Runnymede Borough Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)

Report of Findings

September 2026

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1. Executive Summary

Summary of Key Findings and Conclusions

Introduction and Methodology

1.1 The primary purpose of this Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is to provide a robust assessment of current and future need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in Runnymede Borough Council (the Council) area.

1.2 This GTAA provides a credible evidence base which can be used to support the preparation of Local Plan Policies and, where appropriate, the provision of new Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots for the period 2026/27 to 2044/45.

1.3 This covers the Council's new Local Plan period and the 10-year requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026[1].

1.4 The GTAA has sought to understand the accommodation needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in the Council area through a combination of desk-based research, stakeholder interviews, and engagement with members of the Travelling Community. This includes those living on all known sites and yards, as well as seeking to engage with households living in bricks and mortar accommodation. The GTAA has also sought to assess whether there is any need for transit provision to be provided.

1.5 A total of 163 interviews or proxy interviews were completed with Gypsies and Travellers living on sites in Runnymede. A total of 26 interviews were completed with Travelling Showpeople living on yards in Runnymede. In addition, 6 interviews were completed with households living in bricks and mortar[2]. The overall response rate was 95.1% (97.1% for Gypsies and Travellers and 84.8% for Travelling Showpeople).

1.6 A total of 12 stakeholder interviews were also completed.

1.7 The baseline date for the study is July 2026.

Background

1.8 In relation to Travellers, Policy HO1 in the NPPF (2026) sets out that *The preparation of spatial development strategies, and local plans where a spatial development strategy is not in place, should be based upon: b. An assessment of the permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in the area as a minimum over the plan period.*

[1] The 2026 NPPF now sets out the government's policies for plan-making and for making decisions on development proposals in England in relation to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and has replaced the now repealed Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) 2024.

[2] See Chapter 3 and Chapter 7 for details of the efforts that were made to contact households living in bricks and mortar.

1.9 Policy HO1 also sets out that *At the most appropriate level, development plans should also take into account an assessment of the size, type and tenure of housing or other accommodation needed for different groups. These groups include, but are not limited to: h. Travellers*.

1.10 Policy HO3 in the NPPF sets out that *Local plans should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites to meet or exceed the housing requirement figure and pitch and plot requirements for their areas over the plan period, drawing on the land availability assessment in accordance with policy PM9. This should include: b. In relation to traveller sites: i. A supply of specific deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption of the plan (as set out in Annex D); and ii. A supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for the subsequent years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for the remaining plan period, where the plan covers more than 10 years.*

1.11 The NPPF in Annex B states that *'Pitch' means a pitch on a gypsy and traveller site and 'plot' means a pitch on a travelling showpeople site (often called a 'yard'). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for gypsies and travellers and mixed-use plots for travelling showpeople, which may / will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment*.

1.12 Overall the NPPF refers to the provision of Travellers' *sites/yards* to meet needs, and to setting *pitch/plot* targets. For ease, and consistency, this GTAA sets out the accommodation needs as needs for pitches/plots. In most cases, the need should be met through provision of a pitch/plot. However, in some circumstances the accommodation needs may be more appropriately met through provision of other *alternative* suitable accommodation (for example through additional touring caravans on sites and yards). So, in this GTAA any reference to *pitch/plot* means *pitch/plot* or *pitch/plot equivalent*.

1.13 This GTAA provides evidence of accommodation needs in line with the NPPF requirements. This evidence will help to inform the Council's policies in their emerging Local Plan including the setting of local pitch/plot targets and the allocation of sites/yards to meet identified accommodation needs.

1.14 ORS recommend that Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan Policies should give consideration to addressing need from households that meet the 2026 NPPF planning definition of a Traveller through the allocation of new pitches or plots – or equivalents; through the intensification or expansion of the existing sites and yards where need has been identified; and through consideration of granting planning permission for any temporary and unauthorised sites or yards where this is felt to be appropriate in relation to relevant Development Management Policies.

1.15 The Council should also put in place a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy to manage any need from Undetermined Households, as well as to deal with any potential windfall applications, potential need from in-migration, or any need arising from bricks and mortar.

1.16 The findings of this report should be considered as part of future housing mix and type within the context of the assessment of overall housing need in relation to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

1.17 Whilst the findings in this report are aggregated totals for the whole of Runnymede the Council have been provided with more detailed breakdowns to support the preparation of any future Local Plan Policies.

Key Findings

Pitch Needs – Gypsies and Travellers

1.18 In April 2026 ORS and the Council identified 160 Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Runnymede:

- 2 public sites (30 pitches);
- 16 private sites with permanent planning permission (77 pitches);
- 1 temporary site (1 pitch);
- 6 sites that are tolerated for planning purposes (8 pitches);
- 9 unauthorised sites (48 pitches);
- 4 interviews were also completed with households living in bricks and mortar.

1.19 Our research concluded that 186 Gypsy or Traveller households met the 2026 NPPF planning definition and there were 5 households where it was not possible to confirm their status. These 5 households are also likely to meet the 2026 NPPF planning definition and are referred to as Undetermined Households for the purposes of this GTAA.

1.20 Our research identified a need for 154 pitches emerging from the 186 households that met the 2026 NPPF planning definition. This is made up of:

- 48 pitches from households on unauthorised developments;
- 1 temporary pitch;
- 19 pitches for concealed/doubled-up households or single adults;
- 23 pitches to meet a 5-year need from teenagers;
- 64 pitches from new household formation, using a formation rate of 1.80% derived from the household demographics.
- Offset by available supply from 1 vacant pitch on a public site.

1.21 There is also a need for 4 pitches emerging from the 5 Undetermined Households. This is made up of:

- A modelled need for 1 pitch for concealed/doubled-up households or single adults;
- A modelled need for 1 pitch to meet a 5-year need from teenagers; and
- 2 pitches from new household formation, using the ORS national formation rate of 1.50%.

1.22 The overall pitch needs for Gypsies and Travellers for the period 2026/27 to 2044/45 are summarised below:

Figure 1: Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in Runnymede (2026/27-2044/45)

Status	2026/27-2044/45
Need from households who meet the Planning Definition	154
Undetermined Need	4
TOTAL	**158**

1.23 The need from households that meet the planning definition and for Undetermined Households can be distributed across year periods as shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Need for Gypsy and Traveller households by year periods

Year Period	Dates	NPPF Need	Undetermined Need
1 – 5	2026/27-30/31	90	2
6 – 10	2031/32-35/36	21	1
11 – 15	2036/37-40/41	23	1
16 – 19	2041/42-2044/45	20	0
1 – 19	**2026/27-2044/45**	**154**	**4**

Comparison with 2018 GTAA – Gypsies and Travellers

1.24 The previous GTAA for Runnymede was completed in 2018 and identified an overall need for Gypsies and Travellers for 205 pitches for the 16 year period from 2017 to 2032.

1.25 This new GTAA has identified an overall need for Gypsies and Travellers for 158 pitches for the 19 year period from 2026 to 2044.

1.26 This represents a decrease in need of 47 pitches (albeit over a longer time period).

1.27 Figure 3 below summarises to key difference between the 2018 GTAA and the 2026 GTAA. This shows that the primary reasons for the reduction of need have been:

- A reduction in the number of pitches with temporary planning permission (-7).
- A reduction in current need from concealed and doubled-up households (-19).
- A reduction in 5-year need from teenagers (-10).
- A reduction in need from in-migration/roadside/B&M (-12).

Figure 3: GTAA Comparison 2018 and 2026 for Gypsies and Travellers (Overall Current and Future Need)

Component	2018	2026	Difference
Sites/Bricks and Mortar	25	39	14
All Pitches	140	168	28
Interviews Completed	93	169	76
Response Rate	79%	97%	18
Temporary Pitches	8	1	-7
Tolerated Pitches	1	8	7
Unauthorised Pitches	33	48	15
Current Need (Concealed/Doubled-Up)	39	20	-19
5-Year Need (Teenagers)	34	24	-10
In-Migration/Roadside/B&M	12	0	-12
Future Need (New Household Formation)	45	66	21
Total Need	**205**	**158**	**-47**

Plot Needs – Travelling Showpeople

1.28 In April 2026 ORS and the Council identified 5 Travelling Showpeople yards (36 plots) in Runnymede. All were on private yards with planning permission. In addition 2 interviews were completed with households living in bricks and mortar.

1.29 Our research concluded that 39 Travelling Showpeople households met the 2026 NPPF planning definition and there were 5 Undetermined Households where it was not possible to complete an interview.

1.30 Our research identified a need for 20 plots emerging from the 39 households that met the 2026 NPPF planning definition. This is made up of:

- 11 plots from concealed or doubled-up households or single adults;
- 2 plots to meet a 5-year need for teenagers;
- 7 plots from new household formation, derived from the household demographics.

1.31 There is also a future need for 2 plots from Undetermined Households.

1.32 The overall plot needs for Travelling Showpeople for the period 2026/27 to 2044/45 are summarised in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Need for Travelling Showpeople households in Runnymede (2026/27-2044/45)

Status	2026/27-2044/45
Need from households who meet the Planning Definition	20
Undetermined Need	2
TOTAL	**22**

1.33 The need from households that meet the planning definition and for undetermined households can be distributed across year periods as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Need for Travelling Showpeople households by year periods

Year Period	Dates	NPPF Need	Undetermined Need
1 – 5	2026/27-30/31	13	0
6 – 10	2031/32-35/36	3	1
11 – 15	2036/37-40/41	2	0
16 – 19	2041/42/44/45	2	1
1 – 19	**2026/27-2044/45**	**20**	**2**

Comparison with 2018 GTAA – Travelling Showpeople

1.34 The previous GTAA for Runnymede was completed in 2018 and identified an overall need for Travelling Showpeople for 31 plots for the 16 year period from 2017 to 2032.

1.35 This new GTAA has identified an overall need for Travelling Showpeople for 22 plots for the 15 year period from 2026 to 2044.

1.36 This represents a decrease in need of 9 plots – due to a reduction in need from teenagers (-5) and in new household formation (-4).

Recommendations

Gypsy and Traveller Recommendations

1.37 The recommendations for addressing need from Gypsies and Travellers are set out below:

1. **Pitch Content:** In general terms, need identified in a GTAA is seen as need for pitches. As set out in Chapter 4 of this report, the now withdrawn Government Guidance on *Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites* recommended that, as a general guide, an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan, parking space for two vehicles, and a small garden area. This guidance relates primarily to the provision of pitches on public sites but can also be more broadly applied to the provision of pitches on private sites.

2. **Pitch Size:** Whilst there is no standard size for a Gypsy and Traveller pitch, there are some examples of guidance[3] at a local authority level that recommend average pitch sizes of between 320m^2 and 500m^2 but also suggest that a variety of pitch sizes – including small, medium and large pitches - can enable different sized families to be accommodated on sites (equivalent to two, three and four-bedroom houses) and can contribute to affordability. It is also acknowledged that the Council has its own adopted guidance on the design of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches and plots as contained in its Runnymede Design Supplementary Planning document. This includes recommended minimum pitch/plot sizes.

3. **Public Sites:** When preparing its Local Plan, the Council might want to consider whether need arising from public sites could be addressed through the expansion or intensification of these sites, or for new public sites(s).

4. **Private Sites:** When preparing its Local Plan, the Council might want to consider whether need arising from private sites could be accommodated through the expansion or intensification of these sites, or through new site/pitch allocations. Where they have been identified, the Council may wish to consider the regularisation of temporary and unauthorised sites.

5. **Alternative Approaches (1):** The Council could also consider alternative approaches to dealing with need from single adults and from teenagers as it is unlikely that they will need a full pitch of their own in the short to medium term. This need could be addressed through permitting additional touring caravans on existing sites/pitches which are, generally, each equivalent to the provision of a pitch, as opposed to more formally set out pitches.

6. **Alternative Approaches (2):** The second approach which the Council could consider is for private sites occupied by larger extended family groups. Again, sites like this may be able to meet the overall accommodation needs through a combination of shared static caravans, tourers and dayrooms on existing sites – as opposed to more formally set out sites with separate pitches. It is common for conditions in Decision Notices for Traveller sites to simply place limits on the numbers and types of caravans as opposed to placing limits on the number of pitches.

7. **Undetermined Need:** The Council will also need to carefully consider how to address any potential need from Undetermined Households; from households seeking to move to Runnymede (in-

[3] Leeds City Council: *Gypsy and Traveller Site Design Guide* (2020) and East Devon District Council: *Gypsy and Traveller Site Design and Layout Guidance* (2017).

migration), or from households currently living in bricks and mortar who may wish to move to a site. In terms of Local Plan Policies, the Council may wish to consider a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies.

8. **Future Need:** Future need from new household formation could be met through natural turnover of pitches over time.

9. **Monitoring:** The Council should continue to monitor any changes to the site baseline through new applications and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites to provide 5 years' worth of sites against locally set targets as required by the NPPF.

10. **Supporting Data:** Whilst the findings in this report are aggregated totals for the whole of Runnymede, due to data protection issues, the Council have more detailed data to enable an accurate review of Local Plan allocations to be made.

11. **Pitch Deliverability Assessment:** Finally, the Council may wish to consider completing a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (PDA) to explore in more detail the capacity of existing sites to accommodate additional pitches and/or caravans to meet identified needs. The PDA should take into account the findings of this assessment to inform emerging Local Plan policies and may be updated if appropriate.

Travelling Showpeople Recommendations

1.38 The recommendations for addressing need from Travelling Showpeople are set out below:

1. **Plot Size:** Whilst there is also no standard size for a Travelling Showpeople plot, The Showmen's Guild[4] advocates an average plot size of 2,000m^2. However, this should be viewed with some caution given the age of the guidance. In more recent years, many Showpeople have sought to diversify their working practices and often do not now need as much space for the storage or maintenance of larger rides. Recent planning applications in other local authorities have seen plans for new yards put forward including a variety of plot sizes. It is also acknowledged that the Council has its own adopted guidance on the design of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches and plots as contained in its Runnymede Design Supplementary Planning document. This includes recommended minimum pitch/plot sizes.

2. **Private Yards:** For need arising from private yards, the Council may wish to consider the expansion or intensification of these yards, or to address need through new yard/plot allocations. If they are identified, the Council should also consider the regularisation of yards with temporary planning permission and of unauthorised yards.

3. **Other Need:** The Council will also need to carefully consider how to address any potential need from households seeking to move to Runnymede (in-migration); or from households currently living in bricks and mortar who may wish to move to a yard. In terms of Local Plan Policies, the Council may wish to consider Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies.

