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CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND SHOWPERSON ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT UPDATE



February 2013



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1. Introduction

The Survey

- 1.1 Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned by Central Bedfordshire Council to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment.
- 1.2 The study seeks to provide an evidence base to enable the authority to comply with their requirements towards Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople under the Housing Act 2004, the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012. The main objective of this study is to provide the Council with robust, defensible and up-to-date evidence about the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Central Bedfordshire in the 19 years period until 2031 in sections covering 2013-2018, 2019-2023 and 2024-2028 and 2029-2031. The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan is due to commence in 2014 and hence the first period of 2013-2018 is for six years which covers both the pre-plan year of 2013 and first five years of the plan. Any pitches delivered in 2013 can be considered to count towards those required over the plan period.
- 1.3 We would note at the outset that the study covers the needs of Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, but for ease of reference we have referred to the study as a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment.

Definitions

- 1.4 For the purposes of the planning system, Gypsies and Travellers means:

"Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependents' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of Travelling Showpeople or circus people travelling together as such." (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, CLG, March 2012)

- 1.5 Within the main definition of Gypsies and Travellers, there are a number of main cultural groups which include:

- » Romany Gypsies;
- » Irish Travellers; and
- » New Travellers.

- 1.6 Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised in law as distinct ethnic groups and are legally protected from discrimination under the Equalities Act 2010.

- 1.7 Alongside Gypsies and Travellers, a further group to be considered are Travelling Showpeople. They are defined as:

“Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their family’s or dependent’s more localized pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.” (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, CLG, March 2012).

Legislation and Guidance for Gypsies and Travellers

- 1.8 Decision-making for policy concerning Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sits within a complex legislative and national policy framework and this study must be viewed in the context of this legislation and guidance. For example, the following pieces of legislation and guidance are relevant when constructing policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople:
- » Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012;
 - » National Planning Policy Framework 2012;
 - » Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments Guidance October 2007
 - » Environmental Protection Act 1990 for statutory nuisance provisions;
 - » The Human Rights Act 1998, when making decisions and welfare assessments;
 - » The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as subsequently amended);
 - » Homelessness Legislation and Allocation Policies;
 - » Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (sections 61, 62);
 - » Anti-social behaviour Act 2003 (both as victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour);
 - » Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
 - » Housing Act 2004 which requires local housing authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies & Travellers and Showpeople as part of their housing needs assessments. This study complies with the this element of government guidance ;
 - » Housing Act 1996 in respect of homelessness.
- 1.9 To focus on Gypsies and Travellers, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (Sections 77, 78) is particularly important with regard to the issue of planning for Gypsy and Traveller site provision. This repealed the duty of local authorities to provide appropriate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. However, Circular 1/94 did support maintaining existing sites and stated that appropriate future site provision should be considered.
- 1.10 For site provision, the previous Labour Government guidance focused on increasing site provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and encouraging local authorities to have a more inclusive approach to Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople within their Housing Needs Assessment. The Housing Act 2004 required local authorities to identify the need for Gypsy and Traveller sites, alongside the need for other types of housing, when conducting Housing Needs Surveys. Therefore, all local authorities were required to undertake accommodation assessments for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople either as a separate study such as this one, or as part of their main Housing Needs Assessment.

- 1.11 Local authorities were encouraged rather than compelled to provide new Gypsy and Traveller sites by central government. Circular 1/06 ‘Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites’, released by the CLG in January 2006, replaced Circular 1/94 and suggested that the provision of authorised sites should be encouraged so that the number of unauthorised sites would be reduced.
- 1.12 The Coalition Government announced that the previous government’s thinking contained in Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites (Circular 01/06) was to be repealed, along with the Regional Spatial Strategies which were used to allocate pitch provision to local authorities. The CLG published ‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites’ in March 2012 which set out the Government’s planning policy for traveller sites. It should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

- 1.13 The document ‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites’ sets out the direction of government policy. Among other objectives the new policies aims in respect of Traveller sites are (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites Page 1-2) :

- » that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning;
- » to ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites;
- » to encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale;
- » that plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development;
- » to promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those travellers who cannot provide their own sites;
- » that plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective;
- » for local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies;
- » to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under-provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply;
- » to reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions;
- » to enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure;
- » for local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.

