



# **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND SHOWPERSON ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT**



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Opinion Research Services The Strand, Swansea SA1 1AF  
Nigel Moore, Claire Thomas, Imogen Statham and Alys Thomas  
enquiries: 01792 535300 · [info@ors.org.uk](mailto:info@ors.org.uk) · [www.ors.org.uk](http://www.ors.org.uk)

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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 18 year period until 2031 in sections covering 2014-2019, 2020-2024 and 2025-2029 and 2030-2031. The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan is due to commence in 2015 and hence the first period of 2014-2019 is for 6 years which covers both the remainder of the pre-plan year of 2014 and first five years of the plan. Any pitches delivered in the remainder of 2014 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;
  - » 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 localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above. (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, CLG, March 2012).*

## Legislation and Guidance for Gypsies and Travellers

<sup>1.8</sup> 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, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople:

- » Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012;
- » National Planning Policy Framework 2012;
- » Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments Guidance October 2007;
- » 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, 77 and 78);
- » 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 and Travellers and Showpeople and meet any identified unmet need
- » Housing Act 1996 in respect of homelessness.

## Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

<sup>1.9</sup> The document 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' which came into force in March 2012 sets out the direction of government policy. Among other objectives, the new policy's aims in respect of Traveller sites are (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites Page 1-2):

- » 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.

<sup>1.10</sup> 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.*

<sup>1.11</sup> 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.

## Tackling Inequalities for Gypsy and Traveller Communities

<sup>1.12</sup> 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).

<sup>1.13</sup> The aforementioned 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.

## Methodology

<sup>1.14</sup> 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, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment and this has been updated in light of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.

<sup>1.15</sup> 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

<sup>1.16</sup> At the outset of the project we sought to understand the background to the Gypsy, 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 and information held on unauthorised encampments in each area and also those who have expressed an interest in public pitches.

### Stage 2: Household Survey

<sup>1.17</sup> The research methodology for identifying the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople adopted in this report was largely based upon face to face interviews with Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across Central Bedfordshire. We sought to undertake a census of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households in November 2013. Interviews were sought with every known Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople household present during this time. Though only one member of each household was interviewed, the survey questions cover other members of the same household. We would note that a single Traveller household may occupy several caravans.

### Stage 3: Stakeholder Engagement

<sup>1.18</sup> This study includes extensive stakeholder engagement with council officers and elected members from Central Bedfordshire, and neighbouring Local Authorities and other stakeholders. The aim of this



engagement was to help understand the current situation in the study area, particularly in relation households not on known existing sites, and also to discuss Duty to Cooperate issues with neighbouring Local Authorities, and any issues regarding education, health and community cohesion.

#### **Stage 4: Future Pitch and Plot Requirements**

- <sup>1.19</sup> 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 from Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessments conducted across the country.
- <sup>1.20</sup> The overall principles behind assessing future needs are relatively simple. The model assesses the current backlog of need for pitches based upon unauthorised sites, concealed households, and the net movement of households from bricks and mortar. It then adds in future arising need in the form of newly forming households, households on sites with temporary planning permissions and net migration to the area. From this figure any empty or undeveloped pitches with planning permission are then subtracted to provide for a final net pitch requirement. The residential and transit 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.

#### **Stage 5: Conclusions**

- <sup>1.21</sup> This stage draws together the evidence from Stages 1 to 4 to provide an overall summary of the requirements for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Central Bedfordshire.



## 2. Gypsy and Traveller Sites and Population

### Background

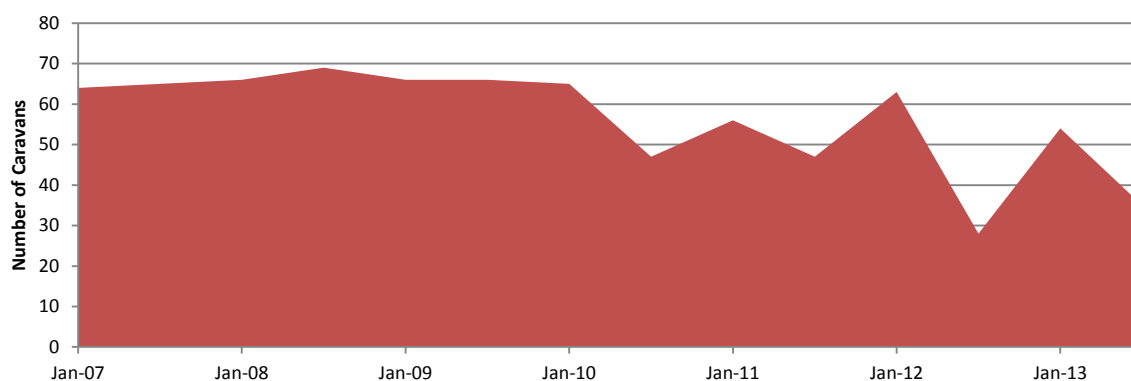
- 2.1 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment focuses upon the number of dwellings required in an area, and how many of these should each be provided by the public and private sector. The central aim of this study was to follow a similar format for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation 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 A source of information available on the Gypsy and Traveller population derives from a bi-annual survey of Gypsy and Traveller caravans, required by government, conducted by each Local Authority in England on a specific date in January and July of each year, and reported to CLG. This count is of caravans and not households, which makes it more difficult to interpret for a study such as this because it does not count pitches or resident households. It must also be remembered that the count is merely a 'snapshot in time' conducted by the Local Authority on a specific day and that any unauthorised encampments which occur on other dates will not be recorded. Likewise any caravans that are away from authorised sites on the day of the count will not be included.
- 2.8 The charts below show the cumulative number of unauthorised and authorised caravans in each Local Authority area at the time of the counts. Please note that the scale on each chart varies and that the charts are to be read cumulatively to give the total caravan count. The data reported does not include any Showpeople caravans in the area. We would also note the figures are provided for illustrative purposes to demonstrate the relative size of the populations and are not used in any modelling of future pitch requirements.

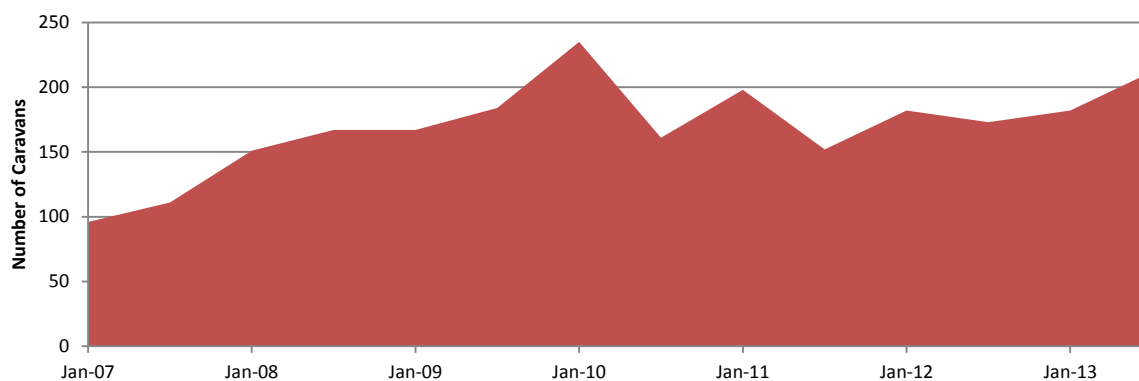
**Figure 1**

**Gypsy Caravan Count for Public Sites in Central Bedfordshire: Jan 2007 – July 2013 (Source: CLG Bi-annual Local Authority Caravan Count)**

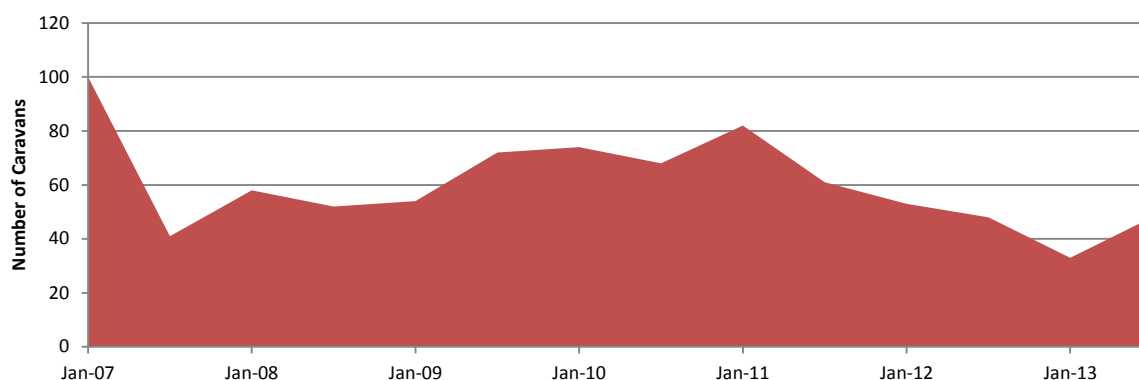


**Figure 2**

**Gypsy Caravan Count for Private Sites in Central Bedfordshire: Jan 2007 – July 2013 (Source: CLG Bi-annual Local Authority Caravan Count)**

**Figure 3**

**Gypsy Caravan Count for Unauthorised Sites in Central Bedfordshire: Jan 2007 – July 2013 (Source: CLG Bi-annual Local Authority Caravan Count)**