4. **Alternative Approaches:** The Council may wish to consider alternative approaches to dealing with need from single adults and teenagers as it is unlikely that they will need a full plot of their own in

[4] The Showmen's Guild: *Travelling Showpeople's Sites – A Planning Focus* (2007).

the short to medium term. This need could be addressed through permitting additional touring caravans on yards/plots.

5. **Future Need:** Future need from new household formation could also be met through natural turnover of plots over time.

6. **Supporting Data:** Whilst the findings in this report are aggregated totals for the whole of Runnymede due to data protection issues, the Council have more detailed data to enable an accurate review of Local Plan allocations to be made.

7. **Pitch Deliverability Assessment:** Finally, the Council may wish to consider completing a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (PDA) to explore in more detail the capacity of existing yards to accommodate additional plots and/or caravans to meet identified needs. The PDA should take into account the findings of this assessment to inform emerging Local Plan policies and may be updated if appropriate.

Transit Recommendations

1.39 The recommendations for addressing transit need are set out below:

1. **Overall Transit Provision:** There is currently no public transit provision in Runnymede. The Council have recorded a limited amount of encampments in recent years – mostly during the summer and early autumn months. As such, it is recommended that there is not a need for any transit provision at this time.

2. **Monitoring:** The situation relating to levels of encampments should continue to be monitored. As well as information on the size and duration of the encampments, this monitoring should also seek to gather information from residents on the reasons for their stay in the local area; whether they have a permanent base or where they have travelled from; and whether they have any need or preference to settle permanently in the local area. This information should be collected as part of a welfare assessment (or similar).

3. **Review:** It is recommended that a review of the evidence base relating to encampments, including the monitoring referred to above, should be undertaken on an annual basis, and that this should be considered on a Surrey-wide basis. This will establish whether there is a need for investment in any new transit provision or emergency stopping places, or whether the current approach is preferable.

4. **Short-Term Approach:** In the short-term, the Council should continue to use its current approach when dealing with encampments and management-based approaches, such as negotiated stopping agreements, should also be considered.

5. **Management-Based Approaches:** The term 'negotiated stopping' is used to describe agreed short-term provision for Gypsy and Traveller caravans. It does not describe permanent 'built' transit sites but negotiated agreements which allow caravans to be sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. Agreements are made between the Council and the (temporary) residents regarding expectations on both sides. See www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk for further information.

6. **Temporary Stopping Places:** Temporary stopping places can be made available at times of increased demand due to fairs or cultural celebrations that are attended by Gypsies and Travellers. A charge

may be levied as determined by the local authority although they only need to provide basic facilities including: a cold-water supply; portable toilets; sewage disposal points; and refuse disposal facilities.

2. Introduction

2.1 The primary purpose of this Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), is to provide a robust assessment of current and future need for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in Runnymede Borough.

2.2 The outcomes of the study will supersede the outcomes of the previous Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) completed for the Council that was published in January 2018.

2.3 The study provides an evidence base to enable the Council to comply with their requirements towards Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople under the Housing Act 1985, the Housing and Planning Act (2016), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026, and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

2.4 The GTAA provides a robust assessment of need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in the study area. It can be used to aid the implementation of the Council's Local Plan Policies and the provision of Traveller pitches and plots over the plan period. Whilst the next iteration of the Local Plan for Runnymede will need to cover a period of at least 10 years from adoption in line with NPPF requirements, at the time of finalising this GTAA, the Council had not chosen the length of the next plan period. Officers have commented that the Council is considering a plan period of between 10 and 15 years (potentially up to 2044), This GTAA therefore covers the period up to 2044, to provide a robust evidence base for the Council for whatever plan period is selected.

2.5 In addition to identifying current and future permanent accommodation needs, it seeks to identify any need for transit provision.

2.6 It also includes recommendations on whether the Council should consider a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (PDA) to inform the emerging Local Plan.

2.7 The study covers the needs of Gypsies (including English, Scottish, Welsh and Romany Gypsies), Irish Travellers, New (Age) 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 (GTAA).

2.8 The baseline date for the study is July 2026.

Definitions

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) 2024

2.9 The PPTS (2024) has been repealed and is now incorporated into the new NPPF (2026) which sets out the government's policies for plan-making and for making decisions on development proposals in England in relation to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026

2.10 The NPPF (2026) includes a number of policies relating to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

2.11 For the purposes of the planning system, the planning definition of a Traveller is set out in Annex B of the NPPF and states:

Gypsies and travellers: *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 dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.*

Travelling showpeople: *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 own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes gypsies and travellers as defined separately in this glossary.*

Pitches and Plots: *'Pitch' means a pitch on a gypsy and traveller site and 'plot' means a pitch on a travelling showpeople site (often called a 'yard'). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for gypsies and travellers and mixed-use plots for travelling showpeople, which may / will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.*

NPPF, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), August 2026

Definition of Travelling

2.12 One of the most important questions that GTAA's need to address in terms of applying the planning definition is *what constitutes a cultural tradition of nomadism.* This has been determined through case law.

2.13 **R v South Hams District Council (1994)** – defined Gypsies as "*persons who wander or travel for the purpose of making or seeking their livelihood (not persons who travel from place to place without any connection between their movements and their means of livelihood*.)" This includes 'born' Gypsies and Travellers as well as 'elective' Travellers such as New Age Travellers.

2.14 In **Maidstone BC v Secretary of State for the Environment and Dunn (2006)**, it was held that a Romany Gypsy who bred horses and travelled to horse fairs at Appleby, Stow-in-the-Wold and the New Forest, where he bought and sold horses, and who remained away from his permanent site for up to two months of the year, at least partly in connection with this traditional Gypsy activity, was entitled to be accorded Gypsy status.

2.15 In **Greenwich LBC v Powell (1989)**, Lord Bridge of Harwich stated that a person could be a statutory Gypsy if they led a nomadic way of life *only seasonally*.

2.16 The definition was widened further by the decision in **R v Shropshire CC ex p Bungay (1990)**. The case concerned a Gypsy family that had not travelled for some 15 years in order to care for elderly and infirm parents. An aggrieved resident living in the area of the family's recently approved Gypsy site sought Judicial Review of the Local Authority's decision to accept that the family had retained their Gypsy status even though they had not travelled for some considerable time. Dismissing the claim, the judge held that a person could remain a Gypsy even if he or she did not travel, provided that their nomadism was held in abeyance and not abandoned.

2.17 **Wrexham County Borough Council v National Assembly of Wales and Others (2003)** determined that households and individuals could continue to lead a nomadic way of life with a permanent base which they set out from and return to.

2.18 Following the changes to the PPTS in 2024, the planning definition of a Gypsy and Traveller in the NPPF (2026) now includes *all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan*.

2.19 As a result of this it can be concluded that all ethnic Gypsies and Travellers now meet the NPPF Annex B planning definition of a Traveller.

2.20 There were no changes to the planning definition of a Travelling Showperson made in the PPTS (2024) but is also assumed that all Travelling Showpeople will meet the NPPF Annex B planning definition.

Legislation and Guidance for Gypsies and Travellers

2.21 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 key pieces of legislation and guidance are relevant when developing policies relating to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. As previously set out it should be noted that the PPTS has now been repealed and is now incorporated into the new NPPF 2026:

- The Housing Act, 1985
- The Equality Act, 2010
- The Housing and Planning Act, 2016
- Planning Practice Guidance[5] (PPG)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2026

2.22 In addition, Case Law, Ministerial Statements, the outcomes of Local Plan Examinations and Planning Appeals, and Judicial Reviews also need to be taken into consideration. Relevant examples have been included in this report where appropriate.

2.23 The primary guidance for undertaking the assessment of housing need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is now set out in the NPPF (2026).

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

2.24 The most recent version of the NPPF was issued in August 2026 and contains a number of policies relating to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople under the following sections:

- Achieving sustainable development;
- Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- Making effective use of land; and
- Protecting Green Belt land.

2.25 Below is a summary of the key policies relating to the completion of a GTAA and planning to meet need for Travellers that are set out in the *Delivering a sufficient supply of homes* section of the NPPF.

[5] With particular reference to the sections on Housing needs of different groups (May 2021).

HO1: Assessing the need for homes

1. The preparation of spatial development strategies, and local plans where a spatial development strategy is not in place, should be based upon:

b. An assessment of the permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in the area as a minimum over the plan period.

HO2: Setting requirement figures for homes

1. Spatial development strategies should establish a housing requirement and set pitch and plot requirements where a need has been identified, for each local planning authority within the strategy area. These figures should not be retested as part of local plan preparation unless there has been a significant change in circumstances which affects the overall requirement and its distribution to each local planning authority area.

2. Where a spatial development strategy is not in place, local plans should establish the housing requirement figure and pitch and plot requirements for their area, taking account of any relevant emerging spatial development strategy.

4. Pitch and plot requirements should reflect the extent to which identified permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in the area can be accommodated over the plan period as fully as possible, in accordance with policy S1.

HO3: Providing land for homes

1. Local plans should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites to meet or exceed the housing requirement figure and pitch and plot requirements for their areas over the plan period, drawing on the land availability assessment in accordance with policy PM9. This should include:

b. In relation to traveller sites:

i. A supply of specific deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption of the plan (as set out in Annex D); and

ii. A supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for the subsequent years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for the remaining plan period, where the plan covers more than 10 years.

HO12: Traveller sites

1. Development proposals for traveller sites should be located so that they:

a. Provide a settled base while recognising the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability and may also mean that locations not well-related to existing settlements may be appropriate; and

b. Enable access to frequently used services, such as education, welfare and health services, including ensuring that children can attend school on a regular basis.

2. When considering proposals for traveller sites, including for the purposes of considering need under policies S5 and GB7, local planning authorities should take into account the existing level of local provision and need for additional sites and other personal circumstances which may be relevant. Applications from any traveller should be considered and not just those with local connections.

3. Where development proposals require the permanent or temporary relocation of an authorised traveller site, an alternative site should be identified and provided. Suitable alternative sites should take into account the views of existing residents as well as existing family or community groupings where possible.

2.26 In addition, Annex B and Annex D of the NPPF contain the following definitions of *Deliverable*, *Developable*, and *Windfall Sites*.

Deliverable: *To be considered deliverable, sites for housing or other pitches and plots should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that homes will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular:*

(a) sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long-term phasing plans).

(b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield land register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that homes will be delivered on-site within five years.

Developable: *To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development (or for traveller sites) with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.*

Windfall sites: *Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.*

3. Methodology

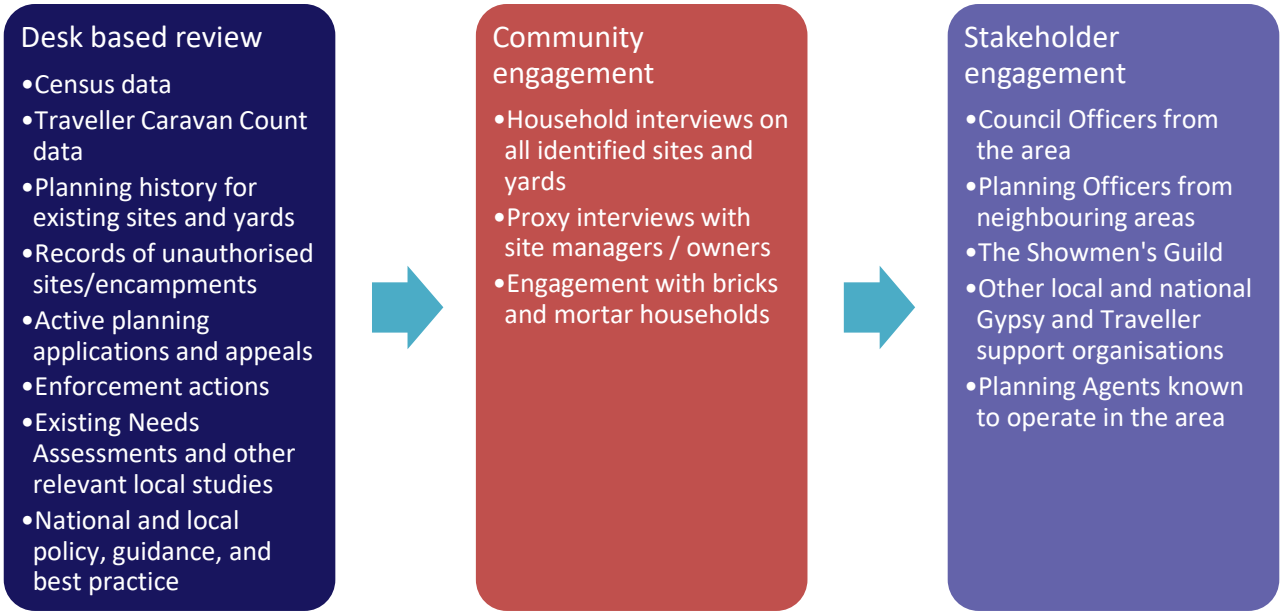
Background

3.1 Opinion Research Services (ORS) have been undertaking GTAAs for over fifteen years. Our approach to completing GTAAs has been regularly refined in light of changes to PPTS (now repealed) in 2015, 2023 and 2024, the Housing and Planning Act 2016, changes to the NPPF in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2024 and 2026, and the PPG, as well as the outcomes of Local Plan Examinations and Planning Appeals.

3.2 ORS would note that the ORS GTAA methodology has been repeatedly found to be sound and robust, including through Local Plan Examinations in multiple areas across England[6].

Our approach to Fieldwork

3.3 The stages below provide a summary of the methodology that was used to complete this study. These stages have been completed concurrently.



Desk-Based Review

3.4 The secondary data that was reviewed and collated included:

- Census data.
- MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count data.

[6] ORS have attended Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Examination Sessions where the GTAA methodology has been found to be sound in areas including Bedford, Brentwood, Bristol, Cambridge, Castle Point, Central Bedfordshire, Charnwood, Cheltenham, Colchester, Cotswold, Daventry, Ealing, East Hertfordshire, Elmbridge, Exeter, Gloucester, Hounslow, Kings Lynn, Leicester, Maldon, Milton Keynes, Newark and Sherwood, Newham, Rutland, South Cambridgeshire, South Gloucestershire, South Northamptonshire, South Staffordshire, Spelthorne, St Albans, Tewkesbury, and Waverley.

- Planning history for existing sites and yards.
- Records of unauthorised sites/encampments.
- Information on active planning applications and appeals.
- Information on active enforcement actions.
- Existing Needs Assessments and other relevant local studies.
- National and local policy, guidance, and best practice.

