



# DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL AND THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL TRAVELLER NEEDS ASSESSMENT



Report January 2013



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# 1. Introduction

## The Survey

- 1.1 Opinion Research Services (ORS) was commissioned by Dacorum Borough Council and Three Rivers District Council to undertake a Traveller Needs Assessment.
- 1.2 The main objective of this study was to determine the scale of unmet current and future needs for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showmen within the two areas and to translate these into recommended pitch and plot targets that are useable within the Council's respective Local Plans and to enable the assessment of a rolling five year supply. This also required the identification of whether any extra site provision should be on public or private sites, and whether the local authority need to plan for the provision of transit sites or emergency stopping places.
- 1.3 A secondary objective was to assess the needs of people living on existing sites in terms of any extra service provision that may be required. The study also seeks to highlight how Government planning guidance for Gypsy and Traveller sites will impact upon the planning and housing strategies employed by the authorities.

## Legislation and Guidance for Gypsies and Travellers

- 1.4 Decision making for policy concerning Gypsies & Travellers and Showmen sits within a complex legislative and national policy framework and this study must be viewed in this context:
  - Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012;
  - National Planning Policy Framework 2012;
  - Environmental Protection Act 1990 for statutory nuisance provisions;
  - The Human Rights Act 1998, when making decisions and welfare assessments;
  - The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as subsequently amended);
  - Homelessness Legislation and Allocation Policies;
  - The local authority development plan and emerging Local Development Frameworks;
  - Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (sections 61, 62);
  - Anti-social behaviour Act 2003 (both as victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour);
  - Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
  - Housing Act 2004 which requires local housing authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies & Travellers and Showmen as part of their housing needs assessments. This study complies with this element of government guidance ;
  - Housing Act 1996 in respect of homelessness.
- 1.5 To focus on Gypsies and Travellers, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (Sections 61, 62) is particularly important with regard to the issue of planning for Gypsy and Traveller site provision. This repealed the duty of local authorities to provide appropriate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.

However, Circular 1/94 did support maintaining existing sites and stated that appropriate future site provision should be considered.

- 1.6 For site provision, the previous Labour Government guidance focused on increasing site provision for Gypsies and Traveller and encouraging local authorities to have a more inclusive approach to Gypsies and Travellers within their housing needs plans. The Housing Act 2004 required local authorities to identify the need for Gypsy and Traveller sites, alongside the need for other types of housing, when conducting Housing Needs Surveys. Therefore all local authorities were required to undertake accommodation assessments for Gypsies and Travellers either as a separate study such as this one, or as part of their main Housing Needs Assessment.
- 1.7 Local authorities were encouraged rather than compelled to provide new Gypsy and Traveller sites by central government. Circular 1/06 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites', released by the DCLG in January 2006, replaced Circular 1/94 and suggested that the provision of authorised sites should be encouraged so that the number of unauthorised sites would be reduced.
- 1.8 The Coalition Government announced that the previous government's thinking contained in Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites (Circular 01/06) and the guidance on conducting Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments published in updated form in October 2007 was to be repealed, along with the Regional Spatial Strategies which were used to allocate pitch provision to local authorities. This happened in 2012 with the publication of the CLG document 'Planning for Traveller Sites' in March 2012.

## Planning for Traveller Sites

- 1.9 The document 'Planning for Traveller Sites' sets out the direction of government policy. Among other objectives the new policy's aims in respect of traveller sites are (Planning for Traveller Sites Page 1-2) :
  - that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning
  - to ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites
  - to encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale
  - that plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development
  - to promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those travellers who cannot provide their own sites
  - that plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective
  - for local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies
  - to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply
  - to reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions
  - to enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure

- for local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.

1.10 In practice the document states that (Planning for Traveller Sites Page 3):

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

Local planning authorities should, in producing their Local Plan:

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

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

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

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

## **Tackling Inequalities for Gypsy and Traveller Communities**

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

1.14 This report contains 28 commitments to help improve the circumstances and outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers across a range of areas including (Page 6) :

- Identifying ways of raising educational aspirations and attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
- Identifying ways to improve health outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers within the proposed new structures of the NHS.

- Encouraging appropriate site provision; building on £60m Traveller Pitch Funding and New Homes Bonus incentives.
- Tackling hate crime against Gypsies and Travellers and improving their interaction with the criminal justice system.
- Improving knowledge of how Gypsies and Travellers engage with services that provide a gateway to work opportunities and working with the financial services industry to improve access to financial products and services.
- Sharing good practice in engagement between Gypsies and Travellers and public service providers.

## Funding for New Sites

- 1.15 The new Coalition Government policies also involve financial incentives for new pitch provision in the form of the New Homes Bonus. Gypsy & Traveller and Showmen sites receive a New Homes Bonus of 6 times the Council Tax plus £1,800 per pitch provided on all sites. This is the equivalent of around £10,000-£15,000 per pitch.
- 1.16 Direct grant funding is also available for public Gypsy and Traveller sites. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) took over delivery of the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant programme from CLG in April 2009. Since then they have invested £16.3m in 26 schemes across the country providing 88 new or additional pitches and 179 improved pitches.
- 1.17 HCA have now confirmed allocations for £47m of future funding which will support 71 projects around the country, for the provision of new Gypsy and Traveller sites and new pitches on existing sites, as well as the improvement of existing pitches. As of January 2012, a further £13million was available nationwide, with £850,000 of that being available to spend in London and the remaining £12million for the rest of England.

## Research Methodology

- 1.18 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites does not contain any prescribed methodology for conducting Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments. Good practice guidance was published by Department of Communities and Local Government in 2007 in the form of 'Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments'.
- 1.19 The research methodology adopted in this report followed a number of phases which are consistent with those set out in the requirements of Planning Policy for Travellers Sites 2012 and Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments 2007. Consistent with a number of other Gypsy & Traveller and Showmen Accommodation Assessment undertaken by ORS, we conducted structured interviews with a number of officers and Members from the Councils. Researchers also interviewed officers from neighbouring authorities to understand cross-boundary issues in line with the Duty to Co-operate enshrined in the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.20 The aim of these interviews was to provide background information on local authority thinking about the provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Showmen, and to understand how site provision operates at the present time within current and emerging policy frameworks.

- 1.21 In terms of neighbouring councils, the 2011 London Plan contains no specific requirements for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Subsequently, the London Plan Revised Early Minor Alterations published for public consultation in June 2012 and considered at an Independent Examination in Public in November 2012, propose to bring the London Plan policy in line with the National Planning Policy on Gypsies and Travellers.
- 1.22 Meanwhile, all authorities in Buckinghamshire are currently undertaking a new joint assessment, while Central Bedfordshire are also understood to be looking at revising their pitch requirement figures following criticism of their previous study at a Public Inquiry. No other authority in Hertfordshire, with the exception of Stevenage, are understood to be undertaking any new assessment of need.
- 1.23 The second stage of the research process was to interview Gypsy & Traveller and Showmen households in Dacorum and Three Rivers to understand their current and future requirements.
- 1.24 We undertook a census of Gypsy and Traveller and Showmen households in the study area between August and September 2012. Interviews were attempted with every known Gypsy and Traveller household present in the two authorities during this time period. In total 32 interviews were achieved on-site with Gypsies and Travellers, 14 with Showmen and 5 further interviews with Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar.
- 1.25 This survey had a number of objectives:
- to analyse the provision of services on existing sites to assess if more, or improved, service provision was required within the existing sites
  - to determine travelling patterns and likely future household formation to analyse the future need for extra site provision.
- 1.26 The evidence from the household survey was then tied to available sources of secondary data on the trends in the Gypsy and Traveller and Showmen population. The main sources of data comes from the bi-annual Gypsy and Traveller caravan count conducted by local authorities alongside planning records provided by the councils and waiting list and unauthorised encampment information provided by Hertfordshire County Council Gypsy and Traveller Unit. This count gives a picture of historic trends in Gypsy and Traveller populations. The caravan count has been known to contain inaccuracies as discussed in Chapter 2 of this document, but is useful as a guide to trends. Information was provided on all applications for sites in recent years and waiting lists for public sites.