## 3. Stakeholder Consultation

### Introduction

- <sup>3.01</sup> In order to set the context of the research and ensure the study is based on a sound understanding of the relevant issues, a list of 68 contacts was provided to ORS by the Council with the aim of carrying out telephone interviews.
- <sup>3.02</sup> 33 individual interviews were undertaken and the following is a breakdown of each consultation group:
- » 8 Members;
  - » 9 Officers;
  - » 10 Officers from surrounding areas;
  - » 6 Stakeholders.
- <sup>3.03</sup> ORS conducted 33, semi-structured and in-depth telephone interviews during November and December 2013 = 49% response<sup>1</sup>. The interviews typically lasted between 30- 40 minutes.
- <sup>3.04</sup> Reasons for not being able to conduct interviews were:
- » Those requested by e-mail to provide telephone contact details did not do so;
  - » Colleagues within the same organisation had already been interviewed and nothing further could be added;
  - » The person contacted felt they did not have any information that would be of help to the study;
  - » The person contacted had existing commitments and could not complete an interview within the timescale;
  - » Those contacted did not respond.
- <sup>3.05</sup> The following neighbouring authorities chose to take part in the GTAA. Interviews were conducted with officers from: Dacorum Borough Council, Milton Keynes Council, St Albans District Council, North Hertfordshire District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Bedford Borough Council, Stevenage Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council.
- <sup>3.06</sup> The aim of interviewing nearby authorities is to identify any migration between districts, what routes may be travelled, background information on the framework within which the authorities operate and any perceptions they may have regarding Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities within their operational areas.
- <sup>3.07</sup> The officers interviewed work in the following departments: Strategic Planning and Housing, Spatial Planning and Design, Planning and Housing, Planning with Development/Policy/ Projects/Enforcement/

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<sup>1</sup> This response rate is based on the list of 68 names included on the Council's contact list.

Transport, Gypsy and Traveller Service, Children's Services, Development Management, Housing/Housing Strategy/Housing Management/Private Sector Housing.

- 3.08 ORS also interviewed wider Stakeholders and these included interviews undertaken with individuals who had knowledge and experience of working with Gypsies and/or Travellers. These interviews included Bedfordshire Police, Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service, Bedfordshire Gypsy & Traveller Services and Registered Providers (RPs).
- 3.09 With the aim of obtaining bricks and mortar contacts ORS interviewed representatives from the following RPs:
- » Aldwyck Housing Association;
  - » Guinness Partnership Housing Association;
  - » Hightown Praetorian & Churches Association.
- 3.10 Central Bedfordshire Council operates a sub regional choice based lettings scheme and its partners are Aragon Housing Association, BPHA and Luton Borough Council.
- 3.11 All of those interviewed, including Members, were asked whether they could identify or knew any Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople living in bricks and mortar accommodation and if so, could they give a letter from ORS to them. The letter from ORS asks whether they would like to be involved in the Accommodation Needs Assessment consultation;
- 3.12 RPs were also asked how well they are able to identify these households within their current monitoring mechanisms and whether there are specific issues in relation to housing people from the Gypsy, Traveller or Showpeople communities.
- 3.13 RPs, together with other organisations found they were able to provide very little data through their monitoring systems. The majority of Officers confirmed they knew of people from the Gypsy, Traveller or Showpeople communities living in their areas or in their properties because of Officer experience/knowledge, but not because of the analysis of statistical data.
- 3.14 The reasons given for not being able to accurately provide information was due to people not self-declaring their ethnicity during the housing application process or it was not possible to extrapolate this information from data sets/computer systems and/or tended generally not to be included in monitoring.
- 3.15 The Consultation section has been split into two distinct sections:
- » Officers and Members of Central Bedfordshire Council and Officers representing neighbouring authority areas;
  - » Wider Stakeholders – including Registered Providers.
- 3.16 Due to issues around data protection and in order to protect the confidentiality of those who took part, this section does not include verbatim comments and it aims to represent a summary of the views and responses expressed by Officers, Members and Stakeholders during the consultation interview process.
- 3.17 The Consultation Section may, in some places, be representative of personal views and opinions and not necessarily the views of the organisation the interviewee works for.

- <sup>3.18</sup> The Consultation Section is based on information provided during the interview process and may not have a direct correlation to the factual information given to ORS from the local authority for example number and names of sites.

## Central Bedfordshire Officers and Members and Officers employed in neighbouring areas

### Background

- <sup>3.19</sup> Officers for Central Bedfordshire Council were able to provide background information to the history and current status of the Council's GTAA. The Council is currently developing a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan and the current draft identifies 66 pitches. In addition to this since January 2013 planning permission has been granted for a further 45 pitches across Central Bedfordshire.
- <sup>3.20</sup> Members responding from Central Bedfordshire Council highlighted their involvement in the consultation for new sites as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) process and how, at times it was a difficult balance in representing the views of the settled community with the need to provide new sites, especially when there are long waiting lists for housing for local residents in their wards.
- <sup>3.21</sup> Some Members believe there is a genuine need to meet any identified need for Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople and there appeared to be a positive view in relation to the way forward and the allocation of windfall sites.
- <sup>3.22</sup> Officers from neighbouring areas confirmed the following:
- » Dacorum BC – recent GTAA undertaken which has identified additional need which the council is seeking to provide;
  - » Milton Keynes Council – Sub-regional GTAA undertaken and sites have been identified in the Milton Keynes Local Plan;
  - » St Albans District Council – an updated GTAA has been commissioned to inform the Strategic Local Plan;
  - » North Hertfordshire District Council – A GTAA has been undertaken Countywide and a recent GTAA has been completed specific to the Council – low levels of need have been identified in their area;
  - » Buckinghamshire County Council – a joint GTAA has been undertaken with all local authority districts and this is currently in draft;
  - » Bedford Borough Council – A GTAA was undertaken in 2012 that identified need for additional pitches to the end of the plan period (2021). The need was assessed and it found that the current provision is now meeting that need and there is no plan to provide more sites;
  - » Stevenage Borough Council – a GTAA was undertaken in 2006 and resulted in an extension of an existing public site by 3 pitches. A new GTAA has recently been undertaken and is currently in draft and is yet to be published
  - » Huntingdonshire District Council - A review of the 2006 Gypsy and Traveller Sites Assessment (GTAA) has been carried out by Cambridgeshire County Council Research



Group on behalf of the nine authorities involved in the original study. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) was completed in October 2011. The target is 2.5 pitches per year to 2036 which will meet the target set in the GTANA of 64.

### **Accommodation Provision: Authorised Sites, Unauthorised Developments/Temporary Permission and Bricks and Mortar**

- 3.23 Officers from Central Bedfordshire Council identified three authorised public sites, one of which is currently under refurbishment and will be reopened in 2014 exclusively for the use of Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople over 50 years of age.
- 3.24 The majority of Officers highlighted that private sites were designed and built by the residents of the sites and therefore they invested in their sites to meet their needs. The majority of Officers acknowledged that owners of private sites are more likely to apply for permission to increase the occupancy or increase the area of the site due to family growth and sometimes will do so without first seeking planning permission.
- 3.25 It was generally agreed by Officers from Central Bedfordshire that the authorised sites, whether private or public, are in good condition, residents are able to access services such as health and education and there are no particular issues in relation to community cohesion as far as is known.
- 3.26 Some Members stated there have been issues on the public sites regarding community cohesion, but over recent years relations between residents of the sites and the settled community have improved.
- 3.27 Members generally agreed that facilities and the condition on the public sites are good and residents are able to access services such as doctors' surgeries and schools.
- 3.28 The majority of Members believe that the privately run sites are well managed, but should not be extended. One Member mentioned a Showpeople site, which although not overcrowded in terms of the number of people living on the site, may need to expand because of the amount and type of equipment associated with travelling fairs.
- 3.29 Officers responding from neighbouring authorities highlighted the following authorised sites in their areas:
- » Bottoms Walton, Burnham, Buckinghamshire (public site) - 10 pitches;
  - » Green Park, Amersham, Buckinghamshire (public site) - 8 pitches;
  - » Mansion Lane, Iver, Buckinghamshire (public site) - 32 pitches;
  - » The Orchards, Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire (public site) - 5 pitches;
  - » Wapseys Wood, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire (public site) - 17 pitches;
  - » There are a large number of small privately owned sites in the Buckinghamshire area;
  - » Long Marston, Hertfordshire Dacorum District Council (public, County managed) – 6 pitches;
  - » Three Cherry Trees Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire Dacorum District Council (public, County managed) 30 pitches;
  - » Two privately owned Showpeople site in the Dacorum District Council area – (11 plots);

- » Hertfordshire County Council Gypsy and Traveller Service manage 10 public sites including the two in the Dacorum District Council area – (approximately 200 pitches in total);
- » Two public sites in the Milton Keynes District Council area and a further site is being proposed that may or may not be publicly owned/managed;
- » Approximately two private sites in the Milton Keynes District Council area;
- » Three public sites in the St Albans District Council area – (40 pitches in total);
- » Six private sites in the St Albans District Council area – (25 pitches);
- » One private site in North Hertfordshire District Council – (12 pitches);
- » One public site at Kempston Hardwick Bedford Borough Council – (22 pitches);
- » One public authorised site Stevenage Borough Council – (3 pitches);
- » One site owned by Huntingdonshire County Council and managed by Luminus – (20 pitches);
- » Five sites privately owned in Huntingdonshire District Council area (in addition to this there are 2 sites with personal permissions and 3 sites with certificates for existing use).