- 1.14 In practice the document states that (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites Page 3):

'Local planning authorities should set pitch targets for Gypsies and Travellers and plot targets for travelling Showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities'.

1.15 Local planning authorities should, in producing their Local Plan:

- » identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
- » identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15;
- » consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has special or strict planning constraints across its area (local planning authorities have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries);
- » relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density;
- » protect local amenity and environment.

1.16 A key element to the new policies is a continuation of previous government policies. This is, while local authorities now have a duty to ensure a 5 year land supply to meet the identified needs for Traveller sites, if no need is identified they should set criteria based policies to assess potential sites which may arise in the future. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites notes on Page 3-4 that:

1.17 'Criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community'.

1.18 Therefore, criteria based planning policies sit at the heart of the new guidance, irrespective of whether need is identified or not.

Tackling Inequalities for Gypsy and Traveller Communities

1.19 In April 2012 the government issued a further document relating to Gypsies and Travellers in the form of 'Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers (CLG April 2012)'.

1.20 This report contains 28 commitments to help improve the circumstances and outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers across a range of areas including:

- » Identifying ways of raising educational aspirations and attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children;
- » Identifying ways to improve health outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers within the proposed new structures of the NHS;
- » Encouraging appropriate site provision; building on £60m Traveller Pitch Funding and New Homes Bonus incentives;

- » Tackling hate crime against Gypsies and Travellers and improving their interaction with the criminal justice system;
- » Improving knowledge of how Gypsies and Travellers engage with services that provide a gateway to work opportunities and working with the financial services industry to improve access to financial products and services;
- » Sharing good practice in engagement between Gypsies and Travellers and public service providers.

Funding for New Sites

- 1.1 The new Coalition Government policies also involve financial incentives for new pitch provision in the form of the New Homes Bonus. Gypsy & Traveller and Showpeople sites receive a New Homes Bonus of 6 times the Council Tax plus £1,800 per pitch provided. This is the equivalent of around £10,000-£15,000 per pitch.
- 1.2 Direct grant funding is also available for Gypsy and Traveller sites. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) took over delivery of the Gypsy and Traveller Sites grant programme from CLG in April 2009. Since then they have invested £16.3m in 26 schemes across the country providing 88 new or additional pitches and 179 improved pitches.
- 1.3 HCA have now confirmed allocations for £47m of future funding which will support 71 projects around the country, for the provision of new Gypsy and Traveller sites and new pitches on existing sites, as well as the improvement of existing pitches. As of January 2012 a further £12.1m of funding was available for scheme outside of London and bidding will remain open until all the money is allocated.

Research Methodology

- 1.21 This section sets out the methodology we have followed to deliver the outputs for this study. Over the past 10 years ORS have developed a methodology which provides the required outputs from a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment and this has been updated in light of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.
- 1.22 We would note that prior to the involvement of ORS in this process Central Bedfordshire Council had undertaken a significant amount of work to consult on the issues affecting Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in preparation for their Local Plan.
- 1.23 The stages below provide a summary of the process undertaken by ORS, with more information on each stage provided in the appropriate section of the report.

Stage 1: Background

- 1.24 At the outset of the project we sought to understand the background to Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in Central Bedfordshire. The study sought to identify the location of all known sites in the study area and the number of pitches or plots on each one. The study also gathered information from recent caravan counts in each local authority and also waiting lists for public sites.

Stage 2: Future Pitch and Plot Requirements

- ^{1.25} The methodology used by ORS to calculate future pitch and plot requirements has been developed over the past 10 years and has drawn on lessons from both traditional housing needs assessments and also best and worst practice for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment conducted across the country.
- ^{1.26} The overall principles behind assessing future needs are relatively simple. The residential pitch requirements for Gypsies and Travellers are identified separately from those for Travelling Showpeople and for each group the requirements are identified in 5 year periods to 2031 in line with the requirements of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

Stage 3: Conclusions

- ^{1.27} This stage draws together the evidence from Stages 1 and 2 to provide an overall summary of the requirements for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Central Bedfordshire.