## 2. Gypsy and Traveller Sites and Population

### Types of Sites

- 2.1 A mainstream Housing Needs Survey typically focuses upon the number of dwellings required in an area, and how many of these should each be provided by the public and private sector. The central aim of this study was to follow a similar format for Gypsy and Traveller and Showmen accommodation requirements.
- 2.2 The main consideration of this study is the provision of pitches and sites for Gypsies and Travellers and plots (often called a 'yard') for Showmen. A pitch or plot is an area which is large enough for one household to occupy and typically contains enough space for two caravans, but can vary in size. A site or yard is a collection of pitches which form a development exclusively for Gypsies and Travellers or Showmen. Throughout this study the main focus is upon how many extra pitches or plots are required in the two authorities in 5 year intervals.
- 2.3 The public and private provision of mainstream housing is also largely mirrored when considering Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. One common form of Gypsy and Traveller site is the publicly-provided residential site, which is provided by the local authority, or by a registered provider (usually a housing association). Places on public sites can be obtained through a waiting list, and the costs of running the sites are met from the rent paid by the licensees. Therefore, public sites are a direct equivalent of social housing among bricks and mortar tenants. There are currently two public sites in Dacorum and none in Three Rivers.
- 2.4 The alternative to public residential sites is private residential sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Showmen. These result from individuals or families buying areas of land and then obtaining planning permission to live on them. Households can also rent pitches on existing private sites. Therefore, these two forms of accommodation are the equivalent to private ownership and private sector renting for those who live in bricks and mortar housing.
- 2.5 The Gypsy and Traveller and Showmen population also has other forms of sites due to its mobile nature. Transit sites tend to contain many of the same facilities as a residential site, except that there is a maximum period of residence which can vary from a few weeks to a period of months. An alternative is an emergency stopping place. This type of site also has restrictions on the length of time for which someone can stay on it, but has much more limited facilities. Both of these two types of site are designed to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers and Showmen whilst they travel.
- 2.6 Further considerations in the Gypsy & Traveller and Showmen population are unauthorised developments and encampments. Unauthorised developments occur on land which is owned by the Gypsies & Travellers and Showmen, but for which they do not have planning permission to use for residential purposes. Unauthorised encampments occur on land which is not owned by the Gypsies and Travellers and Showmen.

## Sites in Dacorum and Three Rivers

### Dacorum

- 2.7 All the Gypsy and Traveller sites currently provided in Dacorum are publically owned and managed by Hertfordshire County Council. There are 30 permanent pitches with a capacity of up to 60 caravans at Cherry Trees Lane, Hemel Hempstead and 6 pitches at a smaller site in Long Marston with a capacity of 12 caravans.
- 2.8 There are currently 11 Showmen plots in Dacorum. However, permission may be sought in the future to convert one of the sites to housing. One of the plots has a temporary planning permission, while the other five plots at Hogpits Bottom, Flaunden have no formal permission, but where long-term occupation has seen their status become lawful.

### Three Rivers

- 2.9 In Three Rivers, there are no publically provided sites, but there are a range of private sites. The largest private site is in Bedmond and this has capacity for 20 pitches. A smaller site in Sarratt has capacity for two caravans on one pitch, while sites in Kings Langley and Langleybury have temporary permission for three and two pitches respectively. A site at Carpenders Park has a recently expired planning permission for one temporary pitch, and at the time of writing this report there was an application for six pitches at a site in Carpenders Park which has subsequently been withdrawn.
- 2.10 Three Rivers also has two authorised Showmen yards in Mill End with a combined capacity of 20 plots. However, it was determined through this study that other long-term Showmen yards existed in the District without planning permission. Therefore, we estimate that there are approximately 40 Showmen plots in use within the district.
- 2.11 In summary, Dacorum has 36 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on publically owned sites, while Three Rivers has 21 permanent and 5 temporary pitches on private sites, with another previously occupied site still in use following the end of its temporary planning permission. Dacorum has up to 11 plots for Showmen, but not all are in use while Three Rivers has 20 authorised plots, but the true figure for the number of Showmen on sites in the District is much higher.

## Caravan Count

- 2.12 The best quantitative information available on the Gypsy and Traveller communities derives from a bi-annual survey of Gypsy and Traveller caravans which is conducted by each local authority in England on a specific date in January and July of each year. This count is of caravans and not households which makes it more difficult to interpret for a study such as this. It must also be remembered that the count is conducted by the local authority on a specific day and that any unauthorised encampments which occur on other dates will not be recorded.
- 2.13 Figure 1 shows that during the most recent caravan count in January 2012 there were 54 caravans in Dacorum all of which were on the two public sites and 32 caravans in Three Rivers, with all but 5 of these being on authorised private sites. The remaining 5 caravans were on two unauthorised sites (3 on one site and 2 on another site).

Figure 1  
Gypsy Caravan Count for Dacorum: July 2007 – January 2012 (Source: CLG Bi-annual Local Authority Caravan Count)

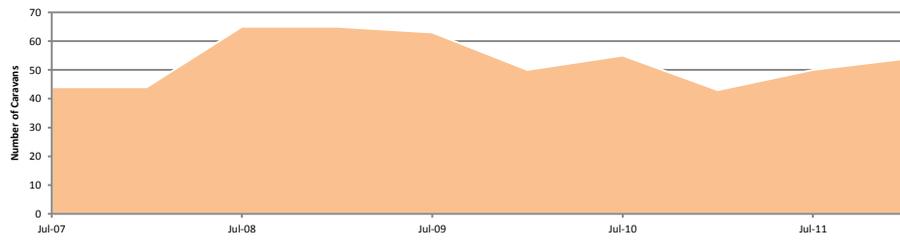
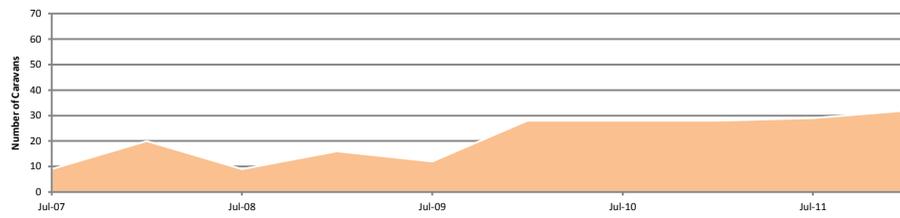


Figure 2  
Gypsy Caravan Count for Three Rivers: July 2007 – January 2012 (Source: CLG Bi-annual Local Authority Caravan Count)



## 3. Stakeholder Consultation

### Interviews

- 3.1 In order to set the context of the research and ensure the study is based on a sound understanding of the relevant issues, ORS conducted semi-structured, in-depth telephone interviews over a period in August and September 2012. The interviews typically lasted between 15 and 40 minutes. The interviews carried out with officers and Members of both councils were with representatives from Housing, Residents Services, Enforcement, Development, Sustainability and Environmental Health Departments, portfolio holders for planning and the following local authorities, all of whom adjoin Dacorum and/or Three Rivers:
- South Buckinghamshire District Council;
  - Chiltern District Council;
  - London Borough of Harrow;
  - Hertsmere Borough Council;
  - St Albans District Council;
  - Aylesbury Vale District Council;
  - Central Bedfordshire Council;
  - Hertfordshire County Council;
  - Watford Borough Council;
  - London Borough of Hillingdon.
- 3.2 The aim of interviewing Council officers and stakeholders was to provide background information on the framework within which they operate, and on the perceptions of the Gypsy and Traveller and Showmen communities within each of the council areas. This report attempts to highlight how matters relating to Gypsies and Travellers and Showmen are currently handled and perceived within Three Rivers and Dacorum areas.
- 3.3 ORS contacted a range of representative bodies for Gypsies and Travellers in the Three Rivers and Dacorum areas and were able to speak with representatives of the National Travellers Action Group Hertfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment (GATE) and interview a representative from Great Wood Children's Centre who work with children from the Gypsy and Traveller community. Other representative groups did not respond to the opportunity to take part in the survey. These groups are listed in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 ***Due to issues surrounding data protection and in order to protect the confidentiality of those who took part in the interviews this report represents a summary of the views expressed by Council officers, Members, Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showmen and other Stakeholders in the area.***

