Bath & North East Somerset Council

Bath & North East Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)

Final Report

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 the Bath & North East Somerset 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 2025/26 to 2042/43. This covers the Council's Local Plan period and the 15-year requirements set out in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS). The outcomes of this study supersede the outcomes of the previous GTAA for the Council.

1.3 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, yards, and encampments, as well as seeking to engage with households living in bricks and mortar accommodation.

1.4 A total of 24 interviews or proxy interviews were completed with Gypsies and Travellers living on sites in Bath & North East Somerset. There were no Travelling Showpeople identified living on yards.

1.5 A total of 2 stakeholder interviews were also completed.

1.6 The baseline date for the study is June 2024 which is when the fieldwork was completed

Background

1.7 Gypsy and Travellers Local Plan Policies should give consideration to addressing need from households that meet the 2024 PPTS planning definition through the intensification or expansion of the existing sites and yards where need has been identified. Consideration should then be given to granting planning permission for any temporary and unauthorised sites or yards. If any residual need remains then consideration will need to be given to the allocation of new pitches or plots.

1.8 The Council should also put in place a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy (as suggested in Paragraph 11 in the PPTS) to manage the need from Undetermined households, as well as to deal with any potential windfall applications, potential need from in-migration, or from bricks and mortar.

1.9 Paragraph 62 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 sets out that in determining the minimum number of homes needed, *strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning practice guidance*.

1.10 Paragraph 63 then states that [emphasis added] *Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent); families with children; looked after children; older people (including those who*

*require retirement housing, housing with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; **travellers**; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.*

1.11 Footnote 27 to this section states that '*Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers' housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document*.'

Key Findings

1.12 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. Whilst the findings in this report are aggregated totals for the whole of Bath & North East Somerset, the Council have been provided with more detailed breakdowns to support the preparation of any future Local Plan Policies.

Pitch Needs – Gypsies and Travellers

1.13 In June 2024 the Council identified 35 Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Bath & North East Somerset:

- 1 public site (11 pitches);
- 4 private sites with permanent planning permission (9 pitches);
- 1 site that is tolerated for planning purposes (13 pitches);
- 1 public transit site (2 pitches).

1.14 Our research concluded that 28 Gypsy or Traveller households met the 2024 PPTS planning definition and there were 7 households where it was not possible to confirm their status. These 7 households are likely to meet the 2024 PPTS planning definition and are referred to as Undetermined Households for the purposes of this GTAA.

1.15 Our research identified a need for **18 pitches** emerging from the 28 households that met the 2024 PPTS planning definition. This is made up of 4 pitches from concealed/doubled-up/over-crowded households; 5 pitches from a 5-year need from teenage children; 1 pitch from in-migration/roadside; and 8 pitches from new household formation, using a formation rate of 1.70% derived from the household demographics.

1.16 There is also a need for **5 pitches** emerging from the 7 undetermined households. This is made up of a modelled need for 1 pitch from concealed/doubled-up/over-crowded households or single adults; a modelled need for 2 pitches for a 5-year need from teenage children; and 2 pitches from new household formation, using the ORS national formation rate of 1.50%.

1.17 The overall pitch needs for Gypsies and Travellers for the period 2025/26 – 2042/43 are summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in Bath & North East Somerset (2025/26-2042/43)

Status	Need
Need from households who meet the Planning Definition	18
Undetermined	5
TOTAL	**23**

1.18 The need from households that meet the planning definition can be distributed across year periods as shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**.

Figure 2 – Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in Bath & North East Somerset that meet the Planning Definition by year periods

Year Period	Dates	Need
0 – 5	2025-29	10
6 – 10	2030-34	3
11 – 15	2035-39	3
16 – 18	2040-42	2
0 – 18	**2025-42**	**18**

Plot Needs – Travelling Showpeople

1.2 In Bath & Nort East Somerset, at the time of reporting there were no Travelling Showperson's households identified. Therefore, there is no current or future need for any Travelling Showpeople plots.

1.19 The overall plot needs for Travelling Showpeople for the period 2025/26 – 2042/43 are summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3 – Need for Travelling Showpeople households in Bath & North East Somerset (2025/26 – 2042/43)

Status	Need
Need from households who meet the Planning Definition	0
Undetermined	0
TOTAL	**0**

1.3 The need from households that meet the planning definition can be distributed across year periods as shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**4.

Figure 4 – Need for Travelling Showpeople households in Bath & North East Somerset that meet the Planning Definition by year periods

Year Period	Dates	Need
0 – 5	2025-29	0
6 – 10	2030-34	0
11 – 15	2035-39	0
16 – 18	2040-42	0
0 – 18	**2025-42**	**0**

Recommendations

Gypsy and Traveller Recommendations

1.20 A summary of recommendations for addressing need from Gypsies and Travellers are set out below:

» Whilst there is no standard size for a Gypsy and Traveller pitch, Guidance[1] recommends an average pitch size of 320m^2 but also suggests that a variety of pitch sizes – including small,

[1] Leeds City Council: *Gypsy and Traveller Site Design Guide (2020).*

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.