2. Gypsy and Traveller Sites and Population

Background

- 2.1 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment focuses upon the number of dwellings required in an area, and how many of these should each be provided by the public and private sector. The central aim of this study was to follow a similar format for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation requirements.
- 2.2 One of the main considerations of this study is the provision of pitches and sites for Gypsies and Travellers. A pitch is an area which is large enough for one household to occupy and typically contains enough space for one or two caravans, but can vary in size. A site is a collection of pitches which form a development exclusively for Gypsies and Travellers. For Travelling Showpeople the most common descriptions used are a plot for the space occupied by one household and a yard or collection of plots which are typically exclusively occupied by Travelling Showpeople. Throughout this study the main focus is upon how many extra pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and plots for Travelling Showpeople are required in Central Bedfordshire.
- 2.3 The public and private provision of mainstream housing is also largely mirrored when considering Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. One common form of Gypsy and Traveller sites is the publicly-provided residential site, which is provided by the local authority, or by a registered provider (usually a housing association). Places on public sites can be obtained through a waiting list, and the costs of running the sites are met from the rent paid by the licensees (similar to social housing). There are currently three public sites in the study area.
- 2.4 The alternative to public residential sites is private residential sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. These result from individuals or families buying areas of land and then obtaining planning permission to live on them. Households can also rent pitches on existing private sites. Therefore, these two forms of accommodation are the equivalent to private ownership and renting for those who live in bricks and mortar housing.
- 2.5 The Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population also has other forms of sites due to its mobile nature. Transit sites tend to contain many of the same facilities as a residential site, except that there is a maximum period of residence which can vary from a few weeks to a period of months. An alternative is an emergency stopping place. This type of site also has restrictions on the length of time for which someone can stay on it, but has much more limited facilities. Both of these two types of site are designed to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers whilst they travel.
- 2.6 Further considerations in the Gypsy and Traveller population are unauthorised developments and encampments. Unauthorised developments occur on land which is owned by the Gypsies and Travellers, but for which they do not have planning permission to use for residential purposes. Unauthorised encampments occur on land which is not owned by the Gypsies and Travellers.

Caravan Count

- 2.7 The best quantitative information available on the Gypsy and Traveller communities derives from a bi-annual survey of Gypsy and Traveller caravans which is conducted by each local authority in England on a specific date in January and July of each year. This count is of caravans and not households which makes it more difficult to interpret for a study such as this. It must also be remembered that the count is conducted by the local authority on a specific day and that any unauthorised encampments which occur on other dates will not be recorded. The count also only features those caravans the local authority is aware of. Therefore, it may not reflect all of the Gypsy and Traveller caravans in the authority.
- 2.8 The charts below show the number of caravans on public, private and unauthorised sites since 2007. The recent fall in the number of caravans on public sites is principally due to a refurbishment of one site.

Figure 1
Gypsy Caravan Count for Public Sites in Central Bedfordshire: Jan 2007 – July 2012 (Source: CLG Bi-annual Local Authority Caravan Count)

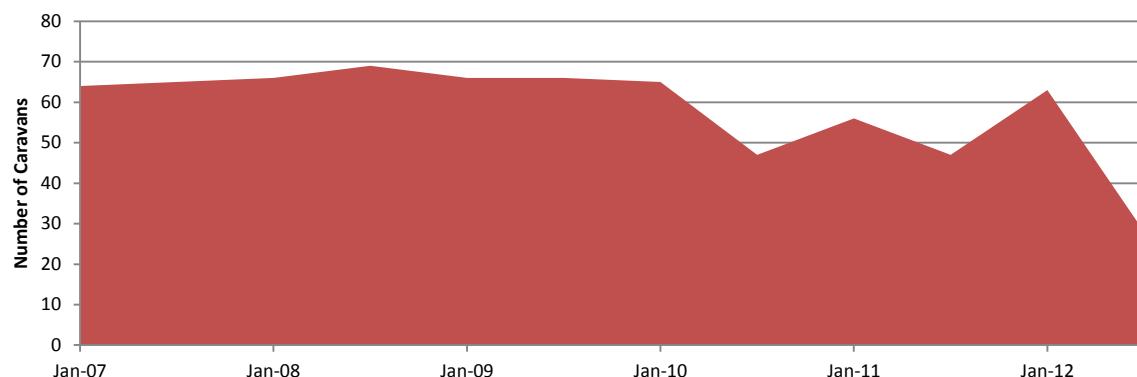


Figure 2
Gypsy Caravan Count for Private Sites in Central Bedfordshire: Jan 2007 – July 2012 (Source: CLG Bi-annual Local Authority Caravan Count)