## Summary of Views Expressed

### Awareness of Policies

- 3.5 Policies highlighted by all participating council officers included the Human Rights Act 1998, Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, Equalities Act 2010, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2012, government guidance notes and circulars such as Enforcement Circular 10/97 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 3.6 In addition to these officers noted that they had various council policies. Some officers mentioned specific policies relating to Gypsies or Travellers or Showmen such as Unauthorised Encampment Policies and Procedural Guidance notes. Officers from within Dacorum Council also mentioned that there were other policies such as Anti Social Behaviour or Rent Setting policies that although not specifically mentioning Gypsies or Travellers or Showmen would impact upon these communities:
- “We have a whole list of policies and legislation that we use to shape all of our services....but not totally related to Gypsies and Travellers and we also carry out impact assessments on all our policy documentation”.*

### Sites and Encampments

- 3.7 Interviews carried out with officers of Three Rivers District Council revealed the following information about site provision in their area:
- There is no public site provision in the area;
  - There are four Gypsy or Traveller sites that are privately owned that have temporary planning permission. The number of pitches is currently being verified in terms of what can be counted towards the overall District provision;
  - It was perceived that there is a small need for further pitch provision for Gypsies and Travellers.
- 3.8 Interviews carried out with officers of Dacorum Borough Council revealed the following information about sites in their area:
- There are currently two sites for Gypsies or Travellers in Dacorum both of which are owned and managed by the County Council
  - There is no Gypsy or Traveller site provision directly provided by the Council
  - There is one site that is owned privately for Showmen.
- 3.9 Interviews carried out with officers from other authorities indicated that:
- Hertfordshire County Council manage 10 Gypsy or Traveller sites (these are normally larger than 10 pitches in provision) and one transit site providing accommodation for approximately 200 Gypsies or Travellers in the County;
  - 6 sites were owned by Showmen and these were privately owned ;
  - The majority of Gypsy or Traveller sites are privately owned authorised sites, but provide smaller amounts of pitch provision most commonly under 10 pitches;
  - A number of authorities owned and managed their own Gypsy or Traveller sites;
  - There were a number of unauthorised Gypsy or Traveller sites where temporary planning had expired.

- 3.10 Interviewees from other neighbouring authorities generally acknowledged that there was a lack of pitch provision for the Gypsy and Traveller communities:

*“There is generally a shortage of pitches in London and south of London, but in our district we are largely at the level that is required in terms of the targets previously set”*

*“There is in every county an authorised stop place and even then there are still unauthorised sites because there are still not enough authority sites and the community has difficulties itself because the planning help isn’t there.”*

- 3.11 Interviews carried out with officers of Three Rivers and Dacorum councils regarding Gypsy and Traveller encampments revealed the following:

- Few occurrences of Gypsies or Travellers arriving in the area and if they do, this is only for short periods of time and for specific occasions such as a family wedding;
- There are a small number of unauthorised encampments on land that is privately owned;
- There have been instances of encampments on car parks and on Green Belt land;
- There have been a few instances of unauthorised encampments on council owned land.

- 3.12 Interviews carried out with officers from nearby authorities stated:

- That there were few instances of Gypsies or Travellers arriving in the area and if they do, this is only for short periods of time and for specific occasions such as a family wedding;
- There were occasions when Gypsies or Travellers arrived in their district, but were passing through to get to other destinations;
- Some districts had a number of unauthorised encampments, on privately owned land, without planning permission but were tolerated;
- Some districts had a small number of unauthorised encampments on land that is privately owned;
- Some districts had a number of unauthorised encampments, on privately owned land, without planning permission but these were tolerated;
- It was generally agreed that there was a time lapse between Gypsies or Travellers moving onto privately owned land before applying for any type of planning;
- There was no mention of unauthorised encampments on council owned land.

- 3.13 It was generally agreed by officers from Three Rivers and Dacorum councils that there were no particular reasons as to why Gypsies or Travellers may be attracted to encamp in the areas:

*“We don’t have that many, but if we do have them I think usually we tend to have them for things like funerals or because of work in the area.”*

*“I suppose a lack of service provision for the Travelling community and also them being displaced from other authority areas.”*

## Community Relations

- 3.14 Officers from Three Rivers and Dacorum councils commented that there were issues, but relatively few, that had arisen between Gypsies and Travellers or Showmen and the settled communities:

*“I don’t believe our area or adjacent areas are any different in that there are usually obviously tensions between the settled community and Travelling community. I suppose we are the interface*

*between those communities; it is fair to say there are very different needs and expectations between the two communities.”*

- 3.15 Some interviewees noted that there were issues, whether real or perceived, between Gypsies or Travellers that had moved into bricks and mortar with existing residents. It was unclear, however, whether this was because the Gypsies or Travellers did not want to be living in bricks and mortar or whether there were social or possibly racial tensions.
- 3.16 There was an indication from some interviewees that where there had been a settled community of Gypsies or Travellers on the site for some time, especially with the same families, that these were well integrated within the local settled community.
- 3.17 It was indicated that community relations were affected where council managed sites were not well managed, facilities were poor, or the site was considered by those living on site as being dangerous due to issues such as road access.

## Trends

- 3.18 Council officers generally evidenced that there were routes that would be particularly attractive to Gypsies or Travellers or Showmen in the area such as the A1, M1, A41 and M25 and that there **were** no particular reasons for Gypsies or Travellers or Showmen to move to the area other than the proximity to London, work, family or friends.
- 3.19 Some interviewees acknowledged that the area would remain and continue to become more attractive to Gypsies or Travellers or Showmen because of opportunities to work, transport links and existing family ties:
- 3.20 Interviewees reported an increase in the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers having a more settled existence and travelling less. This also included a slight trend towards moving into bricks and mortar accommodation.
- 3.21 Interviewees noted that there had been a steady increase in some of the areas regarding the number of privately owned sites. It was noted that these were more often than not in the Green Belt and that Gypsies or Travellers would move onto the land once purchased, before seeking planning permission. This would lead to authorities pursuing enforcement action but this was often protracted.
- 3.22 Interviewees did not report any identifiable trends in terms of seasonal fluctuations.
- 3.23 It was reported that there was a slight trend for Gypsies or Travellers towards setting up their own businesses, but they had insufficient skills in areas such as IT and business start-up.
- 3.24 Some interviewees confirmed that there now appeared to be a trend for allowing young couples to stay with parents on their pitches because of a lack of sites.

## Needs and Wants

- 3.25 Interviewees were asked about the criteria that should be borne in mind when determining where a Gypsy or Traveller or Showmen site should be placed. The responses received were mixed.