- 3.30 Officers in neighbouring areas reported that they had some public sites which are overcrowded and/or waiting lists are full. There are also some public sites that are currently being refurbished or there are plans to refurbish them in the near future; although accessing grant funding for refurbishments in the current climate is proving challenging for some local authority areas.
- 3.31 The general consensus of Officers responding from neighbouring authorities is that the public and private sites are in the majority of cases meeting the needs of residents and there are no current issues in relation to anti social behaviour or community cohesion..
- 3.32 Officers responding from Central Bedfordshire gave a few examples of unauthorised developments or sites with temporary permission in the area. Where unauthorised development does occur it is usually due to the expansion of existing authorised private sites.
- 3.33 Unauthorised sites and those with temporary planning permission in the Central Bedfordshire area are acknowledged by Officers as being, in some cases, in poor condition when compared to authorised sites. Issues such as inadequate drainage, water pressure/water supply and unsafe electric supplies are concerning to Officers. It is believed by the majority of Officers that this is because owners/residents do not wish to invest in a site until planning permission had been secured.
- 3.34 Some Officers believe that granting planning permission on sites with temporary planning permission may encourage owners to invest in the sites which will improve the living conditions for residents.
- 3.35 Some Members understand there to be few unauthorised developments in Central Bedfordshire and that when they do occur it is when a site with temporary planning permission lapses or when a private site is expanded without planning permission. It was acknowledged that this sometimes results in tension with the settled community as the residents of these sites appear to be flouting planning law.
- 3.36 Officers responding from neighbouring authority areas had few examples of unauthorised developments and/or sites there are tolerated in their areas.

- 3.37 A minority of Officers from neighbouring authority areas believe that unauthorised developments or sites with temporary planning consent are more likely to be in poor condition and in addition to this Officers understood there to be greater management issues; the majority of Officers however felt unable to comment as these types of sites do not occur in their areas.
- 3.38 Some Officers responding from Central Bedfordshire Council believe there may be some Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople living in bricks and mortar accommodation. However, they are unable to identify specific households and do not know them personally.
- 3.39 A minority of Officers responding from Central Bedfordshire Council believed there may be a psychological aversion or a cultural preference not to live in bricks and mortar accommodation. In addition to this some Officers believe that the preference may be for static caravans together with a touring caravan when perhaps given the choice between a site and bricks and mortar accommodation.
- 3.40 Some Officers appreciated or empathises that some Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople may find living in bricks and mortar accommodation detrimental to health and potentially could lead to illnesses such as depression.
- 3.41 Members are aware that in some of their wards there are Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople living in bricks and mortar accommodation but they do not know them personally. Members generally believe that these Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople appear to have integrated into the community and there is only the odd family that may cause tensions.
- 3.42 Both Officers and Members believe that the housing that may be provided to Gypsies and Travellers in Central Bedfordshire is in good condition and is accessible to amenities.
- 3.43 Officers responding from neighbouring authorities were unable to provide information regarding Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople who may be living in bricks and mortar accommodation in their areas.
- 3.44 Where Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANAs) have been undertaken in nearby local authority areas very little information about their needs have been identified and Officers reported it was challenging to identify any such households to assist in their GTAA consultation/research.
- 3.45 Where a County Council manages sites and where waiting lists are held it appears that this is helpful in identifying what accommodation need there may be. This is because some Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople living in bricks and mortar accommodation may wish to move back onto a site and applied to go on a specific site waiting list.

### **Accommodation and Management: Roadside Encampments/Transit**

- 3.46 Members and Officers responding from Central Bedfordshire Council confirmed they are unaware of any short-term unauthorised roadside encampments in their area currently. However, they acknowledged there have been a few instances of roadside encampments and when they do occur it is usually for short periods of time and during spring and summer. Officers believe there has been a decrease in the number of unauthorised encampments over recent years, although no reasons or statistics were provided to evidence this.
- 3.47 Officers responding from nearby local authority areas confirmed they had few instances of unauthorised encampments and the level had decreased over recent years. When encampments occur the occupants

tend to stay in the area for a few days and then move though to other areas; it was not know where these Travellers move to. Officers generally agree that those who set up encampments in their areas are doing to in order to visit relatives or are attending a specific occasion such as a wedding or they are just travelling through.

3.48 Only one nearby local authority reported they had an encampment at the time of the interview.

3.49 Hertfordshire County Council manage a transit site and Bedford Borough Council also have transit provision.

### **Gypsies and Travellers - Trends, Favoured Locations and Stopping Points**

3.50 When asked to consider trends in relation to these communities Officers from Central Bedfordshire Council believe there have been no significant trends, although some Officers think there has been an increase of planning permissions being granted in relation to private sites.

3.51 Some Officers believe that although the number of encampments has reduced over recent years, the actual numbers of Gypsies and Travellers has increased. It was put forward that this is because more Gypsies and Travellers are living permanently in the area on their own sites lawfully and this has encouraged others to seek the same.

3.52 Officers from neighbouring areas also report they had seen a decrease in the number of unauthorised encampments over recent years; one Officer suggested that in their area it is because favoured places traditionally used by Gypsies and Travellers have been earth bunded so they can no longer access these areas.

3.53 The majority of Officers responding from neighbouring authorities believe they have seen an increase in sites gaining permanent and temporary planning permission, often retrospectively.

3.54 Officers from Central Bedfordshire in the main do not believe there are favoured areas or stopping points in the district although some Officers did suggest Arlesey, Dunstable, Leighton Buzzard, Pottton and Biggleswade; Biggleswade was also mentioned specifically in relation to Showpeople. Although no specific reasons were put forward as to why these areas are considered as being favoured places, some Officers suggest it is because there are a number of privately owned sites in those areas and relatives come to visit.

3.55 Mention was made by Members that roadside encampments occasionally occur on an industrial park on the north side of Biggleswade and there has been an encampment on a recreation ground in Pottton. It is generally agreed by Members that the few encampments that occur in the area are ad-hoc and tend to be on the main road networks through the area and therefore there are no specific locations or favoured areas as far as Members are aware.

3.56 Officers responding from neighbouring local authority areas believe that Hertfordshire, generally, is a favoured location due the motorway networks through the area and the only other favoured areas are usually within the proximity of existing sites.

### **Future Accommodation Needs**

3.57 A few Officers stated that some of the authorised sites will need to be expanded or new sites provided (either private or public) to meet natural family growth and newly forming households.

- <sup>3.58</sup> A minority of Officers working for Central Bedfordshire Council believe that transit sites should not be provided as they are understood to be hard to manage, whilst a small number of Officers believe that a small transit site should be provided.
- <sup>3.59</sup> The majority of Officers responding from nearby authority areas confirmed they are meeting the need for sites as identified in their GTAAs. A minority of Officers confirmed there is a small amount of unmet need and this possibly is for public provision as opposed to private sites.
- <sup>3.60</sup> In terms of the criteria to be considered when determining where a site should be, Officers and Members from Central Bedfordshire Council either referred to the emerging policy GT5 and/or stated the following views:
- » Sites should be near local services and facilities such as shops, GPs and schools (especially lower and middle schools and there should be a choice of schools) and therefore in sustainable locations;
  - » Sites should be near existing sites, but should not dominate the settled community;
  - » Accessible to local road networks and public transport;
  - » Access to services/facilities on site such as water, sanitation, rubbish collection and electricity;
  - » An impact assessment should be undertaken in relation to the local environment.
- <sup>3.61</sup> Officers from Central Bedfordshire Council were in the main unable to suggest a suitable location for a site other than those mentioned in the Local Plan; only two locations were suggested: Dunton Lane (2 sites identified) and Pulloxhill. Some Officers suggested that no sites should be granted permission in the green belt or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) such as the Chilterns.
- <sup>3.62</sup> Officers from Central Bedfordshire Council generally agree that smaller sites, privately owned for the use of an individual or specific family are preferable to large sites. However, there is an acknowledgement by some Officers that not all Gypsies or Travellers can afford to buy their own site and therefore there is a need for public owned site provision in order to ensure a mix of affordable accommodation and choice for these communities in the same way as the settled community.
- <sup>3.63</sup> In terms of the management of sites respondents from Central Bedfordshire Council generally agree that small private sites are, in their experience or belief, better managed, although no issues were identified with regard to the management of the public sites in the District. Some Officers believe that public sites are difficult to manage because there is a mix of Gypsies and Travellers and the different communities do not always live harmoniously together.
- <sup>3.64</sup> One Officer suggested that public sites can meet identified need quicker as they tended to be larger than privately owned sites.
- <sup>3.65</sup> Members generally agreed that smaller private sites owned and managed by Gypsies or Travellers are preferable to large publicly owned/managed sites.

### **Community Cohesion, Employment, Health and Education Issues**

- <sup>3.66</sup> Officers did not mention any specific issues in relation to Showpeople when speaking about community cohesion.

- <sup>3.67</sup> Some Officers from Central Bedfordshire Council also highlighted that there are sometimes internal family feuds and also specific groups of Gypsies and Travellers such as Irish Travellers and English Gypsies, and thus they are unlikely to live on the same site. This leads to sites becoming specific to either one or the other; mixed groups of Gypsies or Travellers are less likely.
- <sup>3.68</sup> Members stated that community cohesion usually deteriorates when consultation arose on the proposal of new sites by the Council or when applications for the expansion of an existing site or a new privately owned site are open to consultation with the local settled community. This had led to some action groups being set up in protest to new identified sites and what was considered over zealous reports in the press.
- <sup>3.69</sup> It was mentioned that a public site at Kempston Hardwick located in the Bedford Borough Council area and borders Central Bedfordshire, sometimes causes concern in relation to fly tipping and loose/abandoned horses for local residents.
- <sup>3.70</sup> Some Members believe that not enough is being done in the area to improve community cohesion and more could be done at a local level.
- <sup>3.71</sup> Officers responding from Central Bedfordshire Council generally agreed that residents living on authorised sites are able to access health and education services. One Officer highlighted that improvements to adult education for those living on sites should be seen as a priority, alongside the need to support children in regular school attendance.
- <sup>3.72</sup> With regard to employment issues Officers generally believe that Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople are more likely to be self-employed and therefore will not necessarily want or need to access employment related services.
- <sup>3.73</sup> The majority of Members do not have a view with regard to Education, Health or Employment in relation to the Gypsy, Traveller or Showpeople communities; one Member mentioned that sometimes planning permission is granted because of the applicant's need to attend a local hospital due to poor health.