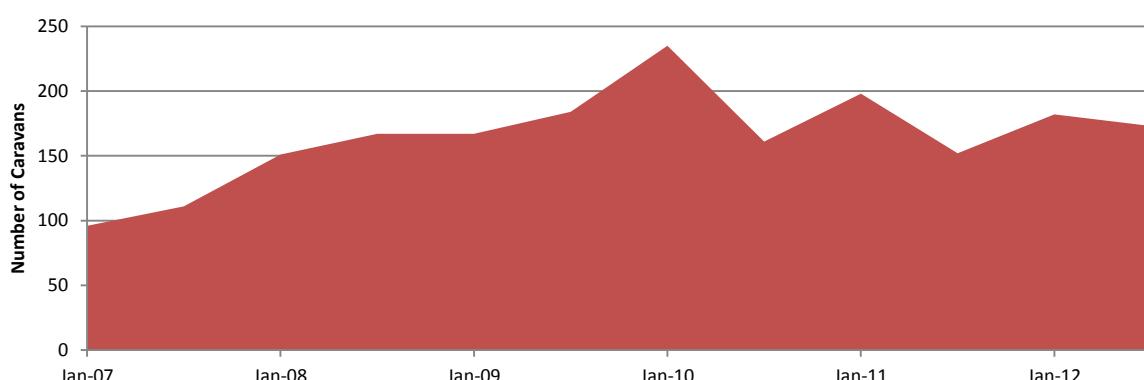
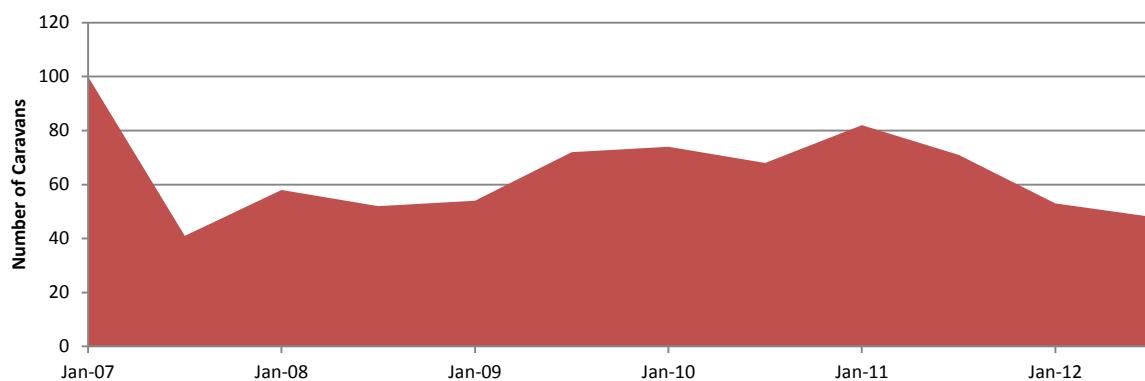


Figure 3

Gypsy Caravan Count for Unauthorised Sites in Central Bedfordshire: Jan 2007 – July 2012 (Source: CLG Bi-annual Local Authority Caravan Count)



Sites in Central Bedfordshire

- 2.9 The charts overleaf document all sites and pitches known to exist in Central Bedfordshire. At the time of writing, there are 182 pitches on Gypsy and Traveller with permanent permission, 15 pitches with temporary planning permission, 2 pitches on a very long-term site with no planning permission and 9 pitches on unauthorised site.
- 2.10 The Travelling Showperson population is much smaller with only 3 known authorised yards containing 10 caravans, three long-term yards without planning permission with 25 caravans and one unauthorised one containing 10 caravans. We would note that typically Showperson yards contain an identified number of plots, but for most yards in Central Bedfordshire planning records do not specify the number of plots. For the three sites with an identified number of plots one has two plots and three caravans, a second has three plots and three caravans, and the third has three plots and four caravans. Therefore, the number of caravans is close to the number of plots and we have undertaken the calculations in this report on the basis that there are 35 occupied plots in Central Bedfordshire.