Stakeholder Engagement

3.5 Stakeholder engagement involves three core groups; local Council Officers, Planning Officers from neighbouring authorities and representative bodies.

3.6 Council Officers help provide a fuller understanding of local issues. This includes information about the progress made in addressing any needs identified in previous GTAAs and about any unauthorised developments.

3.7 Planning Officers from neighbouring authorities allow us to explore cross-border issues including transit provision.

3.8 Speaking with other organisations and agencies who represent Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople allows the assessment to take account of any particular issues affecting these communities. To support the GTAA contact was made with Friends Families and Travellers, and the Showmen's Guild.

Community Engagement

3.9 Once we have identified all authorised and unauthorised sites/yards in the study area we seek to complete an interview with each household. ORS use a census rather than sampling approach as we consider this to be more robust. Sample based approaches can lead to an underestimate of need and GTAAs using sampling are regularly challenged by the Planning Inspectorate.

3.10 ORS make at least three separate attempts to contact a household including leaving calling cards and offering appointments and the opportunity to complete an interview over the telephone.

3.11 Interviews are undertaken by experienced fieldworkers who work on our GTAA studies across England and Wales. To ensure consistency in data collection, ORS use a standard questionnaire which can be seen in **Appendix C**. The interview captures current demographic characteristics, the current or future accommodation needs of household members and whether there is any over-crowding or the presence of concealed households. It also asks about the type of pitches households may require in the future – for example private or socially rented, together with any features they may wish to be provided.

3.12 The survey still includes questions about the travelling characteristics of household members. Whilst responses to these questions are less relevant now following the changes to the PPTS in 2024, and now the NPPF in 2026, ORS feel that this is still useful data to collect. This information is useful when seeking to address any identified need as those who do and don't travel may have different pitch/plot requirements.

3.13 Where we are unable to complete an interview, we attempt to gather basic information about each pitch/plot through a proxy interview from sources including neighbouring residents and site managers.

3.14 In addition to the household and proxy interviews, fieldworkers make an overall physical assessment of each site/yard to determine any vacant pitches/plots and to identify any potential opportunities for intensification or expansion of sites/yards to meet current and future needs.

Bricks and Mortar Households

3.15 Following the changes to the PPTS in 2024, now incorporated into the NPPF 2026, the planning definition of a Traveller now includes *all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan*. This also includes households living in bricks and mortar who can demonstrate a cultural tradition of nomadism. Traveller households living in bricks and mortar have always been included in GTAAs completed by ORS so the changes to the planning definition have not changed how these households are dealt with in the GTAA.

3.16 The 2021 Census recorded 63 households who identified as Gypsies or Irish Travellers who lived in a house or bungalow in Runnymede and 17 living in a flat or maisonette. The 2021 Census also recorded 40 households who identified as Roma who lived in a house or bungalow in Runnymede and 28 living in a flat or maisonette. It should be noted that Roma households generally prefer to live in housing and not on sites.

3.17 ORS apply a rigorous approach to making contact with bricks and mortar households as this is a common issue raised at Local Plan Examinations and Planning Appeals. Contacts are sought through a range of sources including the interviews with people on existing sites and yards; information from stakeholder interviews; information from housing registers; and information from planning agents known to operate in the area. Interviews are sought with all identified households.

3.18 Through this approach, ORS endeavour to enable households living in bricks and mortar the opportunity to make their views known so that this can be included in the GTAA.

3.19 ORS do not make assumptions on the overall needs from household in bricks and mortar based on the outcomes of any interviews that are completed, as in our experience this leads to a significant over-estimate of the number of households wishing to move to a site or a yard.

3.20 In summary, ORS do not model need from households living in bricks and mortar and instead rely on any local evidence of need that is identified. Any need from bricks and mortar households that comes forward in the future should be addressed through Local Plan Criteria-Based Policies/ National Decision Making Polices as set out in the recommendations in this GTAA.

Timing of the Fieldwork

3.21 ORS are fully aware of the transient nature of many travelling communities and subsequent seasonal variations in site and yard occupancy. ORS aim to complete fieldwork during the non-travelling season, and to avoid days of known local or national events.

3.22 The fieldwork for this GTAA was completed over an extended period between March 2025 and March 2026 and a very robust response rate of 95.1% was achieved (97.1% for Gypsies and Travellers and 84.8% for Travelling Showpeople).

Our Analysis

Applying the NPPF Planning Definition

3.23 The primary change to the PPTS in December 2024, now incorporated into the NPPF 2026, in relation to the assessment of need was the change to the definition of a Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showperson for planning purposes. Wherever possible we use the data collected in household interviews to identify if they meet the planning definition. In some cases information from planning applications and planning appeal Decision Notices are also used.

3.24 Through the inclusion of *all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan* in the NPPF Annex B definition, this now includes all Travellers. There were no changes to the definition of Travelling Showpeople in Annex B and all are now assumed to meet the NPPF planning definition.

Dealing with Undetermined Households

3.25 A GTAA has to consider the needs of any households where it is not possible to determine if they meet the planning definition – usually because we have been unable to complete an interview. These are defined as Undetermined Households.

3.26 Whilst there is no guidance that sets out how the needs of these households should be addressed, ORS consider it necessary to estimate potential need from these households. This is an additional need figure over and above the need identified for households that meet the planning definition.

3.27 The estimate sought to identify potential current and future need from any pitches/plots known to be temporary or unauthorised through modelling need from concealed-doubled-up households, from teenagers based on the outcomes from completed interviews, and through new household formation. This modelling applies the proportion of need from households that were interviewed to the Undetermined Households. This modelled need is also accounted for in an increased base for the calculation of future household formation.

3.28 As the demographics of the Undetermined Households are unknown, ORS use our national household formation rate of 1.50% in our analysis to estimate future need[7].

3.29 Following the changes to the planning definition in PPTS 2024, now incorporated into the NPPF 2026, it has been assumed that all Undetermined Households will meet the planning definition. However, it is recommended that needs from Undetermined Households are addressed through Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies/criteria contained in National Decision Making Policies and not through specific allocations.

3.30 The ORS approach to addressing the need arising from Undetermined Households was supported by the Planning Inspector for a Local Plan Examination for Maldon District Council, Essex (June 2017). He concluded [emphasis added]:

> *The Council's stance is that any need arising from 'unknowns' should be a matter left to the planning application process. Modifications to Policy H6 have been put forward by the Council setting out criteria for such a purpose, which I consider further below. To my mind, that is an appropriate approach. While there remains a possibility that up to 10 further pitches may be needed, that cannot be said to represent*

[7] See Chapter 7 for further details on household formation.

identified need. It would be unreasonable to demand that the Plan provide for needs that have not been established to exist.

Calculating the Current and Future Need

3.31 To identify need, the NPPF requires an assessment for current and future pitch/plot requirements but does not provide a standard methodology for this. However, as with any housing assessment, the underlying calculation can be broken down into a relatively small number of factors. In this case, the key issue is to compare the supply of pitches/plots available for occupation with the current and future needs of the population.

3.32 A summary of the approach that has been taken is show below.

Supply of Pitches/Plots

3.33 Our desk-based research and fieldwork determines the vacant, and potentially available supply in the study area:

- Current vacant pitches/plots on public sites;
- Pitches/plots on public sites currently with planning consent due to be developed within 5 years;
- Pitches/plots vacated by people on public sites moving to housing;
- Pitches/plots vacated by people on public sites moving from the study area (out-migration).

3.34 It is important when seeking to identify supply from vacant pitches/plots that they are in fact available for general occupation – i.e. on a public or social rented site/yard, or on a private site/yard that is run on a commercial basis with anyone being able to rent a pitch/plot if they are available. Typically, vacant pitches/plots on small private family sites/yards are not included as components of available supply but can be used to meet any current and future need from the family living on the site/yard.

Current Need

3.35 The second stage is to identify components of current need:

- Households on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected.
- Households living on sites/yards with temporary planning permission.
- Concealed, doubled-up or over-crowded households (including single adults).
- Teenage children in need of a pitch/plot of their own in the next 5 years.
- In-migration/roadside.
- Households in bricks and mortar needing to move to sites/yards.
- Households in need on waiting lists for public sites.

3.36 ORS are increasingly identifying households and adult household members who have been forced to leave sites/yards due to over-crowding or exceeding planning conditions on the number of caravans permitted on sites/yards. These households are typically living on the roadside or doubling-up on pitches/plots in neighbouring local authorities. ORS include these households as components of hidden need and term them *displaced in-migration*.

Future Need

3.37 The final stage is to identify components of future need. This includes the component of new household formation.

3.38 Household formation rates are often the subject of challenge at appeals or examinations. ORS firmly believe that any household formation rates should use a robust local evidence base, rather than simply relying on national precedent. The approach taken is set out in more detail in Chapter 7 of this report.

Pitch/Plot Turnover

3.39 Some assessments of need make use of pitch/plot turnover as an ongoing component of supply. ORS do not agree with this approach or with making any assumptions about annual turnover rates. ORS consider that this approach frequently ends up significantly under-estimating need as, in the majority of cases, vacant pitches/plots are not in fact available to meet any local need.

3.40 The use of turnover has been the subject of a number of Inspectors Decisions, for example **APP/J3720/A/13/2208767** found a GTAA to be unsound when using turnover and concluded:

> *West Oxfordshire Council relies on a GTAA published in 2013. This identifies an immediate need for 6 additional pitches. However, the GTAA methodology treats pitch turnover as a component of supply. This is only the case if there is net outward migration, yet no such scenario is apparent in West Oxfordshire. Based on the evidence before me I consider the underlying criticism of the GTAA to be justified and that unmet need is likely to be higher than that in the findings in the GTAA.*
>
> *In addition, Best Practice for Assessing the Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers produced jointly in June 2016 by organisations including Friends, Families and Travellers, the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit, the York Travellers Trust, the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group, Garden Court Chambers and Leeds GATE concluded that:*
>
> *Assessments involving any form of pitch turnover in their supply relies upon making assumptions, a practice best avoided. Turnover is naturally very difficult to assess accurately and in practice does not contribute meaningfully to additional supply so should be very carefully assessed in line with local trends. Mainstream housing assessments are not based on the assumption that turnover within the existing stock can provide for general housing needs.*

3.41 As such, other than current vacant pitches/plots that are known to be available, annual pitch/plot turnover has not been considered as a formal component of supply in this GTAA. However, natural turnover of pitches/plots on public and private sites/yards should continue to be monitored by the Council. In particular, the natural turnover of pitches/plots can help to meet future need over time from new household formation.

Transit Provision

3.42 GTAA studies require the identification of demand for transit provision. Whilst the majority of Gypsies and Travellers have permanent bases either on sites/yards or in bricks and mortar and no longer travel, other members of the community either travel permanently or for part of the year.

3.43 Due to the mobile nature of the population, a range of sites/yards can be provided to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers as they move through different areas.

- **Transit sites** - full facilities where Gypsies and Travellers might live temporarily (for up to three months) – for example, to work locally, for holidays or to visit family and friends.
- **Emergency stopping places** - more limited facilities.
- **Temporary sites and stopping places** - only temporary facilities to cater for an event.
- **Negotiated stopping places** - agreements which allow caravans to be sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time.

3.44 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, usually around 12 weeks, and has a range of facilities such as water supply, electricity, and amenity blocks.

3.45 An alternative to, or in addition 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 usually has more limited facilities with typically only a source of water and chemical toilet disposal provided.

3.46 Another alternative is negotiated stopping. The term negotiated stopping is used to describe agreed short-term provision for Gypsy and Traveller caravans. It does not include permanent built transit sites but negotiated agreements which allow caravans to be sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. Agreements are made between the local authority and the (temporary) residents regarding expectations on both sides.

3.47 Temporary stopping places can be made available at times of increased demand due to fairs or cultural celebrations that are attended by Gypsies and Travellers. A charge may be levied as determined by the local authority although they only need to provide basic facilities including: a cold-water supply; portable toilets; sewerage disposal point and refuse disposal facilities.

3.48 The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (Section 62a) is particularly important with regard to the issue of Gypsy and Traveller transit site provision. Section 62a of the Act allows the police to direct trespassers to remove themselves and their vehicles and property from any land where a suitable pitch is available for the caravan or each of the caravans on a relevant caravan site which is situated in the local authority's area (or within the county in two-tier local authority areas). Relevant sites need to be managed by a Local Authority or a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). The police have no powers to direct people to private transit sites or yards.

3.49 Consideration also has to be given to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act which came in to force in June 2022. Part 4 of the Act gives the Police additional powers to deal with unauthorised encampments through new offences relating to residing on land without consent in or with a vehicle and new powers in relation to the seizure of property.

3.50 In order to investigate the potential need for transit provision when undertaking work to support the GTAA, ORS sought to undertake analysis of any records of unauthorised sites and encampments, as well as information from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Traveller Caravan Count. The outcomes of the Stakeholder Interviews with Council Officers and with Officers from neighbouring planning authorities have also been taken into consideration when determining this element of need in the study area.

Approaches to Meeting Identified Need

3.51 In relation to Travellers, Policy HO1 in the NPPF (2026) sets out that *The preparation of spatial development strategies, and local plans where a spatial development strategy is not in place, should be based upon: b. An assessment of the permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in the area as a minimum over the plan period.*

3.52 Policy HO1 also sets out that *At the most appropriate level, development plans should also take into account an assessment of the size, type and tenure of housing or other accommodation needed for different groups. These groups include, but are not limited to: h. Travellers*.

3.53 Policy HO3 in the NPPF sets out that *Local plans should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites to meet or exceed the housing requirement figure and pitch and plot requirements for their areas over the plan period, drawing on the land availability assessment in accordance with policy PM9. This should include: b. In relation to traveller sites: i. A supply of specific deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption of the plan (as set out in Annex D); and ii. A supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for the subsequent years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for the remaining plan period, where the plan covers more than 10 years.*

3.54 The NPPF in Annex B states that *'Pitch' means a pitch on a gypsy and traveller site and 'plot' means a pitch on a travelling showpeople site (often called a 'yard'). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for gypsies and travellers and mixed-use plots for travelling showpeople, which may / will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.*.

3.55 Overall the NPPF refers to the provision of Travellers' *sites/yards* to meet needs, and to setting *pitch/plot* targets. For ease, and consistency, this GTAA sets out the accommodation needs as needs for pitches/plots. In most cases, the need should be met through provision of a pitch/plot. However, in some circumstances the accommodation needs may be more appropriately met through provision of other *alternative* suitable accommodation (for example through additional touring caravans on sites and yards). So, in this GTAA any reference to *pitch/plot* means *pitch/plot or pitch/plot equivalent*.