### **Cross Boundary and Consultation Activities**

- <sup>3.74</sup> Officers from Central Bedfordshire Council believe that the main travelling routes for Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople are the A5, M1 corridor and possibly the M25 although outside of the District. It is thought that some of these road networks may be used because they are main routes to Ireland and back.
- <sup>3.75</sup> Members highlighted the road from Dunton Lane out of Biggleswade, the road network from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, A507, A1 and M1.
- <sup>3.76</sup> Officers responding from nearby local authority areas believe the following roads are used by Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople: M1, M25, A1M, M40, A34 and A505
- <sup>3.77</sup> Officers from the Council generally agree that when encampments occur it is due to long distance Gypsies or Travellers (and possibly Showpeople) passing through the area and those who live on the sites and are based permanently are local to Central Bedfordshire. These Gypsies and Travellers tend to be static, but perhaps are transient during the summer holidays.
- <sup>3.78</sup> Some Members believe that in Central Bedfordshire the Gypsies and Travellers living in the area do not travel in a transient way and if they do, it will be during the summer holidays.

- 3.79 Council Officers or Members gave no indication that Gypsies or Travellers are moving out of the area, although a minority of Officers believe that more are coming to the area because of the increase in planning permissions being granted for private sites.
- 3.80 The majority of Officers responding from neighbouring areas do not believe that Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople are moving out of their area to neighbouring districts. Only two Officers reported that a small number may be moving to nearby areas because those local authority areas had more sites than they have.
- 3.81 Council Officers and Members and Officers responding from neighbouring areas have no knowledge that Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople are being shifted back and forth between local authority areas, although one Officer mentioned some Travelling Showpeople from Leighton Buzzard who moved to Aylesbury but have since returned.
- 3.82 Officers and Members highlighted few examples of cross-border working other than between education services and enforcement officers; there have been some meetings between nearby local authorities with regard to planning. However, the consensus is that cross-border working needed to be improved.
- 3.83 Officers responding from neighbouring local authority areas gave some examples of cross-border working such as undertaking GTAA's on a sub-regional or countrywide basis. However, further work in terms of updates is proving challenging because of the different stages Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are at with their Local Plans.
- 3.84 The majority of Officers believe that the Council is meeting the duty to co-operate although there is a recognition that this is a two way process and sometimes there are delays in gaining response from neighbouring authorities and therefore communication could be improved.
- 3.85 Officers responding from nearby local authority areas believe they are complying with the Duty to Cooperate and believe Central Bedfordshire Council is too and the process has now been assisted because of clear Government guidance. Some Officers also highlighted the need for sustained liaison and communication at Officer Level in order to ensure continuous improvement; one Officer suggested that at some point future cooperation will be required at a political level between local authority areas with regard to Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople.
- 3.86 Officers responding from neighbouring local authority areas generally agree that consultation could be considered regular on the public run sites; this is sometimes specific if related to site refurbishment and the gaining of grant funding or in relation to GTAA's for example.
- 3.87 Officers responding from neighbouring local authority areas confirmed they visit sites to undertake consultation as written formats are less likely to be effective, sometimes due to low levels of literacy.

### **Future Priorities and Any Additional Issues**

- 3.88 It was generally agreed by all those interviewed that massive change is unlikely in relation to the numbers of Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople living or travelling through the Central Bedfordshire area.
- 3.89 Some Officers responding from Central Bedfordshire Council believe that significant in-roads have been made in the provision of sites in the District. However, concerns were raised because there is a small existing identified unmet need and should any additional need be identified it will be down to political will as to whether any future sites will be developed; especially in relation to the provision of public sites.



- <sup>3.90</sup> Some Officers believe that amenities on existing sites and the granting of permanent planning permission on sites with temporary permission should be seen as a priority for Central Bedfordshire Council.
- <sup>3.91</sup> Little mention was made to Showpeople in the interviews with Officers from Central Bedfordshire, although one Officer mentioned that a group of Showpeople had recently arrived in the area and more needed to be understood as to what their needs may be.
- <sup>3.92</sup> Some Officers responding from Central Bedfordshire believe that more support and advice should be provided to Gypsies and Travellers but this may mean that more resources such as staff will be needed. Examples of the type of advice that would be needed included planning advice for those who wish to own their own sites especially in relation to suitable/appropriate locations and also assistance in relation to accessing education for both adults and children.
- <sup>3.93</sup> Some Officers from Central Bedfordshire Council believe that further work with both the settled community and Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople could help in relation to community cohesion.
- <sup>3.94</sup> Members generally agree that the priority for the Council is to identify accurately any need there may be for more sites in Central Bedfordshire based on local need only, and any new sites should be located with sensitivity to local residents.
- <sup>3.95</sup> Some Members hoped that sites with temporary planning permission can be made permanent where these sites are felt appropriate. It was put forward that any new housing development, dependent on size and location, should have a small site proposed in any design. Members appreciated that the identification of need and location of any sites is always going to be a contentious issue.
- <sup>3.96</sup> Some Members believe that more work needs to be carried out in terms of dispelling myths and stereotyping of Gypsies and Travellers and such communities should not be confused with Showpeople. However, some Members also believe that Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople need to do more themselves to become members of the wider community in Central Bedfordshire.
- <sup>3.97</sup> Officers responding from neighbouring areas generally wanted to ensure that their councils are meeting any identified need and sites are identified in suitable location, and that all local authorities should be looking to do the same in their own area.
- <sup>3.98</sup> Some Officers from nearby local authority areas are looking to expand/upgrade their existing sites as a priority where need has been identified.
- <sup>3.99</sup> Some Officers from nearby local authority areas will not know what their priorities are until their GTAAs have been published or updated.
- <sup>3.100</sup> Some Officers from nearby local authority areas are looking to work with others on updated GTAAs, but a minority of Officers are concerned that yet another GTAA will be undertaken which may identify need, but no sites are provided due to the lack of political will.
- <sup>3.101</sup> One Officer from a nearby local authority area wanted to see more resources/investment for those roadside to ensure improved support and access to services such as health and education.



## Wider Stakeholders

### 3.102 Background

- 3.103 The majority of Stakeholders interviewed are not local authorities and therefore do not undertake their own GTAA's and therefore are unaware as to the status of these documents in their area.
- 3.104 Organisations that were asked do not have any policies specific to Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople but used overarching policies and constitutional documents; examples were given as Equality and Diversity, lettings and allocations especially in relation to Choice Based Lettings. Although not specifically used in relation to Gypsies and Travellers there was usually an equality and diversity statement included in any policy documentation.
- 3.105 The majority of respondents have not undertaken any specific training in relation to Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople.

### Accommodation Provision: Current Site Provision and Bricks and Mortar

- 3.106 No issues were raised about difficulties for residents accessing services such as education or health and no issues regarding anti social behaviour or community cohesion have been highlighted.
- 3.107 Stakeholders are unable to identify or comment on private sites.
- 3.108 Stakeholders are unable to identify any unauthorised developments or sites with temporary planning permission so are unable to comment as to whether or not the sites meet needs of residents.
- 3.109 A minority of respondents stated they are aware of some Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople living in bricks and mortar accommodation. A letter from ORS was made available for Stakeholders to pass to anyone they could identify. However, no specific households in bricks and mortar were identified by Stakeholders.
- 3.110 RPs confirmed they do monitor ethnicity and have the ability to extrapolate statistical data in relation to Gypsies and Irish Travellers where this has been declared by an applicant. One RP confirmed that of the properties 833 they have in Central Bedfordshire, only one had declared themselves as a Gypsy or Irish Traveller; but this household is no longer a tenant.
- 3.111 RPs did not provide any meaningful information as to where any Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople they house moved from, such as their previous location, tenure or reason for needing to be housed.
- 3.112 Where RPs monitor this information it is reliant on whether or not those completing the necessary application form or who are asked to update their profiles declare this information.
- 3.113 It was generally agreed that Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople living in bricks and mortar housing may be reluctant or unwilling to be interviewed as part of the consultation because, it is believed, they are suspicious of those in authority and also as to what the information will be used for.
- 3.114 Some Stakeholders believe that bricks and mortar accommodation does not meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople because it is against their culture.
- 3.115 Some Stakeholders suggested that more information should be provided by the local housing authority in relation to whether a prospective tenant is a Gypsy, Traveller or Showperson. It is believed that this would

help with the allocation of suitable properties and their cultural needs can be considered. It would also ensure that support can be put in place from the start of the tenancy should it be required; thus assisting in a sustained tenancy.

- <sup>3.116</sup> RPs did not raise any specific issues in relation to housing management of accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople.

### **Accommodation and Management: Roadside Encampments/Transit**

- <sup>3.117</sup> Some Respondents believe that encampments occur in the area are because of specific events such as a wedding or funeral, because they are moved from other local authority areas or because a new site has been developed with the hope they will get a pitch.

### **Gypsies and Travellers - Trends, Favoured Locations and Stopping Points**

- <sup>3.118</sup> Respondents did not report any significant trends at the present time.
- <sup>3.119</sup> Respondents did not believe there were any particular locations or stopping points that are favoured by Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople in Central Bedfordshire. One respondent mentioned that a location in Hatch had been occupied a few years ago, but no locations in Central Bedfordshire were highlighted as being used by Travellers. Goldington Green were suggested, but this is not in Central Bedfordshire.

