



Opinion Research Services

Excellent research for the public, voluntary and private sectors



Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment

Need Summary Report

October 2017



The Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) endorsed the Greater Essex GTAA Report on the 25th January 2018



Opinion Research Services The Strand, Swansea SA1 1AF
Steve Jarman, Claire Thomas and Ciara Small
Enquiries: 01792 535300 · info@ors.org.uk · www.ors.org.uk

© Copyright October 2017

Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0

Contains OS Data © Crown Copyright (2017)

Contents

1. Introduction	4
The Planning Definition in PPTS (2015)	5
Definition of Travelling	5
2. Methodology	8
3. Planning Definition	10
Applying the Planning Definition	10
Unknown Households	11
Households that do not meet the Planning Definition	12
4. Survey of Travellers	13
Interviews with Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	13
Efforts to contact bricks and mortar	13
5. Current and Future Pitch Provision	14
New Household Formation Rates	14
Breakdown by 5 Year Bands	15
Planning Status of Households	16
Bricks and Mortar Interviews	16
Pitch Needs – Gypsies and Travellers	16
Plot Needs – Travelling Showpeople	16
Transit Recommendations	16
6. Conclusions	18
Gypsies and Travellers	18
Travelling Showpeople	18
Transit Provision	18

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The primary objective of this Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) Need Summary is to provide a robust revised assessment of current and future need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in Southend-on-Sea Borough for the period 2016-2033.
- 1.2 The primary reason for completing the update was the publication of a revised version of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) in August 2015. This included a change to the definition of Travellers for planning purposes. The key change that was made was the removal of the term *persons...who have ceased to travel permanently*, meaning that those who have ceased to travel permanently will not now fall under the planning definition of a Traveller for the purposes of assessing accommodation need in a GTAA (see Paragraph 1.8 for the full definition).
- 1.3 The study will provide an evidence base to enable the Council to assess and meet the needs of the Travelling Community as well as complying with their requirements towards Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople under the Housing Act 1985, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 2014, PPTS (2015), and the Housing and Planning Act 2016. It also provides an evidence base which can be used to support Local Plan policies.
- 1.4 The Southend-on-Sea Borough GTAA is part of a wider study that covers the whole of Essex, together with the unitary authority of Thurrock (Greater Essex). The study across all 14 local authorities has been completed following a Joint Methodology which can be found as a separate report¹.
- 1.5 The reporting framework for the wider Essex GTAA comprises the Essex GTAA Joint Methodology Report; individual GTAA Need Summary Reports for each of the 14 local authorities; and an Essex GTAA Summary Report that brings together the final outcomes from each local authority and provides figures for Essex as a whole, figures for the wider study area, as well as providing strategic recommendations on transit provision. The GTAA Need Summary Reports are dated when they were each published.
- 1.6 The purpose of this GTAA Need Summary Report is to provide the Council with a summary of the levels of accommodation need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Southend-on-Sea Borough for the period 2016-2033.
- 1.7 The baseline date for the study is **September 2016**.

¹ Essex, Southend-on-Sea & Thurrock Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Joint Methodology (January 2018)

The Planning Definition in PPTS (2015)

- ^{1.8} For the purposes of the planning system the definition of a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson was changed in PPTS (2015). The planning definition is set out in Annex 1 and states that:

For the purposes of this planning policy “gypsies and travellers” means:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

In determining whether persons are “gypsies and travellers” for the purposes of this planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:

- a) Whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life.*
- b) The reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life.*
- c) Whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances.*

For the purposes of this planning policy, “travelling showpeople” means:

Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.

(Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), August 2015)

- ^{1.9} The key change that was made to both definitions was the removal of the term *persons...who have ceased to travel permanently*, meaning that those who have ceased to travel permanently will not now fall under the planning definition of a Traveller for the purposes of assessing accommodation need in a GTAA.

Definition of Travelling

- ^{1.10} One of the most important questions that GTAA’s will need to address in terms of applying the planning definition is *what constitutes travelling?* This has been determined through case law that has tested the meaning of the term ‘nomadic’ as well as other travelling characteristics.
- ^{1.11} **R v South Hams District Council (1994)** – defined Gypsies as “*persons who wander or travel for the purpose of making or seeking their livelihood (not persons who travel from place to place without any connection between their movements and their means of livelihood.)*” This includes ‘born’ Gypsies and Travellers as well as ‘elective’ Travellers such as New Age Travellers.
- ^{1.12} In **Maidstone BC v Secretary of State for the Environment and Dunn (2006)**, it was held that a Romany Gypsy who bred horses and travelled to horse fairs at Appleby, Stow-in-the-Wold and the New Forest, where he bought and sold horses, and who remained away from his permanent site for up to two

months of the year, at least partly in connection with this traditional Gypsy activity, was entitled to be accorded Gypsy status.