- 3.26 It was generally agreed by officers that the ‘ideal’ site would be one that is near a residential area whilst having reasonable proximity or ease of access to services and facilities such as shops, schools, healthcare and other local amenities. Some officers referred to their specific planning criteria with regard to this question such as ruling out any site of special scientific interest (SSSI). Most of these planning criteria equally apply to bricks and mortar accommodation.
- 3.27 Several of those interviewed highlighted the difficulties in providing sites; these included:
- Gypsies and Travellers wishing to stay with other family members having an impact on the amount of land required;
  - Political will;
  - Land cost;
  - Land availability especially with regard to the Green Belt;
  - Planning, particularly with understanding the system and also with getting planning permissions to be granted;
  - Local objection (NIMBYism) and any real or perceived impact on local residents
  - Differences in opinion as to what constitutes the ideal site:

### Cross-boundary Issues

- 3.28 Officers from Three Rivers and Dacorum councils felt that the main transport links used by Gypsies and Travellers and Showmen were no different to those that the settled community would use. These includes roads such as the A1, A41, M1 and M25:
- “The A41 gives great access to the M25 – Watford to Dacorum and in the same way Three Rivers to Dacorum and then up to Coventry.”*
- 3.29 It was stated that there were some families that moved in and out of the districts, but they tended to be families from other areas travelling through for specific occasions, such as the big religious festival at Aylesbury. These were generally families following a traditional route and the children tended not to be registered to any local schools.
- 3.30 As noted earlier, few adjoining authorities have up to date studies in place, with a number currently at the early stages of gathering new information. Currently, no published studies assume that Dacorum or Three Rivers will take any of the predicted growth in Gypsies and Travellers or Showmen. Equally no neighbouring authority is currently planning to provide additional sites which could be used to accommodate the needs for Dacorum or Three Rivers.

### The Future

- 3.31 Stakeholder and officers who were interviewed reported that although there appeared to be a general consensus that new sites or an expansion of existing sites was needed, they believed there were political issues to overcome in order to realise this need.
- 3.32 Some officers expressed an opinion that new site development should be approached in the same way as affordable housing.
- 3.33 Some officers from Three Rivers and Dacorum councils were concerned as to who would manage these new sites if developed:

*“...by using the Gypsy or Traveller community to run the sites the better they will be.”*

*“If we put the planning policy into place then we will be providing more sites and they will have to be managed by someone.”*

- 3.34 Although no evidence was provided by those interviewed, they indicated that those from the Gypsy and Traveller communities were growing, albeit modestly. Interviewers commented that young people were double parking with parents on pitches and they were either single people or newly married couples with or without children who wanted or needed to be with family.
- 3.35 In the main, mechanisms for consultation with all sectors of the Gypsy and Traveller and Showmen communities remain patchy. The exception to this is where specific organisations are supporting their own or specific communities.
- 3.36 Some officer interviewees felt that consultation with Gypsies and Travellers and Showmen had declined since the new government had been voted into power.
- 3.37 The methods most normally used to consult with the different communities are through face to face interviews or meetings but it was generally reported that this was in relation to specific issues on particular sites.
- 3.38 Some interviewees did state that they used a number of methods to consult especially on new policies these methods included:
- Web based technology;
  - Focus groups;
  - Face to face interviews; and
  - Meetings with representative bodies.
- 3.39 It was generally acknowledged that there was considerable room for improvement in terms of monitoring consultation including specific areas such as ethnicity.
- 3.40 Finally, another stakeholder was of the opinion that there should be more collaboration across Hertfordshire both in terms of carrying out Needs Assessments. This could avoid interview fatigue and that all authorities should share collective responsibility for the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

## 4. Gypsy and Traveller Population

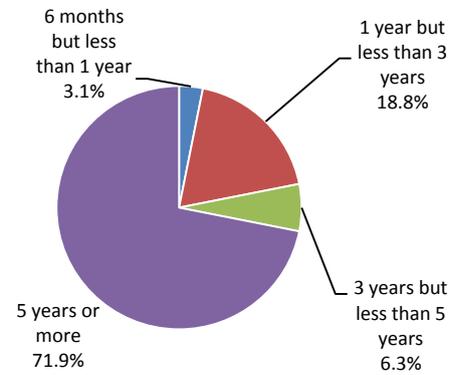
### Survey of the Gypsy and Traveller Population

- 4.1 One of the major components of this assessment was a detailed survey of the Gypsy and Traveller population in Dacorum and Three Rivers. This aimed to identify current households with housing needs, and to assess likely future household formation from within the existing households to help judge the need for future site provision. The survey sought to provide a baseline position on the resident Gypsy and Traveller population of the two authorities.
- 4.2 Interviews were attempted with every Gypsy and Traveller household in the area who were present between August and September 2012. Therefore, the baseline point for the findings of this study is September 2012. Throughout the survey period interviewers worked from 9am to 7pm each day and made repeated visits to each household until a successful interview was concluded.
- 4.3 A particular effort was made to obtain interviews from the private site in Bedmond in Three Rivers which has permission for 20 pitches. Whilst the owners of the site wish to maintain their privacy as much as possible they were willing to provide enough information for this survey to proceed. In particular they confirmed that while there is currently free space at the site, this is not available for use by other households. Space on the site is only for family members and it is anticipated that the site will be available for older children to form their own households and therefore no new need will arise from this site.
- 4.4 This therefore left a total of 36 permanent pitches in Dacorum and 6 permanent and temporary pitches in Three Rivers to interview. In total 27 completed interviews were achieved in Dacorum and 5 in Three Rivers. This gave the survey an approximate response rate of 75%. A further 5 interviews were achieved with households living in bricks and mortar.
- 4.5 ***Throughout this study the person responding to the survey will be referred to as the respondent, and in questions which refer to all people in the household they will be referred to as household members.***
- 4.6 Throughout the remainder of this report the majority of numbers which appear on the charts represent the percentage of respondents who appear in that category. The purpose of showing percentages is to allow the results of the survey to be extrapolated to the whole Gypsy and Traveller population. In a few cases it is more appropriate to use the actual number of respondents, and these cases are clearly identified. In all charts those respondents who answered 'don't know', or did not answer the question, are omitted unless otherwise stated.

### Length of Residence

4.7 Many Gypsies and Travellers surveyed had a long period of residence in Dacorum and Three Rivers (Figure 3). 85% of respondents had lived on their current site for more than 5 years. On the public sites in Dacorum, only 4 of the 27 respondents had been resident for less than 3 years, indicating a very low rate of pitch turnover. All but one of the respondents to the survey identified their current site as being their permanent base.

Figure 3  
Length of Time Respondents Have Lived on Their Current Site, by all Respondents (Source: Survey of Gypsy and Traveller Population On-site 2012)

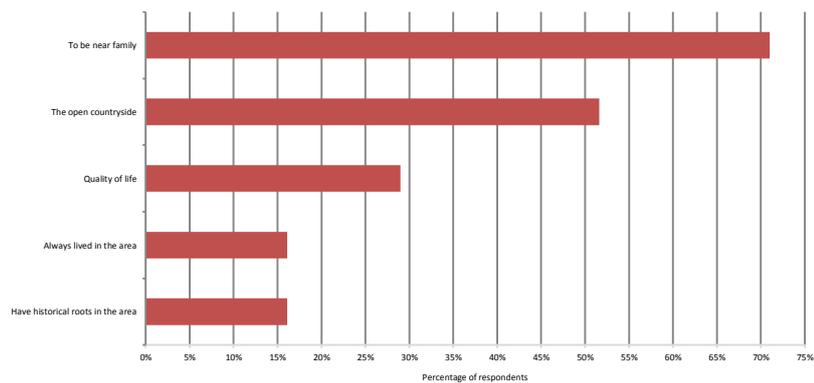


### Attractions of Living in Dacorum and Three Rivers

4.8 Respondents were asked to identify the main reasons that attracted them to live in Dacorum and Three Rivers (Figure 4). They were allowed to select as many reasons as they wished from a list of nine options.

4.9 The two main factors which attracted respondents to the area were to be near to their family or because of the open countryside.

Figure 4  
What Attracted Them to Live in the Area, by all Respondents (Source: Survey of Gypsy and Traveller Population On-site 2012)

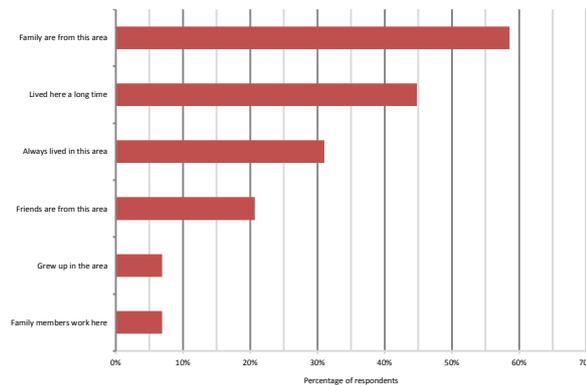


## Connections with the Area

- 4.10 Almost all respondents felt that they have strong connections to Dacorum and Three Rivers. In particular, Figure 5 shows that the main connection was that their family comes from the area, while many had either always lived in the area or had lived in the area for a long time.

