

**FINAL**

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL  
GYPSY AND TRAVELLER TRANSIT STUDY**

**FINAL REPORT**

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## SUMMARY

S1. The objectives of the study are to assemble and assess the available quantitative, qualitative and anecdotal evidence in order to:

- i. Identify as far as is practicable any evident patterns of transit movement by Gypsies and Travellers in and through the South East region; and
- ii. Provide an indication of the scale, type and broad location of need or demand for additional transit provision.

The findings will form part of the evidence base for the ongoing South East Plan partial review for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The study does not carry any formal planning status. However, it is expected that, in compiling their evidence for transit need to meet the requirements of Policy H7, county groups would give significant weight to the study along with other evidence and advice they think fit in order to achieve an appropriate distribution of transit sites and stopping places.

S2. Evidence has been brought together from: the sub-regional GTAAs and advice submitted by local authorities; the bi-annual Caravan Count; and a questionnaire survey of key stakeholders including local authorities, police forces, Traveller Education Services and Gypsy and Traveller representative groups (44 responses). The survey collected information on levels of unauthorised encampments and 'softer' information about the nature of unauthorised encampments, known travelling patterns and views on appropriate future transit provision. Two workshops were held in September 2009 to amplify and comment on the assembled information and interim conclusions drawn in a report circulated wholly or in part to participants.

S3. A background examination of previous research and guidance demonstrates the importance of travelling to Gypsies and Travellers, and its complexity. Gypsies and Travellers have different travelling patterns and are likely to have different transit accommodation requirements. While 'active' travelling may have decreased there is no sign that it is about to disappear. Guidance on how local and regional bodies should plan to meet transit accommodation needs is not well developed and somewhat tentative.

S4. The 12 sub-regional GTAAs and advice submitted by local authorities provide a starting point for assessing need, but do not provide a complete or consistent 'answer'. GTAAs/advice provided estimates of transit accommodation requirements for only four county groups. The GTAAs provide somewhat inconsistent information about travelling but find relatively few obvious travelling routes, much 'local' travelling and a range of ethnicities among those involved in travelling.

S5. Shortcomings in the Caravan Counts suggest they would not, alone, provide a credible basis for transit site planning. This was reinforced by the workshops and particularly that involving Gypsy and Traveller representatives. However, there is sufficient consistency between measures and over time to suggest higher priority on the basis of need in Hampshire/Isle of Wight, Kent/

Medway and East Sussex/Brighton & Hove. Individual local authority 'hotspots' can also be identified.

S6. Records of unauthorised encampments in the past year were collected by the survey. These are not fully comprehensive and will under- rather than over-state numbers. Almost 720 unauthorised encampments were recorded across the region. As with the Caravan Count analysis, Hampshire/Isle of Wight, Kent/Medway and East Sussex/Brighton & Hove experienced the highest numbers of encampments and together accounted for about two-thirds of the regional total. Very few districts experienced no encampments during the past year. The average size of encampment was 5 caravans, and average duration about a fortnight. Across the region, most encampments occur between April and October with a clear peak in June and July. The workshops noted that records may be incomplete and, as with the Caravan Counts, could be influenced by differential enforcement policies and need for residential rather than transit sites.

S7. The stakeholder survey was designed to provide evidence and views in order to supplement and help interpret information from the GTAAs, the Caravan Count and records of unauthorised encampments. Important points arising are:

- Opinions differ as to the relative numerical importance of need for short-term transit accommodation and permanent residential accommodation generated by unauthorised encampments. Both exist. Answers from local authorities suggest that elements of transient need may have been missed by some GTAAs.
- There are many reasons why people might need transit accommodation including most importantly: work/employment, visiting family or friends, moving through the area and holidays. The complexity and combinations of reasons for travelling indicate that it is a mistake to see travel patterns by Gypsy and Traveller communities as entirely predictable.
- Opinion is also mixed about whether the need for transit accommodation is likely to increase, decrease or stay about the same.
- There are a number of special events in or near the South East which attract large numbers of Gypsies and Travellers, including religious gatherings, horse fairs and race meetings. Their impact on unauthorised encampment seems mainly to be indirect where groups want to stop for a time on the journey to or from the event.
- Major routes were mentioned as an indication of possible locations for transit sites in Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes, Kent and Sussex. In other parts of the region, there appear to be few obvious route-oriented locations for transit site provision. Responses from two Gypsy and Traveller bodies stressed the importance of having a network of places to stop as well as route-oriented locations.
- Outside Hampshire/Isle of Wight there was little consensus among survey respondents on priority need locations for transit provision.
- The survey explored two possible approaches to allocating transit provision across the region:

- Provision should mirror need as evident in the pattern of unauthorised encampments – no consensus, but some agreement that need cannot be ignored. Some stakeholders think that provision should be diversified away from the ‘high need’ areas.
- Provision should ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are able to stop legally in every local council area – markedly divergent views expressed. Most recognised that there should be a wider distribution of transit provision but did not agree that **every** local council should make provision.
- Stakeholders stressed the importance of considering a full range of ways of creating locations where ‘Gypsies and Travellers can legally stop’, including formal sites, less formal stopping places, larger pitches (on private sites) to accommodate visitors and sensitive approaches to managing unauthorised encampments. Which form is most appropriate in any particular area depends on local circumstances and need. There are perceived management challenges with all forms of provision which will need to be overcome.
- Sites/stopping places of different sizes are needed with a range of facilities. Small sites are seen as easier to manage – transit sites with 10-15 pitches and stopping places for about 6 caravans.
- Stakeholder responses stressed the vital importance of involving and engaging the Gypsy and Traveller communities in the planning and provision of transit accommodation. The grass roots element to planning is an essential complement to any top-down approach.

S8. There is no generally accepted model for estimating transit need from records of unauthorised encampments or other information sources. The study developed six different approaches based on: ‘evidence’ (Caravan Count using three different assumptions and unauthorised encampment records); local authority advice; and a policy-oriented option aimed at creating a network of transit sites and stopping places. These options, with the assumptions used, produced estimates of additional need between 112 and about 150 additional transit pitches (see Table 7.2 below). They were discussed in broad principle at the consultation workshops.

S9. A number of specific inter-related questions were posed at the workshops:

- Are the figures based on unauthorised encampments in the past year a reasonable reflection of reality? Is there any better evidence available? *The accuracy of the figures were questioned especially by Gypsy and Traveller representatives. However, it was recognised that there is no better hard evidence at present.*
- At a county group level, can the pattern of unauthorised encampments be taken as an indication of need/demand or is it significantly influenced by different enforcement approaches? *Gypsy and Traveller representatives felt enforcement approaches significantly distort travelling and that the current pattern would not be a good indicator of the pattern of need. Other stakeholders accepted a possible influence, but felt it to be less marked.*

- Is it possible to distinguish between need for residential and transit accommodation arising from unauthorised encampments? *The consensus was that both needs undoubtedly exist, but that there is no method at present of distinguishing between them. Provision of both residential and transit sites will crystallise need for transit provision in future.*
- Is the study's interpretation of the pattern of transit movement as being only partially 'route-oriented' accurate? Can patterns of travelling realistically be predicted? *Participants reinforced the view that travelling is a complex phenomenon, and some elements cannot be predicted. However, some can, and this should not be ignored.*
- What are the pros and cons of each three broad approaches to estimating additional transit provision:
  - using evidence of need from the Caravan Counts or records of unauthorised encampments
  - using GTAAs and advice from local authorities
  - creating a network of provision across the region*A number of advantages and disadvantages were identified. There was support in principle for aiming to create a network of provision, especially given the acknowledged limitations of 'evidence' of need.*
- Is it appropriate to plan provision to meet the likely travelling peak or to accept that unauthorised encampments will continue because of limited capacity? *The consensus was that it is right to plan to meet the travelling peak, but that the form of provision might be less formal above the expected 'usual' level of usage.*
- Do the study's general indications of type and broad location of transit provision needed make sense? *Gypsy and Traveller representatives insisted that transit provision should not be sub-standard and should therefore provide good basic facilities. Other stakeholders argued for a range of provision to meet varying needs and preferences, and to provide flexibility beyond 'usual' levels of demand.*

S10. The concluding chapter addresses the study objectives by bringing together and assessing the evidence on travelling patterns in and through the South East. It concludes:

- Evidence from GTAAs, local authority advice, the Caravan Count and records of unauthorised encampments is imperfect and likely to understate current levels of unauthorised encampments.
- The workshops made clear that estimates of need for transit provision based solely on evidence from the Caravan Counts and records of unauthorised encampments would not be credible to Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- It is impossible at present to distinguish between residential and transit need arising from unauthorised encampments – a view supported by the GTAAs, the stakeholder survey and the workshops.
- Because of general mistrust of the Caravan Count and records of unauthorised encampments, and specifically because of the unknown extent of distortion introduced by different approaches to enforcement, it would be unwise to place too much weight on the pattern of encampments as evidence of transit need.

- The complexity of reasons behind travelling mean that an element cannot be predicted.

S11. In this context, and supported by the consensus from the workshops, an assessment of need based on the **principle of creating a network of transit accommodation** as well as harder 'evidence' is recommended. Proposed estimates of need for additional transit provision (expressed in terms of both pitches and caravans) and its broad location at county group level is in the table below. The basic assumption is that there should be at least 4 sites or stopping places in each county group providing on average 4 pitches each. The exceptions are Hampshire/Isle of Wight and Kent/ Medway where their greater geographical extent and evidence of need from the Caravan Count and records of unauthorised encampments are reflected in an assumed 8 transit site/stopping place minimum. In all cases, the minimum is assumed to include both current and additional provision. The final column in the table comments in more detail on the figures and their derivation, including the impact of existing provision.

<b>Recommended Additional Transit Need by County Group</b>			
County group	Additional need		Comments
	Pitches	Caravans	
Berkshire	12	20	Creating network by providing 3 additional sites x 4 pitches (current provision 1 site)
Bucks/Milton Keynes	16	27	Creating network by providing 4 additional sites x 4 pitches (no current provision)
East Sussex/Brighton & Hove	8	14	Creating network by providing 2 additional sites x 4 pitches (current provision 2 sites)
Hampshire/Isle of Wight	48	82	Combination assumed of formal sites (advice) + 4 stopping places (network assumptions and GTAA which identified need for stopping places as well as transit sites) (no current provision)
Kent/Medway	37	63	Local authority advice which coincides with network assumptions (current provision 1 site)
Oxfordshire	16	27	Creating network by providing 4 additional sites x 4 pitches (no current provision)
Surrey	4	7	Creating network by providing 1 additional site x 4 pitches (current provision 3 sites)
West Sussex	12	20	Creating network by providing 3 additional sites x 4 pitches (current provision 1 site)
<b>South East</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>260</b>	

Note: Pitches are converted to caravans by multiplying by 1.7 (the assumed average number of caravans per pitch)

S12. The main advantages of the proposed approach are:

- By creating a network, it increases opportunities for Gypsies and Travellers to pursue a travelling lifestyle across the region without the disruption and expense of unauthorised encampment.
- Despite being based on different reasoning, it corresponds broadly to evidence of need in that:
  - The level of requirements falls within the range of estimates based on the Caravan Count and records of unauthorised encampments.
  - The larger county groups (Hampshire/Isle of Wight and Kent/Medway) which have higher proposed provision also showed the highest levels of need from analysis of the Caravan Count and unauthorised encampments.
- It takes explicit account of current levels of transit site provision.
- It has the effect of broadening transit provision beyond areas currently experiencing highest levels of unauthorised encampment. This re-distributive aspect resembles that underlying the allocations of residential pitch requirements in Policy H7.

S13. There is no necessary assumption in the figures that all pitches will be provided on formal transit sites. Provision of formal, equipped sites should aim to meet 'usual' demand, with peak demand being met by less formal sites and stopping places. Less formal provision might also meet the preferences of some Gypsy and Traveller groups. Site provision could be phased in line with monitored site usage especially in areas with current low levels of unauthorised encampments. Some less formal sites could be further developed where stable demand is evident.

S14. The assumptions underlying the recommended estimates of additional transit need illustrate the minimum additional provision considered likely to create an effective regional site/stopping place network. In accordance with the delegated approach in Policy H7, county groups will take account of local circumstances (for example, typical size of travelling groups) and Gypsy and Traveller community and other views in determining the number, size and type of sites to be provided. It may be locally appropriate to provide the equivalent number of pitches on a greater number of smaller sites or on fewer larger sites. However, it is considered unlikely that significantly fewer sites overall could provide an effective network.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This study forms part of the evidence base for the ongoing South East Plan partial review for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. It deals broadly with patterns of transit movement by Gypsies and Travellers in South East England and their implications for any additional transit provision. Travelling Showpeople are not included.

1.2 Consultation on *Recommendations for new policy H7: Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople* closed 1 September 2009 prior to an Examination in Public in February 2010. Proposed policy H7 identifies the number of net additional permanent residential pitches each Local Planning Authority (LPA) must plan to deliver in the period 2006-2016. In addition it states: *'Local Planning Authorities will also make appropriate provision in Local Development Documents to meet requirements for transit and temporary stopping purposes.'* The accompanying text notes that evidence currently available at regional level is insufficiently robust to provide individual transit allocations at LPA level and recommends county-based joint working to establish the level and form of provision required. As a starting point Table H7b sets out some indicators of relative need for transit provision at county group level from Gypsy and Traveller Accommodations Assessments (GTAA's) and the bi-annual Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count (the Caravan Count). This table is reproduced as Table 1.1 below. The supporting text also notes that a regional transit study will examine travelling patterns and high-level of transit need. This report presents the findings of that regional study.

<b>Table 1.1 : Indicators of Need for Transit Provision by County Group (Table H7b)</b>				
County group	Indicative transit advice/ GTAA	Unauthorised encampment caravans 2004-7		
		Winter	Summer	Change
Berkshire Unitaries	No advice	23	16	-7
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes	No advice	5	19	14
East Sussex and Brighton & Hove	2 sites	24	84	60
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	4 sites	40	113	74
Kent and Medway	7 sites/ stopping places	62	38	-25
Oxfordshire	No advice	17	17	1
Surrey	No advice	2	15	13
West Sussex	25 pitches	34	50	17
<b>South East</b>		<b>205</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>147</b>

1.3 The objectives of the study are to assemble and assess the available quantitative, qualitative and anecdotal evidence in order to:

- i. Identify as far as is practicable any evident patterns of transit movement by Gypsies and Travellers in and through the South East region; and
- ii. Provide an indication of the scale, type and broad location of need or demand for additional transit provision.

1.4 'Evidence' has been collected as follows:

- Further examination of the findings and recommendations of the sub-regional GTAs and advice submitted by local authorities.
- Further assembly and analysis of Caravan Count data.
- A questionnaire survey (predominantly by e-mail) of key stakeholders including local authorities, police forces, Traveller Education Services and Gypsy and Traveller representative groups. The survey sought both 'hard' evidence in the form of records of unauthorised encampments, and 'softer' information about the nature of unauthorised encampments, known travelling patterns and views on appropriate future transit provision. In all, 44 completed questionnaires were returned, including 2 returned by county councils on behalf of all constituent county districts, and 1 returned on behalf of a sub-county group of three districts. At least one source of information on unauthorised encampments was provided in all parts of the region. Three of the responses came from Gypsy and Traveller organisations or individuals.
- Two workshops held in early September to amplify and comment on the assembled information and interim conclusions. The first workshop (held in Sittingbourne, Kent) was for Gypsy and Traveller representatives only. The second (held in Guildford, Surrey) was for all stakeholders.

1.5 This Final Report draws together all the material gathered and seeks to fulfil the study's objectives. It is structured by source of information. After setting the background (Chapter 2) Chapter 3 deals with GTAs, Chapter 4 with the Caravan Count, Chapter 5 with the information from the survey on unauthorised encampments and Chapter 6 with the more general elements from the survey on travelling patterns and transit provision. In each case, the chapter includes the main findings and their implications; the bulk of the evidence is presented in annexes. Chapter 7 outlines possible approaches to estimating need for transit provision on the basis of the evidence assembled. Chapter 8 presents the main points arising from the workshops at which, amongst other things, these possible approaches were discussed. Chapter 9 draws conclusions on the basis of all the evidence gathered.

1.6 The study does not carry any formal planning status. However, it is expected that, in compiling their evidence for transit need to meet the requirements of Policy H7, county groups would give significant weight to the study along with other evidence and advice they think fit in order to achieve an appropriate distribution of transit sites and stopping places.

## 2. BACKGROUND

2.1 As the text accompanying proposed Policy H7 notes, travelling for both work and cultural reasons remains an important part of the lifestyle of Gypsies and Travellers. Travelling, of course, also involves stopping and this has become increasingly an issue as traditional stopping places disappear through development and the greater legal and physical protection of land. Issues which make the provision of some form of transit provision a priority include:

- European and English case law has, to an extent, recognised a positive obligation for states to 'facilitate the Gypsy way of life'<sup>1</sup>. Transit as well as permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller sites are required to achieve this. The legal definition of 'gypsies' for planning purposes requires a nomadic lifestyle and there are only specified, usually temporary, exceptions. Having applied this definition, it behoves the state (at national, regional and local levels) to make the required lifestyle legal and possible.
- Many Gypsies and Travellers experience very poor living conditions on unauthorised encampments without easy access to water or toilet facilities and with uncertainty and stress from potential eviction. Access to health and educational services is made harder without an authorised stopping place. Service providers as well as Gypsies and Travellers suffer frustration as groups move on.
- Visible unauthorised encampments can heighten tensions between Travelling and settled communities, making it harder to foster greater community cohesion.
- Managing unauthorised encampments is expensive for local authorities, police and other landowners. It is ultimately also frustrating if there is nowhere legal for Gypsies and Travellers to go.

2.2 This chapter looks briefly at research on travelling and transit site provision, then at guidance available on assessing transit site needs.

### Research on Travelling and Transit Sites

2.3 There has been very little recent research on travelling among Gypsies and Travellers in England. Judith Okely's ethnographic study<sup>2</sup> of Gypsies in the south of England in the early 1970s includes passages on travelling including travel patterns, reasons for travelling and links to livelihood and affluence. The wider research<sup>3</sup>, of which her study formed part, referred to the

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<sup>1</sup> Chris Johnson and Marc Willers, *Gypsy and Traveller Law*, Second Edition, LAG, 2007, page 33

<sup>2</sup> Judith Okely, *The Traveller-Gypsies*, Cambridge University Press, 1983

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Adams, Judith Okely, David Morgan and David Smith, *Gypsies and Government Policy in England*, Heinemann, 1975

virtual absence of transit pitches on sites provided by local authorities and their general reluctance to provide such pitches. The report recommended that each London Borough, metropolitan and non-metropolitan district authority be given a duty to specify at least one area where Gypsies will be authorised to stop. These stopping areas might have very limited or no facilities, and might change location over time. The idea was never taken forward into practice.

2.4 The most significant research on travelling and transit needs<sup>4</sup> to date was commissioned by the (then) Department of the Environment and formed the basis of a consultation paper issued in February 1982 on the accommodation needs of long-distance and regional Travellers. The research involved interviews with adults in 118 families in the Midlands, South East and Wales. The interviews covered travelling history, travelling patterns, reasons and accommodation needs. Its findings and recommendations are quoted here as the most comprehensive snapshot available, despite the age of the information.

2.5 Three Traveller groups were identified:

- Local Travellers have a particular 'home' area. They may travel outside this, but predominantly over short distances and in relatively small groups of c5 families. The majority were said to prefer residential sites.
- Regional Travellers are not tied to a particular area but travel over a range of around 100 miles, working at agricultural or tree work or tarmac laying and having a wide range of incomes. They travelled in groups with an average 5.4 families. There were estimated to be about 900 families of regional Travellers. The majority were said to prefer transit to permanent sites.
- Long-distance Travellers travel widely from no fixed base in England and Wales and included carpet and furniture sellers. They moved in large groups averaging 19 families, and might typically travel about 65 miles between camps where they liked to stay for 6 weeks to 3 months at a time – longer to over-winter. There were estimated to be about 300 families of long-distance families. The majority were said to prefer transit to residential sites.

2.6 The travel routes of individual families of regional and long-distance Travellers were plotted. The routes reflect employment opportunities, the location of more settled family members and tend to avoid local authorities known for very active enforcement policies. London is clearly important along with other highly urbanised areas and motorways. In the South East, plotted routes take in Kent, Epsom (the Derby), Southampton, Slough, Oxford and Reading.

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<sup>4</sup> David Smith, Sharon Bohn Gmelch and George Gmelch, *The Special Accommodation Needs of Irish and Other Long-distance Travellers*, 1982 (not formally published)

2.7 The report discusses aspects of transit site size, design and management, and length of stay (up to 3 months, longer over winter). It recommends, as a first stage, the development of a series of serviced stopping places with some provision to be made by every county council and metropolitan district. In the longer term, it advocates the development of good quality transit sites within commuting distance of all major industrial population centres and in large and medium sized cities on motorways between these. The only example given of such a location in the South East is Southampton. Sites would have defined pitches with individual hardstandings, water and toilet facilities for each family, rubbish skips with regular collection and some form of management supervision. The report stresses the need for management and design to create an environment in which Travellers themselves can regulate behaviour. Specifically to meet the needs of long-distance Travellers, the report proposes 8-10 'stopping places' within the motorway sleeve (outlined by the M5, M62, M1 and M4). Only Reading in the South East figures among suggested suitable locations.

2.8 The Consultation Paper issued by DoE in February 1982, amongst other things, suggested a way ahead which included:

- 8-10 motorway sleeve sites to accommodate 30-40 caravans with rubbish skips and access to water and toilet facilities, for long-distance Travellers.
- Provision of a national network of small stopping places for 300 regional Traveller families. These might have basic facilities and be large enough for 5-6 caravans.