- For need arising from public sites the Council will need to consider the expansion or intensification of these sites, or for new sites(s), as it is unlikely that this need could be addressed through the provision of pitches on new private sites.
- For need arising from private sites the Council will need to consider the expansion or intensification of these sites, or to address need through new site/pitch allocations. Where they have been identified the Council should also consider the regularisation of sites with temporary planning permission and of unauthorised sites.
- The Council will also need to carefully consider how to address any potential needs from Undetermined households; from households seeking to move to Bath & North East Somerset (in-migration); or from households currently living in bricks and mortar who may wish to move to a site. In terms of the Local Plan Policies, the Council should continue to use or put in place Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies as suggested in PPTS.
- Future need from new household formation could also be met through natural turnover of pitches over time, or through enforcing against pitches not found to be occupied by Gypsies or Travellers.

Travelling Showpeople Recommendations

1.21 A summary of recommendations for addressing need from Travelling Showpeople are set out below:

- No Travelling Showpeople were identified living on yards in Bath & North East Somerset so there is no current or future need for plots.

Transit Recommendations

1.22 Due to historic low numbers of encampments, and the existence of public transit pitches (some of which have recently been converted to permanent pitches due to a lack of demand for them as transit pitches), it is not recommended that there is a need for additional formal public transit provision in Bath & North East Somerset at this time.

1.23 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 could be collected as part of a Welfare Assessment (or similar).

1.24 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. 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.

1.25 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 could also be considered.

1.26 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.

1.27 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; portaloos; sewerage disposal point 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 Bath & North East Somerset Council.

2.2 The outcomes of the study will supersede the outcomes of the previous Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) completed for the Council

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, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) 2024, the Housing and Planning Act (2016), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 2021.

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 covering the period 2025/26 to 2042/43 to meet the 15-year requirements of the PPTS and the Councils Local Plan period.

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

2.6 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).

2.7 The baseline date for the study is June 2024 which was when the fieldwork was completed.

Definitions

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) 2024

2.8 For the purposes of the planning system, the current planning definition of a Traveller is set out in PPTS (2024) – click here for details. The planning definition set out in Annex 1 states that:

> *1. For the purposes of this planning policy "gypsies and travellers" means:*
>
> *Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or 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.*
>
> *2. For the purposes of this planning policy, "travelling showpeople" means:*

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 above.

3. For the purposes of this planning policy, "travellers" means "gypsies and travellers" and "travelling showpeople" as defined above.

4. For the purposes of this planning policy, "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.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
December 2024

Definition of Travelling

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

2.10 **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.

2.11 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.

2.12 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*.

2.13 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.

2.14 **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.

2.15 Following the changes to the PPTS in 2024 the planning definition now includes *all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan*.

2.16 As a result is this it can be concluded that all Gypsies and Travellers now meet the PPTS 2024 planning definition of a Traveller.

2.17 There were no changes to the planning definition of a Travelling Showperson mase in 2024 but is assumed that all Travelling Showpeople will meet the Annex 1 planning definition.

Legislation and Guidance for Gypsies and Travellers

2.18 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:

- The Housing Act, 1985 – click here for details.
- The Equality Act, 2010 – click here for details.
- The Housing and Planning Act, 2016 – click here for details.
- Planning Practice Guidance[2] (PPG), 2021 – click here for details.
- Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), 2024 – click here for details.
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2024 – click here for details.

2.19 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.

2.20 The primary guidance for undertaking the assessment of housing need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is set out in the PPTS (2024). It should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) 2024

2.21 The PPTS (2024, Paragraph 4), sets out the overall aims of the policy in respect of Traveller sites:

- That local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning.
- To ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites.
- To encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale.
- That plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development.
- To promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be travellers who cannot provide their own sites.
- That plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective.

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

- For local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies.
- To increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply.
- To reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions.
- To enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare, and employment infrastructure.
- For local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.

2.22 PPTS states in Paragraph 9 that:

> *Local planning authorities should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers as defined in Annex 1 and plot targets for travelling showpeople as defined in Annex 1 which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities.*

2.23 PPTS goes on to state in Paragraph 10 that Local Planning Authorities should in producing their Local Plan:

- Identify and annually update a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets.
- Identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11-15.
- Consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has special or strict planning constraints across its area (local planning authorities have a duty to cooperate on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries).
- Relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density.
- Protect local amenity and environment.

2.24 Local Authorities have a duty to ensure a 5-year land supply to meet any need that is identified Traveller sites. However, PPTS also sets out in Paragraph 11 that:

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

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

2.25 The most recent version of the NPPF was issued in December 2024.

2.26 Paragraph 62 of the NPPF sets out that in determining the minimum number of homes needed, *strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning practice guidance*.

2.27 Paragraph 63 then states that [emphasis added] *Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent); families with children; looked after children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families;* ***travellers****; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.*

2.28 Footnote 27 to this section states that '*Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers' housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document*.'

Lisa Smith v The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and others [2022]

2.29 In October 2022 the Court of Appeal handed down judgment in *Lisa Smith v The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities [2022] EWCA Civ 1391*. The case was a challenge to a specific appeal decision and concerned whether the planning definition of Gypsies and Travellers contained in Annex 1 of the PPTS (2015) is discriminatory against Travellers who are settled and who no longer travel for work due to old age or disability. The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal and quashed the Inspectors decision from 2018 and referred the case back to The Secretary of State for redetermination.