### **Future Accommodation Needs: Permanent and Transit provision**

- <sup>3.120</sup> Stakeholders had mixed views as to whether there is sufficient site provision in the Central Bedfordshire area. The majority believed, however, that additional sites should be provided, but whether private or public sites were preferred was not clear.
- <sup>3.121</sup> One respondent suggested that as there is no current transit provision in Central Bedfordshire such provision is needed to ensure that an alternative can be offered to those on unauthorised encampments.
- <sup>3.122</sup> Respondents stated the following as important criteria to consider with regard to site location and design:
- » Access to amenities and facilities such as GPs, schools, shops, public transport etc.;
  - » Access to facilities on site such as water, electric, drainage and rubbish disposal;
  - » Sufficient access and space for emergency vehicles;
  - » In close proximity to other residential areas and not located in rural areas where residents could be isolated.

- <sup>3.123</sup> The majority of Stakeholders were unable to suggest locations for new sites.

- <sup>3.124</sup> There was no indication by Stakeholders to suggest that pressure would be placed on bricks and mortar accommodation by Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople.

### **Community Cohesion, Employment, Health and Education Issues**

- <sup>3.125</sup> Stakeholders in general agreed there are issues around community cohesion and in particular the concern by the settled community when sites are proposed in their area because they believe their houses will be devalued because of the proximity of a Traveller site.

- <sup>3.126</sup> Some specific examples were given with regard to community cohesion such as the behaviour of some residents of the Tilsworth and Billington sites by local residents.
- <sup>3.127</sup> Stakeholders mentioned that initiatives to improve relationships were in place and in particular the work being undertaken with young people on Traveller sites have been successful in breaking down the barriers that can sometimes exist between Travellers and the settled community.
- <sup>3.128</sup> RPs did not highlight any specific issues in relation to the housing of Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople in bricks and mortar accommodation in relation to anti social behaviour or their integration into the settled community.
- <sup>3.129</sup> When issues do arise in relation to community tensions between the settled community and those living on sites or when unauthorised encampments occur, some Stakeholders reported they are dealt with fairly and appropriately by the necessary authorities and this had improved relationships.
- <sup>3.130</sup> It was stated by the majority of Stakeholders that they believe Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople living on authorised sites and in bricks and mortar accommodation are able to access services relating to employment, health and education.
- <sup>3.131</sup> Stakeholders believe that positive steps have been taken to assist Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople in relation to employment such as changing a postal address so that it does not specifically use the word “site”. It is the belief of some Stakeholders that when a prospective employer knows that an applicant is from a Traveller site that person will be less likely to be asked to interview.

### **Cross Boundary and Consultation Activities**

- <sup>3.132</sup> Stakeholders recorded that the following routes may be used by Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople: A1, A6, M1, A421, M4 and A414.
- <sup>3.133</sup> The majority of Stakeholders did not believe that Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople were moving from Central Bedfordshire to other areas or vice versa, nor are they being forced to move between local authority areas because of eviction.
- <sup>3.134</sup> Stakeholders generally believe that Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople are either based in Central Bedfordshire or are long distance Travellers passing through.
- <sup>3.135</sup> Stakeholders generally believe that cross boundary working could be improved but examples of cross boundary working were suggested such as between countywide police groups.
- <sup>3.136</sup> The majority of Stakeholders are not aware of any consultation with Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople on a regular basis. There is some consultation undertaken when the bi-annual caravan count is undertaken and on an ad-hoc basis.
- <sup>3.137</sup> The majority of Stakeholders wish to see consultation with Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople improved and a suggested partnership approach was put forward.

### Future Priorities and Any Additional Issues

- 3.138 The majority of Stakeholders believe that further site provision should be provided as a priority, particularly a transit site. Where new sites are provided these should not impact on the existing, local settled community.
- 3.139 Some concern was highlighted over the low levels of literacy within the Gypsy and Traveller community in particular. With the emphasis on information/digital technology it may be that members from these communities may find it even hard to access services from councils and RPs for example.
- 3.140 The majority of Stakeholders are not aware of any consultation with Gypsies, Travellers or Showpeople on a regular basis. There is some consultation undertaken when the bi-annual caravan count is undertaken and on an ad-hoc basis.
- 3.141 It is believed that communication networks need to be improved with members of the Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople communities in order to ensure that improvements can be made to sites such as safe access for emergency services.

## 4. Gypsy and Traveller Population

### Survey of the Gypsy and Traveller Population

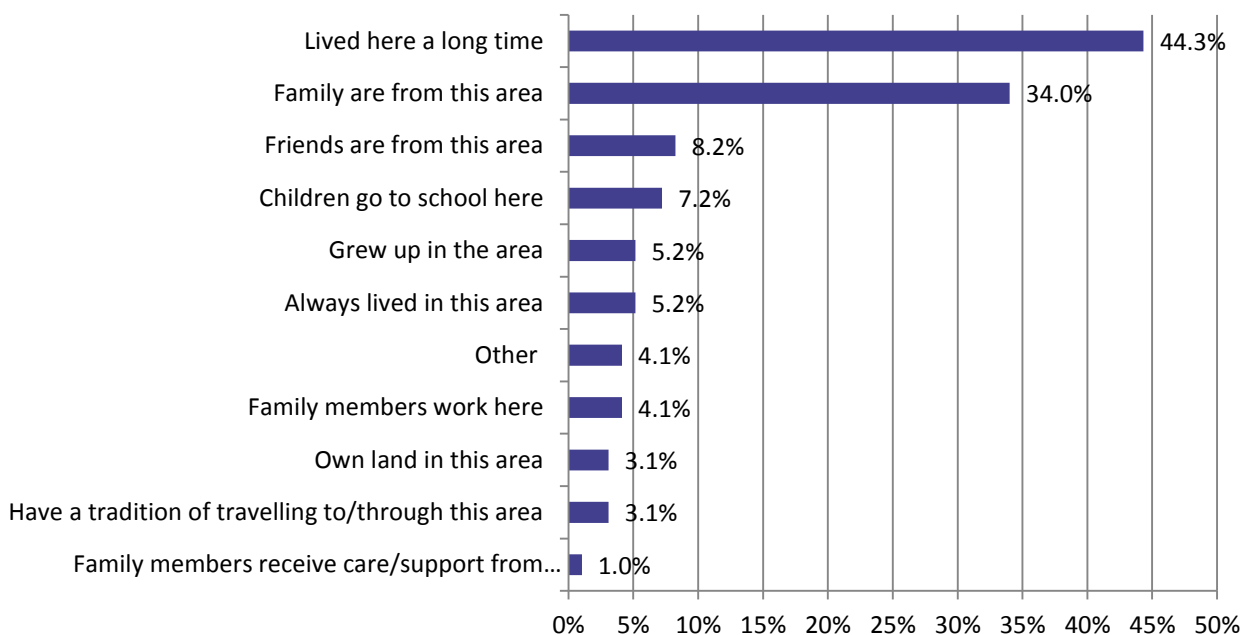
- 4.1 One of the major components of this assessment is a detailed survey of the Gypsy and Traveller population in Central Bedfordshire. This aimed to identify current households with housing needs, and to assess likely future household formation from within existing households, to help judge the need for future site provision.
- 4.2 Interviews were attempted with every Gypsy and Traveller household in the area who were present during November 2013. Therefore, the base date for the findings of this study is November 2013. In total, interviews were achieved on-site with 98 households, representing a 44% response rate.
- 4.3 Throughout this study the person responding to the survey will be referred to as the respondent, and in questions which refer to all people in the household they will be referred to as household members. Throughout the remainder of this report the majority of numbers which appear on the charts represent the percentage of respondents who appear in that category. The purpose of showing percentages is to allow the results of the survey to be extrapolated to the whole Gypsy and Traveller population of Central Bedfordshire. In a few cases, it is more appropriate to use the actual number of respondents, and these cases are clearly identified. In all charts those respondents who answered 'don't know', or did not answer the question, are omitted unless otherwise stated.

### Connections with the Area

- 4.4 The vast majority (87%) of those surveyed considered the site to be their permanent base. Of the remaining 12 respondents who did not, 5 identified permanent bases and said they were visiting for a short while, 1 was on an unauthorised site, 2 stated that they travel constantly and the remaining 4 said that they had no permanent base.
- 4.5 By far the most common connections that respondents reported as having with the area were: having lived in the area a long time (44%); and their family being from the area (34%).

**Figure 4**

**Nature of Local Connections in Central Bedfordshire, by all Respondents (Source: Survey of Gypsy and Traveller Population On-site 2013)**



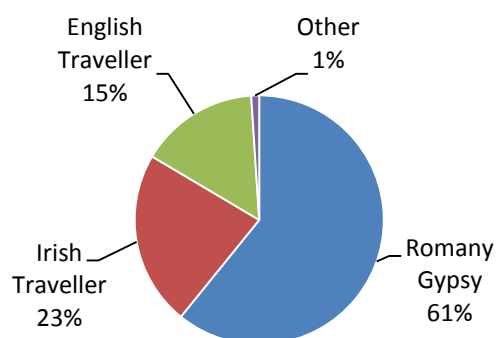
- 4.6 More than half of respondents (55.8%) reported that their family had lived on their site for 5 years or more, and more than three quarters had been there at least a year. However, 15.8% reported that their family had been living there for less than a month.

## Ethnic Background

- 6.1 Just under three fifths of all respondents identified themselves as being Romany Gypsies, while nearly a quarter said that they were Irish Travellers.