The proposals were never taken forward into practice.

2.9 It might safely be assumed that the scale of regional and long-distance travelling has reduced significantly since the early 1980s. This assumption is made on two bases:

- In the Caravan Count in July 1982, a total of 9,076 caravans was recorded across England, of which 4,453 were on unauthorised sites. In July 2008, there were 17, 572 caravans in all, and 3,936 on unauthorised sites. However, only 1,696 caravans were counted on land not owned by Gypsies or Travellers (unauthorised encampments) suggesting a significant decrease since 1982.
- GTAAs in the South East and elsewhere usually refer to the travelling behaviour of Gypsies and Travellers interviewed. Answers given to questions about changes in personal behaviour frequently suggest that all-year-round travelling has decreased and people have become more 'settled' on sites or in housing. Many more people say that their travelling has reduced than say it has increased.

2.10 Travelling has not, however, ceased and it is not clear to what extent reduced travelling is attributable to personal circumstances (such as increasing age, ill health or the desire to get children into schools) or to constraints in the form of difficulties of finding anywhere safe to stop while travelling and experience of frequent evictions.

2.11 Recent studies suggest that current travelling is a complex matter. The CLG report on *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews*<sup>5</sup> identifies five components to travelling, while admitting that the scale of each is unknown:

- Travelling is the constant lifestyle for a proportion of Gypsies and Travellers, or the lifestyle for others over extensive parts of the year. Such travelling appears to be predominantly work related. Accommodation requirements arise in/near the places where work is being carried out, and sometimes on the main routes between work places. (This form of travelling appears to be akin to that described in the 1980s.)
- There are a number of fairs, missions and other events which attract numbers of Gypsies and Travellers, often on a regular basis. Such events are normally known in advance. They generate accommodation needs while the event is in progress and temporary need in the area and on routes leading to it before and after.
- Family events (weddings, funerals) are important in the Gypsy and Traveller culture, as is visiting family members in other parts of the country. Major events are unpredictable, but this sort of social visiting is naturally more likely to generate accommodation needs in areas where numbers of Gypsies and Travellers live.
- Some Gypsies and Travellers travel in caravans for holidays, perhaps meeting up with other family members or friends at an agreed location. Insofar as Gypsies and Travellers cannot or do not access holiday caravan sites, this generates requirements in the destination area.
- Some Gypsies and Travellers travel and form unauthorised encampments simply because they have nowhere else to go. Some may be looking for a permanent site or a house.

2.12 Residential site provision should reduce need for the last form of temporary accommodation but will not necessarily reduce need for provision from the other components listed. Insofar as strictly employment-related regional and long-distance travelling has decreased, the importance of transit sites directly related to the motorway sleeve may have diminished since the early 1980s. However, the need for a network of sites and stopping places seems to be as real now as then.

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<sup>5</sup> *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies, Communities and Local Government, 2007*

## Guidance on Assessing Need for Transit Sites

2.13 CLG guidance<sup>6</sup> on carrying out GTAA's makes clear that transit needs should be included, but says little about how this should be done. GTAA's have taken different approaches. Some do not include transit needs at all, some make very general recommendations and others produce quantified estimates of requirements at LPA level albeit usually using a less structured model than for residential pitch requirements.

2.14 The report on Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews<sup>7</sup> deals relatively briefly with transit needs. It identifies potential sources of information in GTAA's and the Caravan Count (suggesting that need for transit sites might be indicated either by taking a proportion of caravans recorded on unauthorised encampments, or by looking at the difference between caravan numbers on unauthorised encampments in summer and winter and assuming that the summer excess (where this exists) represents visitors requiring transit provision). Given the lack of understanding and information on travelling, the report recommends a flexible approach whereby some need is planned for in the form of larger pitches on residential sites to accommodate family visitors, and a variety of transit accommodation ranging from formal sites through stopping places to temporary sites geared to specific events or to seasonal travel. It notes the importance of creating a network of transit provision to facilitate mobility and avoid sites getting clogged by Gypsies and Travellers with nowhere to move on to. It also advocates taking a wider perspective potentially linking with adjoining regions.

## Comments

2.15 This background demonstrates the importance of travelling to Gypsies and Travellers, and its complexity. Gypsies and Travellers have different travelling patterns and are likely to have different transit accommodation requirements. While 'active' travelling may have decreased there is no sign that it is about to disappear. Guidance on how local and regional bodies should plan to meet transit accommodation needs is not well developed and somewhat tentative.

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<sup>6</sup> *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments : Guidance*, Communities and Local Government, October 2007

<sup>7</sup> *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies*, Communities and Local Government, 2007, Chapter 5

### **3. TRANSIT ISSUES IN THE GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENTS AND LOCAL AUTHORITY ADVICE**

3.1 Annex 1 brings together information on transit requirements from GTAAs and the advice submitted by local authorities. It also looks at the methods used and notes other useful information from the GTAAs relating to travelling or to unauthorised encampments.

3.2 Overall, two points are clear:

- Treatment of transit requirements is much less well developed than requirements for residential pitches.
- Approaches are variable across the region, with different evidence being used and different conclusions being reached.

3.3 Table H7b, reproduced as Table 1.1 above, summarised requirements from the GTAAs and advice at county group level as follows:

- Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes : no advice (no estimate in the GTAA)
- East Sussex/Brighton & Hove : 2 additional sites on the coast + the refurbished Horsdean site in Brighton & Hove (re-working of GTAA information)
- Hampshire/Isle of Wight : 4 sites (one in each sub-area of Hampshire and one on the Isle of Wight) based on the GTAA although this latter also recommended provision of a network of stopping places as well
- Kent/Medway : 7 sites (Canterbury, Dover, Swale, Dartford, Gravesham, Tonbridge & Malling and Sevenoaks) based on the GTAAs and analysis of unauthorised encampment records
- Oxfordshire : no advice (no estimate in the GTAA)
- Surrey : no advice (the GTAAs did not identify any quantified requirements to be met in their study areas)
- West Sussex : need to accommodate 25 households in a year<sup>8</sup> (centring on Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex) based on the GTAA

3.4 As can be seen, several county groups submitted no advice. Several GTAAs concluded that a quantified assessment of need for transit provision is impossible and/or inappropriate because increasing the number of residential pitches is/should be the priority. Until there are enough residential pitches, the need for transit accommodation cannot be assessed, and any transit provision would be blocked by people seeking permanent residential accommodation. A secondary reason is that assessment of transit need is a regional rather than a local issue<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> It is not clear how this translates into pitch need, since the same pitch could be occupied by more than one household in a year.

<sup>9</sup> Some information on unauthorised encampments was provided for this study for all parts of the region. Authorities, including those not offering advice, should be aware of levels of unauthorised encampments in their area.

3.5 There are two unresolved issues following this examination of the GTAA's and the advice:

- The relationship between unauthorised encampments and need for transit sites is treated differently in the GTAA's. In several carried out by DCA, most/all households on unauthorised encampments are presumed to need residential rather than transit accommodation, reflecting answers given in the GTAA surveys. In others (for example, Chichester and East Kent), survey answers suggest that most people on unauthorised encampments are passing through and want transit rather than permanent accommodation. This might reflect genuine geographical differences, but might also reflect the short timescales for fieldwork in the DCA methodology which could mean that some genuinely transient Gypsies and Travellers were not interviewed. The questionnaire survey and the workshops tried to explore this issue (see Chapters 6 and 7).
- The GTAA's in Surrey all found no evidence of need for transit accommodation and reported low incidence of unauthorised encampments. The East Surrey GTAA and Advice recognises that this seems surprising given the location of Surrey in relation to employment opportunities and motorways, and notes that there may be suppressed demand<sup>10</sup>. The wider point, again explored further in Chapters 6 and 7, is how far evidence from the incidence of unauthorised encampments might be 'distorted' by different approaches to enforcement, or by different ways in which encampments are recorded.

3.6 The GTAA's included some, but variable, information about travelling patterns, reasons for travelling and the characteristics of those involved in unauthorised encampments. Survey findings are often not sufficiently disaggregated to be really helpful. Three relevant points emerge:

- Few obvious travelling routes are specifically identified in the GTAA's, other than the A27 in Sussex, and movement between Sittingbourne and Canterbury in Kent.
- Much travelling is obviously local to the South East, and often to the study areas of the GTAA's. This may reflect people 'belonging' to the area but unable to find authorised sites. Some, however, are reported to have a permanent base in the study area and are presumably travelling for cultural reasons or simply for 'a change'.
- Where the ethnicity of people involved in unauthorised encampments is reported, it tends to involve several Traveller groups. English Travellers, Irish Travellers and New Travellers are all represented.

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<sup>10</sup> The GTAA's from Surrey do not draw specific attention to the unusually large number of transit pitches already provided in the county (see Table 7.1 below) which could have an impact on apparent need. The West Surrey GTAA survey failed to include the biggest private transit site in Waverley because access was denied by the owner. This may have affected the GTAA's findings.

3.7 Overall, the GTAAs and advice provide a starting point for assessing need, but do not provide a complete or consistent 'answer'. Other sources are examined below to see how the regional picture might be improved.

## 4. THE CARAVAN COUNTS

4.1 The report *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews*<sup>11</sup> suggests that regional planning bodies might use Caravan Count information on caravans on unauthorised encampments as a base for estimates of transit need, perhaps looking to accommodate a proportion of caravans or cater for any summer excess in caravan numbers indicating seasonal travelling. There are undoubtedly problems in using Caravan Count information, and three are particularly relevant:

- Caravan Count figures are known to be inconsistent and widely acknowledged to undercount caravans<sup>12</sup>. Unfortunately, the figures for caravans on unauthorised encampments are most suspect because authorities may not always be aware of encampments on Count day. There are also suspicions, especially among Gypsy and Traveller communities, that some local authorities may deliberately undercount in order to avoid appearing to have need for site provision. Count figures alone are, therefore, not a credible basis for policy.
- The Caravan Count – even if fully accurate and consistent – would be inadequate alone as a basis for transit site planning because it provides a snapshot at dates in January and July only. Encampments occurring at other times of the year are not recorded, and could be particularly important locally where, for example, there is a major event which attracts numbers of Gypsies and Travellers.
- There is no indication from the Caravan Count alone that transit sites would be the most appropriate accommodation for the people in caravans on unauthorised encampments. As the GTAAs suggest, some may be looking for permanent rather than temporary accommodation.

4.2 For these reasons, the Caravan Counts should not be taken as the sole basis for detailed planning of provision, but can still provide indications of relative need and apparent consistency of trends over time.

4.3 Table 4.1 updates the Caravan Count analyses carried out by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA)<sup>13</sup> (see Table 1.1 above). It is based on published Caravan Counts between January 2004 and January 2009 (January 2004 to July 2008 for the overall average to ensure an equal number of summer and winter Counts are included). It shows the average number of caravans counted on unauthorised sites on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers over that period for each county group. This might be

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<sup>11</sup> *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies*, Communities and Local Government, 2007, Chapter 5

<sup>12</sup> Pat Niner, *Counting Gypsies & Travellers: A Review of the Gypsy Caravan Count System*, ODPM, 2004

<sup>13</sup> SEERA was the former Regional Planning Body for the South East of England before being dissolved on 31 March 2009. It is now replaced by the South East England Partnership Board.

regarded as an indication of the 'base' position but may well include people seeking permanent residential sites as well as those requiring temporary transit provision. It also shows the average difference between July and January figures over the period on the premise that any seasonal summer excess is more likely to indicate temporary need.

<b>Table 4.1 : County Group Counts Analysis : January 2004 to January 2009</b>		
	Average caravans (Jan 2004-July 2008)	Average summer excess
Berkshire	20	+2
Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes	10	+13
East Sussex/Brighton & Hove	52	+44
Hampshire/Isle of Wight	74	+54
Kent	48	-11
Oxfordshire	15	+3
Surrey	7	+10
West Sussex	36	+16
<b>South East Region</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>+131</b>

4.4 The table suggests that relative priority areas for transit provision in the South East are:

- Hampshire/Isle of Wight : indicated both by the overall average and the summer excess.
- East Sussex/Brighton & Hove : indicated both by the overall average and the summer excess.
- Kent : indicated by average caravan numbers; Kent is unusual in having higher numbers in winter than in summer<sup>14</sup>.

4.5 Of apparent lower priority and roughly in descending order are: West Sussex, Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes, Berkshire, Surrey and Oxfordshire. The overall pattern at this level of analysis does not differ greatly according to which measure of need is taken (with the notable exception of Kent), and over time. This consistency suggests that it might be taken as an indication of relative priority, in conjunction with other evidence.

4.6 Annex 2 presents the results of an analysis of the Caravan Counts at local authority level. Table 4.2 shows local authorities within county groups which, between January 2004 and January 2009 averaged 5 or more caravans on unauthorised encampments and/or had an average July excess of 5 caravans or more. As explained in Annex 2, authorities have not been included where the picture appears to have been unduly influenced by a single or a few periods.

<sup>14</sup> This is hard to account for since Kent CC records of unauthorised encampments show 40 encampment started in July 2007 and 2008 compared with 7 in January (see also Annex 3).

<b>Table 4.2 : Potential 'Hotspot' Local Authorities within County Groups</b>	
	LAs 5+ caravans every period and/or July excess 5+ caravans
Berkshire	<i>Wokingham</i>
Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes	<i>Milton Keynes</i>
East Sussex/Brighton & Hove	Brighton & Hove, Wealden
Hampshire/Isle of Wight	Basingstoke & Dean, Winchester, Test Valley, <i>Eastleigh, Havant, Portsmouth, Southampton, New Forest</i>
Kent	Swale
Oxfordshire	<i>West Oxfordshire</i>
Surrey	-
West Sussex	Crawley

Note : LA names in italics show where they are included because of having an average July excess of 5 caravans or more **only** – indicating areas particularly affected by seasonal travelling.

4.7 Table 4.2, gives an indication of the sorts of area which might be considered for transit provision when supported by evidence from other sources. The following chapter reports on one such source.

## 5. SURVEY INFORMATION ON UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS

5.1 The questionnaire sent out as part of this research asked respondents for information on the most recent 12 months' records of unauthorised encampments, with as much detail as possible about the location, size and duration of the encampment. County councils, district councils and police forces all provided information:

- Some information was provided for every part of the region. This was normally available from at least one source at local authority level. The exception is Hampshire where the main source provided on encampment numbers came from the police and was at OCU level which in most cases amalgamate a number of districts.
- In some places, information was provided by more than one agency. For example in Crawley, information was provided by the local authority, the county council and police. In this instance for the period July 2008 onwards, the county council recorded 9 encampments, the local authority reported some of these and another 4 in addition, and the police an additional 2. This reflects the often fragmented nature of encampment records as different agencies become aware of, and are responsible for managing, different encampments. Some local authorities, for example only record encampments on their own land or only 'problematic' ones, or some counties only record encampments on county council or highway land. This suggests that, where a single source of information has been provided, it may understate actual figures to an unknown extent. Sources have been amalgamated wherever possible, but we are relying on a single source for about half the region.
- The information provided was for slightly different periods in different places. Many respondents provided information from June or July 2008 onwards, that is the 12 months immediately preceding the survey. Other figures relate to the calendar year 2008 or the financial year 2008/09. Wherever possible, we have ensured that a 12 month period has been included in the analysis although it is not always the same 12 months.

5.2 Unauthorised encampment records are an improvement over the Caravan Count because they are continuous and therefore include encampments throughout the year, not just those present on Count day. The basic unit of recording is usually the encampment (that is, a piece of land occupied on an unauthorised basis) rather than the number of caravans, although this may also be recorded. However, encampment records require some interpretation as an indicator of need for transit site provision:

- As with the Caravan Count, some of those involved in unauthorised encampment may require residential rather than transit accommodation.

- To an unknown extent, the pattern of unauthorised encampments may reflect differential enforcement approaches (or perceptions of enforcement approaches). Strict enforcement or active site protection measures could deter encampments, or divert them to areas where stopping is seen to be easier.
- Records usually include each location encamped. The same group may move between several locations within a small area because of enforcement actions. This would appear as several encampments and might inflate the area's total whereas the group might have remained at a single location if permitted to do so. This can only be established at local level and in the light of good information and communication with the Gypsies and Travellers involved.
- Records of unauthorised encampments (and the Caravan Count) can give no indication of 'latent' need for transit provision – that is, Gypsies and Travellers deterred from travelling at all because of the difficulty of finding somewhere to stop.

5.3 Table 5.1 (overleaf) brings together the information provided at county group level. Across the South East in the past year, there have been almost 720 encampments (certainly an under- rather than an over-statement). The proportion of encampments for each county group is:

Hampshire/Isle of Wight	27%
Kent	19%
East Sussex/Brighton & Hove	17%
Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes	10%
Berkshire	9%
West Sussex	8%
Surrey	6%
Oxfordshire	4%

As can be seen, Hampshire/Isle of Wight accounts for over a quarter of all the region's encampments. Together, the top three county groups account for almost two-thirds of the regional encampments.

5.4 The order of county groups according to the number of encampments recorded is very similar to that emerging from the Caravan Count analysis (paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5 above), thus reinforcing this, admittedly superficial, pattern of relative need.

<b>Table 5.1 : Number of Unauthorised Encampments Experienced in Most Recent Year by County Group</b>				
County group	Encampments			Comments
	Number	Source	Year	
Berkshire	64	Berks Unitaries	June 2008 on except Bracknell F 2008/09	Highest numbers (23) recorded in Wokingham; no LA = 0
Bucks/Milton Keynes	70	Bucks CC/MK	June 2008 on	Highest numbers in Milton Keynes (38) and Aylesbury Vale (19); no LA = 0
East Sussex/Brighton & Hove	123	ESCC + Sussex police	June 2008 on	Highest numbers in Brighton & Hove (58) and Lewes (26); no DC = 0
Hampshire/Isle of Wight	190	Hampshire police	2008	Highest numbers (90) in North Hampshire sub-area; no indication whether any DC = 0; DC figures where provided appear to be consistent with police records
Kent/Medway	139	Kent CC + Medway	2008	Highest numbers in Swale (52) and Medway towns (25); 1 DC = 0; DC figures where provided appear to be consistent with KCC records
Oxfordshire	30	Oxfordshire CC	June 2008 on	Highest numbers (15) in West Oxfordshire; no DC = 0
Surrey	40	Surrey CC + DCs		Highest numbers (10) in Surrey Heath; 4 DCs = 0
West Sussex	60	WSCC + Sussex police	July 2008 on	Highest numbers (15) in Crawley and Mid Sussex; no DC = 0
<b>South East</b>	<b>716</b>			

Source : Information provided in the survey

5.5 In terms of possible 'hotspot' local areas, the local authorities recording 20 or more encampments in the most recent year for which data is supplied are listed below. The figures are the number of separate encampments recorded:

Brighton & Hove	58
Swale	52
Basingstoke & Deane	47
Milton Keynes	38
Lewes	26
Medway	25
Wokingham	23
Hart	21
Southampton	20

It is possible that Winchester in Hampshire would also figure in the list were figures available at district level. The full details of encampments at district level is presented in Annex 3. Only local knowledge could identify how many families or groups were involved in the encampments and the extent to which many short-distance moves might 'inflate' the total.

5.6 The records also show that there are very few local authorities in the South East which experienced no encampments in the year for which date was provided<sup>15</sup>. These are: Thanet in Kent and Elmbridge, Mole Valley, Waverley and Woking in Surrey.

5.7 Records of unauthorised encampments can be used to demonstrate information to assist planning transit provision beyond simple numbers<sup>16</sup>. In particular, encampment size could give some indication of size of sites required. Duration of the encampment can give some indication of travelling dynamics (or this in conjunction with enforcement activity). Unfortunately survey respondents were not able to provide information in a common format and there has been insufficient time to piece together quite disparate and possibly inconsistent information. The following comments are based on easily available information.

5.8 Information on the number of caravans involved on encampments was provided by/for 59 districts. The average across these districts was 5 caravans per encampment; this is also the average reported by Kent County Council for encampments in Kent and Medway in 2008. In our survey, the average size at district level ranged from 1 caravan to 10 caravans. In most areas where information is available at the level of individual encampments, there appears to be a pattern of many small (up to 5 caravan) encampments, many fewer with up to 10 caravans, and one or two which can have 20 or more in a year. In the context of site planning, this raises the issue whether it is better to provide small sites or stopping places which, in most areas, could accommodate the great majority of encampments, or to consider larger sites

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<sup>15</sup> This picture can, of course, change very quickly – an encampment has, for example, been recorded in Thanet in summer 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Annex 3 summarises the sorts of information local authorities collect about travelling groups and unauthorised encampments. It also reports the findings on questions about managing unauthorised encampments.

which could potentially accommodate larger groups but would otherwise either have vacancies or require the mixing of different travelling groups.

5.9 Information on how long encampments last appears highly variable as might be expected since it potentially encompasses encampments on both highly visible, high profile sites and much less obtrusive locations. Kent CC reported an average encampment duration in 2008 of 17 days (reduced to 13 days if two unusually long-standing encampments are discounted).

Information provided by Southampton for this survey shows an average encampment duration of 11 days. Sussex Police records show the average duration of encampments in Brighton & Hove was 16 days, but about 60% of encampments lasted for up to a week only and only 9% lasted longer than a month. The same source of information for East Sussex shows the majority of encampments lasted less than a week, but two especially long-standing encampments significantly raise the average. There is no consistent evidence to link length of stay with different enforcement approaches. These findings are difficult to interpret for transit site planning without knowing how long particular groups needed or wanted to be in a local area which would be a better indicator of likely stay on a transit site in the absence of enforcement action.