2.30 Whilst certain parts of the PPTS planning definition of a Traveller were found to be discriminatory, as the PPTS 2015 itself was not the subject of the case it was not quashed or declared unlawful at this time.

2.31 As a result of the Lisa Smith Judgement, changes to the PPTS in 2023, and following consultation on the NPPF in 2024, the Government made changes to the PPTS in December 2024 to effectively bring all Gypsies and Travellers under the current planning definition.

3. METHODOLOGY

Background

3.1 Opinion Research Services (ORS) have been undertaking Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessments (GTAAs) for over ten years. Our approach has been regularly refined in light of changes to PPTS in 2015, 2023 and 2024, the Housing and Planning Act (2016), the NPPF (2024), and the PPG (2021), as well as the outcomes of Local Plan Examinations and Planning Appeals.

3.2 PPTS contains a number of requirements for local authorities which must be addressed in a GTAA. Paragraph 7 in the PPTS sets out that local authorities should (a) pay particular attention to early and effective community engagement with both settled and traveller communities (including discussing travellers' accommodation needs with travellers themselves, their representative bodies and local support groups; (b) cooperate with travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups; other local authorities and relevant interest groups to prepare and maintain an up- to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of their areas over the lifespan of their development plan, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities; and (c) use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of local plans and make planning decisions.

3.3 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[3].

Our approach to Fieldwork

3.4 The stages below provide a summary of the methodology that was used to complete this study.

[3] ORS have attended Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Examination Sessions in areas including Bedford, Brentwood, Bristol, Cambridge, Castle Point, Central Bedfordshire, Cheltenham, Colchester, Cotswold, Daventry, East Hertfordshire, Gloucester, Leicester, Maldon, Milton Keynes, Newark and Sherwood, Newham, Runnymede, South Cambridgeshire, South Northamptonshire, Spelthorne, Tewkesbury, and Waverley.

Desk-Based Review

3.5 The secondary data that was reviewed and collated included:

- Census data.
- Traveller Caravan Count data.
- 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

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

3.7 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. ORS received two responses from Council Officers within Bath & North East Somerset

3.8 Planning Officers from neighbouring authorities allow us to explore cross-border issues including transit provision. For this project we engaged with Officers from

- Bristol City Council
- North Somerset Council
- Somerset Council
- South Gloucester Council
- Wiltshire Council

Community Engagement

3.9 Once we have identified all authorised and unauthorised sites/yards and encampments 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.

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, their current or future accommodation needs, whether there is any over-crowding or the presence of concealed households and travelling characteristics. 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 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, ORS feel that this is useful data which supports analysis. 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 will attempt to gather basic information about each pitch/plot through a proxy interview from sources including neighbouring residents and site management.

3.14 In addition to the household interviews fieldworkers make an overall physical assessment of each site to determine any opportunities for intensification or expansion to meet future needs.

Bricks and Mortar Households

3.15 The 2021 Census recorded 62 households who identified as either Gypsies or Irish Travellers, or Roma who lived in a house or bungalow in Bath & North East Somerset and 41 living in a flat or maisonette.

3.16 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 were sought through a range of sources including the interviews with people on existing sites and yards; information from stakeholder interviews; and information from housing registers. Interviews are sought with all identified households.

3.17 Through this approach the GTAA endeavoured to enable households living in bricks and mortar the opportunity to make their views known.

3.18 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. We do not model need from households living in bricks and mortar.

Timing of the Fieldwork

3.19 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.

3.20 The fieldwork for this GTAA was completed between April 2024 and June 2024 and researchers were able to collect information on the majority residents living on sites.

Our Analysis

Applying the PPTS Planning Definition

3.21 The primary change to the PPTS in December 2024 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 is also used.

3.22 Through the inclusion of *all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan* in the Annex 1 definition this now includes all Travellers. There were no changes to the definition of Travelling Showpeople in Annex 1.

Dealing with Undetermined Households

3.23 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

3.24 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.

3.25 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 and from teenagers based on the outcomes from completed interviews; and through new household formation. 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.

3.26 Following the changes to the planning definition in PPTS 2024 it has been assumed that all undetermined households will meet the definition. However, it is recommended that need from undetermined households is addressed through Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies and not through specific allocations.