**Figure 5**

**Ethnic Group by all Respondents (Source: Survey of Gypsy and Traveller Population On-site 2013)**

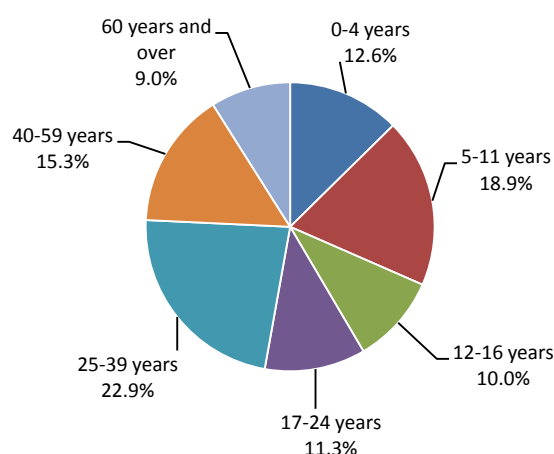


## Age and Household Profile

- 4.7 The households showed a mixed range of ages across their members, very much in line with the results of similar studies carried out by ORS elsewhere. 41% of household members were aged 16 or under. However, we would note that it is typical for Gypsy and Traveller studies to record relatively few males aged 18-60 years, many of who travel on an almost permanent basis. This is the case in Central Bedfordshire with 20 of the interviews conducted at pitches with no adult males household members, so the share of adults in the population is almost certainly higher than shown by the household survey.

**Figure 6**

**Age of Household Members, by all Household Members (Source: Survey of Gypsy and Traveller Population On-site 2013)**



- 4.8 More than four fifths of respondents (88.8%) reported just one household living on their pitch. Most respondents (73.5%) reported that there were 4 people or fewer living on their pitch, and 18.3% only had one person living on the pitch.

## Health Problems

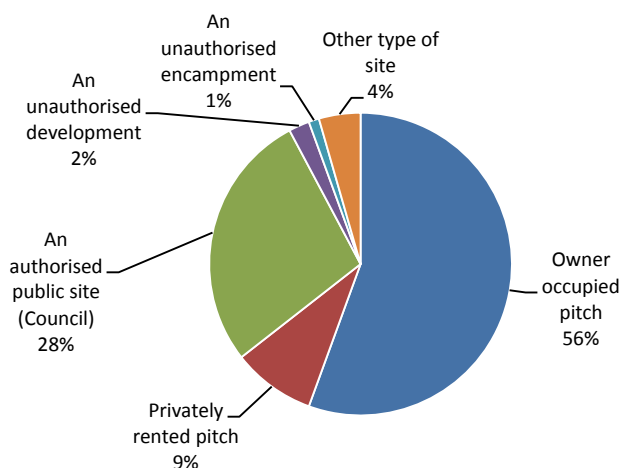
- 4.9 19.4% of respondents interviewed (19 respondents) reported that their household contained at least one member with a long-term health problem. Of those who reported a long term health problem within the household, 36.8% (7 respondents) said their existing pitch did not meet the care needs of those with health issues.

## 5. Existing Sites

### Type of Site

- 5.1 83 interviews (92% of total interviews) were carried out on authorized sites (58 on private sites and 25 on public sites). 3 interviews were carried out on unauthorised encampments and developments. (see Figure 8 below) and 4 respondents said their pitch was on some other type of site.
- 5.2 All respondents were asked if they required any additional caravans at their current pitch. Only 10.3% (10 respondents) indicated that they would like another caravan within their existing household. 3 of these respondents reported that these additional caravans were needed for older children and 5 said they were needed for adult relatives.
- 5.3 When asked how many additional caravans were required, 7 respondents said they would need 2 extra caravans, and 3 respondents said they would need a single extra caravan.
- 5.4 Of these 10 respondents who indicated that they needed any additional caravans, 9 felt there was space on their existing pitch to accommodate these.
- 5.5 The phrasing of this question focused on a need rather than a demand for more caravans. Respondents were asked, irrespective of who was purchasing the caravans, whether they needed more caravans for household members. Therefore, this question simply reflected a perceived need for more caravans, rather than an ability to afford (demand for) more caravans.

**Figure 7**  
Type of pitch, by all Respondents (Source: Survey of Gypsy and Traveller Population On-site 2013)



### Views of Sites

- 5.6 All respondents were asked if their current site was meeting their in terms of accommodation quality and space; site facilities, location and management. Just over a quarter (26.5%, 26 respondents) felt that their current site was not meeting their needs.
- 5.7 A lack of facilities and issues with site management were each identified by 4 of these respondents when asked to explain why their current accommodation does not meet their needs. There were also 4 comments about a lack of day rooms. 3 respondents reported that the site is too small; or that the site lacks electricity.



- <sup>5.8</sup> Respondents were also asked what facilities they felt were needed, if facilities were lacking. The responses most commonly mentioned the installation/upgrading of: toilets, showers or washing facilities; electricity/sockets; and day rooms or day areas (all mentioned by 5 respondents).
- <sup>5.9</sup> Of the 26 respondents who felt that their current accommodation and site did not meet their needs, 24 felt their needs could be addressed at their current pitch.

## Bricks and Mortar

- <sup>5.10</sup> Only 5 respondents (5.4%) reported that they had previously lived in bricks and mortar accommodation (i.e. a house, bungalow or flat). Of these, 3 hadn't lived in such accommodation for at least 10 years.

## Moving to a New Permanent Base

- <sup>5.11</sup> Only 2 respondents that they would like to move to a new permanent base, either now or in the next 15 years. Of the 2 respondents who would wish to move, 1 would prefer to live in a caravan/trailer on a private site owned by themselves, and 1 would prefer to live in a caravan/trailer on a Council run site. The households seeking to live on a public site are currently on an unauthorised site, while the household seeking a private site are currently sharing a pitch with another family.

## 6. Travelling Showpeople

### Travelling Showpeople Households in Central Bedfordshire

- <sup>6.01</sup> The population of Travelling Showpeople is typically smaller than that of Gypsies and Travellers and planning records also tend to be more disparate. In total the study area contains three authorised yards, three long-term tolerated yards and one unauthorised yard with a total of up to 46 plots.
- <sup>6.02</sup> During the course of the household survey with Gypsies and Travellers interviews were attempted with all Showpeople households in the area. In total, 9 interviews were carried out with Travelling Showpeople, while a spokesperson for the unauthorised yard also providing separate information. Given the limited number of full interviews undertaken with Travelling Showpeople and also the less structured information gained from site visits, we have chosen not to provide detailed statistics on the population.
- <sup>6.03</sup> The survey of the Travelling Showpeople produced two main issues. Firstly an existing site is overcrowded. Three households in the on-site interview stated they were already looking to move to a four plot yard nearby. This site is specifically designed to address the needs of four concealed households.
- <sup>6.04</sup> Meanwhile, an unauthorised yard contains a mixture of family members and also other households without a permanent base who use it when they are not travelling. The spokesman for this site is seeking a 10 plot site to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople without a base in the area. The current site is not occupied by 10 households on a permanent basis, but households are described as pulling on and off the site and the spokesman states that there are 10 households seeking plots in the area. However, we would note that when visited by Council officers the site has never been observed to contain more than 3 caravans.

## 7. Future Site Provision

### Pitch Provision

- 7.1 This section focuses on the extra pitch provision which is required in Central Bedfordshire currently and over the next 18 years to 2031 by 5 year segments. This includes both current unmet needs and needs which are likely to arise in the future.
- 7.2 We would note that this section is based upon a combination of the on-site survey, planning records and waiting list information. In many cases, the survey data is not used in isolation, but instead is used to validate information from planning records or other sources.
- 7.3 This section concentrates not only upon the total extra provision which is required in the area, but whether there is a need for any transit sites and/or emergency stopping place provision. The calculation will be firstly provided for Gypsies and Travellers, before being repeated for Travelling Showpeople.
- 7.4 Before commencing on the identification of future needs we would wish to note some key points. In 2010 the Coalition Government announced the planned abolition of all Regional Spatial Strategies and the advent of the Localism Act 2011, National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012. It should be the case that Local Plans rapidly replace the RSS as material consideration in planning decisions.
- 7.5 To identify future need, the March 2012 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, in October 2007 Department of Communities and Local Government produced 'Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments: Guidance'. 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

- 7.6 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;

### Current Need

- 7.7 There are three key components of current need. Total current need) is:
- » Households on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected;
  - » Concealed households; and
  - » Households in brick and mortar wishing to move to sites;

### Future Need

- 7.8 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
  - » Net migration to sites.
- 7.9 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

- 7.10 There are currently 47 pitches on public sites and 186 pitches on private sites in Central Bedfordshire on private sites with permanent permissions. A further 10 pitches have temporary permission and with 4 pitches having no planning permission. A full list of sites is shown in Appendix A.
- 7.11 The next stage of the process is to assess how much space is, or will become available on existing sites.
- 7.12 ORS interviewers identified some unoccupied pitches on private sites and also two non Gypsy and Traveller households on private sites. One pitch is currently advertised as being for sale on the Rightmove website. However, there is no evidence that the empty pitches on the private sites are available for more general use and therefore there is no evidence of significant unoccupied private pitches.
- 7.13 During the course of 2013, the council has granted permanent planning permission for 45 pitches in Central Bedfordshire. However most of these pitches have been the granting of permanent permission to sites which were previously unauthorised or had temporary permissions and therefore do not counts as available supply. However, 3 pitches at Evergreen, Tilsworth and 4 pitches at the Stable Site A in Billington have not yet been implemented and can be counted as future supply. Other permissions may also have not been implement, but we do not have firm evidence for these and have chosen not to count them as supply. It is also the case that the Timberlands site at Slip End is due to re-open follow refurbishment and will add 6 more pitches to the supply in Central Bedfordshire, giving a total of 13 pitches of additional supply.