3.56 This GTAA provides evidence of accommodation needs in line with the NPPF requirements. This evidence will help to inform the Council's policies in their emerging Local Plan including the setting of local pitch/plot targets and the allocation of sites/yards to meet identified accommodation needs.

3.57 ORS recommend that Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan Policies should give consideration to addressing need from households that meet the 2026 NPPF planning definition of a Traveller through the allocation of new pitches or plots – or equivalents; through the intensification or expansion of the existing sites and yards where need has been identified; and through consideration of granting planning permission for any temporary and unauthorised sites or yards where this is felt to be appropriate in relation to relevant Development Management Policies.

3.58 The Council should also put in place a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy to manage any need from Undetermined Households, as well as to deal with any potential windfall applications, potential need from in-migration, or any need arising from bricks and mortar.

4. Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople Sites/Yards and Population

Introduction

4.1 One of the main considerations of this GTAA is to provide evidence to support the provision of pitches and plots to meet the current and future accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Gypsies and Travellers

4.2 A pitch is an area normally occupied by one household, which typically contains enough space for one or two caravans but can vary in size[8]. A site is a collection of pitches which form a larger development for Gypsies and Travellers.

4.3 Whilst there is no standard size for a Gypsy and Traveller pitch, there are some examples of guidance[9] at a local authority level that recommend average pitch sizes of between 320m^2 and 500m^2 but also suggest that a variety of pitch sizes – including small, medium and large pitches - can enable different sized families to be accommodated on sites (equivalent to two, three and four-bedroom houses) and can contribute to affordability.

Travelling Showpeople

4.4 For Travelling Showpeople, the most common descriptions used are a plot for the space occupied by one household and a yard for a collection of plots which are typically occupied by Travelling Showpeople.

4.5 Whilst there is also no standard size for a Travelling Showpeople plot, The Showmen's Guild[10] advocates an average plot size of 2,000m^2. However, this should be viewed with some caution given the age of the guidance. In more recent years, many Showpeople have sought to diversify their working practices and do not now need as much space for the storage or maintenance of larger rides. Recent planning applications in other local authorities have seen plans for new yards put forward including a variety of plot sizes.

Public Residential Sites/Yards

4.6 The public and private provision of mainstream housing is also largely mirrored when considering Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. One common form of a Gypsy and Traveller site is a public residential site, which is

[8] Whilst it has now been withdrawn, Government guidance on *Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites* recommended that, as a general guide, an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer [a static caravan or park home for example] and touring caravan, parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area.
[9] Leeds City Council: *Gypsy and Traveller Site Design Guide* (2020) and East Devon District Council: *Gypsy and Traveller Site Design and Layout Guidance* (2017).
[10] The Showmen's Guild: *Travelling Showpeople's Sites – A Planning Focus* (2007).

provided by a Local Authority or by a Registered Provider (usually a Housing Association). Pitches on public sites can be obtained through signing up to a waiting list, and the costs of running the sites are met from the rent paid by the tenants (similar to social housing).

Private Residential Sites/Yards

4.7 The alternative to a public residential site/yard is a private residential site/yard for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, respectively. These result from individuals or families buying areas of land and then obtaining planning permission to live on them. Households can also rent pitches/plots on existing private sites/yards (providing the planning consents for such sites allow for this).

4.8 These two forms of accommodation are the equivalent to private ownership and private rent for those who live in bricks and mortar housing. Generally, the majority of Travelling Showpeople yards are privately owned and managed.

Transit Provision

4.9 The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population also has other types of sites/yards due to its transient nature, as described more fully in Chapter 3. These are known as transit sites and they provide many of the same facilities as a residential site, except that there is a maximum occupancy period of residence which can vary from a few days or weeks to a period of months[11].

4.10 An alternative to a transit site is an emergency or negotiated stopping place. This type of site also has restrictions on the length of time someone can stay on it but has much more limited facilities.

4.11 Both of these two types of transit provision are designed to accommodate, for a temporary period, Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople whilst they travel.

4.12 A number of authorities also operate an accepted encampments policy where short-term stopovers are tolerated without enforcement action.

Unauthorised Sites/Yards

4.13 Further occurrences for the Traveller population are unauthorised developments and encampments. Unauthorised developments occur on land which is owned by the Travellers or with the approval of the landowner, 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 Travellers and are usually referred to as roadside encampments.

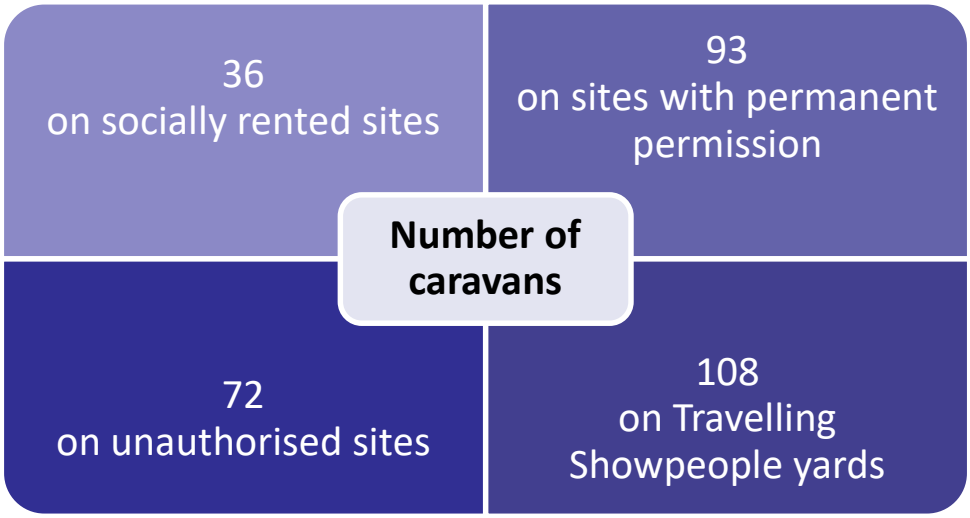
MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count

4.14 Another source of information available on the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population is the Traveller Caravan Count[12] which has been historically conducted by each Local Authority in England on a

[11] When away travelling Showpeople tend to stop off at the fairgrounds/events that they are working at.
[12] The Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count was renamed the Traveller Caravan Count due to the inclusion of information on Travelling Showpeople caravans in 2013.

specific date in January and July of each year[13] and reported to MHCLG. This is a statistical count of the number of caravans on both authorised and unauthorised sites across England. From 2026 the Count will only be completed once a year in January.

4.15 The most recent Traveller Caravan Count in January 2026 reported the following in Runnymede:



4.16 As this count is of caravans and not households, it makes it more difficult to interpret for a study such as this because it does not count pitches/plots or resident households. The count is merely a 'snapshot in time' conducted by the Local Authority on a specific day, and any unauthorised sites/yards or encampments which occur on other dates will not be recorded. Likewise, any caravans that are away from sites/yards on the day of the count will not be included.

4.17 As such, it is not considered appropriate to use the outcomes from the Traveller Caravan Count in the calculation of current and future need as the information collected during the site/yard visits is seen as more robust and fit-for-purpose. However, the Caravan Count data has been used to support the identification of the need to provide for transit provision and this is set out later in this report.

[13] This is because, historically, count data has not been gathered for travelling showpeople in July. Therefore caravan numbers for Travelling Showpeople are only included in the January count.

Sites and Yards in Runnymede

4.18 Figure 6 below sets out the sites and yards in the area on the base date for the GTAA:

Figure 6: Total amount of provision in Runnymede (July 2026)

Category	Sites/Yards	Pitches/Plots
Gypsies and Travellers		
Public sites	2	30
Private sites with permanent planning permission	16	77
Private sites with temporary planning permission	1	1
Sites tolerated for planning purposes	6	8
Unauthorised sites	9	48
Sub-Total	**34**	**164**
Travelling Showpeople		
Private yards with permanent planning permission	5	36
Sub-Total	**5**	**36**
TOTAL	**39**	**200**

4.19 See **Appendix B: Site and Yard List** for further details.

5. Stakeholder Engagement

Introduction

5.1 ORS sought to complete engagement with a range of stakeholders to complement the information gathered through interviews with members of the Travelling Community. This engagement took the form of telephone interviews, Teams interviews, or email exchanges.

5.2 The aim of these interviews is to provide an understanding of current provision and possible future need; short-term encampments; transit provision; and cross-border issues.

5.3 A total of 7 interviews were undertaken with Council Officers from the study area.

5.4 In order to explore issues relating to cross boundary working, ORS also sought to engage with a Planning Officer from the following neighbouring local authorities:

- Elmbridge
- Spelthorne
- Surrey Heath
- Windsor and Maidenhead
- Woking

5.5 Other organisations and agencies who represent Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople were also contacted. These were Friends Families and Travellers, and The Showmen's Guild. Neither organisation had responded by the time of reporting.

5.6 Due to issues surrounding data protection, and in order to protect the anonymity of those who took part, this section presents a summary of the views expressed by interviewees and verbatim comments have not been used. The views expressed in this section of the report represent a balanced summary of the views expressed by stakeholders, and on the views of the individuals concerned, rather than the official policy of their Council or organisation.

Views of Key Stakeholders and Council Officers

Accommodation Needs

5.7 Stakeholders identified a longstanding Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issue in Runnymede, including a potential high level of accommodation need. Authorised sites being occupied by non-Travellers is an issue on some sites.

5.8 In addition, there have been a number of planning applications relating to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the area. A large number of pitches/plots have been granted, particularly in the last 2 years.

5.9 No specific accommodation issues relating to Travelling Showpeople were identified.

Short-term Encampments and Transit Provision

5.10 Unauthorised encampments were said to be a problem in Runnymede and across Surrey in general. Runnymede Borough Council addressed this issue around five years ago by erecting height barriers and other defences to try and restrict access to land used for encampments which was said to have helped.

5.11 Transit provision is not currently provided in Runnymede. Some Gypsies and Travellers in transit had recently been spotted on Chertsey Meads; however, stakeholders consider the level of need to be insufficient to warrant dedicated transit provision, and also that transit issues should be addressed on a Surrey-wide basis moving forward.

Cross Border Issues

5.12 Stakeholders described some informal cross-border working between neighbouring local authorities, including sharing information when Gypsy and Traveller households are moving between areas. This was said to help neighbouring authorities prepare for arrivals and manage their own accommodation provision.

5.13 Drawing on practice in Surrey, it was suggested that there should be a policy or process for signposting Gypsy and Travellers to appropriate local sites where vacancies are available.

Future Priorities and Any Further Issues

5.14 Concerns were raised regarding mobile home sites in Runnymede, including impacts on local drainage, fly-tipping and alleged illegal activity. It was said that there had been several enforcement operations at some sites due to reports of potential unlawful activities taking place. These concerns were described by stakeholders as a significant issue for Runnymede.

5.15 It was considered that increased access to land had contributed to some sites being taken over by members of the Gypsy and Traveller community. Stakeholders also shared concerns around the potential impact of changes in site ownership on existing residents, including vulnerable people who had previously purchased mobile homes on sites that were subsequently acquired by members of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

Representative Organisations

5.16 While contact was made with the organisations set out above in paragraph 5.5, neither of them responded formally so no comments can be attributed. However, informal discussions with the Showmen's Guild suggested that there may be issues in relation to current occupancy of Fairfields.

Neighbouring Authorities

5.17 Potential cross-border issues were raised by the following authorities:

- Surrey Heath, and Woking

5.18 Runnymede Council were made aware of all issues brought forward by these neighbouring authorities.

5.19 The following authorities responded to indicate no potential cross-border issues and no response had been received from Elmbridge Borough Council:

- Spelthorne, and Windsor and Maidenhead

6. Survey of Travelling Communities

Interviews with Travellers

6.1 One of the major components of this study was a detailed survey of the Gypsy and Traveller population living in the study area, including efforts to engage with the bricks and mortar community.

6.2 At the base date for the GTAA, there were 2 public Gypsy and Traveller sites; 16 privately owned sites with permanent planning permission; 1 privately owned site with temporary planning permission; 6 sites that are tolerated for planning purposes; 9 unauthorised sites; and 5 Travelling Showpeople yards. See **Appendix B: Site and Yard List** for further details.

6.3 In addition, it was possible to complete interviews with 6 households living in bricks and mortar[14].

6.4 Figure 7 below sets out the number of pitches/plots, the number of interviews/proxy interviews that were completed or where an outcome was achieved, and any reasons why interviews were not able to be completed. This represents a very robust overall response rate of 95%.

Figure 7: Interviews/Outcomes in Runnymede

Site/Yard Type	Pitches/ Plots	Interviews/ Outcomes	Notes
Gypsies and Travellers			
Public Sites (authorised)			
Elm Farm, Lyne	15	15	
The Paddocks, Virginia Water	15	10	4 x no contact, 1 x vacant (15), 1 double pitch (12,12A)
Private Sites (authorised)			
Poppy Way, Ottershaw	2	1	1 x non-Travellers
4 Aymer Close, Staines	5	5	
Acorn Farm, Thorpe	7	7	
Beechcroft Stables, Egham	6	6	PP granted July 2026 for additional pitches.
Eden Farm (1-6), Virginia Water	6	6	
Eden Farm (8-10), Virginia Water	3	3	
Forest Gate Farm, Ottershaw	1	1	
Greenacres Farm, Lyne	12	12	
Greenacres Mobile Home Park, Chertsey	12	5	Permission implemented but 7 x undeveloped at GTAA base date
High Trees, Chertsey	1	0	1 x refusal
Land adjacent Edale, Addlestone	1	1	
Land adjacent to Lynn's Park, Ottershaw (Carriage Gate)	1	1	
Lynn's Park, Ottershaw	2	2	
New Oak Farm (North section), Chertsey	4	4	
New Oak Farm (South section), Chertsey	10	20	10 x double-pitches

[14] See Chapter 3 and Chapter 7 for details of the efforts that were taken to engage with households living in bricks and mortar.