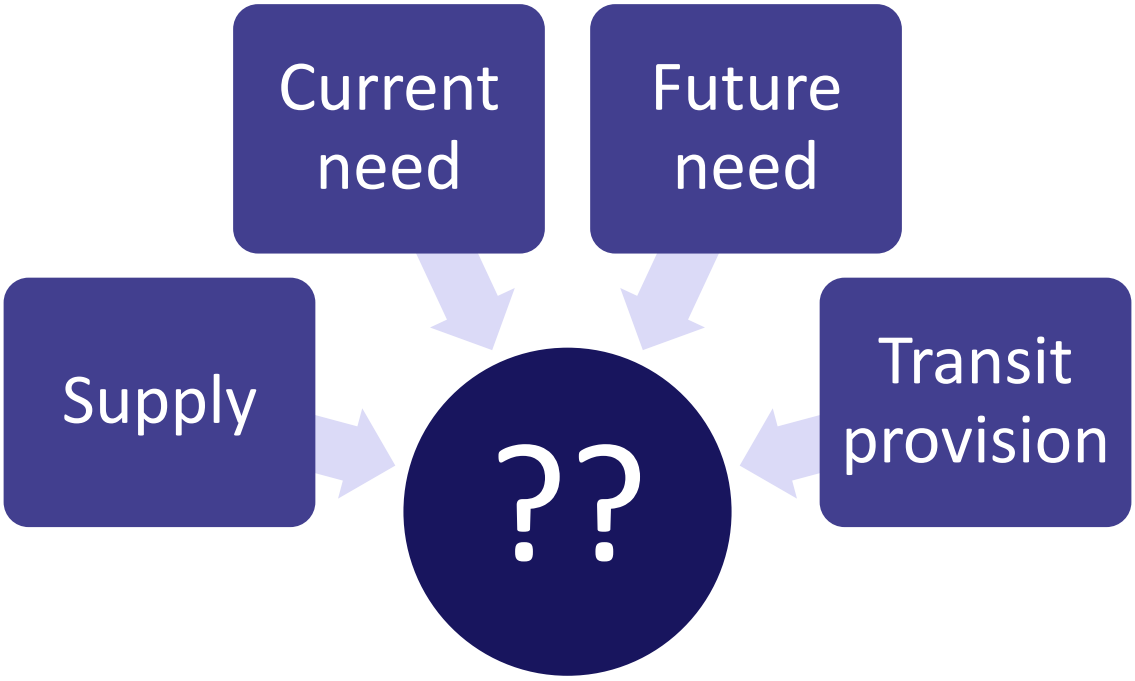
3.27 The ORS approach to addressing the need arising from undetermined households was supported by the Planning Inspector for a Local Plan Examination for Maldon District Council, Essex (29th June 2017). He concluded:

> *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 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

3.28 To identify need, PPTS requires an assessment for current and future pitch 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 available for occupation with the current and future needs of the population.

3.29 A summary out the approach that has been taken is show below.



Supply of Pitches

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

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

3.31 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

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

- Households on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected.
- 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.

3.33 ORS are increasingly identifying households and adult household members who have been forced to leave sites due to over-crowding or exceeding planning conditions on the number of caravans permitted on sites. These households are typically living on the roadside or doubling-up on pitches in neighbouring local

authorities. ORS include these households as components of hidden need and term them displaced in-migration.

Future Need

3.34 The final stage is to identify components of future need. This includes the following components:

- Households living on sites/yards with temporary planning permission.
- New household formation.

3.35 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 Turnover

3.36 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. 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.*

3.37 In addition, Best Practice for Assessing the Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers[4] 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.*

3.38 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

[4] See www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk/resources/ for details.

particular, the natural turnover of pitches/plots can help to meet future need over time from new household formation.

Transit Provision

3.39 GTAA studies require the identification of demand for transit provision. While 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. Due to the mobile nature of the population a range of sites/yards can be developed 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.

3.40 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.

3.41 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.

3.42 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.

3.43 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; portaloos; sewerage disposal point and refuse disposal facilities.

3.44 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.

3.45 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.

3.46 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 were also taken into consideration when determining this element of need in the study area.

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.

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[5]. A site is a collection of pitches which form a development for Gypsies and Travellers.

4.3 Whilst there is no standard size for a Gypsy and Traveller pitch, guidance[6] recommends an average pitch size of 320m^2 but also suggests 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 for example) and can also contribute to affordability.

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, guidance[7] recommends 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 many 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.

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 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).

4.7 The alternative to a public residential site 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.

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

[5] 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.
[6] Leeds City Council: *Gypsy and Traveller Site Design Guide (2020).*
[7] The Showmen's Guild: *Travelling Showpeople's Sites – A Planning Focus (2007).*

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 above. 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.

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.

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.

Sites and Yards

4.14 In the area on the base date for the GTAA (June 2024), there were

- 1 public site (11 pitches);
- 4 private sites with permanent planning permission (9 pitches);
- 1 site that is tolerated for planning purposes (13 pitches);
- 1 public transit site (2 pitches).

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

Figure 5 - Total amount of provision in Bath & North East Somerset (June 2024)

Category	Sites	Pitches
Gypsies and Travellers		
Public sites	1	11
Private sites with permanent planning permission	4	9
Tolerated sites	1	13
Public transit sites	1	2
TOTAL	**7**	**35**

MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count

4.16 Another source of information available on the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population is the bi-annual Traveller Caravan Count which is conducted by each Local Authority in England on a specific date in January and July of each year (only in January for Travelling Showpeople) and reported to MHCLG. This is a statistical count of the number of caravans on both authorised and unauthorised sites across England. With effect from July 2013, the Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count was renamed the Traveller Caravan Count due to the inclusion of information on Travelling Showpeople caravans.

4.17 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. 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.

4.18 The most recent Traveller Caravan Count in July 2024 recorded 14 caravans on socially rented sites; 10 caravans on sites with permanent permissions; and 18 caravans on tolerated unauthorised sites.

5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

5.1 ORS completed 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 or Teams interviews.

5.2 The aim of these interviews was 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 2 interviews were undertaken with Council Officers from the study area.