5.10 While unauthorised encampments can and do occur at any time of the year, the records show a common pattern of higher number of encampments outside the winter months. Annex 3 includes charts for county groups where data is readily analysable which suggest that, in the region as a whole, there is a remarkably regular pattern of encampments with higher levels between April and October rising to a peak in June and July. This regular pattern at regional level is the result of rather different patterns at county group level. It is not clear why this should be so, but may reflect travelling patterns, local events, employment opportunities, history and chance. Peak occupancy will occur at different times of the year in different counties.

## **6. VIEWS ON TRAVELLING AND TRANSIT PROVISION FROM THE SURVEY**

6.1 The stakeholder survey was designed to provide evidence and views in order to supplement and help interpret information from the GTAAs, the Caravan Count and records of unauthorised encampments. The survey included a sequence of twelve qualitative questions. In all, 44 responses were received, although not all respondents felt able to answer all the questions. The number of replies and the range of respondents (in terms of geography and type of organisation) are sufficient to give a general picture of opinion. Details of the response and analyses of answers to each of the questions are presented in Annex 4. Here the analyses are summarised under broad headings of information which might help determine how much transit provision should be made; information which might indicate where provision should be made; and indications of the best forms of provision.

### **Indications of the Extent of Need for Transit Provision**

6.2 Unauthorised encampments provide an obvious indication of need for transit accommodation, but one which requires some interpretation. One issue, highlighted by the different approaches taken by the region's GTAAs, is the extent to which people involved in unauthorised encampments require short-term transit accommodation rather than long-term residential accommodation to meet their needs. Q5 of the survey asked stakeholders how important each group (those needing transit and those needing residential accommodation) are in their area. Most answers suggest that both groups are represented across the region, but more respondents thought the transient need exceeded residential need than thought the reverse<sup>17</sup>. Answers may well be influenced by geography and related local circumstances, but there were also differences in opinion related to perspective. Gypsy and Traveller bodies and Traveller Education Service representatives were more likely to say that the more important need was for residential places. Local authorities by contrast were more likely to think that unauthorised encampments generated transient need which was numerically greater than residential need in their area. This difference of perception linked to organisational perspective meant that there were differences of opinion at county group level in all areas except East Sussex/Brighton & Hove. If local authority perceptions are correct, they indicate that unauthorised encampments represent evidence of need for transit accommodation in most, if not all, parts of the region. Elements of transient need may have been missed by some GTAAs.

6.3 Understanding the reasons for travelling and for using transit accommodation is important in planning transit provision because it gives some indication of likely origins and destinations, and perhaps how long people would want to be in an area and the sort of locations they might find

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<sup>17</sup> 'More important' and 'greater need' in this context relate solely to higher numbers of families or groups involved, not to the perceived urgency of meeting the need.

suitable. Q6 explored reasons why people might need transit accommodation. In order of frequency of mention, the main reasons are: work/employment, visiting family or friends, moving through the area and holidays. Reasons mentioned less frequently included: family events, shows and fairs, 'way of life', looking for accommodation and getting health or dental care. Stakeholders thought that, at different times, any and all of the reasons might apply. People travel and want to be in an area for a short time for a wide range of reasons. Some groups might combine several reasons at the same time – on holiday while visiting family and taking the opportunity to carry out casual work.

6.4 Different reasons may have different locational implications for the extent and location of transit provision. For example, work opportunities depend on the trade involved, but will probably be greater in larger towns; Brighton & Hove noted that the city appears to be a destination because of employment opportunities especially for Irish Travellers. Visiting family and friends depends on the location of family members. Other things being equal, residential sites and areas where Gypsies and Travellers live in housing are likely to generate need for short-term accommodation as well. 'Passing through' seems to be particularly important in Hampshire and along the A27 east/west route into the West Country.

6.5 The complexity of reasons for travelling and combinations of reasons for travelling indicate that it is a mistake to view travel patterns by Gypsy and Traveller communities as entirely predictable. Travelling is not necessarily a matter of getting from A to B, but an activity in itself for cultural reasons as suggested by reported incidents of unauthorised encampments by groups of Gypsies and Traveller who have a 'base' site or house in the local area but want a change.

6.6 There may be locations where travel routes, current Gypsy and Traveller settlement or major employment opportunities suggest a fairly predictable need for transit provision (as in Hampshire, Kent and Brighton & Hove), but others where need is less predictable – with implications for planning provision.

6.7 Complexity of reasons underlying travelling was recognised by stakeholders in answer to a question (Q7) about whether the need for transit accommodation is likely to increase, decrease or stay about the same. Most stakeholders were unable to say, or thought it depended on trends in the economy and economic activity. A number thought it should decrease if/when residential site provision is made. However, a number of stakeholders thought need would continue at current levels (employment opportunities might remain much the same and/or numbers of unauthorised encampments have been stable for a few years), and some thought it would increase, either continuing apparent trends or recognising a growing population of young Gypsies and Travellers keen to experience a travelling lifestyle. These answers probably suggest that transit site provision should be based on current apparent levels of need, but that site usage and incidence of unauthorised encampment should be monitored closely.

## Where should Transit Sites be Provided?

6.8 Reasons behind travelling and need for transit accommodation, as noted above, have some locational implications. By and large, predictable factors tend to reinforce need in the areas already suggested by the Caravan Counts and records of unauthorised encampments.

### *Events and Routes*

6.9 Survey questions explored specific locational issues in the form of **special events** which bring Gypsies and Travellers into the region (Q8), and particular well-used routes which might suggest need for transit provision (Q9).

6.10 The majority of respondents said that they were not aware of any events which regularly brought Gypsies and Travellers into their local area. In addition to weddings, funerals and other adventitious family gatherings, events fell into the following categories:

- Religious events such as conventions and missions for Born Again Christians. These were mentioned by respondents in Kent and Surrey.
- Horse fairs – for example in Slough, Horsmonden (Tunbridge Wells Borough in September), New Forest pony sales and Wickham Horse Fair. This last, held in May each year, was mentioned most frequently by respondents in Hampshire and West Sussex. Stow Fair (outside the South East in Gloucestershire in May and October) was mentioned in Oxfordshire.
- Other fairs or festivals mentioned included the Irish Festival in Crawley, Dettling Diversity Fair, and the Dorset Steam Fair (again outside the South East but mentioned by respondents in Hampshire).
- Race meetings, including Ascot (Berkshire) and Goodwood (West Sussex), but particularly the Derby meeting at Epsom. This was mentioned by several respondents in Surrey and East Sussex.

6.11 Answers suggest that these events do not directly affect levels of unauthorised encampment where short-term accommodation is made available at the event itself. There may be an indirect effect where groups want to stop for a time on the journey to or from the event. Survey answers did not suggest major outstanding issues from events other than the Derby (especially before the meeting); this conclusion assumes that current arrangements for providing accommodation at events themselves continue.

6.12 **Major routes** were mentioned in some responses as an indication of possible locations for transit sites:

### **Hampshire**

- In the north of the county, the M3/A303 leading to the West Country, with particular issues of unauthorised encampment in the Basingstoke, and Aldershot/Farnborough areas. The former Gypsy and Traveller site

at Dummer near Junction 7 on the M3 was identified as an ideal location for a transit site.

- In the south, the A27/M27/A31 east/west route
- Through the county the M3 and A3/A3(M) north/south route.

### **Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes**

- A34; A361; M40; A40; A422 and A4260

### **Kent**

- M25, particularly affecting Sevenoaks and Dartford – ideal for transit sites
- A2/M2/M20 frequently used as routes to Europe, with some families stopping en route in Ashford or Maidstone.

### **East and West Sussex**

- A27

6.13 In other parts of the region, local authority and police respondents often remarked on the absence of apparent routes, as evidenced by the (lack of) pattern in unauthorised encampments. The implication is that, in these areas, there are few obvious route-oriented locations for transit site provision. Responses from two Gypsy and Traveller bodies stressed the importance of having a network of places to stop as well as route-oriented locations.

### ***Priority Locations***

6.14 Q11 of the survey asked whether there were any particular locations where transit provision is an urgent priority. Hampshire/Isle of Wight was the one county area where there was consensus on priority need for provision locally. Of the other areas identified as having large numbers of unauthorised encampments in the Caravan Counts and encampment records:

- Kent County Council commented that the major need now seems to be for residential provision, with fewer urgent priority areas for transit provision than a few years ago (this acknowledges some priority areas remain).
- Brighton & Hove noted their current provision of 23 transit pitches and commented that this has increased pressure on the city and that provision is vital in other areas of the region.

6.15 Elsewhere in the region, there was often a difference of opinion between local authorities (not seeing their area as a priority) and other stakeholders, for example Traveller Education Services<sup>18</sup>, police or Gypsy and Traveller bodies, seeing a priority need.

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<sup>18</sup> Local authority and Traveller Education Service respondent perceptions may differ because of their respective responsibilities. Local authority officers are rarely encouraged to extend the length of stay for unauthorised encampments, whereas TES officers are seeking some stability so that children can attend school for as long a period as possible.

6.16 Thus answers to this question proved of limited usefulness in terms of identifying priority areas for provision other than Hampshire/Isle of Wight and Kent/Medway. Indirectly, the lack of agreement elsewhere is significant as possibly indicating a lack of awareness or acceptance which will make commitment to provision more difficult.

### ***Possible Approaches to Allocation Transit Requirements across the Region***

6.17 The survey explored two other more general aspects of the location of transit provision closely related to possible policy approaches to allocating requirements between areas.

6.18 The first question (Q10) described the pattern of unauthorised encampments revealed by the Caravan Count (and continuous records of encampments) with higher numbers in Hampshire, Sussex and Kent and lower numbers in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Surrey. It asked first whether this was an accurate picture, and secondly whether provision of transit accommodation should follow this broad distribution.

6.19 Some doubts were expressed about the reliability of the Caravan Count (snapshots and known to under-count and be inconsistent). The Count does not provide credible evidence in the eyes of Gypsy and Traveller organisations, and some authorities would prefer to use internal records as evidence. However, there is little in the answers to suggest that doubts about the Count totally invalidate the general picture of higher and lower encampment numbers across the region.

6.20 Opinions differed as to whether transit provision should follow the apparent distribution of need suggested by the pattern of unauthorised encampments. Very generally, local authority respondents from the areas identified as having low numbers of encampments tended to support those figures and to consider that provision should follow the same pattern (that is, highest provision where encampments are most common). Some other authorities, including some in higher need areas, answered the question in principle, stating that provision should be made where need is apparent, while sometimes acknowledging that figures can be the result of enforcement action. Pragmatically, sites provided away from 'need' areas might be unused while unauthorised encampment would continue in the 'need' areas.

6.21 Some authorities in the areas with higher numbers of encampments evident in the Count suggest that provision should not solely follow this pattern, pointing out that patterns of apparent need can be distorted by differential enforcement approaches or landowner attitudes and that there is a need to dig behind the headline figures. Others see considerable merits in developing provision over a wider area.

6.22 Overall, responses to this question reflect a considerable range of opinion and viewpoint. They certainly do not furnish the regional planning

body with any simple, agreed blueprint for allocating transit provision around the region.

6.23 The second general question potentially informing allocation policies (Q12) took as its starting point the proposition put forward by Gypsy and Traveller bodies that Gypsies and Travellers should be able to stop legally in every local council area. It asked for opinions on this, and for indications of areas where some form of provision would not be needed. The question provoked more and longer comments than any other question in the survey. A minority of respondents, especially Gypsy and Traveller bodies and Traveller Education Services, agreed unequivocally with the proposition. The majority of answers might be summed up as recognising that there needs to be a wider distribution of transit provision but not agreeing that **every** local council should make provision. Stakeholders also stressed the importance of considering a full range of ways of creating locations where 'Gypsies and Travellers can legally stop', including formal sites, less formal stopping places and sensitive approaches to managing unauthorised encampments.

6.24 Two reasons were given for provision being inappropriate in every area:

- Lack of need, meaning that provision would be under-used, difficult to manage and a waste of resources.
- It would be very hard to find suitable locations in every area because of small size and/or planning constraints.

Several stakeholders referred to the merits of taking a sub-regional approach rather than requiring every local authority to take action.

6.25 Overall the answers suggest little agreement with the proposition that every local authority should make specific provision for a transit site or stopping place. A blanket policy on these lines would probably be unacceptable. There is however, at least implicit support for wider provision and a sub-regional approach which would also include management of unauthorised encampments.

## **Types and Design of Transit Provision**

6.26 The final section of the questionnaire explored views about type and design of transit provision.

6.27 Q13 asked about the different ways in which transit accommodation can be provided. There was general agreement that, across the region, a range of different types of transit accommodation is needed including all or a combination of: larger pitches on residential sites where families can accommodate visitors, formal transit sites and less formal temporary stopping places where people can stay for a short time. A further suggestion was using fields or traditional stopping places with no specific facilities. Concern was expressed in some answers that transit provision would become permanent and that type, design and management should seek to avoid this.

6.28 Some stakeholders identified the form of provision they thought most appropriate for their local area. Some identified particular problems with particular forms of provision. These often related to management, for example of local authority residential sites with larger pitches, transit sites where need is discontinuous and stopping places generally. One Gypsy Traveller thought that transit site management would be more effective if sites were provided by Gypsies and Travellers.

6.29 Overall, answers suggest that most stakeholders perceive the need for a range of forms of provision to meet transient needs in the South East including formal transit sites, stopping places and (on family sites) larger pitches to accommodate visitors. Which form is most appropriate in any particular area depends on local circumstances and need. There are perceived management challenges with all forms of provision which will need to be overcome.

6.30 Stakeholders were asked (Q14) what transit sites and stopping places should be like in terms of size and facilities. There is clear consensus that sites should be relatively small, and that transit sites can be bigger than stopping places. There is a balance to be struck between a site small enough to be manageable and large enough to be useful. Indications are that for transit sites the balance might be 10-15 pitches, while a stopping place might have space for no more than around six caravans. There is rather less consensus on whether provision of facilities on transit sites, and especially on stopping places, should be as good as possible or as basic as possible. Water and refuse collection were usually specified as essential. Toilets and washing facilities, where thought to be appropriate, are most commonly envisaged on a shared rather than an individual basis. Some respondents were very specific about facilities (see Annex 4).

6.31 Answers generally suggest the need for a range of sites with a range of facilities. The logic of the clear consensus support for small sites and smaller stopping places for ease of management is that even a fairly modest overall pitch or caravan capacity requirement across the region will mean many separate locations to be found. Depending on facilities provided and access to basic infrastructure, there could also be cost implications.

6.32 Answers to Q15 about any particular groups who would require specially designed transit accommodation suggest that a wide range of provision should also meet most identified special needs. Provision for animals might be required on occasion. Catering for disability in basic, minimum facility provision would be challenging.

### **Other Points**

6.33 Three themes emerged in the final question of the survey (Q17) which asked whether respondents wanted to add anything further.

- There were pleas for fuller research on transit issues in the South East and for the production of better basic information which would help understanding and management of unauthorised encampments.
- The second theme notes that Gypsy and Traveller communities are not familiar with using transit accommodation but are familiar with stopping on the roadside on unauthorised encampments. Some behavioural change will be needed on the part of Gypsies and Travellers. Information will be needed about site availability and vacancies to help an accommodation network function.
- The third theme, which forms a common thread running through some responses, is the vital importance of involving and engaging the Gypsy and Traveller communities in the planning and provision of transit accommodation. National or local targets may be set, but at local level a priority is to talk to Gypsies and Travellers about things that could help them in leading their lifestyle and at the same time could prevent unauthorised encampments and tensions between communities. The grass roots element to planning is an essential complement to any top-down approach.

## 7. TOWARDS AN ESTIMATE OF TRANSIT REQUIREMENT

7.1 Moving from a broad picture of the incidence of unauthorised encampments and transit movement to an assessment of transit pitch requirements is not straightforward. Chapter 2 noted that there is little guidance on how best to assess need for additional transit accommodation. There is no recognised 'model' to use, as has been developed for estimating residential pitch requirements, which might indicate that if there are 'x' encampments, 'y' transit pitches will be needed. GTAA's in the South East and elsewhere have adopted different approaches and have acknowledged their shortcomings.

7.2 Table 7.1 shows the baseline position for the provision of transit pitches across the South East updated to January 2009. There are just over a hundred transit pitches across the region, the equivalent of 6% of residential pitches at the same date. More than half of the provision is private (59%), and more than three-quarters of the regional total is provided in Surrey and East Sussex/Brighton & Hove. There are no or nominal numbers of pitches currently in Buckinghamshire, Hampshire/Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire and West Sussex. Pitch requirements discussed below would be additional to current provision, and should complement its distribution.

<b>Table 7.1 Baseline Provision of Transit Accommodation : January 2009</b>				
County group	Number of pitches			Location
	Public	Private	Total	
Berkshire	0	15	15	West Berkshire
Bucks/Milton Keynes	0 <sup>(1)</sup>	0	0	
East Sussex/Brighton & Hove	33	0	33	Brighton & Hove (23); Lewes (10)
Hampshire/Isle of Wight	0	0	0	
Kent	1	0	1	Ashford
Oxfordshire	0	0	0	
Surrey	7	50	57	Spelthorne (15); Waverley (42)
West Sussex	0	3	3	Chichester
South East	41	68	109	

Source : SEERA

<sup>(1)</sup> A 7 pitch transit site in South Bucks is understood to have been permanently closed and is not included in this table<sup>19</sup>.

7.3 The scale of need/demand for provision is very difficult to establish. There are many factors contributing to the difficulties, for example:

- Will transit provision prove attractive to Gypsies and Travellers so that it is used? There is very little transit provision nationally at present, and many sites have bad reputations (for conditions, safety, management etc) with Gypsies and Travellers. There are no precedents to draw on.

<sup>19</sup> This amendment has been made on the basis of information provided at the Guildford workshop. Its inclusion has affected the estimates of pitch need under approach C below from those presented at the workshops.

- Will the amount of travelling increase or decrease in future? Many survey respondents thought it might remain much as now, but recognised the number of factors which could affect it. Will provision of transit accommodation affect the extent of travelling?

7.4 A number of possible approaches to estimating the scale of additional transit requirements were explored and worked examples (including pitch requirements following each approach) were developed for discussion at the workshops (see Chapter 8). These were presented as examples rather than firm predictions or pitch allocations.

### **Approaches to Estimating Transit Needs**

7.5 Approaches to estimating need for additional transit provision can have fundamentally different bases. Each approach explored is intended to take account of all forms of transit provision, including the possibility of staying with family members, and stopping places as well as formal transit sites. Sensitive 'tolerant' approaches to managing encampments might also be included in 'provision', though not as the sole response.

#### ***A : 'Evidence-based' Approaches using Caravan Counts or Records of Unauthorised Encampments***

7.6 Following the precedent of methods for calculating residential pitch requirements, estimates are based on the best available 'hard' evidence. This is the Caravan Count or records of unauthorised encampments. While both are open to criticism and interpretation, there is no other source realistically available at regional level at present. Four variants are worked out here and presented in Table 7.2 (page 31):

**A1** : This takes the average number of caravans recorded in the Caravan Counts between January 2004 and July 2008 (10 Counts) on unauthorised sites on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers (unauthorised encampments). It assumes that all will require some form of transit provision. This assumption could over-state need insofar as some Gypsies and Travellers need residential rather than transit accommodation (perhaps compensating for under undercounting in the Counts). There is a further assumption that caravans can be converted into pitches by dividing by 1.7 – that is, on average each family will have 1.7 caravans, some two or more and some one only<sup>20</sup>. This produces a regional total requirement for **154 transit pitches**.

**A2** : This again uses the Caravan Count, but assumes that transit requirements are equal to the difference between the July and January Counts over the period January 2004 to January 2009 (thus reflecting summer travelling). Again the assumption is made that all the excess

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<sup>20</sup> Both assumptions can be varied. For example, a third of caravans might be assumed to need residential rather than transit accommodation, or an average of 1.5 caravans per pitch might be assumed.

will require transit provision, and that there will be an average of 1.7 caravans per pitch. The regional total using this method is **77 transit pitches**.

**A3** : This variant combines A1 and A2. It is needed because A2 does not work at sub-regional level. In Kent/Medway, the Counts record higher numbers of caravans in January than in July so this county groups has a zero requirement under A2. A3 is identical to A2 for all county groups except Kent/Medway where the A1 figure is included. It again assumes 1.7 caravans per pitch. The regional total is **112 transit pitches**, rather lower than produced by A1.

**A4** : This variant is based on records of unauthorised encampments collected in the survey. The assumptions are somewhat crude since there is no recognised way of converting encampments to transit pitch need. The reasoning is as follows. Records presented in Chapter 5 showed that there had been about 720 unauthorised encampments across the region in the past year. This is likely to be an under-estimate because of incomplete records. Most encampments take place over about 8 months of the year reflecting the seasonal pattern of travelling. Average duration of encampment was about two weeks. There are 16 x 2 week periods in 8 months, which would give an average of about 45 encampments across the South East each fortnight<sup>21</sup>. The average size of encampment was found to be about 5 caravans, which is assumed to equate to 3 pitches. This gives a regional requirement of  $45 \times 3 =$  **135 transit pitches**. This lies within the range set by methods A1 and A3.