Figure 4
Current Gypsy and Traveller Sites and Pitches in Central Bedfordshire

Site	Number of Pitches
Local Authority Sites	
Potton Gypsy Site, Common Road, Potton	14
Chiltern View, Northall Road, Eaton Bray	27
Timberlands, Half Moon Lane, Pepperstock, Slip End	(Under refurbishment)
TOTAL PITCHES ON LOCAL AUTHORITY SITES	41
Private Sites with Permanent Permission	
Old Cartwheel Nurseries, A1 Sandy, Great North Road, Sandy	15
Talamanca Gypsy Site, 63 Great North Road, Sandy	15
Little Acre, Langford Road, Biggleswade	3
Magpie Farm, Hill Lane, Upper Caldecote	6
145 Chapel End Road, Houghton Conquest	2
Twin Acres, Hitchin Road, Arlesey	4
Woodside Caravan Park, Thorncote Road, Hatch, Sandy	3
Land at 197 Hitchin Road, Arlesey	10
North Star Cottage, Watling Street, Hockliffe	1
Evergreens, Dunstable Road, Tilsworth	4
Jockey Farm, Watling Street, Caddington	11
28 & 30 Stanbridge Road, Billington	7
Toddbury Farm, Gypsy Lane, Little Billington	16
The Stables Gypsy Lane, Little Billington	10
Greenacres, Gypsy Lane, Little Billington	14
The Stables Site A, Stanbridge Road, Billington	7
Little Acre, Half Moon Lane, Pepperstock, Slip End	2
Greenvale, Watling Street, Caddington	6
Eversholt Beeches, Watling Street, Caddington	5
TOTAL PITCHES ON PRIVATE SITES WITH PERMANENT PERMISSION	141
Private Sites with Temporary Permission	
Old Acres, Old Acre Paddock, Barton Road, Pulloxhill	8
Chestnut Caravan Park, Steppingley Road, Tingrith	4
Ash Tree Paddock, Stanbridge Road, Billington	3
TOTAL PITCHES ON PRIVATE SITES WITH TEMPORARY PERMISSION	15
Tolerated Sites – Long-term without planning permission	
Hermitage Lane, Off Westoning Road, Greenfield	2
TOTAL PITCHES ON LONG-TERM TOLERATED PRIVATE SITES	2
Unauthorised Developments	
Land Adjacent to 17 The Causeway, Clophill	1
The Stables Site C, Stanbridge Road, Great Billington	4
Valley View, Hemel Hempstead Road, Dagnall	2
Evergreens, Dunstable Road, Tilsworth	1
Home Farm, Dunstable Road, Tilsworth	1
TOTAL PITCHES ON UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS	9
TOTAL PITCHES	208

Figure 5
Current Travelling Showpeople Yards and Caravans in Central Bedfordshire

Site	Number of Caravans
Showpeople Yards with Permanent Permission	
Gogs Farm, Old Linslade Road, Linslade	4
Greenacre Farm, Billington Road, Stanbridge	3
Land at junction of Bridleway and Luton Road, Fancott	3
TOTAL CARAVANS ON SITES WITH PERMANENT PERMISSION	10
Tolerated Sites – Long-term without planning permission	
Land off Mill Lane, Biggleswade	16
21 Sun Street, Biggleswade	3
Bridge Meadow, Leighton Buzzard	7
TOTAL CARAVANS ON LONG-TERM TOLERATED SITES	26
Unauthorised Developments	
Hawthorne	10
TOTAL CARAVANS ON UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS	10
TOTAL CARAVANS	46

3. Future Site Provision

Pitch Provision

- 3.1 This section focuses on the extra site provision which is required in Central Bedfordshire currently and over the next 19 years by 5 year segments.
- 3.2 The March 2012, the CLG document ‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites’, requires an assessment for future pitch requirements, but does not provide a suggested methodology for undertaking this calculation. However, as with any housing assessment, the underlying calculation can be broken down into a relatively small number of factors. In this case, the key issue for residential pitches is to compare the supply of pitches available for occupation with the current and future needs of the households. The key factors in each of these elements are set out below:

Supply of pitches

- 3.3 Pitches which are available for use can come from a variety of sources. These include
- » Currently vacant pitches;
 - » Any pitches currently programmed to be developed within the study period;
 - » Pitches vacated by people moving to housing;
 - » Pitches vacated by people moving out of the study area
 - » Pitches vacated due to the dissolution of households (normally through the death of a single person household).

Current Need

- 3.4 There are four key components of current need. Total current need (which is not necessarily need for additional pitches) is simply:
- » Households on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected;
 - » Overcrowded households;
 - » Households in brick and mortar wishing to move to sites; and
 - » Households on waiting lists for public sites.