5.4 In order to explore issues relating to cross boundary working, ORS emailed Planning Officers from the following neighbouring local authorities:

- Bristol City Council
- North Somerset Council
- Somerset Council
- South Gloucester Council
- Wiltshire Council

5.5 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 in Bath & North East Somerset

Accommodation Needs

5.6 Bath & North East Somerset Council have one public site with 2 transit pitches and 11 permanent pitches.

5.7 The Council believe the current provision meets the need of Gypsies and Travellers in Bath & North East Somerset.

Short-term Encampments and Transit Provision

5.8 The Council have experienced a limited number of encampments within the last few years.

5.9 Bath & North East Somerset have seen encampments move out of the district or last no longer than 10-14 days.

5.10 There are 2 transit pitches at the public site, Carrswood View. These pitches are very rarely occupied.

Cross Border Issues

5.11 No cross-border issues were raised.

Future Priorities and Any Further Issues

5.12 No future priorities or further issues were raised.

Neighbouring Authorities

5.13 The following authorities responded to indicate no potential cross-border issues:

- Bristol City Council
- North Somerset Council
- Somerset Council
- South Gloucester Council

5.14 The following authorities failed to respond after a minimum of three attempts to engage:

- Wiltshire Council

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, and also efforts to engage with the bricks and mortar community.

6.2 In Bath & North East Somerset at the base date for the GTAA, there were 1 public Gypsy and Traveller site; 4 privately owned sites with permanent planning permission; 1 site that is tolerated for planning purposes; and 1 public transit site identified. See **Appendix** B: Site and Yard List**B** for further details.

6.3 There is also an undetermined application for a new site in Radford (23/02825/FUL). Thie site is currently unoccupied and it is understood that the potential occupiers are currently living in another local authority.

6.4 The table below set out the number of pitches, the number of interviews that were completed, and any reasons why interviews were not able to be completed.

Figure 6 – Interviews completed in Bath & North East Somerset

Site Status	Pitches/ Plots	Interviews	Reasons for not completing interviews/additional interviews
Gypsies and Travellers			
Public Sites			
Carrswood View, Bath	11	5	6 x No Contact
Private Sites			
Candywood Leys, Bathampton	1	0	1 x Vacant
Mill Lane, Radford	1	0	1 x Under Construction
Orchard View, Queen Charlton	6	6	-
Poplar View, Whitchurch	1	0	1 x No Contact
Tolerated Sites			
Newbridge Lane, Bath	13	13	-
Public Transit Sites			
Carrswood View, Bath	2	0	2 x Transit Pitches
TOTAL	**35**	**24**	

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 2042/43. This includes both current unmet need and need which is likely to arise in the future[8]. 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 identifies whether there is a need for any 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. A further 2025 update is currently being completed. The main conclusions are set out here and the full paper is in **Appendix** D: Technical Note on Household Formation and Growth Rates**D**.

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 Decision Notices. The Inspector for an appeal in Doncaster that was issued in November 2016 (**Ref: APP/F4410/W/15/3133490**) 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.*

[8] See Paragraphs 3.41 and 3.42 for details of components on 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.*

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 site surveys. The baseline includes all current authorised households, all households identified as being in current need (including concealed/doubled-up households, movement from bricks and mortar and those on waiting lists not currently living on a pitch or plot), 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 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 latter approach has been applied in Bath & North East Somerset for the following reasons:

- For Gypsy and Traveller households that met the planning definition 40% of residents were aged under 18. Therefore the ORS national rate of 1.50% has been uplifted to 1.70%.

7.13 In addition, the ORS national rate of 1.50% has been used to estimate growth for undetermined Travellers.

7.14 It should also be noted that new household formation has been calculated from year 6 of the GTAA period onwards. New household formation for years 0-5 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. This eliminates any double counting in the assessment of need.

Breakdown by 5 Year Bands

7.15 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 PPTS. The way that this is calculated is by including all current need (from unauthorised pitches/plots, pitches/plots with temporary planning permission, concealed and doubled-up households, 5 year need from teenage children, net movement from bricks and mortar, 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

7.16 The table below sets out the planning status of households for the Bath & North East Somerset GTAA. It is important to note that this table records numbers of households and not the number of pitches or plots.

Figure 7 – Planning status of households in Bath & North East Somerset

Status	Meet Planning Definition	Undetermined
Gypsies and Travellers		
Public Sites	7	6
Private Sites	7	1
Tolerated Sites	13	0
Roadside	1	0
TOTAL	**28**	**7**

7.17 Figure 7 shows that for Gypsies and Travellers 28 households meet the planning definition of a Traveller.

7.18 It was not possible to make contact with 7 Gypsy and Traveller households during the fieldwork period as households were not present during the fieldwork period. These households are recorded as Undetermined for the purposes of the GTAA.

Interviews with Gypsies and Travellers in Bricks and Mortar

7.19 Despite all of the efforts that were made it was not possible to identify and interview any households living in bricks and mortar.

Migration/Roadside

7.20 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 Bath & North East Somerset. These are referred to as roadside households or displaced in-migration.

7.21 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 1

household living on roadside predominantly in Bath & North East Somerset with a need to move to a permanent pitch/plot in the area.

7.22 ORS have found no firm evidence from other local studies that have been completed recently of any households wishing to move to Bath & North East Somerset. Therefore, apart from the 1 household set out above, 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.