- 1.13 In **Greenwich LBC v Powell (1989)**, Lord Bridge of Harwich stated that a person could be a statutory Gypsy if he led a nomadic way of life *only seasonally*.
- 1.14 The definition was widened further by the decision in **R v Shropshire CC ex p Bungay (1990)**. The case concerned a Gypsy family that had not travelled for some 15 years in order to care for its elderly and infirm parents. An aggrieved resident living in the area of the family's recently approved Gypsy site sought judicial review of the local authority's decision to accept that the family had retained their Gypsy status even though they had not travelled for some considerable time. Dismissing the claim, the judge held that a person could remain a Gypsy even if he or she did not travel, provided that their nomadism was held in abeyance and not abandoned.
- 1.15 That point was revisited in the case of **Hearne v National Assembly for Wales (1999)**, where a traditional Gypsy was held not to be a Gypsy for the purposes of planning law as he had stated that he intended to abandon his nomadic habit of life, lived in a permanent dwelling and was taking a course that led to permanent employment.
- 1.16 **Wrexham County Borough Council v National Assembly of Wales and Others (2003)** determined that households and individuals could continue to lead a nomadic way of life with a permanent base from which they set out from and return to.
- 1.17 The implication of these rulings in terms of applying the planning definition is that it will **only include those who travel (or have ceased to travel temporarily) for work purposes and in doing so stay away from their usual place of residence.** It can include those who have a permanent site or place of residence, but that it will not include those who travel for purposes other than work – such as visiting horse fairs and visiting friends or relatives. It will **not cover** those who commute to work daily from a permanent place of residence.
- 1.18 It will also be the case that a household where some family members travel for nomadic purposes on a regular basis, but where other family members stay at home to look after children in education, or other dependents with health problems etc. that the household unit would be defined as travelling under the planning definition.
- 1.19 Households will also fall under the planning definition if they can demonstrate that they have ceased to travel temporarily as a result of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age. In order to have ceased to travel temporarily these households will need to demonstrate that they have travelled for work in the past. In addition households will also have to demonstrate that they plan to travel again for work in the future.
- 1.20 This approach was endorsed by a Planning Inspector in a Decision Notice for an appeal in East Hertfordshire (Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/16/3145267) that was published in December 2016. A summary can be seen below.

Case law, including the R v South Hams District Council ex parte Gibb (1994) judgment referred to me at the hearing, despite its reference to 'purposive activities including work' also refers to a connection between the travelling and the means of livelihood, that is, an economic purpose.

In this regard, there is no economic purpose... This situation is no different from that of many landlords and property investors or indeed anyone travelling to work in a fixed, pre-arranged location. In this regard there is not an essential connection between wandering and work... Whilst there does appear to be some connection between the travel and the work in this regard, it seems to me that these periods of travel for economic purposes are very short, amounting to an extremely small proportion of his time and income. Furthermore, the work is not carried out in a nomadic manner because it seems likely that it is done by appointment... I conclude, therefore, that XX does not meet the definition of a gypsy and traveller in terms of planning policy because there is insufficient evidence that he is currently a person of a nomadic habit of life.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 As part of the overall commission a Joint Methodology has been prepared that has been used to complete GTAAs for local authorities in Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. Although it was a separate commission the Joint Methodology has also been used to complete the GTAA for Basildon. The Joint Methodology sets out the overall approach that has been followed to complete the assessment of need and is a separate document to this report.
- 2.2 The Joint Methodology is based on the approach that ORS have been continually refining over the past 10 years for undertaking robust and defensible GTAAs. This has been updated in light of the introduction of the PPG in 2014, changes to PPTS in 2015 and the Housing and Planning Act (2016), as well as responding to changes set out by Planning Ministers, with particular reference to new household formation rates. This is an evolving methodology that has been adaptive to changes in planning policy as well as the outcomes of Local Plan Examinations and Planning Appeals.
- 2.3 PPTS (2015) contains a number of requirements for local authorities which must be addressed in any methodology. This includes the need to pay particular attention to early and effective community engagement with both settled and traveller communities (including discussing travellers' accommodation needs with travellers themselves); identification of permanent and transit site accommodation needs separately; working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities; and establishing whether households fall within the planning definition for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- 2.4 In summary this included the following key stages:
- » Desk-Based Review
 - » Stakeholder Engagement
 - » Working Collaboratively with Neighbouring Planning Authorities
 - » Survey of Travelling Communities
 - » Engagement with Bricks and Mortar Households
 - » Applying the PPTS Planning Definition
 - » Calculating Current and Future Need
 - » Transit Provision
 - » Final Outcomes

- 2.5 The approach is the same as that considered in April 2016 and July 2017 by the Planning Inspector for the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy. She concluded in her final Examination Report that was published in October 2017:

'The methodology behind this assessment incorporates a full demographic study of all occupied pitches, a comprehensive effort to undertake interviews with Gypsy and Traveller households, and consideration of the implications of the new national policy. I am satisfied that the GTAA provides a robust and credible evidence base and I accept its findings.'

3. Planning Definition

- 3.1 The primary change introduced by PPTS (2015) in relation to the assessment of need was the change in the definition of a Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showperson for planning purposes. Through the site interviews ORS collected information necessary to assess each household against the planning definition. As PPTS (2015) has only recently been issued only a small number of relevant appeal decisions have been issued by the Planning Inspectorate on how the new planning definition should be applied – these support the view that households need to be able to demonstrate that they travel for work purposes to meet the planning definition, and stay away from their usual place of residence when doing so. See Paragraph 1.20 for a recent example.