## ***B. Accepting the Advice Given by Local Authorities***

7.7 Chapter 3 noted the advice given by local authorities, normally based to a greater or lesser extent on their GTAAs. This source is incomplete as several GTAAs did not consider transit needs. It is also not expressed in consistent terms. Sometimes no indication is given of the number of pitches, or need is expressed in terms of households to accommodate in a year without translating this into pitch needs (the same pitch is likely to accommodate more than one family over the course of a year). Answers are shown in Table 7.2 (page 31). Advice cannot be used as the basis for an estimate across the region, but it could be adopted in Hampshire/Isle of Wight and Kent/Medway where the estimates are best developed.

## **C. Aim to Create a Network of Transit Sites/Stopping Places**

7.8 This approach starts from the premise that the underlying reason for providing transit accommodation is to facilitate a travelling lifestyle. To achieve this a network of transit sites and stopping places is required so that

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<sup>21</sup> Obviously the number of encampments will not actually be the same in each fortnight since levels reach a peak across the region in June and July. This assumption represents a mean position. Assumptions could be changed to match likely peak levels in June and July which would increase estimated requirements.

people can move between legal places and have a chance of finding somewhere to stop accessible to most parts of the region where the diverse reasons for travelling might take them. A network, providing the possibility of choice, could accommodate ethnic and other differences between Gypsy and Traveller communities. Such an approach would essentially be policy- rather than evidence-based. A parallel might be the network created by a travel-oriented hotel chain. There are, for example, about 50 Travelodges in the South East. In considering this approach it is important to remember that some of the 'places' would be very basic and might offer freedom from fear of eviction for a time rather than expensive facilities. Many places could be small, intended for a single family group. Some might be provided by farmers, other landowners and Gypsies and Travellers themselves rather than a local authority. Re-opening of common land and traditional stopping places could play a role. The emphasis would be on flexible management of land use as much as 'provision' per se. Not all places would be occupied all the time. Some might prove to be well used and could develop into more formal provision with installation of facilities. Less formal stopping places could complement more formal transit sites provided on major routes or where there is evidenced need from high levels of unauthorised encampments. As a way of illustrating this approach, the final column of Table 7.2 (page 31) shows an estimate of requirements calculated following this general approach. The assumptions are set out in the box below. This gives a regional total of **153 additional transit pitches** (of all types) on 32 locations.

<b>Assumptions in Approach C</b>	
The basic assumption is that there should be a minimum of 4 places where Gypsies and Travellers can stop in each county group; in Kent/Medway and Hampshire/Isle of Wight which have geographical areas around twice the other county groups, the minimum is set at 8 places. In most instances, an average 4 pitch size is assumed. Current provision is acknowledged – the figures produced are for <b>additional</b> sites/pitches.	
Berkshire	3 x 4 pitch sites = 12 pitches (1 site already provided)
Bucks/Milton Keynes	4 x 4 pitch sites = 16 pitches (a former transit site in South Bucks is understood to have closed, so no current provision assumed)
East Sussex/ Brighton & Hove	2 x 4 pitch sites = 8 (2 sites already provided)
Hampshire/Isle of Wight	4 x 8 pitch sites (route-oriented from GTAA and advice) + 4 x 4 pitch sites = 48 (no current provision)
Kent/Medway	37 pitches on 7 sites (as in Advice) (1 site already provided)
Oxfordshire	4 x 4 pitch sites = 16 pitches (no current provision)
Surrey	1 x 4 pitch site = 4 pitches (3 sites already provided)
West Sussex	3 x 4 pitch sites = 12 pitches (1 site already provided)
<b>This gives a regional total of 153 additional pitches on 32 additional sites. Taking into account existing provision, the regional total (existing + new) would be 262 pitches on 39 sites.</b>	
<b>Note :</b> The logic of this approach can be extended to provide a more dense network of sites. For example, a minimum of 5 sites in each county group (9 in Hampshire/Isle of Wight and Kent/Medway) would provide a regional total of 181 additional pitches on a total of 39 additional sites.	

<b>Table 7.2 : Estimates of Additional Transit Pitch Requirements by County Group</b>						
<b>County group</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>A3</b>	<b>A4</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C (additional pitches)</b>
Berkshire	12	1	1	12	No advice	16 pitches, 4 sites
Bucks/Milton Keynes	6	8	8	13	No advice	12 pitches, 3 sites
East Sussex/Brighton & Hove	30	26	26	23	2 sites + refurbished 23 pitches in B&H	8 pitches, 2 sites
Hampshire/Isle of Wight	44	32	32	36	4 sites (the GTAA also referred to stopping places in addition)	48 pitches, 8 sites
Kent/Medway	28	-	28	26	7 sites or stopping places	37 pitches, 7 sites
Oxfordshire	9	2	2	6	No advice	16 pitches, 4 sites
Surrey	4	6	6	8	No need	4 pitches, 1 site
West Sussex	21	9	9	11	25 households in a year	12 pitches, 3 sites
<b>South East</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>135</b>		<b>153 pitches; 32 locations</b>

7.9 These approaches produce quite a wide range of estimates from just over 100 (A3 = 112) to just over 150 (A1 and C) additional transit pitches. To give a sense of proportion, at the upper end of the range, provision on this scale, and taking into account existing provision, would provide transit accommodation opportunities for about one in seven Gypsies and Travellers currently living on authorised sites in the South East, and about one in eleven of the Gypsies and Travellers potentially living on authorised sites in 2016 if the residential pitch requirements of Policy H7 are met.

7.10 The different approaches to estimating transit need were one of the topics for discussion at the consultation workshops.

## 8. CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS

8.1 When the evidence presented in the preceding chapters and associated annexes had been collected and analysed, an Interim Report was produced. This was circulated wholly or in part to stakeholders expressing an interest in attending a workshop to discuss the findings. Two workshops were held:

- 4 September 2009, Sittingbourne (Kent) : attended by 8 representatives of Gypsy and Traveller organisations.
- 9 September 2009, Guildford (Surrey) : attended by 24 stakeholders from local authorities, police, GOSE and Gypsy and Traveller organisations.

Participants came from all parts of the region and all county groups were represented at the workshop in Guildford by at least one stakeholder.

8.2 Through a combination of presentation, plenary and group discussions, the workshops addressed a series of questions which were set out in the Interim Report and circulated, with slight amendments, with the agenda. The questions were grouped into two sets. The first explored views of the evidence itself, the second how that evidence might be translated into an estimate of need for transit provision. The main points raised are summarised here.

### Issues around the Evidence

8.3 An initial presentation explained the objectives of the study and the approach taken. It then briefly described the findings, namely:

- The region's GTAAs are very variable in their treatment of travelling and transit need, and several did not consider transit need at all.
- The Caravan Counts show an average of 261 caravans on unauthorised encampments at Counts over the period January 2004 to July 2008, with a regional average summer 'excess' of 131 caravans.
- Unauthorised encampment records show about 720 separate encampments (not caravans) over a recent 12 month period across the region<sup>22</sup>.
- Both the Counts and encampment records show a similar geographical pattern with Hampshire/Isle of Wight and Kent/Medway having the highest numbers, then East Sussex/Brighton & Hove.

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<sup>22</sup> Between the consultation workshops and the final report, figures for the number of unauthorised encampments in Reading (Berkshire) have been revised upwards from 2 to 15. To avoid confusion, the revised figures are included here. The actual figures quoted at the workshops were 'just over 700' for encampments across the region, and 51 for Berkshire.

8.4 The agenda note included a table showing the distribution of encampments at county group level, then asked three questions for participants to consider.

Berkshire	64
Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes	70
East Sussex/Brighton & Hove	123
Hampshire/Isle of Wight	190
Kent/Medway	139
Oxfordshire	30
Surrey	40
West Sussex	60

**Question 1:** *Do these figures look about right? Is there any better evidence available?*

8.5 Both workshops acknowledged that there were problems with the accuracy and consistency of both the Caravan Count and records of unauthorised encampments. Gypsy and Traveller representatives in particular felt that they were seriously flawed and likely to significantly under-state the number of Gypsies and Travellers in need of transit provision. The following points were made in support of this view:

- Participants were aware of Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised sites who had never been included in the Caravan Count. Some New Travellers in and around Brighton & Hove, and people staying informally on farmers' land were mentioned.
- Some local authorities were said to evict encampments immediately before the Count so that those involved are not counted at either their old or new location.
- Records of unauthorised encampments were said to be inconsistent and not always to include encampments which stayed a short time or were not subject to enforcement action. (This view was contested by some participants at the general stakeholder workshop.)
- Both the Counts and unauthorised encampment records exclude some element of need for transit accommodation from, for example, Gypsies and Travellers finding places on mainstream caravan sites, those travelling in Europe and those deterred from travelling by problems of finding places to stop.

An estimate was made of some 4,000 to 5,000 families across England who might truly need transit accommodation. This is significantly higher than numbers indicated by the number of caravans counted on unauthorised sites on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers in any recent Caravan Count.

8.6 Participants at the Guildford workshop were less critical of the 'evidence' but made other points:

- The incidence of encampments changes over time, and several participants noted a decrease in their areas which could not easily be explained. One participant noted that there appeared also to be changes in the extent to which encampments were being reported (reducing) which would affect future figures.

- The **number** of encampments alone can be misleading since it says nothing of the number of people or caravans involved. If encampments become bigger, smaller encampment numbers could involve the same or even an increased number of families. A single family moving (or moved on) frequently could account for many separate encampments. Local knowledge is needed to 'interpret' figures.

8.7 Both workshops made a plea for better and more consistent data collection. Participant at the Sittingbourne workshop thought that the Caravan Count might be made compulsory, and that direct involvement of the community was perhaps the only way to ensure a comprehensive Count. Participants at Guildford thought that unauthorised encampment records should be standardised to a greater extent than at present.

**Question 2:** *How much is this pattern at county group level affected by different approaches to enforcement or eviction?*

8.8 Not surprisingly, there was no definitive answer to this question at the workshops and opinions differed. Gypsies and Travellers at Sittingbourne suggested a more significant impact of enforcement policies than participants at Guildford. They felt that the table of encampment numbers reflects county areas where Gypsies and Travellers can and cannot stop rather than need. A participant at Guildford pointed out that land protection could reduce encampment opportunities, but is very expensive if carried out extensively.

**Question 3:** *Some people using unauthorised encampments need permanent residential places in the area, some need temporary places while in the area or passing through. Do we know how many there are of each? Does this affect how or when transit sites are provided?*

8.9 Both workshops acknowledged that some people on unauthorised encampments need residential provision and some need more temporary accommodation. Relative numbers are unknown and would be very difficult to establish. Participants identified three potential groups of people requiring temporary accommodation:

- Gypsies and Travellers waiting for a residential site place with nowhere to go in the interim.
- Gypsies and Travellers passing through an area or working in an area for a short period.
- Gypsies and Travellers for whom moving between locations within a broad locality is their preferred way of life.

8.10 The question of how this affects how or when transit sites are provided was not really discussed. Two rather different points were made:

- It might become easier to differentiate between residential and transit need as residential provision is made.
- Need for transit sites can only really be established when some transit sites are established – it is impossible to predict need for something which is not currently a realistic possibility.

8.11 The next issue to be discussed concerned reasons for travelling and implications for travelling patterns. The agenda note read:

*The study found that there are many reasons for travelling. Some travelling is related to particular routes (for example the M3/A303 in Hampshire; A27 in Hampshire and Sussex). There are some clear 'destinations' (for example Epsom for Derby Day, Brighton & Hove for employment). Other travelling has less obvious patterns meaning people might want or need to visit almost anywhere in the region.*

**Question 4:** *Is this interpretation of the 'pattern' of travelling right? Can travelling patterns be predicted?*

8.12 There was general agreement that Gypsies and Travellers travel and are on unauthorised encampments for a wide range of reasons. This is not always a matter of choice, for example being on the roadside as a consequence of relationship breakdown or problems on sites. Some travelling still follows traditional routes, as can be seen from a historical record of encampments, and/or is related to cultural events such as horse fairs. Two points were made:

- While some travelling follows predictable patterns, other travelling follows routes which are not obvious and the places people stop may be unpredictable. For some, travelling is a way of life rather than a link between specific destinations. The balance between 'predictable' and 'unpredictable' may differ in different areas.
- For the South East, the 'elephant in the room' is London. Gypsies and Travellers will want to go to London. If no provision is made there (or more existing provision is lost), there will be a currently unknown (and unpredictable) impact on the South East.

8.13 Three general conclusions might be drawn from the debate on this sequence of questions at the two workshops:

- Estimates of need for transit provision based solely on the Caravan Count and/or records of unauthorised encampments as they exist at present will not be credible for Gypsies and Travellers.
- Evidence from these sources can only be regarded as establishing a minimum level of need and a very general indication of its geographical location. Local knowledge is needed to supplement and/or interpret such evidence as a basis for needs assessment. In time, better data collection could improve the evidence base.
- However, an element of travelling is probably unpredictable by its very nature, and need for transit accommodation will be hard/impossible to predict while there is a shortage of residential sites and while transit provision is not realistically available.

### **Estimating the Need for Transit Provision**

8.14 A short presentation introduced the second part of the workshop explaining that there is currently no accepted method for moving from an assessment of evidence of unauthorised encampments to an estimate of need

for transit provision. The presentation explained the different approaches followed in the study (see Chapter 7). The agenda note read:

*There are different ways of trying to estimate the future need for transit accommodation. The study has looked at three approaches:*

- *Using evidence of need from the Caravan Count or records of unauthorised encampments.*
- *Basing estimates on what the local authorities tell us.*
- *Trying to establish a network of sites and stopping places across the region with a minimum number in each county related to the size of the area.*

*With the assumptions used in the report they provide estimated need for between **110 and 150 additional transit pitches** across the region*

**Question 5:** *What are the advantages of each approach? What are the disadvantages? How else can estimates be made?*

**Question 6:** *Should transit provision aim to meet the travelling peak in any year?*

8.15 In Sittingbourne, the whole workshop discussed these questions briefly. The following points were made:

- Evidence-based approaches, using either the Caravan Count or records of unauthorised encampments, were rejected because of serious perceived problems with the 'evidence'.
- There was unanimous support among the Gypsy and Traveller community representatives for the creation of a network of transit provision along the lines envisaged in approach C. Ideally there should be some provision in every district and the illustrative figures in C were thought far too low.
- The practical wisdom of a more modest start to creating a network was recognised. There are areas with clear need where action should be taken immediately. Eastbourne, Southampton and Brighton were given as examples.

8.16 In Guildford, participants discussed these questions in groups and went more fully into advantages and disadvantages of each approach. In relation to evidence-based approaches (A), advantages include compliance with the evidence-based planning system and ability to see trends over time. These are offset by acknowledged imperfections in the data including geographical inconsistency and potential double counting where families move frequently over a small area as well as overlap with indications of need for residential sites.

8.17 Three advantages were seen for approach C and aims to create a network of provision:

- It makes sense as a response given the uncertainty about travelling patterns.
- It takes account of existing transit provision (where it is open).
- It broadly mirrors the South East policy for allocations of permanent sites by including an element of redistribution.

No real disadvantages were identified. However, there was a view that a network may be accepted as a concept but as proposed the approach is too specific and constrains the flexibility to take account of local knowledge as set out in submission draft Policy H7. Overall there was most support for the Option C approach with a policy objective to create a network of sites. The importance of first discussing site details/options with local Gypsies and Travellers was emphasised.

8.18 In considering whether transit provision should aim to meet the travelling peak in any year debate settled on a majority view that formal transit sites should be provided to meet the 'usual' levels of need, but that there should also be a specific plan to meet the peak through contingency arrangements, for example emergency stopping places, event-specific temporary arrangements or sensitive approaches to managing encampments.

8.19 The final topic discussed at the workshops related to the type and size of transit provision required. The agenda note read:

*The study found that stakeholders were in favour of providing a wide range of provision including formal, managed transit sites; less formal stopping places with limited facilities; space on sites or pitches for family visitors (where possible); and sensitive enforcement action to manage encampments where there are no problems.*

*They thought that sites should be small (10-15 pitches for a formal transit site, space for about 6 caravans on stopping places). There should be variety in the level of facilities provided.*

**Question 7:** *Do you agree with these conclusions? If small sites are provided, what happens when a larger group arrives? Are there any essential services all transit places should have?*

8.20 Rather different conclusions were reached on these questions at the two workshops. At Sittingbourne, many Gypsy and Traveller representatives strongly opposed the provision of sites without good facilities including hardstandings, electricity, showers and toilets and rubbish collection. One participant noted the importance of having accommodation which could be used by education or other service providers for the benefit of site residents. Sites without hardstandings would be unusable in winter or very wet weather. A counter view was expressed noting that some Gypsies and Travellers do not want, and would probably not use, formal sites but rather want the freedom to move around and stop without the fear of eviction. Other points made by Gypsy and Traveller representatives included:

- Not all mobile Gypsies and Travellers would use transit sites, but the great majority – perhaps 95% – were thought likely to.
- There is some apprehension within the Gypsy and Traveller community about council transit sites. Most sites should be run by members of the communities.
- While small sites are generally attractive, participants pointed out that some Irish Travellers travel in larger groups which would require more than around four pitches (the average assumed in Option C above).

- Participants thought that residential pitches/sites should be designed with space to accommodate visitors. This is the equivalent of a spare bedroom in bricks and mortar housing.

8.21 The Guildford workshop argued in favour of a range of provision. Three types of provision were suggested: emergency stopping places, sites with basic facilities and sites with full facilities. It was suggested that initial provision of full facility sites should be in areas of proven need and aiming to meet 'normal' usage. Beyond this, provision might be less formal.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

9.1 The objectives of this study are to assemble and assess the available quantitative, qualitative and anecdotal evidence in order to:

- i. Identify as far as is practicable any evident patterns of transit movement by Gypsies and Travellers in and through the South East region; and
- ii. Provide an indication of the scale, type and broad location of need or demand for additional transit provision.

The preceding chapters and annexes have set out evidence from the various sources assembled. This chapter attempts to assess the evidence to begin to answer the questions drawing also on views expressed at the consultation workshops.

### Patterns of Transit Movement in and through the South East

9.2 Limited and patchy information on patterns of transit movement is provided in the sub-regional GTAAs. The survey included direct questions about events which bring Gypsies and Travellers together and routes commonly used. The Caravan Counts and records of unauthorised encampments, by implication, record the consequences of transit movement by showing where families and groups stop on unauthorised encampments while travelling.

9.3 There is considerable consistency, as might be expected, in the geographical patterns revealed by the Caravan Count and by records of unauthorised encampments. This shows higher levels of encampments in Hampshire/Isle of Wight, Kent/Medway and Sussex/Brighton & Hove, and generally lower levels in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Surrey. Information collected from the survey showed the number of encampments in the most recent year for which information was provided was:

Hampshire/Isle of Wight	190
Kent	139
East Sussex/Brighton & Hove	123
Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes	70
Berkshire	64
West Sussex	60
Surrey	40
Oxfordshire	30

9.4 In assessing the robustness of this information as evidence on which to estimate need for transit accommodation, three points are relevant:

- There are widely acknowledged inadequacies in both Caravan Count data and records of unauthorised encampments – in the latter case particularly when relying on information from a single source where the management of encampments is split between several bodies (potentially between county and district councils, police and private

landowners). These inadequacies will have the effect of under-stating the level of unauthorised encampment, but to an unknown extent. Inconsistencies in completeness could distort the apparent geographical pattern of incidence across the region. The consultation workshops also pointed out that crude information on numbers of encampments provides a poor guide to need for transit accommodation by ignoring size of encampment and by potentially double counting need from a single very mobile family or group. Most fundamentally, the workshops made clear that estimates of need based solely on evidence from the Caravan Count or records of encampments would not be credible to Gypsies and Travellers.

- The survey and the workshops explored, but did not resolve, the question about the extent to which the pattern of unauthorised encampment is influenced by choice and need/demand to be in or to visit the areas with higher encampment levels, and to what extent it is the result of (perceived) differential approaches to enforcement. Information gathered in the survey on usual approaches to managing unauthorised encampments was insufficiently detailed to indicate the speed or determination of enforcement action. Survey answers suggest that both Gypsies and Travellers and some local authority respondents perceive differences in enforcement but these were referred to in general terms. There were differences of opinion expressed at the workshops where Gypsies and Travellers argued that perceptions of robust enforcement could deter would-be visitors to an area, while other stakeholders were less convinced of this effect. Given this uncertainty, it would be unwise to place too much weight on the pattern of encampments as firm evidence of the geographical pattern of demand/need.
- A further unresolved issue discussed at the workshops is the extent to which unauthorised encampments are caused by people who really need residential rather than transit pitches. The GTAAs and some responses to the survey indicate that many Gypsies and Travellers using unauthorised encampments are local to the South East and have often travelled quite short distances. Is this a matter of lifestyle choice or forced on people because they need to be in the area but have nowhere authorised to go? The GTAAs, the survey and the workshops all confirmed that both elements are present, and that it is impossible at present to quantify distinct residential and 'transit' need. There are implications for transit site need and provision:
  - Apparent need for transit accommodation should reduce as permanent site provision increases – as envisaged by several of the GTAAs. There is a valid argument for accommodating people while waiting for a site pitch, but this is different from providing places for people passing through or in the area for a short period. In this context 'temporary sites' would themselves be time limited rather than time limits on the stays of site users.
  - Transit site management will be difficult if people all seek to stay as long as possible. If transit sites are blocked by people who

really need residential accommodation, truly transient groups will not be able to find accommodation and unauthorised encampments will continue.

This factor again makes it hard to estimate need for transit provision from the Caravan Count or unauthorised encampment records. It underlines the importance of monitoring both encampments and transit site usage in future.

9.5 Overall, this assessment of information on unauthorised encampments as 'evidence' for estimating needs for transit accommodation suggests the need for care in translating between evidence and provision. The study has also explored how far there is evidence of need for provision in certain areas or on certain routes.