Figure 5

Nature of Local Connections in Three Rivers and Dacorum, by all Respondents (Source: Survey of Gypsy and Traveller Population On-site 2012)

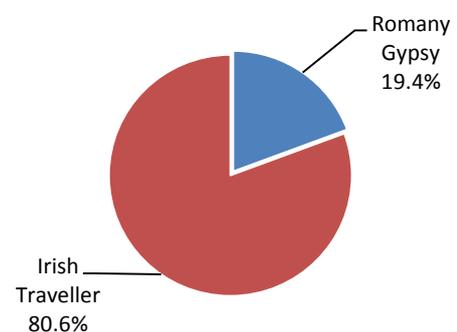


## Ethnic Background

- 4.11 Over 80% of all respondents explicitly identified themselves as being Irish Travellers, while others stated they were Romany Gypsies (Figure 6). There is a clear split between sites, with almost all of the Romany Gypsy population to be found on the Long Marston site in Dacorum.

Figure 6

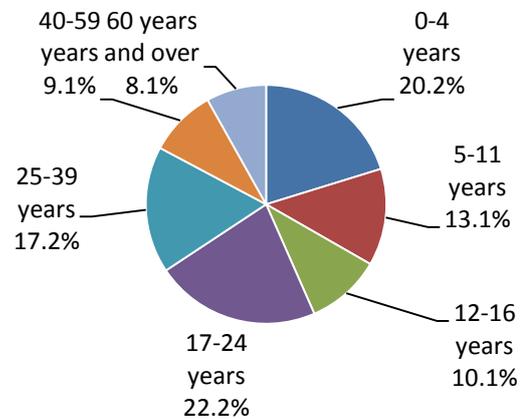
Ethnic Group by all Respondents (Source: Survey of Gypsy and Traveller Population On-site 2012)



## Age and Household Profile

- 4.12 The households showed a mixed range of ages across their members (Figure 7). The households contained 18% of people who were of retirement age, but over 45% of all household members were aged 16 years or under. 22% of all household members were of school age and another 23% were children aged 4 years or less. It should be noted that 20% of all household contain 6 or more people and 15% contain 7 or more people.

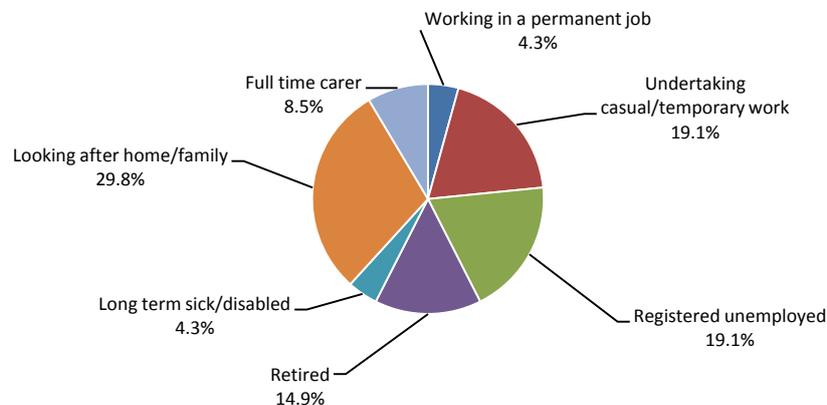
Figure 7  
Age of Household Members, by all Household Members  
(Source: Survey of Gypsy and Traveller Population On-site 2012)



## Employment Status

- 4.13 The employment status of household members aged 16 years or older is shown in Figure 8. Of those who had their employment status recorded, 29% were looking after their home/family. 15% were retired. 4% had a permanent job, another 19% had casual or seasonal work.

Figure 8  
Employment Status of Household Members, by All Household Members Aged Over 16 Years (Source: Survey of Gypsy and Traveller Population On-site 2012)



## Health Problems

- 4.14 40% of respondents interviewed reported that their household contained at least one member with a long-term health problem. There were three cases of households who wished for adaptations on the public sites in Dacorum - two at the Long Marston site and one at the Hemel Hempstead site. The adaptations required are access ramps and shower rails.

## Bricks and Mortar Accommodation

- 4.15 21% of respondents reported that they had lived in bricks and mortar accommodation in the past. However, only two had done so in the last 3 years. Many respondents reported that they had left bricks and mortar housing because they felt it was not part of their way of life, with most having left more than 10 years ago.
- 4.16 One respondent from the Long Marston site in Dacorum expressed a desire to move from the site to bricks and mortar housing. Therefore, the evidence from this survey is that there is very little interest in bricks and mortar accommodation among the on-site Gypsy and Traveller population in Dacorum and Three Rivers. However, it should be noted that movement between bricks and mortar housing and sites is a complex issue, with many Gypsies continuing to travel on a periodic basis while living in bricks and mortar.
- 4.17 ORS were provided with a list of households who live in bricks and mortar for the survey by the councils and sought to supplement this list with further contacts from stakeholders and also from residents on sites. However, the bricks and mortar population does not appear to be particularly large so the household survey only featured interviews with 5 households in bricks and mortar. Of these, two wish to move on to sites, with one each wishing to move on to the Hemel Hempstead and Long Marston sites.

## 5. Existing Sites

### Views of Sites

- 5.1 The majority of respondents were satisfied with their sites (Figure 9). 91% of respondents expressed some form of satisfaction with their site, with no-one expressing dissatisfaction.
- 5.2 Figure 10 shows the improvements which were identified by respondents as being required at their permanent sites. These predominately relate to the Hemel Hempstead site in Dacorum. It should be noted that 60% of respondents felt that no improvements were required.
- 5.3 Very few respondents reported that they wanted more storage space for business needs or asked for larger pitches. A small number did identify space for visitors and general car parking as requiring improvements.

Figure 9  
Satisfaction with Current Site, by all Respondents (Source: Survey of Gypsy and Traveller Population On-site 2012)

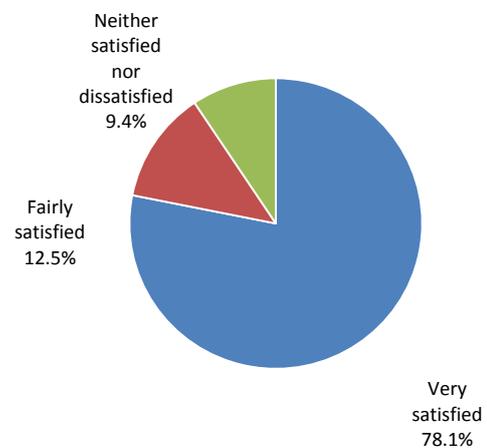
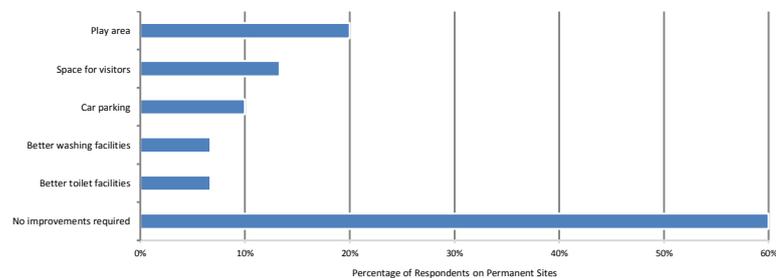


Figure 10  
Improvements Which Respondents Would Like to See on Their Site, by all Respondents on Permanent Sites (Source: Survey of Gypsy and Traveller Population On-site 2012)



## Existing Pitches

- 5.4 Three respondents to the survey reported that they would like to have more caravans at their existing site. Two of these related to private sites in Three Rivers, while the other to the Hemel Hempstead site in Dacorum.
- 5.5 A further five households felt that there were problems with their existing accommodation, with all being on public sites in Dacorum. However, these related to issues such as the lack of a play area for children and the site drainage, and all could be resolved at the site.
- 5.6 It should be noted that all sites are currently fully allocated and that any vacancies that arise are promptly filled from the waiting list. A number of pitches were vacant at the time of the survey, but this is common for such surveys as families are away travelling and the pitches are not available for reallocation to others.

