenity block	Granted
2003	Blackwell Moor*	5 caravans	Refused
2003	Sadberge <sup>!</sup>	1 caravan	Refused, appeal dismissed
2005	Honeypot Lane <sup>#</sup>	Amenity block	Granted
2006	Sadberge <sup>!</sup>	1 caravan	Pending decision
<b>Hartlepool</b>			
	None		
<b>Middlesbrough</b>			
	None		
<b>Redcar &amp; Cleveland</b>			
	None		
<b>Stockton-on-Tees</b>			
2002	Thorpe Leazes*	Chalet and change of use (retrospective)	Approved (apparently temporary permission)
2003	Elton	2 caravans (retrospective)	Refused
2003	Eaglescliffe	Change of use to Gypsy site (retrospective)	Approved
2004	Yarm (High Leven/Maltby)	Change of use, 1 caravan (retrospective)	Refused but partially allowed on appeal
2005	Thorpe Leazes*	Chalet and change of use (retrospective)	Approved (apparently temporary permission)
2005	Durham Road, Stockton <sup>#</sup>	Change of use, 1 caravan (retrospective)	Approved, however applicant has appealed some of the conditions (awaiting outcome)
2005	Haverton Hill	Cert. of lawful use	Approved
2005	Durham Road, Stockton <sup>#</sup>	Change of use, 1 caravan (retrospective)	Appeal
2007	Thorpe Leazes*	Continuing use as chalet and Gypsy site	Pending consideration
2007	Thorpe Leazes*	Additional caravan (retrospective)	Pending consideration
2007	Haverton Hill	Transit site	Withdrawn (Council application)
2007	Urley Nook Road, Eaglescliffe	Creation of hard-standing area and temporary permission for parking of 2 no. travelling caravans	Pending consideration

Note: \* or <sup>#</sup> or <sup>!</sup> signify applications referring to the same land