7.23 It is important to note that any applications for new sites 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.

Gypsy and Traveller Needs

Pitch Needs – Gypsies and Travellers that met the PPTS 2024 Planning Definition

7.24 Analysis of the household interviews indicated that there is a need from 4 pitches concealed/doubled-up/over-crowded households; 5 pitches from a 5-year need from teenage children; 1 pitch from in-migration/roadside households; and for 8 pitches from new household formation. Therefore, the overall level of need for those households who met the planning definition of a Gypsy or Traveller in Bath & North East Somerset is for 18 pitches over the GTAA period.

Figure 8 – Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in Bath & North East Somerset that met the Planning Definition

Gypsy & Traveller – Meeting Planning Definition	Pitches
Supply of Pitches	
Available supply from vacant public and private 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 unauthorised encampments	0
Concealed households/Doubling-Up/Over-Crowding	4
5 year need from teenage children	5
Movement from bricks and mortar	0
In-Migration/Roadside	1
Households on waiting lists for public sites	0
Total Current Need	**10**
Future Need	
Households on pitches with temporary planning permission	0
New household formation	8
(Household base 34 and formation rate 1.70%)	
Total Future Need	**8**
Net Plot Need = (Current and Future Need – Total Supply)	**18**

Figure 9 – Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in Bath & North East Somerset that met the Planning Definition by year periods

Year Period	Dates	Need
0 – 5	2025-29	10
6 – 10	2030-34	3
11 – 15	2035-39	3
16 – 18	2040-42	2
0 – 18	**2025-42**	**18**

Pitch Needs – Undetermined Gypsies and Travellers

7.25 The assessment identified a need for up to 5 pitches for undetermined households. This is made up of a modelled need for 1 pitch for concealed or doubled-up households or single adults; a modelled need of 2 pitches for teenagers; and a need for 2 pitches from new household formation from a maximum of 10 households using the ORS national formation rate of 1.50%.

Figure 10 – Need for undetermined Gypsy and Traveller households in Bath & North East Somerset

Gypsy & Traveller – Undetermined	Pitches
Supply of Pitches	
Available supply from vacant public and private 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 unauthorised encampments	0
Concealed households/Doubling-Up/Over-Crowding (modelled)	1
5 year need from teenage children (modelled)	2
Movement from bricks and mortar	0
In-Migration/Roadside	0
Households on waiting lists for public sites	0
Total Current Need	**3**
Future Need	
Households on pitches with temporary planning permission	0
New household formation	2
(Household base 10 and formation rate 1.50%)	
Total Future Need	**2**
Net Plot Need = (Current and Future Need – Total Supply)	**5**

Figure 11 – Need for undetermined Gypsy and Traveller households in Bath & North East Somerset by year periods

Year Period	Dates	Need
0 – 5	2025-29	3
6 – 10	2030-34	1
11 – 15	2035-39	1
16 – 18	2040-42	0
0 – 18	**2025-42**	**5**

Travelling Showpeople Needs

7.26 In Bath & North East Somerset, there were no Travelling Showperson households identified so there is no current or future need for plots.

Transit Requirements

7.27 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

7.28 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.

7.29 The count is also only a twice yearly (January and July) 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. 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.

7.30 Data from the Traveller Caravan Count shows that there have been low numbers of unauthorised caravans on land not owned by Travellers recorded in the study area in recent years.

Stakeholder Interviews and Local Data

7.31 The Council have experienced a limited number of encampments within the last few years.

7.32 Bath & North East Somerset have seen encampments move out of the district or last no longer than 10-14 days.

7.33 There are 2 transit pitches at the public site, Carrswood View. These pitches are very rarely occupied.

Transit Recommendations

7.34 Due to historic low numbers of encampments, and the existence of public transit pitches (some of which have recently been converted to permanent pitches due to a lack of demand for them as transit pitches), it is not recommended that there is a need for additional formal public transit provision in Bath & North East Somerset at this time.

7.35 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 could be collected as part of a Welfare Assessment (or similar).

7.36 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. 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.

7.37 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 could also be considered.

7.38 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.

7.39 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; portaloos; sewerage disposal point and refuse disposal facilities.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 This study 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, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2024, the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the National Planning Policy Framework 2024, and Planning Practice Guidance 2021. It also provides the evidence base which can be used to support Local Plan Policies.

Gypsies and Travellers

8.2 In summary, in Bath & North East Somerset, for the GTAA period 2025/26 – 2042/43, there is a need for:

- 18 pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households that met the 2024 PPTS planning definition.
- Up to 5 pitches for Undetermined Gypsy and Traveller households.

8.3 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.

8.4 Whilst there is no standard size for a Gypsy and Traveller pitch, Guidance[9] recommends an average pitch size of 320m^2 but also suggests 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.

8.5 For need arising from public sites the Council will need to consider the expansion or intensification of these sites, or for new sites(s), as it is unlikely that this need could be addressed through the provision of pitches on new private sites.

8.6 For need arising from private sites the Council will need to consider the expansion or intensification of these sites, or to address need through new site/pitch allocations. Where they have been identified the Council should also consider the regularisation of sites with temporary planning permission and of unauthorised sites.