9.6 The pattern of transit movement is related to reasons for travelling which are covered to some extent in the GTAAs and were explored in the survey for this study. It is clear that there are very many reasons for travelling, and that they often combine. The main reasons survey respondents identified why people might need transit accommodation are: work/employment, visiting family or friends, moving through the area and holidays. Reasons mentioned less frequently included: major family events, shows and fairs, 'way of life', looking for accommodation and getting health or dental care.

9.7 Both employment opportunities and family visiting are likely to generate a fairly diffuse pattern of travelling, broadly related to the distribution of the settled community and Gypsy and Traveller communities respectively. Holidays may be taken with family members, or might be expected to favour coastal or rural areas, or areas where there is also the chance to pick up a bit of work. Hospitals, doctors and dentists are also distributed in line with the general settlement pattern although some may be perceived as more accessible and welcoming to Gypsies and Travellers than others.

9.8 The need for transit accommodation for people 'passing through' the region can be expected to be route-oriented. The GTAAs provided very limited indications of regular travelling routes. The survey identified clear routes through Hampshire with the M3/A303 leading to the West Country, the M3/A3 north/south and the A27/M27/A31 east/west route in the south of the county. In Kent, the M25 affects Sevenoaks and Dartford, and the A2/M2/M20 routes to the coast and Europe can lead to encampments in Ashford or Maidstone along the way. The A27 through Sussex and Hampshire is identified as significant. Several major roads were identified in Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes.

9.9 Some events attract numbers of Gypsies and Travellers. Several were identified in the survey, particularly related to horse fairs (Horsmonden in Kent, Wickham in Hampshire and Stow in Gloucestershire potentially affecting Oxfordshire) and race meetings (Ascot, Goodwood and particularly Epsom for the Derby meeting). Of these events, only the Derby was identified as leading to unauthorised encampments (in Surrey) before the meeting itself where accommodation is provided on the Downs.

9.10 Workshop participants agreed both the nature and complexity of reasons underlying travelling and stressed the importance of lifestyle. They agreed that only an element of transit movement is route or event oriented, and that a significant element is likely to be unpredictable except at a very general level – for example oriented to existing Gypsy and Traveller settlement patterns and employment opportunities.

### **Scale, Type and Broad Location of Need/Demand for Additional Transit Provision**

9.11 Possible approaches for moving from ‘evidence’ of unauthorised encampment to estimates of need were set out in Chapter 7 above. The approaches were:

- A1** Caravan Count – provision to accommodate the average number of caravans counted between January 2004 and July 2008.
- A2** Caravan Count – provision to accommodate the summer ‘excess’ number of caravans counted January 2004 to January 2009.
- A3** Caravan Count – an amalgamation of A1 and A2 to take account of the situation in Kent where there is no summer excess of caravans.
- A4** Unauthorised encampment records – provision to accommodate recorded encampment numbers on the basis of assumptions about average encampment size and duration.
- B** Advice from local authorities on transit requirements. Incomplete, but potentially applicable in Hampshire/Isle of Wight and Kent/Medway.
- C** Policy-oriented option aimed at creating a network of transit sites and stopping places.

These options, based on the assumptions used, produced estimates of additional need between 112 and about 150 additional transit pitches (see Table 7.2 above). They were discussed in broad principle at the workshops.

9.12 The discussion at the workshops was useful in identifying both pros and cons of the different approaches. The consensus seems to indicate a compromise as follows:

- It is appropriate for policy to aim to create a network of transit provision.
- While subject to criticism, ‘evidence’ of need from the GTAAs, local authority advice, the Caravan Count and/or unauthorised encampment records should not be ignored where it shows urgent need.

On this basis, I recommend that Option C be accepted as the best available indicator of the need for additional transit provision and its broad location at county group level. This is set out in Table 9.1 where suggested requirements are shown in terms of both pitches and caravans (calculated by multiplying pitches by 1.7 for assumed average caravan numbers). The final column shows comments on the figures and their derivation, including the impact of present provision which is taken into account.

<b>Table 9.1 : Recommended Additional Transit Provision by County Group</b>			
County group	Additional need		Comments
	Pitches	Caravans	
Berkshire	12	20	Creating network by providing 3 additional sites x 4 pitches (current provision 1 site)
Bucks/Milton Keynes	16	27	Creating network by providing 4 additional sites x 4 pitches (no current provision)
East Sussex/ Brighton & Hove	8	14	Creating network by providing 2 additional sites x 4 pitches (current provision 2 sites)
Hampshire/Isle of Wight	48	82	Combination assumed of formal sites as in advice + 4 stopping places (network assumptions and GTAA which identified a need for stopping places in addition to transit sites) (no current provision)
Kent/Medway	37	63	Local authority advice which coincides with network assumptions. (current provision 1 site)
Oxfordshire	16	27	Creating network by providing 4 additional sites x 4 pitches (no current provision)
Surrey	4	7	Creating network by providing 1 additional site x 4 pitches (current provision 3 sites)
West Sussex	12	20	Creating network by providing 3 additional sites x 4 pitches (current provision 1 site)
<b>South East</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>260</b>	

9.13 The main advantages of Option C as an approach are:

- By creating a network, it increases opportunities for Gypsies and Travellers to pursue a travelling lifestyle across the region without the disruption and expense of unauthorised encampment.
- Despite being based on different reasoning, it also corresponds broadly to evidence of need in that:
  - The level of requirements in Table 9.1 falls within the range of estimates based on the Caravan Count and records of unauthorised encampments.
  - The larger county groups (Hampshire/Isle of Wight and Kent/Medway) which have higher proposed provision (based on creating 8 sites/stopping places compared to 4 elsewhere) also

showed the highest levels of need from analysis of the Caravan Count and unauthorised encampments.

- Option C takes explicit account of current levels of transit site provision.

9.14 Additional arguments in favour of this option are:

- Aiming to create a network of transit sites/stopping places has the effect of spreading provision beyond the areas of greatest evident need. While not going as far as suggesting some form of provision in every local authority area as preferred by Gypsy and Traveller representatives, it broadens opportunities and would create a starting point from which future provision can be planned when patterns of usage become clearer.
- This re-distributive aspect resembles that underlying the allocations of residential pitch requirements in Policy H7.

9.15 There is no necessary assumption in the figures that all pitches will be provided on formal transit sites. Some could be provided less formally as stopping places. Equally, site provision could be phased in line with monitored site usage especially in areas with current low levels of unauthorised encampments.

9.16 A distinction can be made between the principle of planning to produce a network of transit sites/stopping places and the assumptions used to generate the numbers in Table 9.1 (more fully explained in Chapter 7). Different assumptions could be used to generate a denser network (higher provision need). The assumptions used here illustrate the minimum additional provision considered likely to create an effective regional site/stopping place network. In accordance with the delegated approach in Policy H7, county groups will take account of local circumstances (for example, typical size of travelling groups) and Gypsy and Traveller community and other views in determining the number, size and type of sites to be provided. It may, for example, be locally appropriate to provide the equivalent number of pitches on a greater number of smaller sites or on fewer larger sites. However, it is considered unlikely that significantly fewer sites overall could provide an effective network.

### ***Type of Additional Transit Provision Required***

9.17 The indications from the survey were that as wide a range of types of transit provision as possible should be provided, including all or a combination of: larger pitches on residential sites where families can accommodate visitors, formal transit sites and less formal temporary stopping places where people can stay for a short time. A further suggestion was using fields or traditional stopping places with no specific facilities. Sensitive approaches to managing unauthorised encampments allowing groups to remain when possible might also be thought of as a kind of 'provision'.

9.18 Both the survey and the workshops revealed some differences of opinion as to the appropriate facilities to be provided on transit sites and stopping places. Gypsy and Traveller representatives argued that sites should

be good quality places of which the community can be proud. However, there were other views put forward that some Gypsy and Traveller groups would welcome less formal provision, and that formal, fully equipped sites, especially if provided by local authorities, would only be appropriate where there is evidence of continuing need to ensure the site is well used. This raises the possibility of a core of formal sites with hardstandings, electricity, showers and WCs and rubbish collection catering for usual levels of demand, supplemented by less formal provision to cater for peak demand. Monitored usage could indicate where less formal provision should be upgraded.

9.19 The survey revealed a clear consensus among stakeholders that sites should be relatively small, and that transit sites can be bigger than stopping places. There is a balance to be struck between a site small enough to be manageable and large enough to be useful. Indications are that for transit sites the balance might be 10-15 pitches, and space for no more than around six caravans on a stopping place. The issue of size was not discussed at the workshops.

9.20 There is wide recognition that good management of transit accommodation is vital and will be challenging, not least because there are so few transit sites at present to act as good practice models. Gypsy and Traveller representatives argued that most provision should be made by the community for itself.

9.21 On these and other issues, it is essential that the community is fully involved in the county-group discussions envisaged by Policy H7. Community involvement should also ensure that discussions progress and actually achieve provision which will facilitate the distinctive mobile lifestyle of Gypsies and Travellers.

## **ANNEX 1 : GTAAs AND LOCAL AUTHORITY ADVICE**

This annex summarises the findings of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) and subsequent local authority advice on transit requirements. It also summarises the underlying evidence used.

### **Hampshire and Isle of Wight**

#### ***Hampshire and Isle of Wight GTAAs (DCA)***

Recommendations:

- Three well-managed transit sites in Hampshire (Basingstoke & Dean, Winchester and Test Valley) + one in the Isle of Wight. Hampshire sites to accommodate 41 households per year, made up of 23 vulnerable families evicted in the last 12 months and 18 families who had a base elsewhere.
- A network of emergency stopping places to deal with peak flows of Travellers through the study area during the summer months.
- A sub-regional policy to be adopted for dealing with unauthorised encampments.

Methods and sources of information:

- Caravan Counts.
- Secondary data (incomplete) on unauthorised encampments provided by the County Council and most districts.
- GTAA survey – there seem to have been around 50 interviews with people on unauthorised encampments (not entirely clear from the report, and some may have been long-term rather than transient unauthorised sites).
- Stakeholder views appear to have been taken into account and have informed the recommendations.

Other useful information:

- A summary of unauthorised encampments (Table 4.10, page 53) shows that there had been 185 encampments in Hampshire in the 12 months to September 2006 involving at least 909 caravans (average just under 5 caravans per encampment). Most encampments were recorded in the West and South sub-regions, and fewest in the North.
- Survey interviewees were of mixed ethnicities, with English Travellers, Irish Travellers and New Travellers the largest groups.
- The survey suggests that a minority on unauthorised encampments had been there for at least a year, but others seem to be 'active' Travellers.
- The survey and reported stakeholder comments suggest a high proportion (not quantified) of people on unauthorised encampments are travelling around Hampshire. This includes people with a permanent base in the county.

**Advice : Hampshire**

- The GTAA and supporting evidence is used to advocate provision of one transit site in each of the three sub-county areas.
- Unauthorised camping will be monitored.
- The joint advice is introduced by comments noting that changing or higher profile encampments have been experienced lately.

**Advice : Isle of Wight**

- No comment on transit pitch requirements.
- Consultants are being commissioned to provide details on sites to be provided, including an assessment of the demand for transit accommodation.

**Thames Valley Region****Association of Councils of the Thames Valley Region GTAA (Tribal)**

## Recommendations:

- Suggests an under-supply of transit accommodation but does not quantify need.
- Most survey respondents were seeking permanent accommodation.
- Argues that, until the shortfall for permanent sites is met, transit site demand cannot be assessed and any sites will be used as permanent.

## Methods and sources of information:

- Caravan Count.
- Records of unauthorised encampments (incomplete).
- GTAA survey – 26 interviews with Gypsies and Travellers on the roadside and 4 on authorised transit sites.

## Other useful information:

- There are two transit sites in the area (in Buckinghamshire); one was not used because of lack of demand and the other was in the process of being converted to a residential site.
- Records show about 150 unauthorised encampments a year (excluding Reading and Milton Keynes) 2004-05 and 2005-06. Figures for 2003-04 were much higher. The distribution of encampments between counties in the sub-region changed over this period, although Oxfordshire had highest numbers overall.
- Survey findings are not disaggregated to identify roadside respondents, so there is no information on household characteristics or ethnicity.
- Reported travelling patterns for the whole sample were widespread including all parts of the UK.
- The great majority of those on the roadside thought transit sites should be provided. Suggested locations were Milton Keynes, Oxford, Reading and Aylesbury.

**Advice : Berkshire Authorities, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes Council and Oxfordshire**

Similar advice was offered by each county group:

- The GTAA did not produce a quantifiable assessment of transit need.
- Permanent residential accommodation is the priority and the provision of residential accommodation will reduce the need for transit provision.
- Transit movement is a regional issue and SEERA will be considering regional research into this provision.

**West Surrey**

**West Surrey GTAA (DCA)**

Recommendations:

- There is no evidence of need for additional formal transit provision from either their survey or records of unauthorised encampment in the study area.
- Permanent pitches are recommended for priority; once provided, the need for transit provision will become clearer.
- Visitor/family needs might be better facilitated through transit pitches on new and existing permanent sites as an interim measure.
- Emergency stopping places might be used to facilitate travelling in summer.
- Current transit accommodation should be reviewed and its use monitored.

Methods and sources of information

- Caravan Counts.
- Records of enforcement action by local authorities.
- GTAA survey – no indication of the number of interviews on unauthorised encampments because figures are not disaggregated.

Other useful information

- 42 authorised transit pitches in the study area (Waverley), but no interviews on the large private site as the owner would not allow access.
- Low level of unauthorised encampments revealed.
- No information from the survey because of the lack of disaggregation in the report of findings.

**Advice : West Surrey**

- Follows the GTAA which found no evidence of need for transit pitches.
- Recommends priority be given to permanent pitch provision.
- Provide residential pitches and see what happens to demand/need for transit accommodation.

## **North Surrey**

### ***North Surrey GTAA (Anglia Ruskin University)***

#### Recommendations:

- The GTAA was unable to quantify demand for transit pitches.
- Transit demand should be negotiated county-wide.
- Transit pitches should be provided, perhaps by flexible use of existing pitch provision on both public and private sites.

#### Methods and sources of information:

- Caravan Counts.
- It is impossible to identify whether the GTAA survey included anyone on unauthorised encampments.

#### Other useful information:

- There is a single private transit site with 15 pitches (Spelthorne).
- There is little difference between winter and summer levels of unauthorised encampment revealed by the Caravan Count.
- The local population appears stable.

### ***Advice : North Surrey***

- No need for transit pitches currently identified (GTAA). A privately managed transit site is already provided. There are low levels of unauthorised encampment.
- Priority should be given to permanent residential provision.
- Gypsies and Travellers involved in the Steering Group meetings preparing the Advice have identified the overriding need for residential provision and that this should be designed so as to facilitate visiting by relatives.

## **East Surrey**

### ***East Surrey GTAA (Anglia Ruskin University)***

#### Recommendations:

- The GTAA was unable to quantify demand for transit pitches.
- Transit demand should be negotiated county-wide.
- Transit pitches should be provided, perhaps by flexible use of existing pitch provision on both public and private sites.
- The Consultants' experience suggests that there may be considerable suppressed demand for transit accommodation given the geographical location of Surrey, work opportunities for Gypsies/Travellers arising from its economic prosperity, and the motorways and major roads that pass through it.

#### Methods and sources of information:

- Caravan Counts.
- The GTAA survey was unable to include anyone on the roadside.

#### Other useful information:

- There is little difference in summer and winter levels of unauthorised encampment revealed by the Caravan Count.
- Local Gypsies and Travellers travel predominantly in the South East (when they travel at all).

**Advice : East Surrey**

- Recognises that – because of its location, potential work opportunities and accessibility to motorway/major roads – there may be suppressed demand for transit accommodation in East Surrey.
- There is currently no evidence of need from the GTAA for transit provision in East Surrey rather than elsewhere in the South East.

**Chichester**

**Chichester District Council GTAA (undertaken in-house)**

Recommendations:

- One transit site is an appropriate target, but no detailed model or justification.

Methods and sources of information:

- Detailed records of unauthorised encampments.
- GTAA survey – 28 interviews on unauthorised encampments.

Other useful information:

- Unauthorised encampment records show some encampments each year. The numbers vary year to year.
- Encampment sites show the importance of the A27, especially around Chichester town. Other locations are on the coast at West Wittering and to N of A272.
- The survey showed that about 60% interviewed on unauthorised encampments had travelled from somewhere in the South East, and especially from Brighton.
- Over two-thirds (68%) of interviewees on unauthorised encampments gave ‘temporary stopover’ as their reason for being in the district.
- A recent planning appeal granted permission to form a transit site with provision for three families within an existing authorised private site.

**West Sussex**

**West Sussex GTAA (DCA)**

Recommendations:

- Transit provision to accommodate about 25 households a year.
- Provision to be focused in the east of the area serving Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex.
- This will accommodate people awaiting the development of permanent sites and vulnerable families evicted from other accommodation.
- Some temporary provision could be provided on unauthorised developments, or through the provision of tolerated stopping places.

Methods and sources of information:

- Caravan Counts.
- Records from West Sussex County Council on unauthorised encampments on county council and highways land.
- The GTAA survey – no information on how many (if any) included on unauthorised encampments.

Other useful information:

- There is no authorised transit provision in the county.
- Records show an average of around 250 caravans a year on unauthorised encampments, but numbers vary year to year. Highest numbers are in Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex. Local knowledge suggests travelling along the A27.
- Destinations for travelling for the whole sample include Crawley and East Sussex.

***Advice : West Sussex (including Chichester)***

- The Advice relies on the GTAA evidence.
- There is a need to accommodate 25 households a year centring on Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex.

**East Sussex**

***East Sussex/Brighton & Hove GTAA***

Recommendations:

- A need to accommodate around 29 households a year, with a peak in summer.
- The distribution should broadly follow authorised sites.
- Some need could be accommodated within permanent pitches.
- Estimate of need apparently mainly based on the number of vulnerable families evicted from other sites.

Methods and sources of information:

- The GTAA survey – however, it is not clear how many interviews were conducted with people on unauthorised encampments, but could be the majority of the 26 interviews on unauthorised sites.

Other useful information:

- The survey showed that families on unauthorised sites belonged to a range of ethnic groups including Gypsies/English Travellers, Irish Travellers and New Travellers.
- Need from unauthorised encampments is the largest single element in the estimate of need for permanent residential pitches on the assumption that all involved want permanent accommodation.

***Advice : East Sussex/Brighton & Hove***

- The advice provides broad estimates of need requiring transit pitches using two methods:

- a residual approach that assumes that all need assumed to arise from unauthorised encampments not requiring residential pitches will require transit accommodation (from a re-worked model included in the advice). This produces an estimate of 34 households (Brighton & Hove consider this should be reduced by 9).
- a calculation of seasonal difference from the Caravan Count, which provides an estimate of 30 households. Brighton & Hove again consider this should be reduced by 6.
- This will result in the need for one or two small sites further along the coast (east) in East Sussex.
- In Brighton and Hove the recently refurbished Horsdean site (23 pitches) will adequately accommodate need.

## **North Kent**

### ***North Kent (Dartford, Gravesham, Medway and Swale) GTAA (DCA)***

#### Recommendations:

- There is urgent need for a small managed transit site in Swale.
- Any further provision should be planned on a county-wide basis.

#### Methods and sources of information:

- Caravan Counts.
- Analysis of Kent County Council records of unauthorised encampments.
- The GTAA survey – the precise number of interviewees on unauthorised encampments is not stated, but may be c15.
- However, none of the above appear to contribute directly to the proposal to develop a small site in Swale.

#### Other useful information:

- Unauthorised encampment records shows encampments are much more frequent in Swale than elsewhere in the study area.
- Many survey respondents who had been at their current location less than a year (mostly on unauthorised sites) had previously been elsewhere in the study area.
- Across the whole of the sample, travel destinations are predominantly in Kent or elsewhere in the South East.

## **West Kent**

### ***West Kent (Ashford, Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling) GTAA (DCA)***

#### Recommendations:

- The need for transit accommodation is not assessed.
- Data on unauthorised developments and movement through the area should be analysed locally to develop plans to meet future transit need.

#### Methods and sources of information:

- Caravan Count.

- The GTAA survey included an unknown number of people on unauthorised encampments.
- However, these sources were not used to make any estimate of requirements.

Other useful information:

- None

## **Sevenoaks**

### ***Sevenoaks GTAA (DCA)***

Recommendations:

- A need for around 5 households to be accommodated over a 12 month period.
- These should be considered across the Kent sub-region following further work on travel patterns, unauthorised encampments and enforcement action.
- Some of the provision could be addressed by provision of more stable permanent authorised sites.
- There will remain a need for transit provision for those visiting Sevenoaks and emergency stopping places or transit sites to help manage eviction from public and private land and in-migration from other districts.

Methods and sources of information:

- The GTAA survey – unclear how many people were interviewed on unauthorised encampments.

Other useful information:

- There is currently no authorised transit provision within the area, but a fairly high level of tolerated unauthorised developments.

## **East Kent**

### ***East Kent GTAA (De Montfort University)***

Recommendations:

- Estimated need for caravan capacity of 21. This would meet requirements from unauthorised encampments on all but 32 days in a year. To this is added 6 caravan capacity to take account of unauthorised transit use on a private site.
- Three sites: two in the Canterbury area and one in Dover.
- Two sites to be developed by the local authority, one privately.

Methods and sources of information:

- Caravan Counts.
- Records of unauthorised encampments from Kent County Council and Canterbury.