## Private Sites

- 5.7 Four respondents to the survey reported that they had the required planning permission for their site, with all of these cases being in Three Rivers. Of those who did need planning permission, all four felt that this was very difficult to obtain. This was primarily due to the length of time it took for the permission to be granted.

## Propensity to Travel

- 5.8 85% of respondents reported that they had not travelled at all during the last 12 months. A third of those who did not travel in the past 12 months had travelled in the past . The most common explanation for this is that they want a more settled lifestyle or so that their children can receive education.

## 6. Showmen

### Introduction

- 6.1 This section focuses on the needs and aspirations of Showmen in Dacorum and Three Rivers. As noted earlier, the current situation regarding the number of Showmen present in Dacorum and Three Rivers is slightly confusing due to a number of families residing on sites which do not have planning permission, but which have been in use for a long period of time and therefore have become lawful.
- 6.2 It is estimated that there are currently 11 Showmen plots in Dacorum. We understand that the owner of Timber Yard, Water Lane, Bovingdon, wishes to convert the site to residential use, but no planning application has been submitted and the site is still occupied by Showmen. If redevelopment of this the site is permitted in the future, the showmen will need support in their search for alternative site provision. Another one of the plots has a temporary planning permission, while the other five are on a site with no formal permission, but where long-term occupation has seen their status become lawful.
- 6.3 Three Rivers has two authorised Showmen yards with a combined capacity of 20 plots. However, it is estimated that the household figure rises to approximately 40 plots when the two identified long-term unauthorised sites are considered.
- 6.4 Interviews were attempted with all Showmen households in the area who were present in August and September 2012. In total 14 interviews were achieved with Showmen households living across the two authorities, with almost all other households being away working at the time of the survey. Many of the respondents to the survey were retired members of families who answered questions on behalf of their families where other members were away working, with 75% of the respondents being aged 60 years or more.
- 6.5 Consultation also took place with representatives from the Showmen community. While Hertfordshire is covered by the Eastern branch of the Showmen’s Guild, many of the local residents are members of the London branch because it is closer to where they reside. The key findings from the household survey are:
- All households are satisfied with their current sites
  - No households has any unmet needs
  - In Dacorum, five households may need to move from their current base if their site is sold
  - In Three Rivers, one household expects to have to move from their current site soon.

# 7. Future Site Provision

## Site Provision

- 7.1 This section focuses on the extra site provision which is required in Dacorum until 2031 and Three Rivers until 2026 in 5 year intervals. This section concentrates not only upon the total extra provision which is required in the area, but whether this provision should be in the form of public or private sites and considers if there is a need for any transit sites and/or emergency stopping place provision.
- 7.2 The March 2012 CLG document ‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites’ requires an assessment for future pitch requirements, but does not provide a suggested methodology for undertaking this calculation. The 2007 CLG document ‘Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments: Guidance’ did provide a detailed methodology. While this had the potential to double count, it does provide a framework for understanding future needs and has largely been followed.
- 7.3 The key factor in any calculation such as this is to compare the amount of extra site space which will become available with a prediction of the need for extra space on sites. In particular it is important to consider both in and out movement from the following sources:
- Bricks and mortar accommodation
  - Private sites that are owner occupied
  - Private sites that are rented; and
  - Public sites.
- 7.4 We will firstly outline this calculation for Gypsies and Travellers before discussing Showmen.

## Current Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision

- 7.5 Dacorum contains 36 pitches across two public sites, while Three Rivers has 21 permanent pitches and 5 pitches with temporary permissions.
- 7.6 The next stage of the process is to assess how much space is, or will become, available on existing authorised sites. The main ways in which space is/will be freed are:
- Current empty pitches;
  - New sites or site extensions which are likely to gain planning permission;
  - Migration away from the area;
  - Movement to bricks and mortar;

- Dissolution of households.
- 7.7 In the context of the existing sites the Bedmond site in Three Rivers has a number of currently empty pitches. However, these are in private ownership and will be used by family members in the future. While these pitches are not available for use for households not currently on the site they will prevent the need for the development of new sites to meet the needs of existing households on the Bedmond site. Therefore, these vacant pitches are not available to meet the needs of other households in Three Rivers or Dacorum.
- 7.8 It is the case that three households currently resident on the public site at Hemel Hempstead expect to move to other areas in the next 2 years. This rate of turnover on pitches is consistent with recent turnover on the site, with four of the households being resident for 3 years or less.
- 7.9 Extrapolating this result it is likely that around 7 pitches (i.e. adding together those households expected to move and recent turnover on the site) on public sites in Dacorum will become free from households leaving the area in each 5 year period. This will thus generate 28 pitches over the remaining lifetime of the Dacorum’s Local Planning Framework to 2031.
- 7.10 One respondent from the Long Marston site in Dacorum intends to move to bricks and mortar accommodation. Therefore, few pitches on the existing site will become available.
- 7.11 No household in Three Rivers intended to move in the foreseeable future. This is consistent with a low rate of turnover on private sites.
- 7.12 The dissolution of a household occurs when all the members leave the household. Common ways for a household to dissolve are for a person living on their own to die, or to move to an existing household. The survey found no households that were of pensionable age living on their own and therefore no households are expected to dissolve.

### **Additional Site Provision**

- 7.13 The next stage of the process is to assess how many households are likely to be seeking pitches in the area. Groups of people who are likely to be seeking pitches will include those:
- seeking permanent site accommodation in the area
  - on unauthorised encampments
  - on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected to be granted
  - currently overcrowded
  - new households expected to arrive from elsewhere
  - new family formations expected to arise from within existing households
  - in housing but with a need for site accommodation.

## Current Planning Applications

- 7.14 In Three Rivers, an application for six pitches from a family outside the area has been withdrawn and so Three Rivers currently have no outstanding planning applications for new sites in the District. Similarly there are no outstanding planning applications in Dacorum. As discussed below (see paragraphs 7.16 - 7.17) the needs and aspirations of in-migrant households to private sites can be assessed through the use of site criteria policies rather than through a calculation of expected need.
- 7.15 Three Rivers does have two sites with temporary permissions which will expire in the near future. In this case the household survey indicates that the households on these sites wish to convert their temporary permissions into permanent permissions. This equates to 5 pitches across two sites.

## Current Unauthorised Developments and Encampments

- 7.16 Three Rivers has one current unauthorised site on land owned by Gypsies and Travellers. This site formally had a temporary planning permission and is still occupied following the expiry of the permission in June 2012. Given the household is established in Three Rivers they can be considered as local need and therefore have been counted as such within this study.

## In-migration from Other Sources

- 7.17 The most complicated area for a survey such as this is to estimate how many households will require accommodation from outside the area. Potentially Gypsies and Travellers could move to Dacorum and Three Rivers from anywhere in the country. Three Rivers in particular has seen a number of recent applications for private sites from outside the area. Meanwhile recent migrants to Dacorum have arrived on to the public sites and they will be covered by the waiting list information provided below in paragraphs 7.18-7.21.
- 7.18 Overall the level of in-migration to Dacorum and Three Rivers is very difficult to predict. When seeking to understand the demand for general housing long-term migration trends can be applied to provide an estimate for the number of household moving to an area. However, for Gypsies and Travellers the level of migration is so small and erratic that long-term trends at local authority level cannot be said to exist. Rather than assess in-migrant households as being part of the needs for the area we would propose that each case is assessed as a desire to live in the authority and that site criteria rules are followed for each site. It is important for the authority to have clear criteria based planning policies in place for any new potential sites which do arise. We would also note that any pitches provided as a result of applying the criteria policy would not count towards the provision of pitches identified in the remainder of this study.