8.7 The Council will also need to carefully consider how to address any potential needs from Undetermined households; from households seeking to move to Bath & North East Somerset (in-migration); or from households currently living in bricks and mortar who may wish to move to a site. In terms of the Local Plan Policies, the Council should continue to use or put in place Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies as suggested in PPTS.

8.8 Future need from new household formation could also be met through natural turnover of pitches over time, or through enforcing against pitches not found to be occupied by Gypsies or Travellers.

[9] Leeds City Council: *Gypsy and Traveller Site Design Guide (2020).*

8.9 Whilst the findings in this report are aggregated totals for the whole of Bath & North East Somerset due to data protection issues, the Council have more detailed data to enable an accurate review of Local Plan allocations to be made.

Travelling Showpeople

8.10 No Travelling Showpeople were identified living on yards in Bath & North East Somerset so there is no current or future need for plots.

Transit Provision

8.11 Due to historic low numbers of unauthorised encampments, and the existence of public transit pitches (some of which have recently been converted to permanent pitches due to a lack of demand for them as transit pitches), it is not recommended that there is a need for additional formal public transit provision in Bath & North East Somerset at this time.

Summary of Need to be Addressed – Gypsies and Travellers

8.12 Taking into consideration all of the elements of need that have been assessed, together with the assumptions on need from Undetermined households, the table below sets out the number of pitches that will need to be addressed as a result of the outcomes of the GTAA.

8.13 Total need from Gypsy and Traveller households that met the 2024 PPTS planning definition is for 18 pitches between 2025/26 – 2042/43, and total need from Undetermined households is for 5 pitches.

8.14 The table below breaks total need down by:

- Household that met the planning definition.
- Undetermined households.

8.15 Need from households that met 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 12 – Total Need for Gypsy and Traveller households

Planning Status	Gypsy and Traveller Policy	TOTAL
Meet Planning Definition	28	28
Undetermined	7	7
TOTAL	**35**	**35**

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 is 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 while 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; and to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

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

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	Tenure	Authorised	Unauthorised
Carrswood View, Bath	Public	11	
Candywood Leys, Bathampton	Private	1	
Mill Lane, Radford	Private	1	
Orchard View, Queen Charlton	Private	6	
Poplar View, Whitchurch	Private	1	
Newbridge Lane, Bath	Tolerated	13	
Carrswood View, Bath	Public - Transit	2	
Total Pitches		**35**	**0**
TOTAL		**35**	**0**

Appendix C: Household Interview Questionnaire

Interview or Proxy?

Project Code

GTAA Questionnaire

Introduction

Good morning / afternoon My name is [INTERVIEWER] from Opinion Research Services, working on behalf of [CLIENT]

The Council are undertaking a study of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showmen accommodation needs assessment in this area. This is needed to make sure that accommodation needs are properly assessed and to get a better understanding of the needs of the Travelling Community.

The Council need to try and speak with every Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showmen household in the area to make sure that the assessment of need is accurate.

Your household will not be identified and all the information collected will be anonymous and will only be used to help understand the needs of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showmen households.

All questions are optional and all information you provide will be processed by ORS in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR. Your responses will be stored and processed electronically and securely. This paper form will be securely destroyed after processing. Your household will not be identified to the council and only anonymous data and results will be submitted, though verbatim comments may be reported in full, and the data from this survey will only be used to help understand the needs of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showmen households

A: General Information

Q1. Name of planning authority

Please write in

Q1b Sub area (if needed)

☐

☐

☐

Q2. Address & pitch number

Please write in

Q3. Date of visit

Please write in – DD/MM/YY

Q4. Time of visit

Please write in – HH:MM

Q5. Status of Private Site?

Private rented ☐

Private owned ☐

N/A ☐

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Q6. Name of respondent

Please write in

Q7. Which of these best describes you?

READ OUT: Please tick ONE box only

- Romany Gypsy ☐
- Irish Traveller ☐
- Scots Gypsy or Traveller ☐
- Travelling Showmen ☐
- New Traveller ☐
- English Traveller ☐
- Welsh Gypsy ☐
- Non Traveller ☐
- Other ☐

Please write in

Q8. How many units are on the pitch?

Please write a number in each box

Mobile homes / Static caravans	
Touring caravans	
Day Rooms / Utility Shed	
Bungalows / Bricks and Mortar	
Other (e.g. Park Home or American Caravan)	

Q9. Is this site your main place of residence?

- Yes ☐ **SKIP TO Q11**
- No ☐ **ANSWER Q10**

Q10. Where is your main residence?

Please write in

Q11. How long have you lived here?

Years and months

IF MOVED IN PAST FIVE YEARS ASK

Q12. Where did you move from?

Please write in

Q13. Do you live here out of choice or because there is no other option?

- Choice ☐ **SKIP TO Q15**
- No other option ☐ **ANSWER Q14**

Q14. Why do you feel there is no other choice?

Please write in

Q15. Is this site suitable for your household?

- Yes ☐ **SKIP TO Q17**
- No ☐ **ANSWER Q16**

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Q16. Why do you feel this site isn't suitable?
PROBE: SCHOOLS, WORK, HEALTHCARE, FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Please write in

Q17. How many separate families or single adults live on this pitch?
Please write a number in the box

B: HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS

Q18. Please tell me about the members of your household
Please complete below for the main household on this pitch. Any further families pertinent to this pitch should be included in section G using the format below.