- Latter used to show how many caravans were in the area on unauthorised sites every day of the years 2004-2006. Needs are estimated by balancing the number of days when there would be caravans in excess of proposed capacity with the number of days provision would be unused.

Other useful information:

- Maps of frequently used locations. Shows Sittingbourne and the north coast most frequently used.
- Notes regular movement between Sittingbourne and Canterbury.

### **Advice : Kent**

A provisional assessment of need for transit pitches, drawing upon information on the continuous monitoring of unauthorised encampments (UEs) in Kent and Medway 2004-6, suggests that:

**East Kent:** There are about eight to ten households which have contributed to about fifty percent of the UE caravans in Canterbury District and adjacent Swale Borough in the North Kent GTAA area. So far as the local authorities who manage UEs in those authorities are aware, these households are essentially homeless and may well represent permanent residential need although it is recognised that some might not (currently or at all) have that intention. According to the East Kent GTAA, there appears to be an ongoing and consistent need for transit site provision in Canterbury. It is suggested that the site need in Canterbury district would be for a 15 pitch transit site. In Dover a need for a 6 pitch transit site is indicated.

**North Kent:** The GTAA recommends provision of a small managed transit site in Swale. The three years' UE data provisionally indicate that in Dartford district, a small site with limited facilities to accommodate six to eight caravans for short stays during the summer may be appropriate. In Gravesham a permanent transit site with reasonable facilities to accommodate six to eight caravans would seem to be appropriate, based on the three years' UE data.

**West Kent:** A small site to accommodate small encampments on an emergency basis might be considered in Tonbridge & Malling, based on three years' UE data.

**Sevenoaks:** The three years' data indicate that Sevenoaks experiences a number of medium size encampments, generally in the west of the district and predominantly during the summer months. A medium-sized summer facility with moderate services would accommodate that pattern. The GTAA identifies a requirement for a small transit site facility in the district. The GTAA has been used as evidence, alongside on-going monitoring of unauthorised encampments and CLG caravan count information.

## ANNEX 2 : CARAVAN COUNT ANALYSIS

This annex reports an analysis of the Caravan Counts January 2004 to January 2009 at local authority level. It deals only with caravans on unauthorised sites on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers (unauthorised encampments).

Table A2.1 shows the 16 local authorities with a (rounded) average of 5 caravans or more over the period January 2004 to July 2008. The comments indicate the underlying pattern. Shaded authorities (7) are those where the figures appear sufficiently consistent to indicate possible need for provision.

<b>Table A2.1 : Local Authorities with an Average of 5 or More Caravans on Unauthorised Encampments at Each Count : January 2004 to July 2008</b>		
Local authority	Average	Comments
Brighton & Hove (ES)	30	Consistently high figures, especially in summer
Crawley (WS)	20	Distorted by peak of 126 caravans in Summer 2006. Prior to that averaged around 15; since then either 1 or 0; average without peak = 6
Basingstoke & Deane (Hants)	15	Pretty consistent; 5 or more counted in 8/10 periods
Tonbridge & Malling (Kent)	15	Consistent, but on 'tolerated' sites which may not indicate transit need
Swale (Kent)	13	Pretty consistent; 5 or more counted in 8/10 periods
Winchester (Hants)	12	Pretty consistent; 5 or more counted in 7/10 periods – none in last two Counts
Wealden (ES)	11	Distorted by peak of 64 caravans in Summer 2004. Excluding this, the average is just 5 caravans; 5 or more counted in 6/10 periods (including the peak)
Test Valley (Hants)	11	Pretty consistent; 5 or more counted in 8/10 periods; none in last Count
Windsor & Maidenhead (Berks)	8	Distorted by peak of 64 caravans in Winter 2004. Excluding this average is only 2 caravans; 5 or more counted in only 3/10 (including the peak)
Lewes (ES)	8	5 or more caravans in 5 periods between Summer 2005 and Summer 2007; very few before or after this
Milton Keynes (Bucks)	7	Variable pattern; 5 or more caravans counted in 5/10 periods
Maidstone (Kent)	6	30 caravans counted in Winter 2006 and imputed in Winter 2007. Apart from this very low numbers and no other period had 5 or more caravans
Eastleigh (Hants)	6	Variable pattern; 5 or more caravans counted in only 3/10 periods
South Oxfordshire (Oxon)	6	Distorted by 36 caravans in Winter 2004. Over whole period, only 2 Counts show 5 or more caravans

Isle of Wight (Hants)	5	More than 5 caravans counted in 5 periods between Summer 2006 and Summer 2008
Horsham (WS)	5	Distorted by 28 caravans in Winter 2004. Over whole period, only 4/10 Counts show 5 or more caravans

Table A2.2 shows that there are 13 authorities where the excess of the July over the January averages is 5 or more caravans. Again, shading indicates authorities (9) where the figures suggest a possible seasonal need for provision.

<b>Table A2.2 : Local Authorities with a July Average 5 or More Caravans in Excess of the January Average on Unauthorised Encampments : January 2004 to January 2009</b>		
Local authority	Excess	Comments
Brighton & Hove (ES)	25	Seems a genuine difference over most of the period
Crawley (WS)	19	Distorted by peak of 126 caravans in Summer 2006. Apart from that, higher numbers recorded in Winter
Wealden (ES)	13	Distorted by peak of 64 caravans in Summer 2004. No real pattern of Summer excess apart from that
Eastleigh (Hants)	12	Caravans only recorded in 3 periods, all Summer (3/5)
Milton Keynes (Bucks)	11	Fairly consistent Summer maxima especially early in the period
Havant (Hants)	8	Caravans counted in only 4 periods; 3 (highest) in summer (3/5)
Portsmouth (Hants)	8	Caravans counted in only 3 periods; all Summer (3/5)
West Oxfordshire (Oxon)	7	Seems to be a genuine pattern in that caravans counted in each Summer period (5/5)
Wokingham (Berks)	7	Caravans counted in 4/5 Summer periods
Southampton	7	Caravans counted in 4/5 Summer periods
Runnymede	6	28 caravans counted in Summer 2005; none in any other period
Gosport	5	26 caravans counted in Summer 2005; none in any other period
New Forest	5	Caravans counted in 4/5 Summer periods

This is a harder measure to interpret safely at local level since it could indicate a single Summer encampment over the whole period. The comments try to overcome this issue.

One further analysis was undertaken. Only 10 local authorities across the region **never** recorded caravans on unauthorised encampments in any period between January 2004 and January 2009. These are:

- Bracknell Forest (Berks)
- Wycombe (Bucks)
- Ashford (Kent)

Dartford (Kent)  
Thanet (Kent)  
Vale of White Horse (Oxon)  
Elmbridge (Surrey)  
Epson & Ewell (Surrey)  
Reigate & Banstead (Surrey)  
Surrey Heath (Surrey)  
Tandridge (Surrey)

This list should be viewed with some caution given the limitations of snapshot Caravan Counts. Only Thanet and Elmbridge also registered a zero for encampments from local authority and police records for the last year reported in Annex 3.

## ANNEX 3 : INFORMATION ON UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS

Table A3.1 shows the number of unauthorised encampments reported in the survey for the past year at local authority level.

<b>Table A3.1 : Unauthorised Encampments Recorded in Past Year</b>		
Local authority	No. UE	Source of information
Bracknell Forest	2	Local authority
Reading	15	Local authority
Slough	4	Local authority
West Berkshire	10	Local authority
Windsor & Maidenhead	10	Local authority
Wokingham	23	Local authority
<b>Berkshire</b>	<b>64</b>	
Aylesbury Vale	19	Bucks CC
Chiltern	10	Bucks CC
South Bucks	2	Bucks CC
Wycombe	1	Bucks CC
Milton Keynes	38	Local authority
<b>Bucks/Milton Keynes</b>	<b>70</b>	
Eastbourne	5	ESCC + Sussex Police
Hastings	12	ESCC + Sussex Police
Lewes	26	ESCC + Sussex Police
Rother	9	ESCC + Sussex Police
Wealden	13	ESCC + Sussex Police
Brighton & Hove	58	Local authority
<b>East Sussex/Brighton &amp; Hove</b>	<b>123</b>	
North Hampshire sub-area	90	Hampshire Police
<i>Basingstoke &amp; Deane</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>Local authority</i>
<i>Hart</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>Local authority</i>
<i>Rushmoor</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Local authority</i>
West Hampshire sub-area	44	Hampshire Police
<i>New Forest</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>Local authority</i>
<i>Test Valley</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Local authority</i>
<i>Southampton</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Local authority</i>
South Hampshire sub-area	55	Hampshire Police
<i>Fareham</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Local authority</i>
<i>Portsmouth</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Local authority</i>
Isle of Wight	1	Hampshire Police
<b>Hampshire/Isle of Wight</b>	<b>190</b>	

<b>Table A3.1 : Unauthorised Encampments Recorded in Past Year (continued)</b>		
<b>Local authority</b>	<b>No. UE</b>	<b>Source of information</b>
Ashford	3	Kent CC
Canterbury	6	Kent CC
Dartford	17	Kent CC (LA information corresponds)
Dover	5	Kent CC
Gravesham	6	Kent CC + local authority
Maidstone	4	Kent CC
Sevenoaks	12	Kent CC (LA information corresponds)
Shepway	2	Kent CC
Swale	52	Kent CC
Thanet	0	Kent CC
Tonbridge & Malling	5	Kent CC
Tunbridge Wells	2	Kent CC
Medway Towns	25	Local authority + Kent CC
<b>Kent/Medway</b>	<b>139</b>	
Cherwell	7	Oxfordshire CC
Oxford	2	Oxfordshire CC
South Oxfordshire	5	Oxfordshire CC
Vale of White Horse	1	Oxfordshire CC
West Oxfordshire	15	Oxfordshire CC
<b>Oxfordshire</b>	<b>30</b>	
Elmbridge	0	Surrey CC (LA information corresponds)
Epsom & Ewell	6	Surrey CC
Guildford	6	Surrey CC + local authority
Mole Valley	0	Surrey CC
Reigate & Banstead	4	Surrey CC
Runnymede	6	Surrey CC
Spelthorne	2	Surrey CC
Surrey Heath	10	Surrey CC + local authority
Tandridge	6	Surrey CC + Surrey Police
Waverley	0	Surrey CC
Woking	0	Surrey CC
<b>Surrey</b>	<b>40</b>	
Adur	2	West Sussex CC
Arun	10	West Sussex CC + Surrey Police
Chichester	2	West Sussex CC
Crawley	15	West Sussex CC + Surrey Police + LA
Horsham	11	West Sussex CC + Surrey Police + LA
Mid Sussex	15	West Sussex CC + Surrey Police
Worthing	5	West Sussex CC
<b>West Sussex</b>	<b>60</b>	

## Information Collection and Approaches to Managing Unauthorised Encampments

Table A3.2 shows the sort of information on unauthorised encampments routinely collected by local authorities. Encampment location, size of encampment group and duration of stay are most commonly collected. It is less common to collect information which might help authorities and others to understand more about the reasons for encampment and travelling patterns. Details such as origin and destination, ethnicity and purpose of the visit rely, of course, on information provided by the Gypsies and Travellers on the encampment. There may be some reluctance to disclose such details, particularly in a context of impending enforcement action. Some respondents volunteered that they also recorded any welfare needs for members of the group and/or indications of anti-social behaviour or fly-tipping and/or the authority's costs of dealing with the encampment.

<b>Table A3.2 : Information about Travelling Groups Collected by Local Authorities</b>		
Information:	Number of LAs	% of respondents
Encampment location	36	95
Size/composition of group	30	79
Duration of stay	30	79
Origin/destination if travelling	12	32
Visit purpose	13	34
Whether seeking permanent accommodation locally	14	37
Ethnic group	15	39

Base : 38 LA survey respondents

Eight authorities (21%) said that they collected all the listed pieces of information. At the other extreme, four authorities (11%) record only location of the encampment, and two (5%) said that they had no management system to record reliable information.

Table A3.3 shows responses to a question about how authorities manage or service unauthorised encampments. It is clear that almost all authorities will take some form of enforcement action in some circumstances although several made the point that they tried to negotiate a departure date first. The use of police powers under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 is less common, but still used on occasion in almost two-thirds of authorities.

<b>Table A3.3 : Approaches to Managing Unauthorised Encampments</b>		
Measure:	Number of LAs	% of respondents
Contact by Gypsy and Traveller liaison services	22	58
Contact by other service provider/organisation	16	42
Use of local authority enforcement (eg planning powers or CJPO Act 1994)	30	79
Use of police powers under CJPO Act 1994	24	63
Other legal approaches (including civil action for trespass or injunctions)	14	37

Base : 38 LA survey respondents

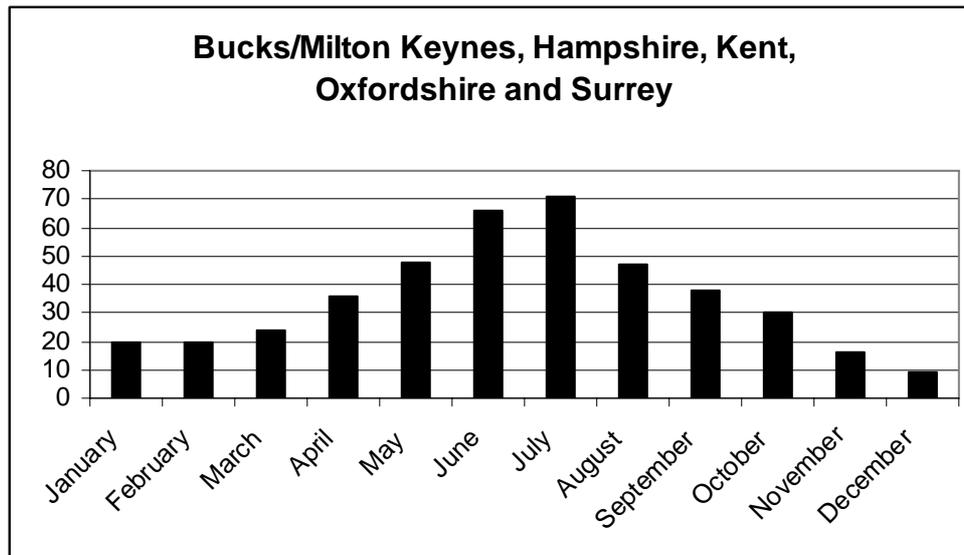
While it is important not to read too much into these responses, it appears that the liaison and service approaches to encampments are less universal than enforcement.

Unfortunately the responses do not distinguish between authorities in terms of the frequency or speed of enforcement action routinely taken. For example, the use of police powers may be very occasional in instances where there is a clear link to major crime or fear of public disorder, or a much more routine occurrence. It is not possible, therefore, to use this information as evidence of areas where enforcement approaches are acting as a deterrent to unauthorised encampment with a potential 'diversion' effect to other areas.

## Seasonal Patterns of Unauthorised Encampments

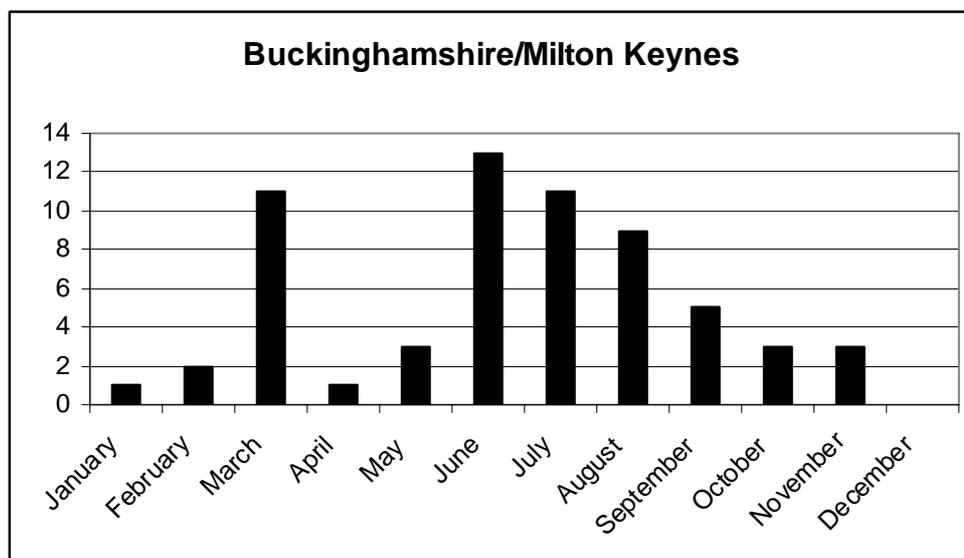
This chart shows the start date of recorded unauthorised encampments for the parts of the region where information is easily analysable. The analysis is for a single year, without any information as to whether this is typical.

The first chart combines data from Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes, Hampshire, Kent, Oxfordshire and Surrey. It shows a clearly seasonal pattern with higher numbers between April and October peaking in June and July. The pattern is remarkably regular.



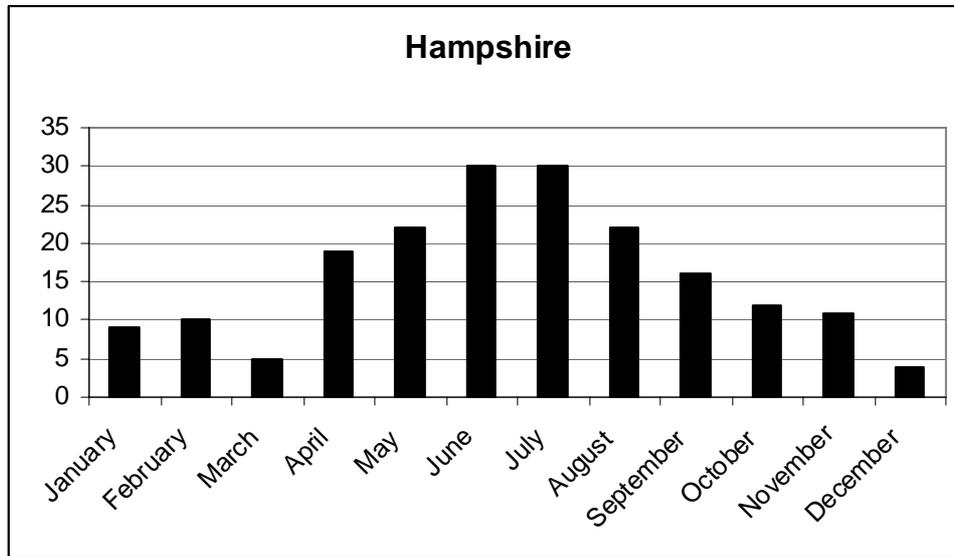
Source : See county group charts

The chart for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes shows a much less regular pattern. Highest numbers are again in June, but the number of encampments in March (attributable to Milton Keynes) equals that of July. The emphasis is autumnal rather than late spring.



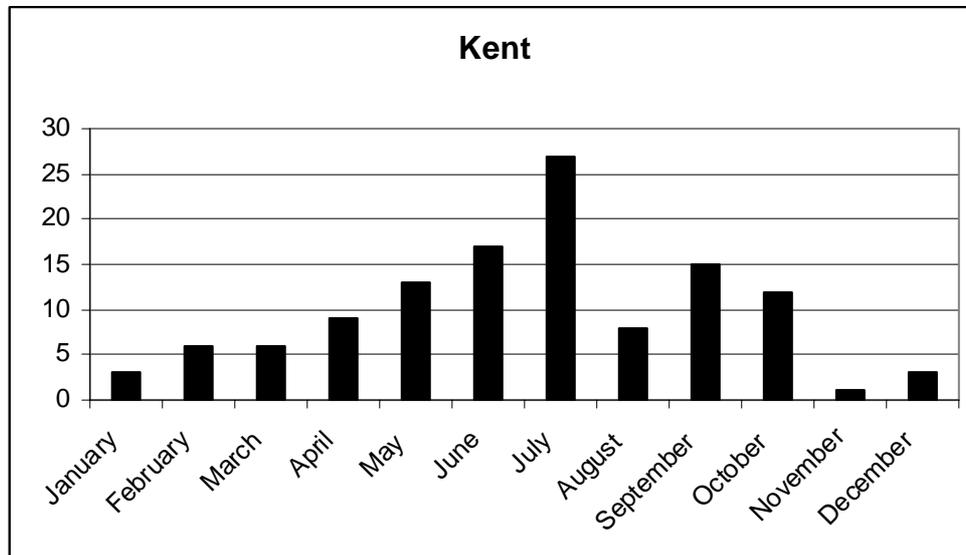
Source: Buckinghamshire CC and Milton Keynes

The pattern in Hampshire is, like the region, fairly regular rising to a peak in June and July. March here proves to be a low month, with higher numbers of encampments experienced in January and February.



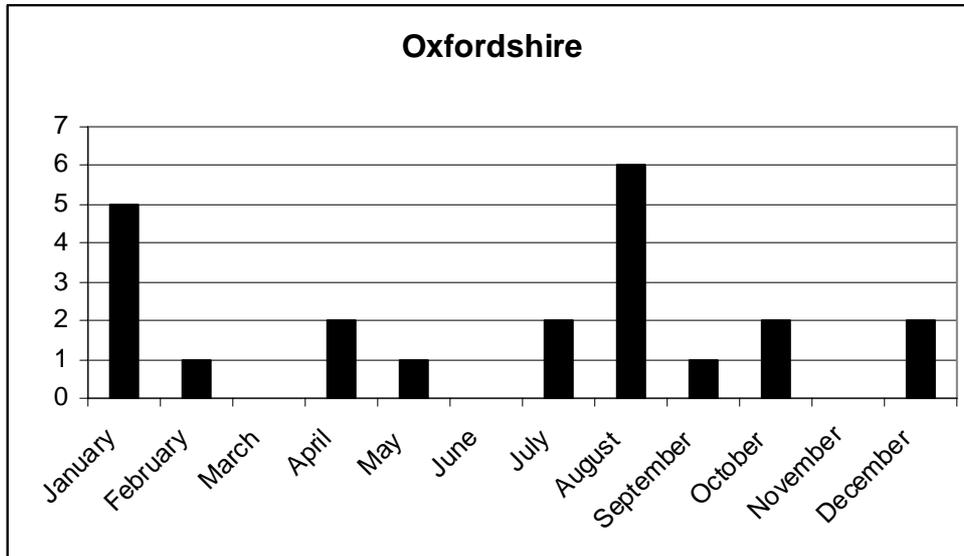
Source : Hampshire Police

The pattern in Kent is less regular. There is a clear peak in July, but an unusually low figure in August.