### Additional Site Provision: Current Need

- 7.14 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;
  - » Concealed households; and
  - » Households in brick and mortar wishing to move to sites;

### Current Unauthorised Developments

- 7.15 There are currently 2 households on unauthorised developments in Central Bedfordshire so we have allowed for 2 pitches to accommodate these households. This figure excludes a 2 pitch long-term site.

## Concealed Households

- 7.16 The household survey also sought to identify concealed households who require a pitch immediately. A concealed household is one who is living within another household and would wish to form their own separate family unit, but are unable to do so because of a lack of space on public or private sites.
- 7.17 The household survey contains two main sources of information on concealed households. Firstly it asks how many households live on a pitch. In one case, 4 households were on a pitch and all were interviewed with the pitch containing 17 people. Another 2 households were interviewed sharing at a plot with 12 people and can also be considered to be a concealed household. There was also a pitch on public sites which reported a second household and the waiting list for public sites contains 4 households who have provided an existing plot at a public site as a point of contact. Therefore, in total the households survey directly identified 4 concealed households on private sites who stated that they were occupying multiple pitches and there are 4 households linked to public sites seeking a pitch.
- 7.18 However, a further source of information on concealed households is those who stated that they do not live at the pitch permanently, but that they do not have a permanent address. In this case the household survey contained 4 households in this situation. In all cases they stated that they were staying with friends or family. There is no firm indication that these households are concealed and living at the address, but also they do not have a permanent address. We have therefore allowed for these to be considered as concealed households on the basis that the interviewee may not wish to cause problems for the main pitch occupier and therefore are not declaring their I status.
- 7.19 In total this leads to the on-site survey identifying a total of 8 concealed households in private sites. The on-site survey had a response rate of just below 50% of all pitches, so as a pragmatic solution we have doubled this figure to give a total of 16 concealed pitches on private sites and 4 on public sites.
- 7.20 This figure of 20 concealed households represents a total potential number of concealed households in the survey data. It is noteworthy that only 2 household on a private site and the 4 on the waiting list indicated a desire to move to another pitch, with the remainder not stating any interest in moving. The remaining households appear to be content at their current location and in some cases it may be possible to address their needs without needing to move them to another pitch such as through varying site licenses.

## Bricks and Mortar

- 7.21 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.
- 7.22 One possible source of information on bricks and mortar households is the public site waiting list. 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 19 households in total on the waiting list for a site in Central Bedfordshire. 4 have provided a contact address at a public site in Central Bedfordshire, while 5 are on sites in other local authorities. These households are typically not counted to prevent double counting between local authorities. 3 of the remaining households are on unauthorised sites or homeless, while 4 are on private sites. This leaves 3 households in bricks and mortar in Central Bedfordshire. We are not able to directly compare individual details of those on the waiting list with those in the on-site

survey due to data protection issues, but the overall site address for those on the waiting list matches the sites the sites where concealed households were found, so we do not consider that these household require to be counted again.

- 7.23 ORS worked with stakeholders, the Local Authority, on-site interviewees and also through advertising on Friends, Family and Travellers Facebook page to identify households in bricks and mortar. This process yielded 6 interviews, one of whom wished to move from their current home to a site, but confirmed that they were on the site waiting list and hence do not need to be counted again.
- 7.24 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.
- 7.25 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. However, in this case no households wished to move from sites to housing.

## Additional Site Provision: Future Need

- 7.26 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
  - » Net migration to sites.

## Temporary Planning Permissions

- 7.27 Central Bedfordshire currently has a developed site with temporary planning permission for 4 pitches and a further undeveloped site with temporary permission for 6 pitches. The permissions will expire within the next 5 years, they have therefore been counted as need within this assessment, but not as a supply of pitches.

## New Household Formation

- 7.28 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. However, a 3% per annum growth rate will see household numbers double in 23.5 years and this figure has been widely used without any clear underlying evidence to support it.

- 7.29 In a study on behalf of Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2003 (Local Authority Gypsy and Traveller Sites in England Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003), Pat Niner identified that household growth rates of 2%-3% per cent a year were appropriate when projecting future formations.
- 7.30 In October 2007 the Department of Communities and Local Government issued guidance for conducting Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments. On page 25 this provides a worked example using a 3% per annum household formation rate, but notes in footnote 6 that:
- 'The 3% family formation growth rate is used here as an example only. The appropriate rate for individual assessments will depend on the details identified in the local survey, information from agencies working directly with local Gypsy and Traveller communities, and trends identified from figures previously given for the caravan count.'*
- 7.31 Therefore, the current guidance is clear that each individual assessment should use local evidence for future household formation rates. This position was confirmed by the Planning -Economy and Society section of Department Communities and Local Government who at a Westminster 'Gypsy & Traveller Briefing 2013: Planning Policy Progress & Delivery' on October 15th 2013 to 32 local authority participants stated:
- '3% is not policy.'*
- 7.32 ORS have produced a detailed separate paper 'Household Formation Rates for Gypsies and Travellers: Technical Note' which demonstrates that the likely rate of growth for the population of Gypsies and Travellers across the whole of England based upon the best available evidence is closer to 1.5% per annum. Officials from Communities and Local Government have seen the technical note and confirmed that they have not undertaken any research on population or household growth for Gypsies and Travellers, and therefore have no information which contradicts this position.
- 7.33 A population growth rate of 1.5% will not necessarily equate to a household growth rate of 1.5%. Instead household growth rates may be higher. For example, across the whole of England for the whole population, the Office for National Statistics project in their 2011 based population highlight a natural change in the population of 0.5% per annum and an overall change of 0.83% per annum when the effects of migration are added. 2011 based household projections produced by Communities and Local Government show a projected rise in households on 0.95% per annum.
- 7.34 ORS believe that the 3% figure often used in Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments is demonstrably too high to be used as a fixed value for all studies and is not based upon any form of robust evidence. Instead we believe that a range of values should be considered in light of local evidence.
- 7.35 While acknowledging that there are currently a small number of pitches in Central Bedfordshire which are vacant we have used the 247 pitches on site, plus 3 households in bricks and mortar and 20 concealed households as a baseline for the growth in the population minus 13 pitches empty due to them being future supply and 2 pitches occupied by non travellers. This gives a total of 255 households for future formations. The table overleaf shows the projected number of pitches required for household formations for different rates of compound growth.

**Figure 8**  
**Extra Pitches Required in Central Bedfordshire from 2014-2031 for Household Formations using Different Growth Rates**

Growth rate per annum	Number of additional pitches required over 18 years
1.5%	78
1.75%	93
2%	109
2.25%	126
2.5%	143
2.75%	161
3%	179

- <sup>7.36</sup> Given a projected growth in the national population of around 1.5% per annum, ORS favour a more pragmatic approach to household formation rates and typically use values between 2% and 2.5% depending upon local circumstances. This allows for households formation to occur quicker than population growth and provides for a buffer within the needs assessment to prevent any under-estimation of needs. In this case we have based our overall figures on a 2.5% per annum compound growth rate, but would note that much of the recent delivery of pitches in Central Bedfordshire has been to address the expansion of family owned sites, thus allowing formations to occur.
- <sup>7.37</sup> 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 56% over 18 years. We would note that extrapolating ONS and CLG population projections for this time period will see the population of Central Bedfordshire rise by 10% due to natural change with a further 10% due to migration. Overall household numbers are projected to rise by around 23% in the period 2013-2031 from CLG household projections.

## In-migration from Other Sources

- <sup>7.38</sup> 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.
- <sup>7.39</sup> Overall the level of in-migration to the Central Bedfordshire is a very difficult issue to predict. 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.



- 7.40 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.

## Overall Needs for Central Bedfordshire

- 7.41 The estimated extra site provision that is required until 2031 using a medium 2.5% per annum compound growth rate is 165 pitches. This includes the existing households on unauthorised sites, concealed households, those in housing, those with temporary planning permissions and the growth in household numbers due to household formation. Including the 45 pitches granted planning permission in 2013 this would see the number of authorised pitches rise by 210 in 19 years to 2031 which is a figure of 112%, at the same times as housing figures are projected to rise by less than 25%. If Central Bedfordshire wished to consider using a 3% compound growth rate, this figure would rise by 36 pitches and if they wished to use a 2% per annum growth rate the figure would fall by 34 pitches.

**Figure 9**

**Extra Pitches which are Required in Central Bedfordshire from 2014-2031 when using a 2.5% compound growth rate**

Reason for Requirement/Vacancy	Gross Requirement	Supply	Net Requirement
<b>Supply of Pitches</b>			
Additional supply from empty pitches	-	7	
Additional supply new sites	-	6	
<b>Total Supply</b>		<b>13</b>	
<b>Current Need</b>			
Current unauthorised developments or encampments and seeking to stay in the area	2	-	
Concealed households	20	-	
Net movement from bricks and mortar	3	-	
<b>Total Current Need</b>	<b>25</b>		
<b>Future Needs</b>			
Currently on sites with temporary planning permission	10	-	
Net migration to the area	0	--	
Net new household formation	143	-	
<b>Total Future Needs</b>	<b>153</b>	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>165</b>

## Requirement by Time Periods

- 7.42 The evidence contained in this survey is that there is a requirement in the next 6 years for a total of 35 pitches to address the backlog of need for households on unauthorised sites, concealed households, those in bricks and mortar plus those households who will see their temporary planning permissions expire within this time period. However, 13 pitches will come back into use on new or re-developed sites. Household growth then requires to be added, with all the possible scenarios set out in the table overleaf.