Willow Farm, Ottershaw	4	7	Permission allows 2 statics on pitches 1,3 & 4 and 1 on pitch 2
Temporary Sites			
Wickham Piggery (Wickham Stables), Egham	1	1	
Tolerated Sites			
111A Almners Road, Lyne	1	1	
Ada's Farm, Lyne, (to west of injunction site)	3	3	
Eden Farm (7), Virginia Water	1	1	
Land adjacent to The Paddocks, Virginia Water, (Roseacres Farm)	1	1	
Old Pine, Land adjacent to Frank Muir Playing Fields, Thorpe	1	1	
Warren Yard, Lyne	1	1	
Unauthorised Sites			
13/14 Queenswood	2	2	
Ada's Farm, Lyne, (to west of injunction site)	5	5	
Forest Gate Farm, Ottershaw	4	4	
Lakeview (Land north of 4 Aymer Close, Staines)	1	1	
Land adjacent to Lynn's Park, Ottershaw (Carriage Gate)	3	3	
Land adjacent Warren Farm, Thorpe	2	2	
Little Almners/Walnut Tree Farm, Chertsey	19	19	Plus up to 115 non-Traveller caravans
Lynn's Park, Ottershaw	8	8	
Land to the west of 203-221 New Haw Road, Addlestone	4	4	
Bricks & Mortar			
4 Aymer Close, Staines	1	1	
Ada's Farm, Lyne (to west of injunction site)	2	2	
The Chimes, Egham	1	1	
Sub-Total	**168**	**167**	
Travelling Showpeople			
Authorised			
Fairfields, Chertsey	12	12	
Stevens Yard, Chertsey	1	0	1 x vacant
Thorpe Lea Cottage, Egham	11	11	
Woburn Park Farm, Chertsey	9	0	5 x refusals, 4 x non-Travellers
54 Mead Lane, Chertsey	3	3	
Bricks & Mortar			
54 Mead Lane, Chertsey	2	2	
Sub-Total	**38**	**28**	
TOTAL	**206**	**195**	

7. Current and Future Pitch Provision

Introduction

7.1 This section focuses on the pitch/plot provision that is needed in the study area currently and to 2044/45. This includes both current unmet need and need which is likely to arise in the future[15]. This time period allows for robust forecasts of the requirements for future provision, based upon the evidence contained within this study and also secondary data sources.

7.2 We would note that this section is based upon a combination of the household interviews, planning records and stakeholder interviews. 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 also includes a review of transit provision.

New Household Formation Rates

7.4 ORS prepared a Technical Note on Gypsy and Traveller Household Formation and Growth Rates in 2015 and updated it in 2020, and again in 2025. The main conclusions are set out here, and the full paper is in **Appendix D**: Household Formation Rates.

7.5 The Technical Note concludes that the growth in the national Gypsy and Traveller population may be as low as 1.25% per annum – much less than the 3.00% per annum often assumed, but still greater than in the settled community. Even using extreme and unrealistic assumptions, it is hard to find evidence for net Gypsy and Traveller population and household growth rates above 2.00% per annum.

7.6 In practice, the best available evidence supports a national net household growth rate of 1.50% per annum for Gypsies and Travellers.

7.7 This view has been supported by Planning Inspectors in a number of appeal decisions. The Inspector for an appeal in Doncaster, (**Ref: APP/F4410/W/15/3133490 (November 2016)**) where the agent acting on behalf of the appellant claimed that a rate closer to 3.00% should be used concluded:

> *In assessing need account also needs to be taken of likely household growth over the coming years. In determining an annual household growth rate, the Council relies on the work of Opinions Research Services (ORS), part of Swansea University. ORS's research considers migration, population profiles, births & fertility rates, death rates, household size data and household dissolution rates to determine average household growth rates for gypsies and travellers. The findings indicate that the average annual growth rate is in the order of 1.50% but that a 2.50% figure could be used if local data suggest a relatively youthful population. As the Council has found a strong correlation between Doncaster's gypsy and traveller population age profile and the national picture, a 1.50% annual household growth rate has been used in its 2016 GTANA. Given the rigour of ORS's research and the Council's application of its findings to the local area I accept that a 1.50% figure is justified in the case of Doncaster.*

[15] See Chapter 3 for details of the components of current and future need.

7.8 Another case was in relation to an appeal in Guildford that was issued in March 2018 (**Ref: APP/W/16/3165526**) where the agent acting on behalf of the appellant again claimed that a rate closer to 3.00% should be used. The Inspector concluded:

> *There is significant debate about household formation rates and the need to meet future growth in the district. The obvious point to make is that this issue is likely to be debated at the local-plan examination. In my opinion, projecting growth rates is not an exact science and the debate demonstrates some divergence of opinion between the experts. Different methodologies could be applied producing a wide range of data. However, on the available evidence it seems to me that the figures used in the GTAA are probably appropriate given that they are derived by using local demographic evidence. In my opinion, the use of a national growth rate and its adaptation to suit local or regional variation, or the use of local base data to refine the figure, is a reasonable approach. As a result of these and other decisions, the ORS approach to new household formation is no longer regularly challenged so there have been no more recent decisions from Inspectors.*

Local Approach to New Household Formation Rates

7.9 This GTAA takes full account of the net local household growth rate per annum calculated on the basis of demographic evidence from the household interviews. The baseline includes all current authorised households, all households identified as being in current need (including concealed/doubled-up households, and roadside households), as well as households living on tolerated unauthorised pitches or plots who are not included as current need. The assessments of future need also take account of modelling projections based on birth and death rates, household dissolution, and in-/out-migration.

7.10 Overall, the household growth rate used for the assessment of future needs is informed by local evidence. This local demographic evidence has been used to adjust the ORS national growth rate of 1.50% up or down based on the proportion of those aged under 18.

7.11 However, in certain circumstances where the numbers of households and/or children are low, or the population age structure cohorts are skewed by certain age groups, it is not appropriate to apply a percentage rate for new household formation. In these cases, a judgement is made on likely new household formation based on the age and gender of the children. This is based on the assumption that 50% of households likely to form will stay in the area. This is based on evidence from other GTAAs that ORS have completed across England and Wales.

7.12 The approach that has been applied in Runnymede for this GTAA is set out below:

- For Gypsy and Traveller households that met the planning definition, 43% of residents were aged under 18. Therefore, the ORS national rate of 1.50% has been uplifted to 1.80%.
- The ORS national rate of 1.50% has been used to estimate growth for Undetermined Gypsy and Traveller households.
- For Travelling Showpeople who met the planning definition, there were very low numbers of children aged under 18 so formation has been derived from the household demographics.
- The ORS national rate of 1.50% has been used to estimate growth for Undetermined Travelling Showpeople.

7.13 It should also be noted that new household formation from younger children (aged 12 and under) has been calculated from year 6 of the GTAA period onwards. New household formation for years 1-5 of the GTAA period is from teenagers in need of a pitch/plot in the next 5 years who have been identified as components of need in the household interviews, or through modelled need for Undetermined Households. This eliminates any double counting in the assessment of need.

Breakdown by 5 Year Bands

7.14 In addition to tables which set out the overall need for Gypsies and Travellers, the overall need has also been broken down by 5-year bands as required by NPPF. The way that this is calculated is by including all current need (from unauthorised pitches/plots, concealed and doubled-up households, 5-year need from teenage children, and in-migration/roadside need) in the first 5 years. The total net new household formation is then split across the remaining GTAA period.

Household Planning Status

7.15 Figure 8 below sets out the planning status of households for the GTAA. It is important to note that this table records numbers of *households* and *not* the number of *pitches or plots*.

Figure 8: Planning status of households in Runnymede

Status	Meet Planning Definition	Undetermined
Gypsies and Travellers		
Public Sites	28	4
Private Sites	94	1
Temporary Sites	1	0
Tolerated Sites	9	0
Unauthorised Sites	50	0
Bricks & Mortar	4	0
Sub-Total	**186**	**5**
Travelling Showpeople		
Private Yards	37	5
Bricks & Mortar	2	0
Sub-Total	**39**	**5**
TOTAL	**225**	**10**

7.16 Figure 8 above shows that for Gypsies and Travellers, 186 households met the NPPF planning definition of a Traveller, and 39 Travelling Showpeople households met the NPPF planning definition.

7.17 It was not possible to complete interviews with 5 Gypsy and Traveller households during the fieldwork period as households either refused to take part in an interview or were not present during the fieldwork period. It was also not possible to complete 5 interviews with Travelling Showpeople households as they refused to take part in an interview. These households are recorded as Undetermined for the purposes of the GTAA.

Interviews with Gypsies and Travellers in Bricks and Mortar

7.18 Following all of the efforts that were made it was possible to identify and interview 6 households living in bricks and mortar (4 Gypsies and Travellers and 2 Travelling Showpeople). All are happy living in bricks and mortar, and do not have a need to move to a site or yard.

7.19 ORS have completed a large number of GTAAs and needs from bricks and mortar households is regularly raised at Appeals and Examinations.

7.20 In response to this ORS, are in the process of preparing a detailed Technical Note to set out evidence to demonstrate that the vast majority of Travellers who live in bricks and mortar do so through choice and have no need to move to a site.

7.21 The Technical Note considers a range of issues based upon the known and estimated statistics for Gypsy and Traveller households in bricks and mortar and also the work ORS have undertaken over the last 15 years in relation to GTAAs. The main issues that have been considered are:

- How large is the Gypsy and Traveller population in England and what proportion live in bricks and mortar?
- How does the number of households in bricks and mortar vary by local authority?
- Whether it possible to estimate the number of households who wish to move from bricks and mortar by a simple statistical means in any local authority.
- What case studies around the country tell us about the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar.

7.22 In terms of households in bricks and mortar, there has now been at least 15 years of detailed research completed by ORS with Gypsies and Travellers as part of the GTAA process and there is no evidence whatsoever to justify that there are a high number of households living in bricks and mortar needing to move to sites. A wide range of methods have been used across the country to identify households who wish to move to sites and few (the majority being in Inner London), if any, have ever shown high numbers who wish to move to sites.

7.23 The emerging conclusions in the Technical Note are set out below and it is anticipated that it will be published later in 2026:

- It is estimated that the current population of Gypsies and Travellers as an ethnic grouping in England is between 200,000-240,000 persons, with around 70,000-90,000 households.
- Evidence from the 2021 Census indicates that there is no link between the number of Gypsy and Traveller households who live in caravans and those who live in bricks and mortar at a local authority level. Some local authorities have large populations on sites, but few households in bricks and mortar, while the reverse applies for others. There is therefore no statistically robust mechanism available to accurately and robustly extrapolate the need for households in bricks and mortar from the size of the on-site population at a local level using data in the 2021 Census.
- For the actual need for households in bricks and mortar, the only available source of information is local evidence based upon household surveys and stakeholder engagement. Other than in London Boroughs and a small number of other urban areas, there is only

evidence of very small numbers of households seeking to move to a site from bricks and mortar, with the majority of households living in bricks and mortar through choice.

» This is supported by evidence from the last round of GTAAs that were completed in Wales under the requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act. The approach in Wales included extremely detailed and binding statutory guidance on how to undertake the GTAA, which required a thorough approach to assessing the needs of households in bricks and mortar. GTAAs were produced for all 22 local authorities in Wales, all following the same methodology, and this represents the most concerted and consistent attempt to identify need from Gypsy and Traveller households in bricks and mortar undertaken in England and Wales. Our research shows that there was a need for just 12 pitches from households living in bricks and mortar across all 22 local authorities in Wales – or an average of just 0.5 household per local authority.

» There are approximately 360 Local Planning Authorities in England and an estimated total of between 52,500-67,500 Gypsy and Traveller households living in bricks and mortar. When the findings from Wales are applied to England this would equate to a total average need from bricks and mortar of 2.5 households for each LPA over the 15-year course of a GTAA.

7.24 As such, the emerging conclusions of the Technical Note suggest a maximum need from bricks and mortar of 2.5 households for each Local Planning Authority across England over a typical 15 year GTAA period, unless local evidence suggests otherwise. In Runnymede there is no local evidence to suggest a need for pitches or plots from those living in bricks and mortar.

7.25 Therefore, whilst the 2021 Census identified Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar, this should not be seen as a proxy indicator of need from these households.

7.26 The overall approach taken by ORS to seek to identify need from households living in bricks and mortar was supported by Local Plan Inspectors in their Report for the St Albans Local Plan which was published in August 2026:

> *470.*
>
> *In respect of travellers living in bricks and mortar, GTAA paragraphs 3.17 to 3.19 set out how the authors applied a 'rigorous approach to making contact with bricks and mortar (traveller) households' (of which 107 were indicated in 2021 Census data). GTAA paragraph 7.23 nonetheless sets out that 'despite all the efforts that were made it was not possible to identify and interview any households living in bricks and mortar'. Although the data could potentially point to a higher level of need, there is equally no robust evidence before us to show which travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation, if indeed any, are seeking pitches in St Albans.*

Migration/Roadside

7.27 The study also sought to identify any need from households who have been forced to move from sites/yards due to overcrowding and who are currently living on the roadside or on sites/yards in other local authorities – and who have strong family links with households in Runnymede. These are referred to as roadside households or *displaced in-migration*.

7.28 Evidence drawn from stakeholder and household interviews has been considered alongside assessments of need that have been completed in other nearby local authorities. The household interviews identified no households living on the roadside predominantly in Runnymede with a need to move to a permanent pitch in the area.

7.29 ORS have found no firm evidence from other local studies that have been completed recently of any households wishing to move to Runnymede. Therefore, net migration to the sum of zero has been assumed for the GTAA – which means that net pitch/plot requirements are driven by locally identifiable need rather than speculative modelling assumptions.

7.30 It is important to note that any applications for new sites/yards or additional pitches/plots as a result of in-migration should be seen as windfall need and should be dealt with by Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies.

Public Sites

7.31 There are 2 public sites in Runnymede with 30 pitches (2 x 15).

7.32 The sites are managed by Surrey County Council and it was confirmed that whilst there is a Surrey-wide waiting list for public sites, there is a local assessment of need that takes place to determine who is most in need for pitches when they become available.

7.33 At the baseline date for the GTAA there was 1 vacant pitch which has been taken into consideration as available supply.