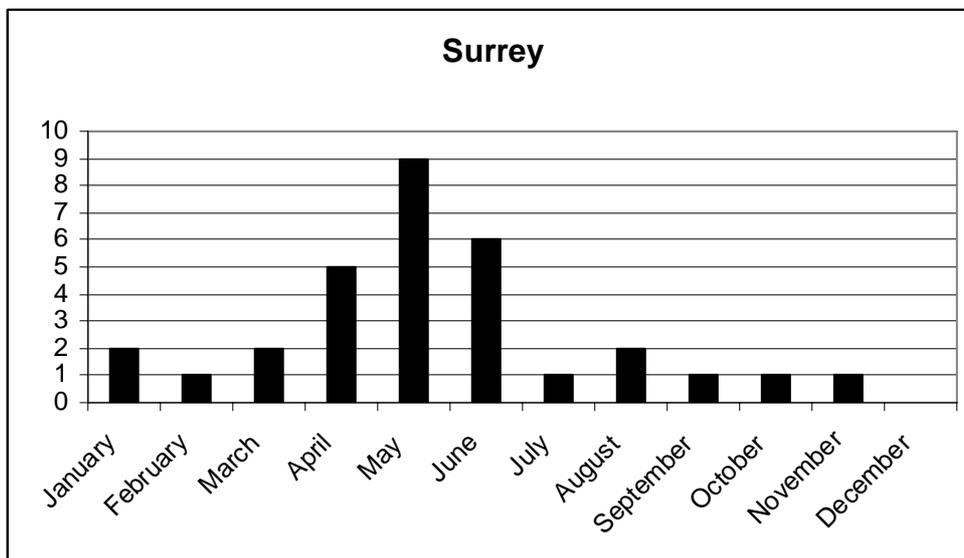
Source : Kent CC

Oxfordshire has relatively low encampment numbers and no seasonal pattern is identifiable. Stow Fair (May and October) does not appear to influence the pattern greatly.



Source : Oxfordshire CC

Encampment numbers are also quite low in Surrey. Encampment numbers are highest in April, May and June. This may be related to the date of the Epsom Derby which is known to attract numbers of Gypsies and Travellers each year.



Source : Surrey CC

## ANNEX 4 : VIEWS AND OPINION FROM THE SURVEY

This annex presents analyses of answers to each of the 'qualitative' questions in the survey. 44 completed questionnaires were returned and analysed. The composition of response is:

Local authorities	33
<i>Single district/unitary</i>	26
<i>Group of districts</i>	1 (3 DCs)
<i>County council on own behalf</i>	4
<i>County council on behalf of DCs</i>	2 (9 DCs)
Traveller Education Services	4
Police	3
Gypsy and Traveller bodies/individuals	3
Other (individual)	1

Where quotations are included below, the name of the respondents' authority or organisation is given. Responses are, however, personal rather than official.

**Q5 : The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments carried out in the South East suggest that some of the families resorting to unauthorised encampments are looking for residential sites in the area, whilst some are passing through and need local accommodation for a short period only. Can you say how important each group is in the area you are familiar with?**

This question was prompted by the very different interpretations of accommodation need arising from unauthorised encampments in the region's GTAAs (see Chapter 3). In some, everyone on unauthorised encampments is assumed to require residential rather than transit accommodation while in others only a proportion are assumed to need residential accommodation and the rest transit accommodation. This is obviously a critical factor in making the transition between figures on unauthorised encampments and plans for transit site provision.

Twelve of the 44 survey respondents did not give an answer.

The great majority of answers indicate that encampments in their area include **both** families looking for residential accommodation locally **and** people passing through. Very generally, the balance in answers is:

Transient exceeds residential	15 respondents
Residential exceeds transient	6 respondents
Both equally	8 respondents

Perceptions seem to differ by viewpoint as much as by geography:

- Local authority respondents are most likely to think that those passing through exceed those looking for residential accommodation in the area. Gypsy and Traveller bodies and Traveller Education Services

were much more likely to say that both are equally significant or that residential exceeds transient need.

- At county group level, there were different perceptions everywhere except East Sussex/Brighton & Hove (every respondent thought transient groups outnumbered people looking for permanent accommodation).

Answers are not, perhaps, particularly helpful in determining how much current encampment activity represents transit need. However, they do suggest that there may be elements of transient need – of families passing through the area not interested in long-term accommodation locally – which has not been picked up by all GTAAAs.

Some illustrative answers are:

*There are both groups within the city, with a group requiring permanent accommodation that has local connections, with much larger numbers of visiting groups. (Brighton & Hove)*

*There are very few occurrences where illegal encampments occur because the occupants are seeking residential sites in Buckinghamshire. The most common occurrence is for visits to family for a limited period or opportunistic occupation of pitches on authorised sites without permission. Very few applications for permanent residential accommodation are received from unauthorised campers. (Buckinghamshire CC)*

*The vast majority of Travellers that frequent Crawley are from the same extended family and they have informed the Council that they are looking to live on a permanent residential site. (Crawley)*

*Most families we work with who are living on the roadside say their priority is for a residential site. (FFT)*

*Mixture of both, we do see many of the same groups circulating locally, but there are also some who are simply travelling down the main road networks. (Hart)*

*We have both families in need of accommodation at permanent sites and families which travel to the area for specific events, most notably the Epsom Derby. The more pressing of the two groups are those who are awaiting a permanent site of accommodation; however both groups are of equal importance to Surrey. (Surrey Police)*

One response from a Gypsy Traveller identifies various different reasons why people may be on the roadside. This illustrates mixed reasons and mixed requirements:

- There are several different groups or families living within the South East with different lifestyles and at different stages in an evolving lifestyle process.*
- *There are families who habitually visit different areas as part of a travelling lifestyle who require minimum services. These are little more than a place where they can park their caravans and vehicles etc, water, a place to*

*dispose of waste, perhaps toilet facilities and a temporary storage area for scrap metal and most importantly minimum supervision.*

- *People previously residing in bricks and mortar accommodation due to lack of available accommodation on sites are now looking to resettle themselves on pitches (in part) due to the opportunities created by the ODPM Circular 01/2006.*
- *Younger adults and new families already living on sites (having grown up on a site) are similarly looking to establish themselves within the Gypsy Traveller community, which is difficult to do unless you reside on a site in a caravan. This can lead to people taking to the road. People having grown up on Gypsy Traveller sites in London are relocating to sites in the South East because of the lack of sites in London, and some will end up roadside. Once children become adults and form new families on sites in London, if they don't remove themselves from the pitch where they grew up they will inevitably create a situation where their parents are in breach of their tenancy agreement. In this way the overcrowding created by the lack of new sites in London, contributes to overcrowding of sites in the South East and roadside encampments in the South East.*
- *People living roadside who have been forced off, or chose to leave, local authority Gypsy sites (not due to overcrowding).*

*These probably aren't the only reasons that people find themselves roadside, or choose to be roadside, but for some of the families their choice is imperative to the Gypsy and Traveller way of life. As you may be aware; not all families will want to reside in the same place for a long period of time, although others will. So enough sites need to be created to allow for flexible choices. All groups are of equal importance. (Gypsy Traveller slightly edited)*

**Q6. What are the main reasons people might need transient accommodation in the South East? For example, working in the area, visiting friends and family, holidays, moving through the region.**

The purpose of this question was to understand more about reasons for travelling, and thus get a better indication of the amount, type and location of appropriate transit accommodation.

The main reasons given, in order of frequency of mention are:

Work/employment	24
Visiting family or friends	17
Moving through	17
Holidays	12
Funerals, weddings and other family events	6
Shows/fairs/other local events	4
Way of life	3
Looking for accommodation	2
Health and welfare needs	2

These are mostly self-explanatory. Most respondents thought that, at different times, any and all of the reasons might apply. People travel and want to be in an area for a short time for a wide range of reasons. Some answers also showed that the same group might combine several reasons at the same time

– taking a holiday while visiting family and taking the opportunity to carry out casual work.

Answers illustrating a range of reasons include:

*All of these reasons, as well as attending funerals, weddings and family celebrations of the permanently domiciled Travellers in the county. Our **opinion** is that work is of critical importance, and that holidays and family events will still be regarded as opportunities to earn money, if possible. (East Sussex CC)*

*The main reasons appear to be travelling during school holidays, travelling for work. (Horsham)*

*During the summer months (most specifically) the South East sees an influx for Gypsies and Travellers for numerous reasons; working, holidays, visiting families, visiting shows and fairs, as well as simply passing through on the way to somewhere else. In some parts of the country there are Gypsy Traveller families living on farms in an unregulated situation and when on occasion local authorities put pressure on the land owners, that generates roadsiders. In Buckinghamshire, we also have a family living roadside that has been driven off a local authority transit site during the process of the site being converted from a transit site to a permanent site. (Gypsy Traveller)*

*From Reading's perspective, most of the unauthorised encampments in Reading are by Gypsies and Travellers who either already have homes in Reading or are visiting family and want to stay in Reading. There is very little evidence of transient need. Occasionally groups need stopping places if there is a funeral or other family event. (Reading)*

*Any, or all, of these reasons might apply but perhaps with varying emphasis depending on the time of year and location within the region. Those travelling to or from personal holidays or holiday resort-based summer work further to the west and south west, represent a significant element within the county's overall need. However, there is also a less seasonal movement by those families and groups travelling through south and central Hampshire in search of work both there and elsewhere. (Winchester)*

The last quotation illustrates perceptions from an area perceived as a route way for travel beyond its area. In contrast, Brighton & Hove is perceived as being a destination:

*Whilst I cannot comment on the detailed numbers in other areas, I am aware that Brighton & Hove has a larger number of unauthorised encampments than other areas in the South East, as it is seen as a popular tourist resort, and provides a large amount of work for particularly Irish Travellers during summer months. (Brighton & Hove)*

*A small number of families in the immediate area are seeking a permanent base either in the form of pitches for caravans from which to travel, or in the form of bricks and mortar. However, a large number of Gypsies and Travellers in the District tend to be those travelling to and from Brighton & Hove. (Lewes)*

**Q7. Is need for accommodation for people staying in the area for a short time likely to increase, decrease or stay about the same in future?**

Whether need is likely to increase or decrease over time obviously affects decisions on site provision to some extent.

The largest group of respondents were unable to give an answer. Sometimes this was in recognition of the complexity of reasons for travelling, and potentially conflicting trends.

*Unknown. Kent Thameside is a growth area which may prove attractive to Gypsies and Travellers in terms of job opportunities in the medium term. (Gravesham)*

*It is very difficult to predict. Normally if Gypsies and Travellers can find work then they will visit the Wokingham Borough. It is difficult to predict whether these numbers will rise or fall, especially considering the potential affects of the recession. It has also been known for foreign workers to rent out some of the caravans on sites that are designated for Gypsy and Travellers. It's difficult to obtain numbers of these incidents and this has affected annual Gypsy and Traveller count data. It is also difficult to ascertain the affect this might have had on Gypsies and Travellers moving to the area or staying in the area for employment. (Wokingham)*

Five respondents said that it all depends – usually on the provision of permanent accommodation either locally or elsewhere. There was a clear perception that the provision of permanent accommodation would probably reduce the need for short-stay accommodation.

*This is probably likely to depend upon the provision of permanent stopping places as our experiences suggest that most unauthorised encampments are the result of homeless families, rather than families in need for transit pitches. (Crawley)*

*If permanent pitch provision increases in those Boroughs that have low or no provision then the need for temporary spaces may reduce. (Runnymede)*

Thirteen respondents saw no real reason why the level of need should change in the future. Sometimes the reason given is stability in figures over the past few years, sometimes a balance of underlying factors are considered.

*We seem to see a fairly constant pattern, so I'd suggest stay the same. (Test Valley)*

*We have had information recently from a Traveller that they are here for economic reasons because the South is not so affected by the credit crunch at present. We will monitor this carefully, but there is clear evidence that, even if Travellers are here for family events or a holiday, they will take the opportunity to pick up work in the usual Traveller trades. We therefore expect the need for accommodation to stay about the same. (East Sussex CC)*

*This is likely to stay about the same. In terms of work, the number of small mixed farms and small-scale horticultural businesses in this area has fallen*

*dramatically in recent years. Although some of the slack, from a land use point of view, has been taken up by PYO, garden centres and equestrian developments, these changes have, nevertheless, altered work and movement patterns. Opportunities for suitable seasonal work have been correspondingly affected and/or reduced. There have, however, been some gains resulting from large-scale house building within the north-east and southern coastal parts of the county. This has increased the chance of obtaining (less seasonal) casual work such as tree felling, garden maintenance, driveway surfacing etc. (Winchester)*

Six respondents thought need was likely to decrease because of increased provision of residential sites.

*Should decline when permanent provision is made in the as there is little evidence of transient need. (Reading)*

*I feel it should decrease as more and more are purchasing land and obtaining at least temporary planning permission. (Sevenoaks)*

However, almost as many respondents (5) thought that need would increase. Reasons included trends, local circumstances and an expectation of increased travelling.

*There has been a marked increase in unauthorised encampments over past few years, therefore need likely to be increasing. (Hart)*

*The opening of the newly refurbished transit site is likely to increase demand, particularly with the national shortage of suitable transit sites. (Brighton & Hove)*

*The need for transit accommodation in the South East is only going to increase: younger people (from the GRT community and New Age Travellers) are exploring (or revisiting) the traditional Gypsy and Traveller way of life that has not always previously been available to them. Also as some people within the community become more financially independent, this will create an increased need. (Gypsy Traveller)*

The policy implications of these answers are that transit site provision should be based on current apparent levels of need, but that site usage and incidence of unauthorised encampment should be monitored closely.

**Q8. Are there any special events which regularly bring Gypsies and Travellers to the South East? What are they, and where are they held?**

Special events can bring numbers of Gypsies and Travellers into an area. If inadequate space is provided for accommodation during the event, there can be a direct impact in terms of unauthorised encampments. There may be indirect impacts in the periods before and after an event and on the routes taken to the venue. Transit requirements stemming from regular events should be planned for.

The majority of respondents (20) said that they were not aware of any events which regularly brought Gypsies and Travellers into their local area. The types, and where appropriate, the specific example of events mentioned were:

- Adventitious events such as weddings and funerals.
- Religious events such as conventions and missions for Born Again Christians. These were mentioned by respondents in Kent and Surrey.
- Horse fairs – for example in Slough, Horsmonden (Tunbridge Wells Borough in September), New Forest pony sales and Wickham Horse Fair. This last, held in May each year, was mentioned most frequently by respondents in Hampshire and West Sussex. Stow Fair (outside the South East in Gloucestershire in May and October) was mentioned in Oxfordshire.
- Other fairs or festivals mentioned included the Irish Festival in Crawley, Dettling Diversity Fair, and the Dorset Steam Fair (again outside the South East but mentioned by respondents in Hampshire).
- Race meetings, including Ascot (Berkshire) and Goodwood (West Sussex), but particularly the Derby meeting at Epsom. This was mentioned by several respondents in Surrey and East Sussex.

There is no indication that most of these events directly affect levels of unauthorised encampment, indeed a number of respondents specifically noted that there was no impact. At Epsom, designated areas are made available (for a fee) on the Downs where Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople can stay. However, there may be an indirect impact from major events such as the Derby, Wickham Horse Fair or the Dorset Steam Fair where groups want to stop for a time on the journey to or from the event itself. The quotation below illustrates this for the Derby.

*Surrey finds that the busiest time of year and the point at which the number of transient Gypsies and Travellers most notably increases is the Derby which is held every June at Epsom Downs racecourse. Travellers historically have arrived a few weeks prior to the event establishing illegal encampments en route before attending the location. (Surrey Police)*

Answers did not suggest a major outstanding issues from events other than the Derby so long as current arrangements for providing accommodation continue.

**9. Are there any particular travelling routes which might influence where transit accommodation should be provided? For example along the A27 in Sussex, around the M25 in Surrey and Kent**

Regularly used routeways are an obvious consideration in determining the general locations for transit site provision. Major routes were mentioned in some responses as an indication of possible locations for transit sites:

**Hampshire**

- In the north of the county, the M3/A303 leading to the West Country, with particular issues of unauthorised encampment in the Basingstoke, and Aldershot/Farnborough areas. The former Gypsy and Traveller site at Dummer near Junction 7 on the M3 was identified as an ideal location for a transit site.
- In the south, the A27/M27/A31 east/west route
- Through the county the M3 and A3/A3(M) as north/south.

**Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes**

- A34; A361; M40; A40; A422 and A4260

**Kent**

- M25, particularly affecting Sevenoaks and Dartford – ideal for transit sites
- A2/M2/M20 frequently used as routes to Europe, with some families stopping en route in Ashford or Maidstone.

In other parts of the region, local authority and police respondents often remarked on the absence of apparent routes, as evidenced by the (lack of) pattern in unauthorised encampments. These included:

- Berkshire authorities
- Surrey (other than the A24 and A217 which are the main approach routes for the Derby at Epsom)
- East Sussex (apart from the A27 and the existing transit site, although Lewes also mentioned the A26 and A259)
- West Sussex (apart from the A27)

The implication is that, in these areas, there are few obvious route-oriented locations for transit site provision although the east/west A27 is an obvious candidate in Sussex.

It is interesting that responses from two Gypsy and Traveller bodies noted that, while specific routes may be important for some families, for many Gypsies and Travellers a network of places to stop is more important. This reflects the variety of travelling patterns, reasons for travelling and the desire for flexibility in stopping places. Stress on a **network** is important in facilitating mobility.

These answers suggest that there may be some obvious route-oriented locations for transit sites, but that these cannot provide a satisfactory network alone.

**10. The Caravan Count shows that unauthorised encampments are, relatively most common in Hampshire, Sussex and Kent, and less common in Surrey, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Is this a true reflection of actual levels of unauthorised encampments? Should the provision of transit accommodation follow this broad geographical pattern? If not, is there a more 'reliable' alternative?**

The purpose of this sequence of questions was to elicit views on the accuracy of the picture built up from the Caravan Counts, but equally to see whether there is general acceptance that the pattern of current unauthorised encampments should also dictate the pattern of future transit site provision.

Several responses cast doubts on the accuracy and consistency of the Caravan Counts as a source of evidence. There were two lines of argument:

- The Count is a snapshot, so it is better to rely on local records which give a continuous picture.
- The Counts are inaccurate and variable, and some local authorities undercount for various reasons.

There is clearly a considerable issue of the credibility of the Caravan Count with some Gypsies and Travellers which reduces its value as an evidence base.

*The Caravan Count is notoriously unreliable . . . This may account for why the numbers of unauthorised encampments are more common in Hampshire, Sussex and Kent, as opposed to other home counties. It may be that some counties deliberately do not count Gypsies and Travellers residing on unauthorised encampments. Also another anomaly may be caused by a decreased tolerance of unauthorised encampments, by some counties, which again would cause a skewed statistic as the need would remain, but the Gypsies and Travellers would be forced to seek accommodation in alternative locations. More consultation is required with the Gypsy and Traveller community. The caravan count should not be considered at all and direct consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community should provide reliable data. (Gypsy Traveller)*

Not all responses addressed the issue of whether transit provision should follow the pattern of unauthorised encampment revealed by the Caravan Count. Several respondents felt that they were unable to comment because they were unaware of circumstances across the region.