Future Need

- 3.5 There are three key components of future need. Total future need is simply the sum of the following:
- » Households living on sites with temporary planning permissions;
 - » New household formation expected during the study period; and
 - » Migration to sites from outside the study area.

- 3.6 We will firstly provide the model as set out above for Gypsies and Travellers before repeating the calculation for Travelling Showpeople.

Current Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision

3.7 There are currently 41 pitches on public sites and 156 on private sites in Central Bedfordshire on private sites including those with temporary permission.

3.8 The next stage of the process is to assess how much space is, or will become available on existing sites. The main ways of finding this is through:

- » Current empty pitches;
- » New sites or site extensions which are likely to gain planning permission;
- » Migration away from the area;
- » Movement to bricks and mortar;
- » Dissolution of households.

3.9 Currently, all authorised public site pitches are occupied, so there is no available space. There is no evidence of significant unoccupied private sites and the continued development of unauthorised sites indicates that households feel that there is no space available for their use. However the Timberland Timberlands site at Slip End is due to re-open follow refurbishment and will add 6 more pitches to the supply in Central Bedfordshire.

3.10 For out-migration to other areas or movements to bricks and mortar household will also wish to move in the opposite direction. Therefore, we have treated these as being part of the current and future need sections of the calculation.

3.11 The dissolution of a household occurs when all the members leave the household. Common ways for a household to dissolve are for a person living on their own to die, or to move to an existing household. Given that households will also form in the future we have treated the net growth in household numbers as being part of the future need.

Additional Site Provision: Current Need

3.12 The next stage of the process is to assess how many households are currently seeking pitches in the area. Groups of people who are likely to be seeking pitches will include those:

- » Households on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected;
- » Overcrowded households;
- » Households in brick and mortar wishing to move to sites; and
- » Households on waiting lists for public sites.

Current Unauthorised Developments

- 3.13 There are currently 9 households on unauthorised developments in Central Bedfordshire so we have allowed for 9 pitches to accommodate these households. This figure excludes any long-term unauthorised developments which are likely to gain certificates of lawful occupation if they were to be sought.

Overcrowded Households

- 3.14 For a household that is overcrowded there are two possibilities. Either extra caravans or trailers could be accommodated on the existing pitch, or if this is not possible, a new larger pitch is required. If the caravans can be accommodated at the existing pitch no additional pitch is required. If the household requires moving to a larger pitch they will also vacate a pitch. Therefore they will not add to the total number of pitches required. Therefore, there is no need to allow for additional pitch provision to accommodate overcrowded households. We would also note that current concealed households on public sites have been included within the waiting list information.

Bricks and Mortar

- 3.15 Identify households in bricks and mortar has been frequently highlighted as an issue with Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments. A recent report in Central Bedfordshire by the Ormiston Children and Families Trust entitled the ‘The support needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Central Bedfordshire (October 2012) spoke to 12 households living in bricks and mortar in Central Bedfordshire. This size of this sample is typically for face to face studies undertaken by ORS.
- 3.16 Meanwhile, the 2011 UK Census of Population identified a population of 478 Gypsy and Traveller persons in Central Bedfordshire. Given that there are over 200 pitches on site in the area, the vast majority of the population are likely to be living on sites. The figure of 478 persons is likely to be an under-estimate of the total population due to some Gypsies and Travellers not declaring their ethnic status or completing the Census at all, but it does still indicate a relatively low population in bricks and mortar.
- 3.17 We would note that households who are seeking to move from housing to public sites can express a desire to do so through registering on the waiting list for public and therefore will have been counted elsewhere in this calculation. Meanwhile those seeking to live on a private sites could seek to do so on their own or pursue a privately rented pitch on an existing private site.
- 3.18 We would also note that for a number of recent studies undertaken by ORS we have worked with national Gypsy and Traveller representatives to identify households in brick and mortar. For a number of recent studies the representatives reported over 100 known households in housing and they encouraged them to come forward to take part in the survey. The actual number who eventually took part in the surveys ranged from zero to six household per area, and not all wished to move back to sites. Therefore, while there is anecdotal evidence of many Gypsies and Travellers in housing most appear to be content to remain there and when provided with the opportunity by national representatives to register an interest in returning to sites few choose to do so.
- 3.19 It is also the case that within most face to face survey undertaken on-site by ORS a small number of households are seeking to move to bricks and mortar. Therefore, it should be remembered that movement between housing and sites runs in both directions and typically comes extremely close to balancing out to zero. On this basis we have modelled the future pitch requirement on the basis that as many households

will want to move from sites to housing as will want to move from housing to sites and therefore the new requirement is zero.