Gypsy and Traveller Needs

Pitch Needs – Gypsies and Travellers that met the NPPF 2026 Planning Definition

7.34 Figure 9 below shows the identified needs. This is broken down by year periods in Figure 10 following.

Figure 9: Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in Runnymede that met the Planning Definition

Gypsy & Traveller – Meeting Planning Definition	Pitches
Supply of Pitches	
Available supply from vacant public pitches	1
Available supply from pitches on new sites	0
Pitches vacated by households moving to bricks and mortar	0
Pitches vacated by households moving away from the study area	0
Total Supply	**1**
Current Need	
Households on unauthorised developments	48
Households on pitches with temporary planning permission	1
Concealed households/Doubling-Up/Over-Crowding	19
5-year need from teenage children	23
Movement from bricks and mortar	0
In-Migration/Roadside	0
Households on waiting lists for public sites	0
Total Current Need	**91**
Future Need	
New household formation	
(Household base 209 and formation rate 1.80%)	64
Total Future Need	**64**
Net Pitch Need = (Current and Future Need – Total Supply)	**154**

Figure 10: Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in Runnymede that met the Planning Definition by year periods

Year Period	Dates	Need
1 – 5	2026/27-30/31	90
6 – 10	2031/32-35/36	21
11 – 15	2036/37-40/41	23
16 – 19	2041/42-44/45	20
1 – 19	**2026/27-2044/45**	**154**

Pitch Needs – Undetermined Gypsies and Travellers

7.35 Figure 11 below sets out the identified needs. This is broken down by year periods in Figure 12 following:

Figure 11: Need for undetermined Gypsy and Traveller households in Runnymede

Gypsy & Traveller – Undetermined	Pitches
Supply of Pitches	
Available supply from vacant public pitches	0
Available supply from pitches on new sites	0
Pitches vacated by households moving to bricks and mortar	0
Pitches vacated by households moving away from the study area	0
Total Supply	**0**
Current Need	
Households on unauthorised developments	0
Households on pitches with temporary planning permission	0
Concealed households/Doubling-Up/Over-Crowding (modelled)	1
5-year need from teenage children (modelled)	1
Movement from bricks and mortar	0
In-Migration/Roadside	0
Households on waiting lists for public sites	0
Total Current Need	**2**
Future Need	
New household formation	
(Household base 6 and formation rate 1.50%)	2
Total Future Need	**2**
Net Pitch Need = (Current and Future Need – Total Supply)	**4**

Figure 12: Need for undetermined Gypsy and Traveller households in Runnymede by year periods

Year Period	Dates	Need
1 – 5	2026/27-30/31	2
16 – 10	2031/32-35/36	1
11 – 15	2036/37-40/41	1
16 – 19	2041/42-44/45	0
1 – 19	**2026/27-2044/45**	**4**

Travelling Showpeople Needs

Plot Needs – Travelling Showpeople that met the NPPF 2026 Planning Definition

7.36 Figure 13 below sets out the identified needs. This is broken down by year periods in Figure 14 following:

Figure 13: Need for Travelling Showpeople households in Runnymede that met the Planning Definition

Travelling Showpeople – Meeting Planning Definition	Plots
Supply of Plots	
Available supply from vacant public plots	0
Available supply from plots on new yards	0
Plots vacated by households moving to bricks and mortar	0
Plots vacated by households moving away from the study area	0
Total Supply	**0**
Current Need	
Households on unauthorised developments	0
Households on plots with temporary planning permission	0
Concealed households/Doubling-Up/Over-Crowding	11
5-year need from teenage children	2
Movement from bricks and mortar	0
In-Migration/Roadside	0
Total Current Need	**13**
Future Need	
New household formation	
(Formation from household demographics)	7
Total Future Need	**7**
Net Plot Need = (Current and Future Need – Total Supply)	**20**

Figure 14: Need for Travelling Showpeople households in Runnymede that met the Planning Definition by year periods

Year Period	Dates	Need
1 – 5	2026/27-30/31	13
6 – 10	2031/32-35/36	3
11 – 15	2036/37-40/41	2
16 – 19	2041/42-44/45	2
1 – 19	**2026/27-2044/45**	**20**

Plot Needs – Undetermined Travelling Showpeople

7.37 There is also a need for 2 plots for Undetermined Travelling Showpeople from new household formation.

Transit Requirements

7.38 When determining the potential need for transit provision, the assessment has looked at data from the MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count, the outcomes of the stakeholder interviews, and local records on numbers of recorded encampments.

MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count

7.39 Whilst it is considered to be a comprehensive national dataset on numbers of authorised and unauthorised caravans across England, it is acknowledged that the Traveller Caravan Count is a count of caravans and not households. It also does not record the reasons for unauthorised caravans. This makes it very difficult to interpret in relation to assessing future need because it does not count pitches/plots or resident households.

7.40 The count has to date only occurred twice yearly (January and July)[16] , with this dropping down to once annually from 2026. The count provides a snapshot in time conducted by local authorities on a specific day, and any caravans on unauthorised sites/yards or encampments which occur on other dates are not recorded. Likewise, any caravans that are away from sites/yards on the day of the count are not included.

7.41 As such it is not considered appropriate to use the outcomes from the Traveller Caravan Count in the assessment of future transit provision. It does however provide valuable historic and trend data on whether there are instances of unauthorised caravans in local authority areas.

7.42 Data from the Traveller Caravan Count shows that there have been no unauthorised caravans recorded on land not owned by Travellers in the study area in recent years. Whilst there are higher numbers of unauthorised caravans recorded on land owned by Travellers this is suggestive of longer-term unauthorised sites as opposed to shorter-term encampments.

Stakeholder Interviews and Local Data

7.43 Since 2021 there have been 19 encampments recorded in Runnymede – mostly throughout the summer and early autumn periods.

7.44 Any reports of encampments on Council owned land are dealt with by the Environmental Services Team through established enforcement processes.

7.45 The Council do not feel that there is any need for any formal transit provision in Runnymede at this time, however, they do believe that this is a matter which would be more appropriately looked at over a wider geographical area, for example as part of the Spatial Development Strategy being prepared for Surrey.

[16] From 2026 the Caravan Count will only be undertaken in January each year.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 This GTAA provides a robust evidence base to enable the Council to assess the housing needs of the Travelling Community as well as complying with their requirements towards Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople under the Housing Act 1985, the Housing and Planning Act 2016, and the NPPF 2026. It also provides an evidence base which can be used to support Local Plan Policies.

8.2 In relation to Travellers, Policy HO1 in the NPPF (2026) sets out that *The preparation of spatial development strategies, and local plans where a spatial development strategy is not in place, should be based upon: b. An assessment of the permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in the area as a minimum over the plan period.*

8.3 Policy HO1 also sets out that *At the most appropriate level, development plans should also take into account an assessment of the size, type and tenure of housing or other accommodation needed for different groups. These groups include, but are not limited to: h. Travellers*.

8.4 Policy HO3 in the NPPF sets out that *Local plans should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites to meet or exceed the housing requirement figure and pitch and plot requirements for their areas over the plan period, drawing on the land availability assessment in accordance with policy PM9. This should include: b. In relation to traveller sites: i. A supply of specific deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption of the plan (as set out in Annex D); and ii. A supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for the subsequent years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for the remaining plan period, where the plan covers more than 10 years.*

8.5 The NPPF in Annex B states that *'Pitch' means a pitch on a gypsy and traveller site and 'plot' means a pitch on a travelling showpeople site (often called a 'yard'). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for gypsies and travellers and mixed-use plots for travelling showpeople, which may / will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.*.

8.6 Overall the NPPF refers to the provision of Travellers' *sites/yards* to meet needs, and to setting *pitch/plot* targets. For ease, and consistency, this GTAA sets out the accommodation needs as needs for pitches/plots. In most cases, the need should be met through provision of a pitch/plot. However, in some circumstances the accommodation needs may be more appropriately met through provision of other *alternative* suitable accommodation (for example through additional touring caravans on sites and yards). So, in this GTAA any reference to *pitch/plot* means *pitch/plot or pitch/plot equivalent*.

8.7 This GTAA provides evidence of accommodation needs in line with the NPPF requirements. This evidence will help to inform the Council's policies in their emerging Local Plan including the setting of local pitch/plot targets and the allocation of sites/yards to meet identified accommodation needs.

8.8 ORS recommend that Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan Policies should give consideration to addressing need from households that meet the 2026 NPPF planning definition of a Traveller through the allocation of new pitches or plots – or equivalents; through the intensification or expansion of the existing sites and yards where need has been identified; and through consideration of granting planning

permission for any temporary and unauthorised sites or yards where this is felt to be appropriate in relation to relevant Development Management Policies.

8.9 The Council should also put in place a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy to manage any need from Undetermined Households, as well as to deal with any potential windfall applications, potential need from in-migration, or any need arising from bricks and mortar.

Gypsies and Travellers

8.10 For the GTAA period 2026/27 to 2044/45, there is a need for:

- 154 pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households that meet the 2026 NPPF planning definition.
- 4 pitches for Undetermined Gypsy and Traveller households.

8.11 Taking into consideration all of the elements of need that have been assessed in this GTAA, together with the assumptions on need from Undetermined Households, Figure 15 below sets out the total number of pitches that will need to be addressed, broken down by households that meet the planning definition and Undetermined Households, across 5-year bands throughout the plan period.

8.12 Need from households that meet the planning definition will need to be addressed through a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Policy through a combination of site/pitch allocations and through a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy; and need from Undetermined Households will have to be addressed through a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy.

Figure 15: Total Pitch Need for Gypsy and Traveller Households

Gypsies and Travellers	2026/27-30/31	2031/32-35/36	2036/37-40/41	2041/42-44/45	2026/27-44/45
Meet Planning Definition (Allocations)	90	21	23	20	**154**
Undetermined (Criteria-Based Policy)	2	1	1	0	**4**
TOTAL	**92**	**22**	**24**	**20**	**158**

Recommendations – Gypsies and Travellers

1. **Pitch Content:** In general terms, need identified in a GTAA is seen as need for pitches. As set out in Chapter 4 of this report, the now withdrawn Government Guidance on *Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites* recommended that, as a general guide, an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan, parking space for two vehicles, and a small garden area. This guidance relates primarily to the provision of pitches on public sites but can also be more broadly applied to the provision of pitches on private sites.

2. **Pitch Size:** Whilst there is no standard size for a Gypsy and Traveller pitch, there are some examples of guidance[17] at a local authority level that recommend average pitch sizes of between 320m^2 and 500m^2 but also suggest that a variety of pitch sizes – including small, medium and large pitches - can enable different sized families to be accommodated on sites (equivalent to two, three and four-bedroom houses) and can contribute to affordability. It is also acknowledged that the Council has its

[17] Leeds City Council: *Gypsy and Traveller Site Design Guide* (2020) and East Devon District Council: *Gypsy and Traveller Site Design and Layout Guidance* (2017).

own adopted guidance on the design of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches and plots as contained in its Runnymede Design Supplementary Planning document. This includes recommended minimum pitch/plot sizes.

3. **Public Sites:** When preparing its Local Plan, the Council might want to consider whether need arising from public sites could be addressed through the expansion or intensification of these sites, or for new public sites(s).

4. **Private Sites:** When preparing its Local Plan, the Council might want to consider whether need arising from private sites could be accommodated through the expansion or intensification of these sites, or through new site/pitch allocations. Where they have been identified, the Council may wish to consider the regularisation of temporary and unauthorised sites.

5. **Alternative Approaches (1):** The Council could also consider alternative approaches to dealing with need from single adults and from teenagers as it is unlikely that they will need a full pitch of their own in the short to medium term. This need could be addressed through permitting additional touring caravans on existing sites/pitches which are, generally, each equivalent to the provision of a pitch, as opposed to more formally set out pitches.

6. **Alternative Approaches (2):** The second approach which the Council could consider is for private sites occupied by larger extended family groups. Again, sites like this may be able to meet the overall accommodation needs through a combination of shared static caravans, tourers and dayrooms on existing sites – as opposed to more formally set out sites with separate pitches. It is common for conditions in Decision Notices for Traveller sites to simply place limits on the numbers and types of caravans as opposed to placing limits on the number of pitches.

7. **Undetermined Need:** The Council will also need to carefully consider how to address any potential need from Undetermined Households; from households seeking to move to Runnymede (in-migration), or from households currently living in bricks and mortar who may wish to move to a site. In terms of Local Plan Policies, the Council may wish to consider a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies.

8. **Future Need:** Future need from new household formation could be met through natural turnover of pitches over time.

9. **Monitoring:** The Council should continue to monitor any changes to the site baseline through new applications and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites to provide 5 years' worth of sites against locally set targets as required by the NPPF.

10. **Supporting Data:** Whilst the findings in this report are aggregated totals for the whole of Runnymede, due to data protection issues, the Council have more detailed data to enable an accurate review of Local Plan allocations to be made.

11. **Pitch Deliverability Assessment:** Finally, the Council may wish to consider completing a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (PDA) to explore in more detail the capacity of existing sites to accommodate additional pitches and/or caravans to meet identified needs. The PDA should take into account the findings of this assessment to inform emerging Local Plan policies and may be updated if appropriate.

Travelling Showpeople

8.13 In summary, for the GTAA period 2026/27 to 2044/45 there is a need for:

- 20 plots for Travelling Showpeople households that meet the 2026 NPPF planning definition.
- 2 plots for Undetermined Travelling Showpeople households.

8.14 Taking into consideration all of the elements of need that have been assessed, together with the assumptions on need from Undetermined Households, Figure 16 below sets out the number of plots that will need to be addressed as a result of the outcomes of the GTAA, broken down by households that meet the planning definition and Undetermined Households, across 5-year bands throughout the plan period.

8.15 Need from households that meet the planning definition will need to be addressed through a Travelling Showpeople Local Plan Policy through a combination of yard/plot allocations and through a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy; and any potential need from Undetermined Households will have to be addressed through a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy.

Figure 16: Total Plot Need for Travelling Showpeople Households

Travelling Showpeople	2026/27-30/31	2031/32-35/36	2036/37-40/41	2041/42-44/45	2026/27-44/45
Meet Planning Definition (Allocations)	13	3	2	2	**20**
Undetermined (Criteria-Based Policy)	0	1	0	1	**2**
TOTAL	13	4	2	3	22

Recommendations – Travelling Showpeople

1. **Plot Size:** Whilst there is also no standard size for a Travelling Showpeople plot, The Showmen's Guild[18] advocates an average plot size of 2,000m^2. However, this should be viewed with some caution given the age of the guidance. In more recent years, many Showpeople have sought to diversify their working practices and often do not now need as much space for the storage or maintenance of larger rides. Recent planning applications in other local authorities have seen plans for new yards put forward including a variety of plot sizes. It is also acknowledged that the Council has its own adopted guidance on the design of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches and plots as contained in its Runnymede Design Supplementary Planning document. This includes recommended minimum pitch/plot sizes.

2. **Private Yards:** For need arising from private yards, the Council may wish to consider the expansion or intensification of these yards, or to address need through new yard/plot allocations. If they are identified, the Council should also consider the regularisation of yards with temporary planning permission and of unauthorised yards.