Very generally, local authority respondents from the areas identified as having low numbers of encampments tended to support those figures and to consider that provision should follow the same pattern. For example:

*Yes this is a true reflection of actual levels of unauthorised encampments as far as Buckinghamshire is concerned. Yes, the pattern of transit accommodation should follow this broad geographical pattern. (Buckinghamshire CC)*

*Yes it does reflect actual levels. Yes provision should follow geographic patterns. (Runnymede)*

Some authorities answered the question in principle, stating that provision should be made where need is apparent, even while sometimes acknowledging that figures can be the result of enforcement action. For example:

*It seems appropriate that transit accommodation is provided along travelling routes. (Windsor & Maidenhead)*

*. . . If some areas are showing a greater need for transit sites than others – i.e. a greater number of unauthorised encampments, the majority of transit sites should be located in these places. (Wokingham)*

*Anecdotally, the neighbouring police forces appear to have a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to unauthorised encampments. In the short-term transit accommodation should be directed towards where the problems currently exist. (Hart)*

*No information to provide but those travelling to visit families are unlikely to use accommodation away from their routes. (New Forest)*

Some authorities in the areas with higher numbers of encampments evident in the Count suggest that provision should not solely follow this pattern, pointing out that patterns of apparent need can be distorted and there is a need to dig behind the headline figures. Others see considerable merits in developing provision over a wider area. For example:

*There needs to be spread of transit arrangements across the region linking to the main through routes. Unauthorised encampments may be down to available land – sympathetic or lenient or ineffective landowners – and not reflect where the Gypsies and Travellers need or want to go – the present arrangement may be opportunity led. (Test Valley)*

*The broad geographical pattern may be influenced by historical patterns of movement. An investigation of potential influencing factors would be required e.g. are areas with ‘less common’ unauthorised encampments those that are ‘known in the community’ to have been more proactive regarding enforcement action in the past or where local authorities have defended land from potential encampments etc. Therefore influencing factors may have determined patterns of travel and levels of unauthorised encampments in the past. Additionally, if, as is currently proposed, the South East Plan allocations result in a revised geographic pattern of gypsy pitches, this may require a revised geographic pattern of transit accommodation, to cater for changed travelling routes. (Dartford)*

*The caravan count is a reflection of the level of unauthorised encampments on two days in the year. It does not provide an accurate picture of actual levels of unauthorised encampments over the year. Transit provision should not follow this broad geographical pattern without understanding levels across the year and their locations as well as whether this pattern reflects travelling for work/visiting relatives etc or contains an element seeking permanent accommodation as they do not have a permanent base. (Gravesham)*

*The national research over the past ten years has shown that hardly any districts are not visited by unauthorised encampments. But the amount of*

*such visiting, in our experience, can vary enormously. Sometimes these visits are very short, and may be unrecorded. There should be a fairer network of distribution of such sites, to enable movement to take place, and not just concentrated on certain counties. In some of our districts the demand is so low and rare that it can be best dealt with by allowing encampments to remain for the short periods they stop, and the adverse impact of such visits, which is recorded in our data, is tiny or non-existent to local people and businesses. Most Gypsies and Travellers, in our experience, and most other people, do not want conflict or tension with those around them. However, most will depend on the activities that people are pursuing. Some of the counties west of London appear to have a great aversion to meeting the need that is attributable to their areas, and this should be countered effectively. There should be a greater focus on the statutory duties that Local Authorities have to promote community cohesion, the duty to co-operate to promote safeguarding and well-being of children. Only by having a sharing of the responsibility for responding positively to movement of families can better relationships be formed, and tensions and costs to public bodies be reduced. This must happen across the South East and there need to be links with adjacent regions, too. (Kent CC)*

Overall, responses to this question reflect a considerable range of opinion and viewpoint. They certainly do not furnish the regional planning body with any simple, agreed blueprint for allocating transit provision around the region.

#### **11. Are there particular locations in the South East where provision of transit accommodation is an urgent priority? Where are they?**

The purpose of this question was, obviously, to collect stakeholder views of the priority areas for provision of transit accommodation. Most respondents felt unable to express a view, having too little information.

Hampshire/Isle of Wight was the one county area where there was consensus on priority need for provision locally – expressed by several local authorities, Traveller Education Service and Police. Portsmouth and Southampton commented that there was no priority need within their immediate areas.

Of the other areas identified as having large numbers of unauthorised encampments in the Caravan Counts and encampment records:

- Kent County Council commented that the major need now seems to be for residential provision, with fewer urgent priority areas for transit provision than a few years ago (this acknowledges some priority areas remain). Medway noted high levels of unauthorised encampment in North Kent.
- Brighton & Hove noted their current provision of 23 transit pitches and commented that this has increased pressure on the city so *'it is vital that other areas in the region provide transit accommodation'*.

Elsewhere in the region, in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes, Surrey and West Sussex (Crawley) there was a difference of opinion between local authorities (not seeing their area as a priority) and other stakeholders, for example Traveller Education Services, police or Gypsy and Traveller bodies,

seeing a priority need. This could be a direct contradiction. For example, FFT simply answered 'Crawley' as a priority area while Crawley Borough Council said:

*We can only make comments that relate to Crawley's administrative area and the number of unauthorised encampments show that Crawley is a low area of need. (Crawley)*

A few respondents specifically echoed the point made by Brighton & Hove quoted above that transit accommodation is needed region-wide:

*Suggested that transit accommodation is needed region-wide due to the long term outstanding need. (Lewes)*

*They must include areas where there is a high level of unauthorised encampments but a geographical spread is essential. (Test Valley)*

Thus answers to this question proved of limited usefulness in terms of identifying priority areas for provision other than Hampshire/Isle of Wight and Kent/Medway. Indirectly, the lack of agreement elsewhere is significant as possibly indicating a lack of awareness or acceptance which will make commitment to provision more difficult.

**12. It has been argued that there should be somewhere in every local council area for Gypsies and Travellers to stop legally. Do you agree with this? Are there any areas where provision would not be required? Where are they?**

At the Examination in Public for the single issue review of the South West Plan, Gypsy and Traveller organisations put forward the argument that Gypsies and Travellers should be able to stop legally in every part of the region. Panel proposals increased the number of LPAs required to make some transit pitch provision; only four LPAs across the region have a zero figure for transit provision in the Secretary of State's proposed changes based on the Panel report. This survey question sought to elicit stakeholder views in the South East towards such an approach in principle, and to identify any areas where provision would **not** be required were such an approach to be broadly adopted. The question purposely did not specify the form of transit provision – 'somewhere legal to stop' might be achieved in a variety of ways. However, several stakeholders appear to have interpreted it as relating to formal transit site provision and answered accordingly.

The question provoked more and longer comments than any other question in the survey. The majority of answers might be summed up as recognising that there needed to be a wider distribution of transit provision but not agreeing that every local council area should make provision.

Eight respondents answered with a fairly unequivocal 'yes'. Most were representatives of Traveller Education Services or Gypsy and Traveller bodies, but East and West Sussex County Council respondents also endorsed the general principle.

*Every local council should provide areas for Gypsy and Traveller communities to stop legally. The policy to allow us to travel but not allow us to park in non-workable and a possible breach of our human rights. (Surrey Gypsy and Traveller Community Relations Forum)*

*In an ideal world yes every Council/Borough should have somewhere where an encampment would be tolerated for a short period of time. (West Sussex CC)*

Few answers can be seen as an unequivocal 'no' to the question unless interpreted as involving absolutely every LPA and formal transit site provision. Many stakeholders emphasised the importance of having a wider network of places where Gypsies and Travellers can legally stop. For example:

*'Every local council area' seems to be a bit arbitrary, since some local authorities cover a very small geographic area, whilst others cover a large expanse and take a long time to cross. A distribution of stopping places, which was related to journey time between stops would be more appropriate. In some cases, where local authority areas are small and demand for transit pitches is not high, one stopping place between a number of authorities should suffice. (Dartford)*

*No empirical data to support or challenge such an assertion that every 'area' should have transit site provision. Though as a generality, it would appear both logical and equitable that the gypsy and traveller community should have the ability to use a range of transit sites across the UK for the purposes of exploring new markets for the sale of goods and services and visiting other communities where appropriate to the group's cultural roots and identity. (Medway)*

*. . . The important thing is to make sure that there is a broad geographical spread of any such facilities. (Slough)*

A second theme in answers is the importance of creating a range of circumstances in which 'Gypsies and Travellers can legally stop' including formal transit sites, stopping places and pro-active and sensitive management of unauthorised encampments. This would be geared to the level of apparent need.

*A managed stopping place for emergencies and short-term stay, such as for a family who needed medical treatment, could be considered as appropriate, but not a transit site in every local authority. If not required for transit usage, they may by default become 'unauthorised' permanent sites. Some areas do not have a large enough number of unauthorised encampments or travellers passing through to justify a transit site. (West Berkshire)*

*The priority should be to find permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and to meet the existing need. It seems nonsensical to provide short-term stopping areas where there is no real demand, but there is an existing demand for permanent pitches. A regional evidence-based study should assess where sites may or may not be required. An additional issue is that there may be some areas where sites are not appropriate as with other land uses. An up-to-date local protocol and code of standards could be agree,*

*should there be a short term unauthorised encampment. Alternatively emergency/temporary stopping places could be agreed. (West Surrey sub-area)*

The West Surrey response gives reasons for not making provision in every area which were echoed in many other responses, namely lack of need/demand/preference which would mean provision would be underused and represent a waste of resources, and the inability of some authorities to identify suitable locations because of small size and/or planning constraints. The following quotations illustrate these themes:

*Adequate provision should be made for Gypsies and Travellers to stop legally, but this does not require all authorities to make provision. Depending on the level of need in an area and the type of provision required, provision may be more appropriate on a sub-regional basis although the difficulty politically will be which authority actually accommodates the site. Other factors also come into play in making provision, such as the availability of sites to accommodate such a development, particularly in Green Belt/AONB areas, where such uses are not encouraged as a first choice. Also the preferences of the Gypsy and Traveller community, if provision is made in areas where they do not frequent it may not be used. (Gravesham)*

*In Kent and Medway, the effective management of encampments has meant that only certain council areas have need within them. So we don't agree with this. Our comprehensive UE data reflects the picture. Districts like Thanet, Tunbridge Wells and Shepway, for example, do not need either transit sites or stopping-places. (Kent CC)*

*Stopping places/pitches should only be provided where they will be used. Otherwise they could be difficult to manage and it would also be impossible to justify limited public resources being allocated to provide them. (Runnymede)*

Several stakeholders referred to the merits of taking a sub-regional approach rather than requiring every local authority to take action.

*We are not clear that the need is so great that each LA should have such a site, a sub regional approach should best be taken. (Hart)*

Overall the answers suggest little agreement with the proposition that every local authority should make specific provision for a transit site or stopping place. A blanket policy on these lines would probably be unacceptable. There is however, at least implicit support for wider provision and a sub-regional approach which would also include management of unauthorised encampments.

**13. Transient accommodation can be provided in many ways, for example by providing larger plots so that families can accommodate visitors, identifying temporary stopping places with few facilities where people can stay for a short time, or providing formal managed transit sites. Which sorts are needed in the South East? What are the priorities?**

This question is intended to identify stakeholder views on appropriate forms of transit provision, formal and less formal.

Seven respondents thought all the forms of accommodation referred to in the question are needed in the South East reflecting the scale and range of needs. For example:

*Larger plots = good idea as we've seen families attempting to draw up on sites already full to capacity. Temporary stopping places very important. Transit sites very useful especially from education perspective. (Berkshire TES)*

*Temporary stopping places would be helpful on the main through routes linked to a network of transit and permanent sites. We feel the whole range is required given the scale of demand. (Test Valley)*

*We believe that there should be a range of options available from very temporary stopping place to formally managed transit site provision. This would better reflect local travelling patterns and the variety of reasons why Travellers pass through this county. (East Sussex CC)*

Seven respondents singled out stopping places as a priority for their local area, although some acknowledged that other areas might differ:

*Temporary stopping places with few facilities where people can stay for a short time would appear to be the most appropriate based on the experience in our District. This may vary across the whole South East. (Horsham)*

Four respondents thought that formal transit sites were the priority, and five opted for a combination of formal transit sites and stopping places. For example:

*We would suggest the best way to achieve provision is to have dedicated and managed transit sites. Mixing transit provision with permanent provision may well lead to problems and disruption for permanent residents, similarly sites with minimal services or management may not be popular and may be open to abuse. (Crawley)*

*Both proper transit sites and emergency stopping places should be available. (Hart)*

Many fewer referred to larger plots on sites or these in conjunction with transit sites. For example:

*Our traveller/gypsy representatives seem to prefer larger sites/plots so they could have people to stay. (Runnymede)*

*Both larger family plots in established sites and temporary stopping places.  
(Windsor & Maidenhead)*

Other forms of provision not specified in the question itself were mentioned either in answer to this question or elsewhere in the survey:

*Having spoken to Gypsies during my role many have expressed a wish to return to the old way of stopping places, if this was made possible and local land owners were encourage then it could be a good and sustainable solution. (Surrey CC)*

*By using fields with no permanent facilities could potentially rotate or increase/decrease amount of space available depending on circumstances/ time of year. (Horsham)*

Some answers, as in the case of Crawley quoted above, support their argument by drawing attention to perceived problems with one or another type of provision. With formal transit provision there is particularly the fear of sites becoming permanent:

*No empirical data to base a view as to what is the 'correct' form of transit site. Though the view is expressed that they must not be readily converted to permanent provision as this would lead to councils potentially using enforcement powers to retain their transit site use especially if the permanent site provision is poor. The transitory nature of such sites should support movement not tempt settlement. (Medway)*

*The worry locally is that transit sites will become permanent sites – temporary stopping places may be relevant to this Local Authority area. (Bracknell Forest)*

A rather different issue is seen for transit sites in area with intermittent encampments:

*The successful operation of transit sites relies on a fairly constant flow of Gypsies and Travellers through the County. It is not practical to keep opening and closing sites for short intermittent periods of time throughout the year as unoccupied sites lend themselves to high levels of vandalism, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping at considerable expense to the local authority. . . It is impossible to justify provision for a resident manager in a county where transit site usage would be minimal; however, without a resident manager, experience has been that management of transit sites is particularly challenging. Where recorded annual transit needs are consistently very low, it would be very difficult to justify the very considerable expense to establish and construct a full facility transit site in the current economic climate. (Buckinghamshire CC)*

Management problems were foreseen by some for stopping places (see Crawley above). Management issues were also foreseen, in addition to purely practical constraints, for the use of larger pitches on local authority sites.

*Within the District there are some permanent sites where visitors stay occasionally, or periodically, on an informal basis. Generally, this gives rise to no particular problems. However, making a more formal provision at existing sites or enlarging them for this purpose could give rise to practical issues – a number of sites have precise limitations on occupancy numbers conditioned by earlier planning permissions. Well-located, managed transit sites with good facilities would seem to be the better option – temporary stopping places could give rise to serious difficulties regarding overall management and routine site supervision. (Winchester)*

*Past experience on permanent residential sites has been that larger plots where visitors can stay for any length of time would be very difficult to manage: there is a high risk that visitors would attempt to turn their temporary stay into permanent residence. (Buckinghamshire CC)*

*I am not at all sure that the best arrangement is to provide larger plots at residential sites. This seems unlikely and would necessitate re-design of existing pitches and sites. This would also be very difficult to manage, and is unlikely to have much impact in East Sussex where the vast majority of sites are in private Traveller ownership. (East Sussex CC)*

A further comment bearing on management issues came from a Gypsy Traveller:

*There is no simple answer to this question as each family and individual community will have a different need and opinion on this. Consultation directly with representatives of the Gypsy Traveller community is the answer. Although experience proves that local authority managed sites have not been successful. It is our feeling that successful transit sites are best provided and run by the Gypsy Traveller community. (Gypsy Traveller)*

Overall, answers suggest that most stakeholders perceive the need for a range of forms of provision to meet transient needs in the South East including formal transit sites, stopping places and (on family sites) larger pitches to accommodate visitors. Which form is most appropriate in any particular area depends on local circumstances and need. There are perceived management challenges with all forms of provision which must be overcome.

#### **14. What should stopping places and transit sites be like in terms of size and facilities?**

This question was intended to get stakeholder views on transit site and stopping place design.

The question revealed considerable uncertainty among respondents. Some quoted CLG's 2008 Good Practice Guide *Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites*. There was recognition that different families have different needs and preferences requiring a range of provision:

*Again there is no simple answer to this question as many families and GRT community individuals will have a different need, and opinion on this question. Some families would be happy with minimal facilities when stopping for just a few days, in return for minimal interaction with local authorities. Other families will prefer access to utility blocks, water, electricity etc. There needs to be a mix of provision and more community consultation (with Gypsies and Travellers) is essential and research needs to be conducted. There needs to be provision in every area otherwise transit provision won't work. (Gypsy Traveller)*

Some answers are quite prescriptive. For example:

*Transit provision should provide:*

- *A water supply*
- *Portable toilets*
- *Black bags for refuse collection*

*All of the above should be provided at the expense of the site user. Transit sites are relative small and are only usable by one ethnic group at a time. As on permanent residential sites, compatibility issues are a significant problem . . . Experience has been that permanent features on these sites can suffer vandalism due to lack of ownership by the occupants. (Buckinghamshire CC)*

*Emergency stopping places should simply be parking spaces for up to 3 units. Formal transit sites up to 10 units with water, waste and chemical toilet disposal points. (Hart)*

*In our opinion they should be limited in size to 15 pitches; require limited hard surfacing; and have a single amenity block of relatively small size. Also, or alternatively, could have 'summer' stopping places in identified fields with no alteration. (Horsham)*

*6-8 plots with toilet and shower facilities. (Milton Keynes)*

*Transit site should be small between 6-8 plots. Each plot should have its own water tap and electric hook up for one caravan only. The amenity block should have stainless steel urinals, toilets and basins with push taps so water is not wasted. The block should be separated with male and female facilities. Showers should be provided but with push taps with basic facilities. The lights in the block should be on a sensor so they come on as people enter the building. There should be a small refuse area for household waste only. This must be emptied at least twice a week. (Oxfordshire CC)*

*No more than 8 pitches; proximity to local services including shops; access to water, sanitation and rubbish collection; safe grassy area for children; safe distance from road. (Berkshire TES)*

The clear consensus is that sites should be relatively small, and that transit sites can be bigger than stopping places. Test Valley articulate the balance to be struck in terms of size and provide an indication of pitch numbers broadly in line with other answers:

*Sites need to be small enough to be manageable but large enough to be useful, so stopping places for say half a dozen trailers and caravans and transit sites for 10-12 pitches. (Test Valley)*

There is rather less consensus on whether provision of facilities on transit sites, and especially on stopping places, should be as good as possible or alternatively as basic as possible. Water and refuse collection were usually specified as essential. Toilets and washing facilities, where thought to be appropriate, are most commonly envisaged on a shared rather than an individual basis.

Answers generally suggest the need for a range of sites with a range of facilities. The logic of the clear consensus support for small sites and smaller stopping places for ease of management is that even a fairly modest overall pitch or caravan capacity requirement across the region will mean many separate locations to be found.

**15. Are there particular groups who would require specially designed transient accommodation? For example, New Travellers, horse-drawn Travellers, long-distance Travellers. What sort of provision would best meet their needs? If your response relates to a specific part of the South East please state which.**

The purpose of this question is to identify any special needs with transit provision. To some extent it reflects concerns raised in the South West RSS review about the very different needs of New Traveller and traditional Gypsy and Traveller communities.

The majority of stakeholder respondents were unaware of any special group needs in their area. Sometimes this was clearly based on information:

*There are no particular groups in East Sussex requiring specialist provision. Travellers in East Sussex are almost exclusively Gypsy, travelling in small family groups. (East Sussex CC)*

Oxfordshire CC commented that, were they to be considering transit provision, it would take the form of stopping places for New Travellers.

Three respondents referred to potential problems of mixing ethnic groups on sites or stopping places, but did not say specifically whether this would be an issue locally. Answers suggest respondents had inter-group hostility in mind rather than different locational or design requirements.

*In an ideal world no, but in reality groups don't like to mix, and this goes both ways - new and traditional Travellers. (FFT)*

Other factors mentioned by one or two stakeholders were:

- Horses and other animals : *The Gypsy community need accommodation for animals when they are travelling from one spot to the next. (Surrey Gypsy and Traveller Community Relations Forum)*

- People with disabilities or mobility problems : *The needs of services for disabled people and families with disabled children should be taken into account. (Kent CC)*

Answers suggest that a wide range of provision should also meet most identified special needs. Catering for disability in basic, minimum facility provision would be challenging.

### **17. Is there anything else you would like to add or suggest?**

Three themes emerged in this final question of the survey which have not been specifically reported thus far.

First there were pleas for fuller research on transit issues in the South East and for the production of better basic information which would help understanding and management of unauthorised encampments.

*A detailed transit sites survey should be undertaken at a regional level to fully understand the needs of Gypsies and Travellers including reasons for travel, destinations, length of stay and patterns of travel across the region. A snapshot of quantitative and qualitative need for the South East could be achieved by questioning occupants of unauthorised sites on the same day such as during the summer counts. (West Surrey sub-area)*

*We would recommend an agreed pro forma to record unauthorised Traveller encampments with information that can be shared across Authorities. There should be agreement about what information should be recorded; and what information can be shared. We cannot properly monitor and/or track unauthorised encampments without this basic agreement. (East Sussex CC)*

A second theme is the relative unfamiliarity of the Gypsy and Traveller communities with transit accommodation, the need to change attitudes and to provide information which will help an accommodation network function.

*There is also an issue of some concern to us in that Travellers have little, or no, experience of accessing transit site accommodation and are, instead, very used to resorting to the roadside. We are trying to engage with the Traveller community in order to address this issue and try to find management policies that will best meet the needs and requirements of the travelling community; and will also establish a meaningful local resource that will help address the issue of unwelcome unauthorised encampments. The incidence of unauthorised encampments is the most contentious issue locally, regionally and nationally and the issue most likely to give rise to an increase in community tensions. It is a sad fact that the Traveller community is judged, assisted by certain parts of the media, by this single issue. (East Sussex CC)*

*When a sufficient number of transit sites is established, an information network to assist Travellers in transit would be beneficial. (Brighton & Hove)*

The third theme is the vital importance of involving and engaging the Gypsy and Traveller communities in the planning and provision of transit accommodation. This is a common thread running through responses from

some Gypsy and Traveller bodies and has appeared in a number of quotations above. It was also taken up by local authorities:

*The government and regions often set targets and assess the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities without talking to the communities themselves. This is the case in the Wokingham Borough perhaps where Gypsies and Travellers have not expressed a desire for a transit site. Local liaison with those Gypsies and Travellers that visit the Wokingham Borough may however shed some light on what could help them in leading their lifestyle and at the same time could prevent unauthorised encampments. In conclusion therefore, perhaps there should be a more grass roots approach to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation rather than targets set at a national and regional level regarding local needs. (Wokingham)*