Waiting Lists for Public Sites

- 3.20 The method of registering a desire to obtain a pitch on a public site is through placing your name on the waiting list held by Central Bedfordshire Council. Currently there are 29 households on the waiting list for a site in Central Bedfordshire.
- 3.21 When undertaking assessment such as this it is accepted that it is not necessary to count all 29 households as need. 10 of the households are on private pitches. If they were to move to a public site they would free a pitch on a private site and hence would not add to the net requirement. Similarly, there are three households on unauthorised sites who have been counted elsewhere in this model and one seeking to transfer between sites in Central Bedfordshire. However, there are ten households in bricks and mortar and four who are sharing a pitch on a public site in Central Bedfordshire on the waiting list. These households have not been counted elsewhere in the model and therefore have been included here. This would give a figure of 14 households who require a public site in Central Bedfordshire and it is this figure which has been included within this study.

Additional Site Provision: Future Need

- 3.22 The next stage of the process is to assess how many households are likely to be seeking pitches in the area in the future. Groups of people who are likely to be seeking pitches will include those:
- » Households living on sites with temporary planning permissions;
 - » New household formation expected during the study period; and
 - » Migration to sites from outside the study area.

Temporary Planning Permissions

- 3.23 Central Bedfordshire currently has three sites with temporary planning permissions with a total of 15 pitches. In all cases the permissions will expire within the next 5 years, they have therefore been counted as need within this assessment, but not as supply of pitches.

New Household Formation

- 3.24 It is recognised that an important group for future pitch provision will be older children who form their own households. Many studies of Gypsy and Traveller populations assume a net growth in the population of around 3% per annum, and this figure was used in the East of England Regional plan. Long-term trends indicate that the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans on site has grown by 134% nationally in the past 34 years, which equates to a net growth of around 2.5% per annum and it is this figure we have used in this study. When including the impact of compound growth, a 2.5% growth per annum provides for 16% growth over 6 years, 31% growth over 11 years, 48% growth over 16 years and 60% over 19 years.
- 3.25 On the basis that there are approximately 208 households on site, a growth rate of 60% would see an additional 125 households in the area by 2031.

In-migration from Other Sources

- 3.26 The most complicated area for a survey such as this is to estimate how many households will require accommodation from outside the area. Potentially Gypsies and Travellers could move to the Central Bedfordshire from anywhere in the country. The number of household seeking to move to Central Bedfordshire is likely to be heavily dependent upon pitch provision elsewhere. It has been noted that a weakness of many Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments conducted across the country has been that they either allowed for out-migration without in-migration which led to under-counting of need, or they over-counted need by assuming every household visiting the area required a pitch.
- 3.27 Overall the level of in-migration to the Central Bedfordshire is a very difficult issue to predict. Movement to the public sites is covered by the waiting list and therefore does not need to be included within the model again. We have allowed for a balanced level of migration on to existing private sites. The advantage of allowing for net migration to sum to zero is that it avoids the problems seen with other Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments where the modelling of migration clearly identified too low or high a level of total pitch provision. An assumption of net nil migration implies that the net pitch requirement is driven by locally identifiable need.
- 3.28 Beyond this number, rather than assess in-migrant households seeking to develop new sites in the area, we would propose that each case is assessed as a desire to live in the area and that site criteria rules are followed for each new site. It is important for the authorities to have clear criteria based planning policies in place for any new potential sites which do arise.

Overall Needs for Central Bedfordshire

- 3.29 The estimated extra site provision that is required until 2031 is 157 pitches. This includes the existing households on unauthorised sites, those on the waiting list for a public site, those with temporary planning permissions and the growth in household numbers due to household formation.