**Figure 10****Extra Pitches Required in Central Bedfordshire from 2014-2031 by Time Period for Different Household Formation Rates**

Growth rate per annum	2014-2019	2020-2024	2025-2029	2030-2031	Total
1.5%	46	22	23	10	100
1.75%	50	26	28	12	115
2%	54	30	33	14	131
2.25%	58	34	38	17	148
2.5%	63	39	44	19	165
2.75%	67	44	50	22	183
3%	71	48	56	25	201

## Transit/Emergency Stopping Site Provision

- 7.43 Transit sites serve a specific function of meeting the needs of Gypsy and Traveller households who are visiting an area or who are passing through on the way to somewhere else. A transit site typically has a restriction on the length of stay of around 13 weeks and has a range of facilities such as water supply, electricity and amenity blocks.
- 7.44 An alternative to a transit site 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 with typically only a source of water and chemical toilets provided. Some authorities also operate an accepted encampment policy where households are provided with access to lighting, drinking water, refuse collection and hiring of portable toilets at a cost to the Travellers.
- 7.45 The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 is particularly important with regard to the issue of Gypsy and Traveller transit site provision. Section 62A of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act allows the police to direct trespassers to remove themselves and their vehicles and property from any land where a suitable pitch on a relevant caravan site is available within the same local authority area (or within the county in two-tier local authority areas).
- 7.46 A suitable pitch on a relevant caravan site is one which is situated in the same local authority area as the land on which the trespass has occurred, and which is managed by a local authority, registered social landlord, or other person or body as specified by order by the Secretary of State. Case law has confirmed that a suitable pitch must be somewhere where the household can occupy their caravan and bricks and mortar housing is not a suitable alternative to a pitch.
- 7.47 Therefore, a public transit site both provides a place for households in transit to an area and also a mechanism for greater enforcement action against inappropriate unauthorised encampments.
- 7.48 There is currently no operational public transit site in Central Bedfordshire. Therefore, the Section 62A provision cannot currently be enacted.
- 7.49 Central Bedfordshire have followed a policy of 'sensitive management', an approach which addresses the need for proper judgement in policy response according to the nature of the site, the Gypsy or Traveller group and the concerns of residents and businesses. This balanced approach has minimised the need for

formal legal action. There is little evidence that there is sufficient unauthorised encampments in Central Bedfordshire or that these are causing significant problems. However, the development of a formal public transit site would enable the Council to use the 62A provision should unauthorised encampments occur.

## Needs for Plots for Travelling Showpeople

- 7.50 The estimated need for plots for Travelling Showpeople in Central Bedfordshire is much simpler to model than for Gypsies and Travellers. There are 4 concealed households who are currently working with the council to find a new site. A further group of Travelling Showpeople are working with the council to find a site for up to 10 households. These households are on a mixture of those on an unauthorised site or have no permanent base.
- 7.51 However, as noted earlier in this report, when visited by Council officers the site has never been observed to contain more than 3 caravans. Using the principals applied for Gypsies and Travellers this site would count as an unauthorised development of 3 pitches. However, it is accepted that other households are also seeking a site in the area and do use the unauthorised site. Therefore as a pragmatic solution we have allowed for 7 households associated with this site and for a relatively high rate of future formations to accommodate further households.
- 7.52 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 31% over 18 years. Given the current 47 occupied plots in Central Bedfordshire this will equate to 14 additional plots by 2031.

**Figure 11**

**Extra Plots which are Required for Travelling Showpeople in Central Bedfordshire from 2014-2031**

Reason for Requirement/Vacancy	Gross Requirement	Supply	Net Requirement
<b>Supply of Pitches</b>			
Additional supply from empty pitches	-	0	
Additional supply new sites	-	0	
<b>Total Supply</b>		<b>0</b>	
<b>Current Need</b>			
Current unauthorised developments or encampments and seeking to stay in the area	7	-	
Concealed households	4	-	
Movement from bricks and mortar	0	-	
<b>Total Current Need</b>	<b>11</b>		
<b>Future Needs</b>			
Currently on sites with temporary planning permission	0	-	
Net migration	0	--	
Net new household formation	14	-	
<b>Total Future Needs</b>	<b>14</b>	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>

- <sup>7.53</sup> Therefore, over the next 18 years, the total requirement for Travelling Showpeople is 25 plots. Of these the identified requirement in the period 2014-2019 is 15 plots. From 2020 onwards all future project growth is for household formations. In the period 2020-2024 this is projected to be 4 plots, for 2025-2029 this is projected to be 4 plots and for 2030-2031 it will be 2 plots.

## 8. Conclusions

### Introduction

- 8.1 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

- 8.2 Based upon the evidence presented in Chapter 7, there is a requirement in the next 6 years for a total of 35 pitches to address the backlog of need for households on unauthorised sites, concealed households, those in bricks and mortar plus those households who will see their temporary planning permissions expire within this time period. However, 13 pitches will come back into use on new or re-developed sites. Household growth then requires to be added, with all the possible scenarios set out in the table below.

**Figure 12**

**Extra Pitches Required in Central Bedfordshire from 2014-2031 by Time Period for Different Household Formation Rates**

Growth rate per annum	2014-2019	2020-2024	2025-2029	2030-2031	Total
1.5%	46	22	23	10	100
1.75%	50	26	28	12	115
2%	54	30	33	14	131
2.25%	58	34	38	17	148
2.5%	63	39	44	19	165
2.75%	67	44	50	22	183
3%	71	48	56	25	201

- 8.3 ORS favour a pragmatic approach to household formation rates and typically use values between 2% and 2.5% depending upon local circumstances. This allows for households formation to occur quicker than population growth and provides for a buffer within the needs assessment to prevent any under-estimation of needs. In this case we have based our overall figures on a 2.5% per annum compound growth rate, but would note that much of the recent delivery of pitches in Central Bedfordshire has been to address the expansion of family owned sites, thus allowing formations to occur.

### Travelling Showperson Requirements

- 8.4 There are only three sources of requirements for the Travelling Showperson population in Central Bedfordshire, namely 4 concealed households, an unauthorised site and the growth in the population over time. Central Bedfordshire has a requirement for 25 extra plots for Travelling Showpeople to 2031.

# Appendices

# Appendix A: Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Central Bedfordshire (November 2013)

**Figure 13**  
**Current Gypsy and Traveller Sites and Pitches in Central Bedfordshire**

Site	Number of Pitches
<b>Local Authority Sites</b>	
Potton Gypsy Site, Common Road, Potton	14
Chiltern View, Northall Road, Eaton Bray	27
Timberlands, Half Moon Lane, Pepperstock, Slip End	6
<b>TOTAL PITCHES ON LOCAL AUTHORITY SITES</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Private Sites with Permanent Permission</b>	
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	7
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
Jockey Farm, Watling Street, Caddington	15
28 & 30 Stanbridge Road, Billington	7
Toddbury Farm, Gypsy Lane, Little Billington	18
Old Acres, Old Acre Paddock, Barton Road, Pulloxhill	8
Home Farm, Dunstable Road, Tilsworth	1
Evergreens, Dunstable Road, Tilsworth	8
Valley View, Hemel Hempstead Road, Dagnall	1
Land Adjacent to 17 The Causeway, Clophill	1
The Stables Gypsy Lane, Little Billington	10
Greenacres, Gypsy Lane, Little Billington	14
The Stables Site A, Stanbridge Road, Billington	11
The Stables Site C, Stanbridge Road, Great Billington	4
Ash Tree Paddock, Stanbridge Road, Billington	3
Little Acre, Half Moon Lane, Pepperstock, Slip End	2
Greenvale, Watling Street, Caddington	14
Eversholt Beeches, Watling Street, Caddington	5
<b>TOTAL PITCHES ON PRIVATE SITES WITH PERMANENT PERMISSION</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>Private Sites with Temporary Permission</b>	
Chestnut Caravan Park, Steppingley Road, Tingrith	4

Mile Tree Road, Leighton Buzzard	6
<b>TOTAL PITCHES ON PRIVATE SITES WITH TEMPORARY PERMISSION</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Tolerated Sites – Long-term without planning permission</b>	
Hermitage Lane, Off Westoning Road, Greenfield	2
<b>TOTAL PITCHES ON LONG-TERM TOLERATED PRIVATE SITES</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Unauthorised Developments</b>	
Plot 4 , The Stables, Billington	1
Valley View, Hemel Hempstead Road, Dagnall	1
<b>TOTAL PITCHES ON UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TOTAL PITCHES</b>	<b>243</b>

Figure 14

Current Travelling Showpeople Yards and Caravans in Central Bedfordshire

Site	Number of Caravans
<b>Showpeople Yards with Permanent Permission</b>	
Gogs Farm, Old Linslade Road, Linslade	4
Greenacre Farm, Billington Road, Stanbridge	3
Land at junction of Bridleway and Luton Road, Fancott	3
<b>TOTAL CARAVANS ON SITES WITH PERMANENT PERMISSION</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Tolerated Sites – Long-term without planning permission</b>	
Land off Mill Lane, Biggleswade	16
21 Sun Street, Biggleswade	3
Bridge Meadow, Leighton Buzzard	7
<b>TOTAL CARAVANS ON LONG-TERM TOLERATED SITES</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Unauthorised Developments</b>	
Hawthorne	3-10 (counted 7 as need)
<b>TOTAL CARAVANS ON UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TOTAL CARAVANS</b>	<b>43</b>