For example, a seven year old daughter should be entered as

F	07
Daughter	

Person 1	Person 2
GENDER / AGE	GENDER / AGE
Interviewee	

Person 3	Person 4
GENDER / AGE	GENDER / AGE

Person 5	Person 6
GENDER / AGE	GENDER / AGE

Person 7	Person 8
GENDER / AGE	GENDER / AGE

Person 9	Person 10
GENDER / AGE	GENDER / AGE

How many additional families or single adults are included in Section G?
Please write a number

C: ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

Q19. How many families or single adults living on this pitch will need a pitch of their own in the next five years?
An adult is defined as 18+
Please write a number

Q20. How many of your children will need a home of their own in the next 5 years?
Please write a number

IF ZERO SKIP TO Q24

Q21. Do the individuals counted above currently live on this site?

Yes ☐ **GO TO Q22**

No ☐ **SKIP TO Q23**

Q22. Would they wish to stay here and, if not, where would they wish to move to?

Please write in

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Q23. Where do they currently live? And would they wish to move to this site or another local site if possible?

Please write in

D: FUTURE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

Q24. Do you plan to move from this site in the next five years?

Yes ☐ **GO TO Q32**

No ☐ **SKIP TO Q36**

Q25. Why do you plan to move?

Please write in

Q26. Where do you plan to move to?

Another site in this area ☐

A site in another council area ☐

Bricks & mortar in this area ☐

Bricks & mortar in another council area ☐

Other (e.g. land they own elsewhere ☐

Please provide more detail on the answer above

Q27. Would you prefer to buy a site or rent on a public or private site?

Private buy ☐

Private rent ☐

Public rent ☐

Q28. Can you afford to buy a private pitch or site?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

Q29. Are you aware of, or do you own any land that has potential for new pitches

Yes ☐ **GO TO Q37**

No ☐ **SKIP TO Q38**

Q30. Where is the site and who owns it?

Please write in

E: Travelling

Q31. How many trips, living in a caravan or a trailer, have you or members of your family made away from your permanent base in the last 12 months?

0 ☐ **SKIP TO Q44**

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐ **GO TO Q39**

4 ☐

5+ ☐

Q32. Which family members travelled?

All the family ☐

Adult males ☐

Other ☐

Please write in

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Q33. What were the reasons for travelling?

- Work ☐
- Holidays ☐
- Visiting family ☐
- Fairs ☐
- Other ☐

If work, please write I profession or trade; and if fairs, holidays or visiting family, probe whether this involves any elements of work.

Q34. At what time of year do you or family members usually travel?

- All year ☐
- Summer ☐
- Winter ☐

Q35. How long do you usually travel for?

Please write in

Q36. Where do you or family members usually stay when they are travelling?

- LA transit sites ☐
- Private transit sites ☐
- Roadside ☐
- Friends / Family ☐
- Other ☐

Please write in

IF BEEN TRAVELLING - GO TO Q49

NON-TRAVELLING ANSWER Q44 - Q48

Q37. Are there any reasons you don't travel at the moment?

Please write in

Q38. Have you or family members ever travelled

- Yes ☐ **GO TO Q46**
- No ☐ **SKIP TO Q49**

Q39. When did you or family members last travel?

Please write in

Q40. What were the reasons for travelling?

- Work ☐
- Holidays ☐
- Visiting family ☐
- Fairs ☐
- Other ☐

Please write in or list profession if for work. If for work, please write profession or trade; and if fairs, holidays or visiting family, probe whether this involves any elements of work.

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Q41. Why do you not travel anymore?

- Children in school ☐
- Ill health ☐
- Old age ☐
- Settled now ☐
- Nowhere to stop ☐
- No work opportunities ☐
- Other ☐

Please write in

Q42. Do you or other family members plan to travel in the future

- Yes ☐ **ANSWER Q50**
- No ☐ **SKIP TO Q51**
- Don't know ☐ **SKIP TO Q51**

Q43. When and why do you / they plan to travel?

Please write in

Q44. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your travelling patterns?

Please write in

F: Contact information

Q45. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about this site and your accommodation needs?

Please write in

Q46. Would you like ORS to contact you again regarding future needs assessments?

- Yes ☐ **GO TO Q54**
- No ☐ **SKIP TO Q56**

47. Would you like the Council to contact you about your accommodation needs?

- Yes ☐ **GO TO Q55**
- No ☐ **SKIP TO Q56**

Q48. Can I confirm the details they should use to contact you?

We cannot guarantee if and when they will make contact with you.

Name

Phone number

Email address

Q48a. Do you know of anyone living in Bricks and Mortar who we should contact for this study?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

Q48b. Can you provide their contact details?

Name

Phone number

Email address

If can't provide details will you ask them to contact us on 0800 0789786

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G: Any notes / Extra information

Interviewer: please use this space for any additional information including details about additional households

Interviewer Declaration: I confirm that this interview was conducted in accordance with all interviewing guidelines and that the data collected is accurately recorded

Interviewer Name:	
Interviewer Signature:	
Date:	

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Appendix D: Technical Note on Household Formation and Growth Rates

TO BE ADDED TO FINAL PDF