Figure 6

Extra Pitches which are Required in Central Bedfordshire from 2013-2031

Reason for Requirement/Vacancy	Gross Requirement	Supply	Net Requirement
Supply of Pitches			
Additional supply from empty pitches	-	0	
Additional supply new sites	-	6	
Total Supply			6
Current Need			
Current unauthorised developments or encampments and seeking to stay in the area	9	-	
Currently overcrowded and require to move	0	-	
Net Movement from bricks and mortar	0	-	
Waiting list for public sites	14	-	
Total Current Need			23
Future Needs			
Currently on sites with temporary planning permission	15	-	
Net migration to the area	0	--	
Net New household formation	125	-	
Total Future Needs			140
Total	163	6	157

Requirement by Time Periods

- 3.30 The evidence contained in this survey is that there is a requirement in the next 6 years for a total of 38 pitches to address the backlog of need for households on unauthorised sites and the waiting list for public sites plus those households who will see their temporary planning permissions expire within this time period. Household growth is then projected to be a total of 16% over the next 6 years, giving a further 33 households. However, 6 pitches will come back into use on a public site. Therefore the identified requirement in the period 2013-2018 is 65 pitches.
- 3.31 From 2019 onwards all future project growth is for household formations. In the period 2019-2023 this is projected to be 31 pitches, for 2024-2028 this is projected to be 36 pitches and for 2029-2031 it will be 25 pitches.

Travelling Showpersons

- 3.32 The estimated need for plots for Travelling Showpeople in Central Bedfordshire is much simpler to model than for Gypsies and Travellers. There are 10 plots on an unauthorised site, while there are no plots expected to be freed due to any reason and there is no waiting list for sites. Therefore, the needs are driven by household growth.

- 3.33 For household growth, the typical growth rate for the Travelling Showpeople population is typically lower than for Gypsies and Travellers with estimates normally being from 1%-1.5% and we have used the higher of these figures to allow for future household growth. A growth rate of 1.5% provides for total net growth of 33% over 19 years. Given the current 35 occupied plots in Central Bedfordshire this will equate to 12 additional plots over the next 19 years.
- 3.34 Therefore, over the next 19 years, the total requirement for Travelling Showpeople is 22 plots. Of these the identified requirement in the period 2013-2018 is 13 plots. From 2019 onwards all future project growth is for household formations. In the period 2019-2023 this is projected to be 3 plots, for 2024-2028 this is projected to be 4 plots and for 2029-2031 it will be 2 plots.
- 3.35 Again, it is still important for the authorities to have criteria based planning policies in place in the event of someone seeking to develop a new Showpeople's yard or expand an existing one in the area.

4. Conclusions

Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter brings together the evidence presented earlier in the report to provide some key policy conclusions for Central Bedfordshire. It focuses upon the key issues of future site provision for Gypsies and Travellers and also Travelling Showpersons.

Gypsy and Traveller Future Pitch Provision

- 4.2 Based upon the evidence presented in Chapter 3, the estimated extra pitch provision that is required for Gypsies and Travellers in the next 19 years in Central Bedfordshire is 157 pitches. This is 65 pitches in the period 2013-2018, 31 pitches from 2019-2023, 36 pitches from 2024-2028 and 25 pitches from 2029-2031.
- 4.3 An option which the authorities may wish to consider is, rather than seek to develop new public sites and pitches, to develop a larger private rented sector for Gypsies and Travellers in the area. This could potentially allow the need for public site pitches to be met on private sites, with the help of housing benefit if necessary. This mirrors the current mechanism of meeting housing needs through supporting households in the private rented sector with housing benefit within the settled community.

Travelling Showperson Requirements

- 4.4 There are only two sources of requirements for the Travelling Showperson population in Central Bedfordshire, namely a 10 plots unauthorised site and the growth in the population over time. Central Bedfordshire has a requirement for 22 extra plots for Travelling Showpeople to 2031 (If any existing plots are lost through conversion to alternative uses then these plots will also need to be replaced through alternative provision).

Development of New Sites

- 4.5 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites contains clear advice on the location for new sites, such as that they typically should not be in the Green Belt or remote rural locations where access to services is limited. However, an issue of debate across the country is how to successfully develop new sites and pitches which integrate with the surrounding area. It is common for existing communities to object to new sites being located near to them because of concerns about the impact the site will have on them.
- 4.6 A number of authorities across the country such as those in Worcestershire are considering incorporating sites into new housing developments and urban extensions. The aim of this is to ensure the site fully integrates with the local community from the outset and does not run into conflict with the existing population before it is developed. Meanwhile, many other authorities are investigating the possibility of expanding the capacity of suitable existing sites where there is already an integration of the Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showperson populations with the wider community. These two strategies typically represent practical and effective means of delivering sustainable new Gypsy and Traveller sites and pitches.