3. **Other Need:** The Council will also need to carefully consider how to address any potential need from households seeking to move to Runnymede (in-migration); or from households currently living in bricks and mortar who may wish to move to a yard. In terms of Local Plan Policies, the Council may wish to consider Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies.

[18] The Showmen's Guild: *Travelling Showpeople's Sites – A Planning Focus* (2007).

4. **Alternative Approaches:** The Council may wish to consider alternative approaches to dealing with need from single adults and teenagers as it is unlikely that they will need a full plot of their own in the short to medium term. This need could be addressed through permitting additional touring caravans on yards/plots.

5. **Future Need:** Future need from new household formation could also be met through natural turnover of plots over time.

6. **Supporting Data:** Whilst the findings in this report are aggregated totals for the whole of Runnymede due to data protection issues, the Council have more detailed data to enable an accurate review of Local Plan allocations to be made.

7. **Pitch Deliverability Assessment:** Finally, the Council may wish to consider completing a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (PDA) to explore in more detail the capacity of existing yards to accommodate additional plots and/or caravans to meet identified needs. The PDA should take into account the findings of this assessment to inform emerging Local Plan policies and may be updated if appropriate.

Recommendations - Transit Provision

1. **Overall Transit Provision:** There is currently no public transit provision in Runnymede. The Council have recorded a limited amount of encampments in recent years – mostly during the summer and early autumn months. As such, it is recommended that there is not a need for any transit provision at this time.

2. **Monitoring:** The situation relating to levels of encampments should continue to be monitored. As well as information on the size and duration of the encampments, this monitoring should also seek to gather information from residents on the reasons for their stay in the local area; whether they have a permanent base or where they have travelled from; and whether they have any need or preference to settle permanently in the local area. This information should be collected as part of a welfare assessment (or similar).

3. **Review:** It is recommended that a review of the evidence base relating to encampments, including the monitoring referred to above, should be undertaken on an annual basis, and that this should be considered on a Surrey-wide basis. This will establish whether there is a need for investment in any new transit provision or emergency stopping places, or whether the current approach is preferable.

4. **Short-Term Approach:** In the short-term, the Council should continue to use its current approach when dealing with encampments and management-based approaches, such as negotiated stopping agreements, should also be considered.

5. **Management-Based Approaches:** The term 'negotiated stopping' is used to describe agreed short-term provision for Gypsy and Traveller caravans. It does not describe permanent 'built' transit sites but negotiated agreements which allow caravans to be sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. Agreements are made between the Council and the (temporary) residents regarding expectations on both sides. See www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk for further information.

6. **Temporary Stopping Places:** Temporary stopping places can be made available at times of increased demand due to fairs or cultural celebrations that are attended by Gypsies and Travellers. A charge may be levied as determined by the local authority although they only need to provide basic facilities including: a cold-water supply; portable toilets; sewage disposal points; and refuse disposal facilities.

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms / Acronyms Used

Glossary

Amenity block meaning a building where basic plumbing amenities are provided. This could include a bath, a shower, a WC and a sink.

Bricks and mortar are used to describe mainstream housing.

Caravan is used to describe mobile living vehicle used by Gypsies and Travellers. Also referred to as trailers.

Concealed household is used to describe households living within other households, who are unable to set up separate family units.

Doubling-Up refers to there being more than the permitted number of caravans on a pitch or plot.

Emergency Stopping Place is a temporary site with limited facilities to be occupied by Gypsies and Travellers whilst they travel.

Green Belt refers to a land use designation used to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Household Formation is the process in which individuals form separate households. This is normally though adult children setting up their own household.

In-migration refers to movement of households into a region or community.

Local Plans are Local Authority spatial planning documents that can include specific policies and/or site allocations for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Out-migration refers to the Movement from one region or community in order to settle in another.

Pitch/plot is an area of land on a site or development generally home to one household. Can be varying sizes and have varying caravan numbers. Pitches refer to Gypsy and Traveller sites and Plots to Travelling Showpeople yards.

Private site is an authorised site owned privately. This can be owner-occupied, rented or a mixture of owner-occupied and rented pitches.

Site refers to an area of land on which Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are accommodated in caravans, chalets, or vehicles. Can contain one or multiple pitches or plots.

Social/Public/Council Site is an authorised site owned by either the local authority or a Registered Housing Provider.

Temporary planning permission refers to a private site with planning permission for a fixed period of time.

Tolerated site/yard refers to long-term tolerated sites or yards where enforcement action is not expedient, and a certificate of lawful use would be granted if sought.

Transit provision refers to a site intended for short stays and containing a range of facilities. There is normally a limit on the length of time residents can stay.

Unauthorised Development refers to caravans on land owned by Gypsies and Travellers and without planning permission**.**

Unauthorised Encampment refers to caravans on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers and without planning permission.

Waiting list is a record held by the local authority or site managers of applications to live on a site.

Yard is a name often used by Travelling Showpeople to refer to a site.

Acronyms and Initials

B&M	Bricks & Mortar
GTAA	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
LPA	Local Planning Authority
MHCLG	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ORS	Opinion Research Services
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
PPTS	Planning Policy for Traveller Sites
TSP	Travelling Showpeople

Appendix B: Site and Yard List

Site/Yard	Planning Status	Authorised	Unauthorised
Gypsies and Travellers			
Elm Farm, Lyne	Public	15	
The Paddocks, Virginia Water	Public	15	
38A and 38B Poppy Way, Ottershaw	Private	2	
4 Aymer Close, Staines	Private	5	
Acorn Farm, Thorpe	Private	7	
Beechcroft Stables, Egham	Private	6	
Eden Farm (1-6), Virginia Water	Private	6	
Eden Farm (8-10), Virginia Water	Private	3	
Forest Gate Farm, Ottershaw	Private	1	
Greenacres Farm, Lyne	Private	12	
Greenacres Mobile Home Park, Chertsey	Private	12	
High Trees, Chertsey	Private	1	
Land adjacent Edale, Addlestone	Private	1	
Land adjacent to Lynn's Park, Ottershaw (Carriage Gate)	Private	1	
Lynn's Park, Ottershaw	Private	2	
New Oak Farm (North section), Chertsey	Private	4	
New Oak Farm (South section), Chertsey	Private	10	
Willow Farm, Ottershaw	Private	4	
Wickham Piggery (Wickham Stables), Egham	Temporary	1	
111A Almners Road, Lyne	Tolerated	1	
Ada's Farm, Lyne, Surrey (to west of injunction site)	Tolerated	3	
Eden Farm (7), Virginia Water	Tolerated	1	
Land adjacent to The Paddocks, Virginia Water, (Roseacres Farm)	Tolerated	1	
Old Pine, Land adjacent to Frank Muir Playing Fields, Thorpe	Tolerated	1	
Warren Yard, Lyne	Tolerated	1	
13/14 Queenswood	Unauthorised		2
Ada's Farm, Lyne, Surrey (to west of injunction site)	Unauthorised		5
Forest Gate Farm, Ottershaw	Unauthorised		4
Lakeview (Land north of 4 Aymer Close, Staines)	Unauthorised		1
Land adjacent to Lynn's Park, Ottershaw (Carriage Gate)	Unauthorised		3
Land adjacent Warren Farm, Thorpe	Unauthorised		2
Land to the west of 203-221 New Haw Road, Addlestone	Unauthorised		4
Little Almners/Walnut Tree Farm, Chertsey	Unauthorised		19
Lynn's Park, Ottershaw	Unauthorised		8
Total Pitches		**116**	**48**
Travelling Showpeople			
54 Mead Lane, Chertsey	TSP Private	3	
Fairfields, Chertsey	TSP Private	12	
Stevens Yard, Chertsey	TSP Private	1	
Thorpe Lea Cottage, Egham	TSP Private	11	

Woburn Park Farm, Chertsey	TSP Private	9	
Total Plots		**36**	**0**
TOTAL		**152**	**48**

Appendix C: Household Interview Questionnaire

GYPSY, TRAVELLER & TRAVELLING SHOWMEN ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Site/yard code
Pitch/plot no.
Pitch/plot location

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:

This questionnaire should be used to record information about households that have been interviewed, either with a structured interview (where questions were asked as they are written on the questionnaire) or a semi-structured interview (where the information was gathered through discursive conversation).

Whilst not all households will be prepared to answer every question, it is important to record as much information as possible; but any information that can be provided will be used to inform the assessment. For all questions, you may prompt respondents with the available options as necessary. Please use the "Further Information and Notes" pages towards the end of the form to record any other details that could be relevant to the assessment.

If respondents provide information about other households either living on this site/yard or elsewhere, a separate Proxy Questionnaire should be used to record the information about each additional household.

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is < > and I work for Opinion Research Services (ORS).

The Council is undertaking a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showmen accommodation needs assessment in this area. They have asked ORS to try and contact every household from the Travelling Community living in their area to make sure that the needs assessment is accurate.

This important survey collects information about your accommodation on this site/yard, your own needs and needs of other members of your household, and details about your travelling. The information that you provide will help the Council better understand the accommodation needs of the Travelling Community. It will make sure that needs are properly assessed based on accurate and up-to-date information, so that the needs of every household get counted. The interview should take no more than 20 minutes, and any information that you provide will be treated in strict confidence; so, I hope that you will take part.

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT IF NECESSARY

Only ORS will see your individual answers, the information will be kept secure and confidential and only anonymised data will be sent to the Council. Any information that you provide will be processed by ORS in line with the requirements of the UK Data Protection Act and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For more information, please go to www.ors.org.uk/privacy

If you would like to confirm my identity, you can contact ORS on Freephone 0800 078 9786. If you would like to confirm that ORS is a genuine research practice, you can contact the Market Research Society on Freephone 0800 975 9596.

Your Current Accommodation

Q1. Are you and your household…?

INTERVIEWER: *READ OUT. CROSS ALL THAT APPLY*

- Romany Gypsy
- Irish Traveller
- English Traveller
- Scottish Gypsy or Traveller
- Welsh Gypsy
- Travelling Showman
- New Traveller
- Non-Traveller
- Prefer not to say

Q2a. How long have you lived on this site/yard?

- Less than 12 months
- 12 months but less than 2 years
- 2 years but less than 5 years
- 5 years or longer → GO TO QUESTION 3
- No answer

Q2b. Where did you previously live?

Q3a. Is this site/yard your permanent base?

- Yes → GO TO QUESTION 4
- No
- No answer

Q3b. If not, where is your permanent base?

Q4. Does your household own this site/yard, or do you rent your pitch/plot?

- Own the site/yard
- Privately rent the pitch/plot
- Public rent the pitch/plot
- Housing Association rent the pitch/plot
- No answer

Q5a. Is this site/yard suitable for the needs of your household?

- Yes → GO TO QUESTION 6
- No
- No answer

Q5b. Why do you feel that it isn't suitable?

Q6a. Do you plan to move from this site/yard within the next five years?

- Yes
- No → GO TO QUESTION 7
- No answer

Q6b. Why do you plan to move?

Q6c. Where do you plan to live after you have moved?

- Elsewhere in this council area
- Another council area *WRITE IN*
- No answer

Q6d. Would you prefer to…?

- Buy a site/yard or a private pitch/plot
- Rent on a private site/yard
- Rent on a public site
- Live in Bricks and Mortar
- No answer

Travelling

Q7a. Have you or any other members of your household ever travelled away from your permanent base?

- Yes
- No → GO TO QUESTION 10
- No answer

Q7b. How many trips has your household made over the last 12 months?

Q8. What are/were the reasons for travelling from your permanent base?

- To work, including working/trading at fairs
- Visiting fairs, but not to work
- Visiting family or friends
- Holiday
- Other reasons
- No answer

INTERVIEWER: PROBE FULLY AND PROVIDE FURTHER DETAILS BELOW
If travelling for work, write in profession or trade, including frequency and length of trips
If travelling for fairs or other reasons, confirm if this involved any elements of work, and record nature of work undertaken

Please write in and continue in Notes section as necessary

Q9. Where do you usually stay?

INTERVIEWER: CROSS ALL BOXES THAT APPLY

- Council transit sites
- Private transit sites
- On the roadside
- With family or friends
- Other WRITE IN
- No answer

Q10. What are the main reasons for your household not travelling anymore?

INTERVIEWER: CROSS ALL BOXES THAT APPLY

- Settled now
- Children in school
- Ill health
- Old age
- Nowhere to stop
- No work opportunities
- Other reasons → PROVIDE DETAILS IN NOTES
- No answer

Q11a. Do you or any other members of your household plan to travel in future?

- Yes
- No → GO TO QUESTION 12
- No answer

Q11b. What will be the reasons for travelling?

INTERVIEWER: CROSS ALL BOXES THAT APPLY

- To work, including working/trading at fairs
- Visiting fairs, but not to work
- Visiting family or friends
- Holiday
- Other reasons
- No answer

Household Details

Q12. How many people are in your household, and how many separate families are there? Please count everyone that normally lives on this pitch/plot, including yourself.

number of people

number of families

For <u>each</u> person in your household please answer the following questions

Q13a. What is their relationship to you

- Husband, wife or partner
- Son or daughter (inc. stepchildren)
- Brother or sister (inc. stepsiblings)
- Mother or father (inc. stepparents
- Grandchild
- Grandparent
- Relation - other
- Unrelated

Q13b. What is their gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Q13c. What was their age last birthday

Q13d. Have they travelled away to work in the last 12 months

- Yes
- No

Q13e. Do they plan to travel away to work any time in the future

- Yes
- No

Repeat for each household member

Accommodation Needs

Q14a. If anyone currently living with you needs their own separate accommodation, how many pitches/plots are needed for them now, and how many will be needed within the next five years?

pitches/plots for adults needed now

pitches/plots for adults needed within 5 years

pitches/plots for 13–17-year-olds needed within 5 years

Q14b. Would they want to stay on this site/yard?

- Yes
- No – want to live elsewhere in this council area
- No – want to move to another council area
- No answer

Q15. Do you have any children or other family that are not currently living with you who need their own separate accommodation?

- Yes → PROVIDE DETAILS IN NOTES
- No
- No answer

Q15b. How many pitches/plots would they need?

Q15c. Would they want to move to this site/yard?

- Yes
- No – want to live elsewhere in this council area
- No – want to move to another council area
- No answer

Q16. If separate accommodation was needed on this site/yard, would there be…?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT. CROSS ONE BOX ONLY

- Space available on the existing site/yard
- Potential to extend the boundary of the site/yard
- Need for space on another local site/yard
- No answer

Q17a. Do you own or are you aware of any land that has potential for new pitches/plots?