## Waiting lists for Council Sites

- 7.19 The method of registering a desire to obtain a pitch on a public site is through placing your name on the waiting list held by Hertfordshire County Council. There are currently 19 applicants for pitches on the Long Marston public site and 12 for the public site at Hemel Hempstead. These figures do not include any households who are currently resident on a site elsewhere in Hertfordshire. Therefore, many of the households on the waiting list will be from outside the area and, as discussed above, will represent in-migrants.

- 7.20 It is generally acknowledged that waiting lists for public sites are likely to include double counting as households can register in more than one area or for more than one site within an area. Therefore, a common solution to this problem is to only count 50% of the waiting list as need and assume that the remainder is part of the double counting process. This would give a figure of around 15 households who require a public site in Dacorum.
- 7.21 However, in Hertfordshire households are allowed to request to be on the waiting list for as many sites as they want. When first preferences only are considered, there are 8 households who have identified a preference to live on the Long Marston site and 7 on the Hemel Hempstead site. Therefore, this would suggest that up to 15 pitches on public sites in Dacorum are required to accommodate all the specific extra demand for pitches from all households.
- 7.22 Therefore, taking either 50% of the total waiting list for sites in Dacorum or 100% of those who have identified a site in Dacorum as their first preference sees a requirement for 15 pitches. Therefore, we have allowed 15 pitches to provide for households currently on the waiting list for a public site in Dacorum.

### **New Household Formation**

- 7.23 It is recognised that an important group for future pitch provision will be older children who form their own households. The survey of the Gypsy and Traveller population found no households contained members who were expected to form new households in the next two years.
- 7.24 However, it should be noted that household formation rates for Irish Travellers are very high and that 25% of households on the Hemel Hempstead site contain only people aged 24 years or younger. Around 45% of all people on-site in Dacorum are aged 16 years or under. National trends since 1979 show the on-site population growing at around 3% per annum and the age profile on Dacorum indicates that 3% per annum is a good estimate as to how quickly the population will grow in the future. Over a 20 year period a growth rate of 3% per annum will see the population grow by 81% (this can be calculate by  $[1.03]^{20}$ ) and this will equate to the need for an additional 29 pitches in the borough .
- 7.25 The situation in Three Rivers is much simpler. Excluding the Bedmond site which is likely to see new household formation, but which has space to accommodate this formation, the household survey indicates that there are two children who are in the age range likely to form new households in the next 15 years. Therefore, we have allowed for a further two pitches for households formation in Three Rivers.

### **Bricks and Mortar**

- 7.26 The survey of Gypsies and Travellers includes two households who wished to move from bricks and mortar to sites, with one each seeking a pitch on the Long Marston and Hemel Hempstead sites.

### **Overall Needs**

- 7.27 The estimated extra site provision that is required now and in the near future for Dacorum will be 17 pitches to address the natural growth in the population to 2031 and to address the needs of households currently awaiting pitches on public sites in the area (Figure 11). We would note that the needs for Dacorum are split between approximately equally between Romany Gypsies and the Irish Travellers. While

these two groups do often share sites they are separate ethnic groups and in most areas they choose to live separately from each other. Therefore, it would be standard practice to consider providing the additional pitch requirement on separate sites to allow the two ethnic groups to continue to live independently.

- 7.28 The estimated extra site provision that is required now and in the future in Three Rivers will be 8 pitches to address the need is for the existing households on the sites with temporary planning permissions due to expire in the near future, for the family on a currently unauthorised site and a small amount of household growth over time (Figure 12).
- 7.29 We would stress that it is likely other households will come forward seeking to develop new sites in Dacorum and Three Rivers from elsewhere in the country, but it is not possible to use any past trends to forecast how many households this will equate to. This must be considered against the local authorities site criteria because they have not been explicitly included in this need assessment. It is therefore important that the authorities have clear criteria based planning polices through which to assess future planning applications.

Figure 11

Extra Pitches Which are Required in Dacorum 2012-2031 (Source: ORS Housing Market Model)

Reason for Requirement/Vacancy	Gross Requirement	Supply	Net Requirement
<b>Current unauthorised developments or encampments</b>	0	-	
<b>Currently on sites with temporary planning permission</b>	0	-	
<b>Waiting list for public sites</b>	15	-	15
<b>Migration from elsewhere</b>	0	-	0
<b>New household formation</b>	29	-	29
<b>Movement from bricks and mortar</b>	2	1	1
<b>Currently overcrowded and require to move</b>	0	0	0
<b>Additional supply from out-migration</b>	-	28	(28)
<b>Additional supply from empty pitches</b>	-	0	
<b>Additional supply new sites</b>	-	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>17</b>

Figure 12

Extra Pitches Which are Required in Three Rivers 2012-2026 (Source: ORS Housing Market Model)

Reason for Requirement/Vacancy	Gross Requirement	Supply	Net Requirement
<b>Current unauthorised developments or encampments</b>	1	-	1
<b>Currently on sites with temporary planning permission</b>	5	-	5
<b>Waiting list for public sites</b>	0	-	0
<b>Migration from elsewhere</b>	0	-	0
<b>New household formation</b>	2	0	2
<b>Movement from bricks and mortar</b>	0	0	0
<b>Currently overcrowded and require to move</b>	0	0	0
<b>Additional supply from out-migration</b>	-	0	(0)
<b>Additional supply from empty pitches</b>	-	0	(0)
<b>Additional supply new sites</b>	-	0	(0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

## Public/Private Sites

- 7.30 The evidence contained in this survey is that there is no demand from the existing Gypsy and Traveller community for private sites in Dacorum and no recent evidence of households seeking to develop private sites. The study therefore identifies a need for a further 17 pitches on public sites. We have followed standard practice from housing needs surveys and addressed the backlog of need over 10 years, so the requirement the period 2012-2017 is 7 pitches, with a further 8 pitches required in the period 2017-2022. It would then be the case that 1 additional pitch is required in each of the subsequent 5 year intervals to 2031.
- 7.31 However, it should be noted that this requirement is based on the waiting lists for existing public sites in Dacorum, and that authorities such as Three Rivers with no authorised public sites by definition cannot have a waiting list or identified need.
- 7.32 An option which we would advise Dacorum to consider is, rather than seek to develop new public sites and pitches, to develop a private rented sector for Gypsies and Travellers in the authority. These sites are typically owned and managed by Gypsies and Travellers and accept households in receipt of housing benefit. This could potentially allow the need for public site pitches to be met on private sites by mirroring the role of housing benefit support in the private rented sector in housing.
- 7.33 The evidence is that all of the demand in Three Rivers is for private site pitches. The highest requirement being for 6 pitches in the period 2012-2017 to address the loss of sites with temporary planning permissions and then 2 pitches in the period 2017-2022 to allow for household formation. There is no clear need beyond 2022.
- 7.34 Again, it should be noted that this requirement is based on the nature of the existing population of Three Rivers and that authorities with little current Gypsy and Traveller population will by definition have minimal growth in this population.
- 7.35 Figure 13 summarises the requirements for each five year period.