- Yes
- No → GO TO QUESTION 18
- No answer

Q17b. Where is the land and who owns it?

Q18a. Do you have any family or friends, or know anyone from the Travelling Community currently living in Bricks and Mortar who we should contact for this study?

- Yes
- No → GO TO FURTHER INFORMATION
- No answer

Q18b. Can you provide contact details for them?

INTERVIEWER: IF DETAILS REFUSED, READ OUT

If you aren't able to provide their details, please ask them to call ORS on Freephone 0800 078 9786 to make sure that their needs are counted

Further Information and Notes

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about this site/yard and your travelling patterns and any future plans to travel, or the accommodation needs of you and your household?

Appendix D: Household Formation Rates

ORS Technical Note: Gypsy and Traveller Household Formation and Growth Rates

January 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

Abstract and Conclusions

1.1 National and local household formation and growth rates are important components of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs), but until 2013 little detailed work had been done to assess their likely scale. ORS undertook work in 2013 to assess the likely rate of demographic growth for the Gypsy and Traveller population and concluded that the figure could be as low as 1.25% per annum, but that best available evidence supports a national net household growth rate of 1.50% per annum.

1.2 This analysis was produced as a separate document in 2013 and then updated in 2015 and 2020 in light of comments from academics, planning agents and local authorities.

1.3 This current document represents an update to our findings in 2020 to consider the impact of the data from the 2021 UK Census of Population. This shows little change from the 2011 Census, so there is no change in the overall conclusions that support a national net household growth rate of 1.50% per annum.

Introduction

1.4 Compared with the general population, the relative youthfulness of many Gypsy and Traveller populations means that their birth rates are likely to generate higher-than-average population growth, and proportionately higher gross household formation rates.

1.5 However, whilst their gross rate of household growth might be high, Gypsy and Traveller communities' future accommodation needs are, in practice, affected by any reduction in the number of households due to dissolution and/or by movements in/out of the area and/or by transfers into other forms of housing.

1.6 Therefore, the net rate of household growth is the gross rate of formation minus any reductions in households due to such factors.

2. Modelling Population and Household Growth Rates

2.1 The basic equation for calculating the rate of Gypsy and Traveller population growth is relatively simple: start with the base population and then calculate the average increase/decrease by allowing for births, deaths, in-/out-migration, and household dissolution.

2.2 Nevertheless, deriving satisfactory estimates is difficult because the evidence is often tenuous – so, in this context in 2013, ORS modelled the growth of the national Gypsy and Traveller population based on the most likely birth and death rates. To do so, we supplemented the available national statistical sources with data derived from our own surveys.

Migration Effects

2.3 Population growth is affected by national net migration and local migration (as Gypsies and Travellers move from one area to another). In terms of national migration, the population of Gypsies and Travellers is relatively fixed, with little international migration.

2.4 It is in principle possible for Irish Travellers (based in Ireland) to move to the UK, but there is no evidence of this happening to a significant extent and the vast majority of Irish Travellers were born in the UK or are long-term residents.

Population Profile

2.5 The main source for the rate of Gypsy and Traveller population growth is the UK 2011 and 2021 Censuses. This is due to the ethnicity question in the 2011 Census having a new option included, 'Gypsy and Irish Traveller' was added as a specific category and this option was repeated in the 2021 Census.

2.6 Whilst non-response bias probably means that the size of the population was underestimated, the age profile the 2011 and 2021 Censuses provide is not necessarily distorted and matches the profile derived from ORS's extensive household surveys.

2.7 The 2011 Census gave a total population of 54,895 in England, whilst the 2021 Census shows a population of 67,690, which represents a 23% increase.

2.8 However, this is measuring a mixture of real population growth and greater compliance with the Census in 2021. In reality, the true population of Gypsies and Travellers in England is likely to be 200,000-250,000, so both numbers are just a sample of the overall population.

2.9 Comparing the 2011 and 2021 Census datasets, the share of the population aged under 16 years has fallen from 31.8% to 30.5%, whilst the share aged 65 years or more has risen from 3.7% to 4.9%. The older population is still likely to be an under-estimate, but the results are consistent with the pattern seen in almost all population in England of falling birth rates and rising life expectancy.

Figure 1 – Age Profile for the Gypsy and Traveller Community in England 2011 and 2021 (Source: UK Census of Population 2011 and 2021)

Age Group	People 2011	Cumulative % 2011	People 2021	Cumulative % 2021
Age 0 to 4	5,725	10.4	6,535	9.7
Age 5 to 7	3,219	16.3	3,947	15.5
Age 8 to 9	2,006	19.9	2,547	19.2
Age 10 to 14	5,431	29.8	6,404	28.7
Age 15	1,089	31.8	1,212	30.5
Age 16 to 17	2,145	35.7	2,383	34.0
Age 18 to 19	1,750	38.9	2,107	37.1
Age 20 to 24	4,464	47.1	5,074	44.6
Age 25 to 29	4,189	54.7	4,889	51.9
Age 30 to 34	3,833	61.7	5,189	59.5
Age 35 to 39	3,779	68.5	4,611	66.3
Age 40 to 44	3,828	75.5	4,386	72.8
Age 45 to 49	3,547	82.0	3,982	78.7
Age 50 to 54	2,811	87.1	3,875	84.4
Age 55 to 59	2,074	90.9	3,196	89.1
Age 60 to 64	1,758	94.1	2,423	92.7
Age 65 to 69	1,215	96.3	1,638	95.1
Age 70 to 74	905	97.9	1,432	97.3
Age 75 to 79	594	99.0	882	98.6
Age 80 to 84	303	99.6	552	99.4
Age 85 and over	230	100.0	426	100.0
Total	**54,895**		**67,690**	

Birth and Fertility Rates

2.10 The table above provides a way of understanding the rate of population growth through births. The table shows that surviving children aged 0-4 years comprise 9.7% of the Gypsy and Traveller population – which means that, on average, 1.9% of the total population was born each year (over the last 5 years). The same estimate is confirmed if we consider that those aged 0-14 comprise 28.7% of the Gypsy and Traveller population – which also means that almost exactly 2% of the population was born each year.

2.11 The total fertility rate (TFR) for the whole UK population is just below 2 – which means that on average each woman can be expected to have just less than two children who reach adulthood.

2.12 ORS know of only one estimate of fertility rates of the UK Gypsy and Traveller community, in '*Ethnic identity and inequalities in Britain: The dynamics of diversity*' by Dr Stephen Jivraj and Professor Ludi Simpson (published May 2015). The authors use the 2011 Census data to estimate the TFR for the Gypsy and Traveller community as 2.75.

2.13 ORS have used our own historic survey data to investigate the fertility rates of Gypsy and Traveller women. The ORS data shows that on average Gypsy and Traveller women aged 32 years have 2.5 children (but, because the children of mothers above this age point tend to leave home progressively, full TFR's were not completed).

2.14 On this basis it is reasonable to infer an average of 3 children per woman during their lifetime, which is broadly consistent with the estimate of 2.75 children per woman derived from the 2011 Census. The 2021 Census data is fully consistent with these estimates, so no changes are required to the modelling, but the evidence that the TFR could be falling should be monitored over time.

Death Rates

2.15 Although the above data implies an annual growth rate through births of about 2%, the death rate must also be considered. Whereas the average life expectancy across the whole population of the UK is currently just over 80 years, a Sheffield University study found that Gypsy and Traveller life expectancy is about 10-12 years less than average (Parry et al (2004) '*The Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers: Report of Department of Health Inequalities in Health Research Initiative*', University of Sheffield).

2.16 Therefore, our population growth modelling in 2013 ORS used a conservative estimate of average life expectancy as 72 years – which is entirely consistent with the lower-than-average number of Gypsies and Travellers aged over 70 years in the 2011 Census (and also in ORS's own survey data).

2.17 Again, this data is fully consistent with the 2021 Census, which may be showing slight increases in life expectancy, but not sufficient to be inconsistent with the 2013 modelling.

Modelling Outputs

2.18 If a TFR of 3 and an average life expectancy of 72 years are assumed for Gypsies and Travellers, then the ORS modelling projects the population to increase by 66% over the next 40 years – implying a population compound growth rate of 1.25% per annum.

2.19 If we assume that Gypsy and Traveller life expectancy increases to 77 years by 2050, then the projected population growth rate rises to nearly 1.50% per annum. To generate an 'upper range' rate of population growth, ORS assumed an implausible TFR of 4 and an average life expectancy rising to 77 over the next 40 years – which then yields an 'upper range' growth rate of 1.90% per annum.

2.20 Given the data from the 2021 Census, the figure of 1.25% net population growth appears to be consistent with around 2% of the population being born each year and deaths accounting for around a 0.75% reduction in population.

Household Growth

2.21 In addition to population growth influencing the number of households, the size of households also affects the number. Hence, population and household growth rates do not necessarily match directly, mainly due to the current tendency for people to live in smaller childless or single person households.

2.22 Because the Gypsy and Traveller population is relatively young and has many single parent households, a 1.25%-1.50% annual population growth could yield higher-than-average household growth rates, particularly if average household sizes fall or if younger-than-average households' form.

2.23 However, whilst there is evidence that Gypsy and Traveller households already form at an earlier age than in the general population, the scope for a more rapid rate of growth, through even earlier household formation, is limited.

2.24 Based on the 2011 and 2021 Census, the tables below compare the age of household representatives in all households in England with those in Gypsy and Traveller households – showing that the latter has many more household representatives aged under-25 years. In the general England population in 2021, 2.7% of household representatives are aged 16-24, compared with 7.4% in the Gypsy and Traveller population, which is consistent with ORS's survey data.

2.25 Interestingly, in 2011, 8.7% of all Gypsy and Traveller households were aged under 25 years, but this has fallen to 7.4% in 2021. This is in line with a fall in the general population from 3.6% to 2.7%, which implies households are forming at an older age. This in turn would mean that any population growth would convert to a lower household growth as the growing population forms households at an older age.

Figure 2 – Age of Head of Household in 2011 (Source: UK Census of Population 2011)

Age of Household Representative	Households - England	% Households - England	Households – Gypsies and Travellers	% Households – Gypsies and Travellers
Age 24 and under	790,974	3.6%	1,698	8.7%
Age 25 to 34	3,158,258	14.3%	4,232	21.7%
Age 35 to 49	6,563,651	29.7%	6,899	35.5%
Age 50 to 64	5,828,761	26.4%	4,310	22.2%
Age 65 to 74	2,764,474	12.5%	1,473	7.6%
Age 75 to 84	2,097,807	9.5%	682	3.5%
Age 85 and over	859,443	3.9%	164	0.8%
Total	**22,063,368**	**100%**	**19,458**	**100%**

Figure 3 – Age of Head of Household in 2021 (Source: UK Census of Population 2021)

Age of Household Representative	Households - England	% Households - England	Households – Gypsies and Travellers	% Households – Gypsies and Travellers
Age 24 and under	608,361	2.7%	1,537	7.4%
Age 25 to 34	3,067,607	13.7%	4,278	20.6%
Age 35 to 49	5,886,110	26.2%	6,790	32.8%
Age 50 to 64	6,470,425	28.8%	5,318	25.7%
Age 65 and over	6,427,165	28.6%	2,807	13.5%
Total	**22,459,668**	**100%**	**20,730**	**100%**

2.26 The following tables shows that the proportion of single person Gypsy and Traveller households is not dissimilar to the wider population of England; but there are more lone parents and fewer couples without children, amongst Gypsies and Travellers. This was the case in both 2011 and 2021.

Figure 4 – Household Type in 2011 (Source: UK Census of Population 2011)

Household Type	Households - England	% Households - England	Households – Gypsies and Travellers	% Households – Gypsies and Travellers
Single person	6,666,493	30.3%	5,741	29.5%
Couple with no dependent children	7,024,688	31.8%	3,167	16.3%
Couple with dependent children	4,266,670	19.3%	3,683	18.9%
Lone parent with dependent children	1,573,255	7.1%	3,949	20.3%
Lone parent: All children non-dependent	766,569	3.5%	795	4.1%
Other households	1,765,693	8.0%	2,123	10.9%
Total	**22,063,368**	**100%**	**19,458**	**100%**

Figure 5 – Household Type in 2021 (Source: UK Census of Population 2021)

Household Type	Households - England	% Households - England	Households – Gypsies and Travellers	% Households – Gypsies and Travellers
Single person	6,964,704	30.3%	6,264	28.8%
Couple with no dependent children	7,806,819	34.0%	4,411	20.3%
Couple with dependent children	4,662,429	20.3%	4,500	20.7%
Lone parent with dependent children	1,773,926	7.7%	4,634	21.3%
Lone parent: All children non-dependent	1,058,017	4.6%	1,269	5.8%
Other households	725,107	3.2%	689	3.2%
Total	**22,991,002**	**100%**	**21,767**	**100%**

2.27 The key point, though, is that since 21% of Gypsy and Traveller households are lone parents with dependent children, and up to 30% are single persons, there is limited potential for further reductions in average household size to increase current household formation rates significantly – and there is no reason to think that earlier household formations or increasing divorce rates will in the medium-term affect household formation rates.

2.28 Whilst there are differences with the general population, a 1.25%-1.50% per annum Gypsy and Traveller population growth rate is likely to lead to a household growth rate of 1.25%-1.50% per annum.

3. Conclusions

3.1 The best available evidence suggests that the net annual Gypsy and Traveller household growth rate across England is 1.50% per annum. This figure was originally derived from the 2011 UK Census of Population and ORS's own survey but is also fully consistent with the 2021 UK Census of Population.

3.2 However, whilst a national rate of 1.50% can be demonstrated, this should be adjusted accordingly to establish local rates based on the demographic breakdown of the population at a local authority level.

3.3 Evidence from previous GTAA studies completed by ORS suggest that locally derived rates can vary from 0.50% to 2.75% depending on the number of children aged under 18 in the local Traveller population.

3.4 In addition, in certain circumstances where the numbers of households and children are higher or lower than national data has identified, or the population age structure is skewed by certain age groups, it may not be appropriate to apply a percentage rate for new household formation.

3.5 In these cases, a judgement should be made on likely new household formation based on the age and gender of the children identified in local household interviews. This should be based on the assumption that 50% of households likely to form will stay in any given area and that 50% will pair up and move to another area, whilst still considering the impact of dissolution. This is based on evidence from over 170 GTAAs that ORS have completed across England and Wales involving over 7,000 household interviews.