**Figure 13**  
Extra Pitch Provision in Dacorum and Three Rivers by Local Authority by Public and Private Sites 2012-2031

Local Authority	2012-2017		2017-2022		2022-2027		2027-2031	
	Public/Private Rented Sector	Owner occupied Private/New Traveller	Public/Private Rented Sector	Owner occupied Private/New Traveller	Public/Private Rented Sector	Owner occupied Private/New Traveller	Public/Private Rented Sector	Owner occupied Private/New Traveller
Dacorum	7	0	8	0	1	0	1	0
Three Rivers	0	6	0	2	0	0	-	-

## Transit/Emergency Stopping Site Provision

- 7.36 There is currently only one transit site in the county of Hertfordshire which is located in Hertsmere at South Mimms. This site has 15 pitches and capacity for 30 caravans. There is no provision within either Dacorum or Three Rivers.
- 7.37 Transit sites serve a specific function of meeting the needs of Gypsy and Traveller households who are visiting an area or who are passing through on the way to somewhere else. They do not have a function in meeting local need which must be addressed on permanent sites.
- 7.38 Therefore, the key issue in determining if there is a requirement for further transit site provision is whether there is evidence of sufficient travelling through the area. Figure 14 shows that evidence held by Hertfordshire County Council indicates that in the period 2008-2012, there were 21 unauthorised encampments occurred in Dacorum and 3 occurred in Three Rivers.

**Figure 14**  
**Number of Encampments in Dacorum and Three Rivers by Local Authority 2008-2012 (Source: Hertfordshire County Council Gypsy and Traveller Unit)**

Local Authority	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Dacorum	4	1	7	3	6
Three Rivers	1	0	0	0	2

- 7.39 However, it should be noted that the Dacorum figures significantly overstate the number of unique encampments in the authority because some of those counted are the same household group moving around the area and hence being counted on more than one occasion. It should also be noted that the view of HCC's Gypsy Liaison Officer is that transit sites are not always the most effective way to meet travellers' needs and other mechanisms such as flexibility in residential sites to accommodate visiting families are often be better and easier to manage.
- 7.40 Therefore this study concludes that there is no identified need for a transit site in either Dacorum or Three Rivers. However, we would note that the findings of this study could be used to inform any future studies at a more strategic level.

## Showmen Requirements

- 7.41 As noted in Chapter 6, both Dacorum and Three Rivers contain a number of Showmen yards for resident households. A number of fairs also visit the area during the course of a year, but the Showmen operating these do not require permanent accommodation in the area.
- 7.42 There is no evidence that any Showmen wish to voluntarily move or form new households in the foreseeable future. However, Dacorum does have one yard with one plot which has a temporary planning permission and this will generate a clear need when it expires, unless renewed.
- 7.43 It is also possible that natural growth in the population will require further plot provision in the future. The existing population on site does contain many older persons than the Gypsy and Traveller population and this is likely to see more plots being vacated through dissolution. While the household growth rate nationally for Gypsies and Travellers is typically around 3% per annum, the equivalent rate for Showmen is

around 1%-1.5%. Given the relatively high number of older persons in the population we have allowed a net growth rate of 1% to the existing population. In Dacorum would see a growth of 2 households to 2031, while the equivalent figure for Three Rivers to 2026 would be 7 households.

- <sup>7.44</sup> Therefore in summary, none of the need is immediate with almost all being generated from likely long-term population growth. Dacorum has a requirement for 3 extra plots for Showmen to 2031 (to take account of household growth and the expiry of a temporary planning permission). This equates to less than one additional plot every 5 years to 2031. If any existing plots are lost then these plots will also need to be replaced through alternative provision. Three Rivers also requires 7 extra plots to 2026 due to household growth (equivalent to approximately 2 plots every 5 years to 2026).
- <sup>7.45</sup> All of this requirement will be on private sites. It is anticipated that much of this provision can be accommodated on existing sites or through expansion or making more efficient use of land. Therefore there is not a clear need to allocate specific sites for the growth in the Showmen population.
- <sup>7.46</sup> Again it is still important for Dacorum and Three Rivers to have criteria based planning policies in place in the event of someone from outside of the Councils' areas seeking to develop a new Showmen's yard or expand an existing one in the area.

# 8. Conclusions

## Introduction

- 8.1 This chapter brings together the evidence presented earlier in the report to provide some key policy conclusions for Dacorum and Three Rivers. It focuses upon the key issues of future site provision for Gypsies and Travellers and also Showmen.

## Gypsy and Traveller Future Site Provision

- 8.2 Based upon the evidence presented in Chapter 7, the estimated extra pitch provision that is required for Gypsies and Travellers in the next 20 years in Dacorum is 17 pitches and the equivalent figure for Three Rivers is 8 pitches in the period 2012-2026. These figures should be seen as the minimum amount of provision which is necessary to meet the statutory obligations towards identifiable needs of the population.
- 8.3 It is important for the authorities to have clear criteria based planning policies in place for any new potential sites which do arise. We would also note that any pitches provided as a result of the application the criteria policies, rather than need identified in this study, would not count towards the provision of pitches identified as being required above.

## Public/Private Site Provision

- 8.4 The pitch requirement for Dacorum is drawn from households on public site waiting lists and also from household formations from public sites. Therefore, the requirement could be met through public site provision. An option which Dacorum should seriously consider is, rather than seek to develop new public sites and pitches, to develop a private rented sector for Gypsies and Travellers in the authority. This could potentially allow the need for public site pitches to be met on private sites, with the help of housing benefit if necessary. This mirrors the current mechanism of meeting housing needs through supporting households in the private rented sector with housing benefit within the settled community.
- 8.5 The additional pitch provision for Three Rivers is largely driven by the use of temporary permissions on private sites and therefore these households are likely to have their need met on private sites.

## Transit Sites

- 8.6 There are currently no transit sites in Dacorum and Three Rivers. This study concludes that there is no identified need for a transit site in either Dacorum or Three Rivers due to a low number of historic unauthorised encampments in each authority providing evidence that little travelling occurs through them. However, we would also note that transit sites are an area where cross boundary working could prove to be particularly effective and that the transit needs of Gypsy and Travellers visiting Hertfordshire are an issue which could be considered at a more strategic level.

## Showmen Requirements

- 8.7 There are two sources of requirements for the Showmen population in Dacorum and Three Rivers, namely the loss of temporary planning permissions and the growth in the population over time. Dacorum has a requirement for 3 extra plots for Showmen to 2031 (to reflect household growth and the loss of one temporary pitch) and Three Rivers also requires 7 extra plots to 2026 (for household growth). If any existing plots are lost through conversion to alternative uses then these plots will also need to be replaced through alternative provision.
- 8.8 All of this provision will require to be on private sites and much may be accommodated within existing sites, if they are capable of being expanded, or more efficient use made of existing space within the sites.

## Development of New Sites

- 8.9 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites contains clear advice on the location for new sites, such as that they typically should not be in the Green Belt or remote rural locations where access to services is limited. However, an issue of debate across the country is how to successfully develop new sites which integrate with the surrounding area. It is common for existing communities to object to new sites being located near to them because of concerns about the impact the site will have on them.
- 8.10 A number of authorities across the country such as those in Worcestershire are considering incorporating sites into new housing developments and urban extensions. The aim of this is to ensure the site fully integrates with the local community from the outset and does not run into conflict with the existing population before it is developed. For an area such as Dacorum where large new housing developments are being considered this may represent a practical and effective means of delivering sustainable new Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- 8.11 For Dacorum we would also note that the needs are split between approximately equally between Romany Gypsies and the Irish Travellers. These two groups are separate ethnic groups and while they often live together on sites it is the case in most areas that they choose to live separately from each other. Therefore, it would be standard practice to consider providing the additional pitch requirement on separate sites to allow the two ethnic groups to continue to live independently.

# Appendix A: List of Consultees Approached

## Introduction

8.12 The following outside representative groups and neighbouring authorities were approached to take part in the study as stakeholders:

- Irish Traveller Movement in Britain
- Hertfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment (GATE)
- Great Wood Children’s Centre
- YMCA
- Bucks and West Herts Gypsy Advocacy
- Gypsy Council
- Hertfordshire County Council Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Unit
- Local Showmen representatives
- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Chiltern District Council
- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Hertsmere Borough Council
- London Borough of Harrow
- London Borough of Hillingdon
- South Bucks District Council
- St Albans City and District Council
- Watford Borough Council