Applying the Planning Definition

- 3.2 The household survey included a structured section of questions to record information about the travelling characteristics of household members. This included questions on the following key issues:
- » Whether any household members have travelled in the past 12 months.
 - » Whether household members have ever travelled.
 - » The main reasons for travelling.
 - » Where household members travelled to.
 - » The times of the year that household members travelled.
 - » Where household members stay when they are away travelling.
 - » When household members stopped travelling.
 - » The reasons why household members stopped travelling.
 - » Whether household members intend to travel again in the future.
 - » When and the reasons why household members plan to travel again in the future.
- 3.3 When the household survey was completed the outcomes from these questions on travelling were used to determine the status of each household against the planning definition in PPTS (2015). Through a combination of responses households need to provide sufficient information to demonstrate that household members **travel for works purposes and in doing so stay away from their usual place of residence, or that they have ceased to travel temporarily due to education, ill health or old age, and plan to travel again for work purposes in the future.** The same definition applies to Travelling Showpeople as to Gypsies and Travellers.
- 3.4 Households that need to be formally considered in the GTAA fall under one of 3 classifications that will determine whether their housing needs will need to be assessed in the GTAA. Only those households that meet, or may meet, the planning definition will form the components of need to be included in the GTAA:

- » Households that travel under the planning definition.
- » Households that have ceased to travel temporarily under the planning definition.
- » Households where an interview was not possible who may fall under the planning definition.

3.5 Whilst the needs of those households that do not meet the planning definition do not need to be included in the GTAA, they have been assessed to provide the Council with information on components of need to be addressed as part of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) or a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) for example, and through separate Local Plan policies.

Unknown Households

3.6 As well as calculating need for households that meet the planning definition, the needs of any households where an interview was not completed (either due to refusal to be interviewed or households that were not present during the fieldwork period – despite repeated visits) need to be assessed as part of the GTAA where they are believed to be ethnic Gypsies and Travellers who may meet the planning definition. Whilst there is no law or guidance that sets out how the needs of these households should be addressed, an approach has been taken that applies an estimate of potential need from these households. This will be an additional need figure over and above the need identified for households that do meet the planning definition.

3.7 The estimate seeks to identify potential current and future need from pitches known to be temporary or unauthorised, and through new household formation. For the latter the national rate of 1.50%² has been used as the demographics of residents are unknown. This approach is also consistent with the outcomes of a recent Planning Appeal where access to a site was not possible but basic information was known about the number of households residing there. (Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/Z6950/A/14/2212012).

3.8 ORS are of the opinion that it would not be appropriate when producing a robust assessment of need to make any firm assumptions about whether or not households where an interview was not completed meet the planning definition based on the outcomes of households where an interview was completed.

3.9 However, data that has been collected from over 2,500 household interviews that have been completed by ORS since the changes to PPTS in 2015 suggests that overall approximately 10% of households who have been interviewed meet the planning definition. This would suggest that it is likely that only a small proportion of the potential need identified from unknown households will need conditioned³ Gypsy and Traveller pitches, and that the needs of the majority from unknown households will need to be addressed through separate Local Plan policies.

3.10 The Council will need to carefully consider how to address the needs associated with unknown Travellers in Local Plan policies as it is unlikely that all of these will have a need that should be addressed through the provision of conditioned Gypsy or Traveller pitches. In terms of Local Plan policies the Council could consider the use of a criteria-based policy as suggested in PPTS (2015)

² See Paragraph 5.8

³ Pitches with planning conditions restricting occupation to Gypsies or Travellers.

Paragraph 11, for any unknown households that do provide evidence that they meet the planning definition, and also take into account the NPPF.

- ^{3.11} How the ORS methodology addresses need from unknown households was supported by the Planning Inspector for a recent Local Plan Examination in Maldon, Essex. In his Report that was published on 29th June 2017 he concluded:

150. The Council's stance is that any need arising from 'unknowns' should be a matter left to the planning application process. Modifications to Policy H6 have been put forward by the Council setting out criteria for such a purpose, which I consider further below. To my mind, that is an appropriate approach. While there remains a possibility that up to 10 further pitches may be needed, that cannot be said to represent identified need. It would be unreasonable to demand that the Plan provide for needs that have not been established to exist. That being said, **MM242h** is nonetheless necessary in this regard. It commits the Council to a review of the Plan if future reviews of the GTAA reveal the necessity for land allocations to provide for presently 'unknown' needs. For effectiveness, I have altered this modification from the version put forward by the Council by replacing the word "may" with "will" in relation to undertaking the review committed to. I have also replaced "the Plan" with "Policy H6" – the whole Plan need not be reviewed.

Households that do not meet the Planning Definition

- ^{3.12} Households who do not travel for work or have ceased to travel permanently now fall outside the planning definition of a Traveller. However Romany Gypsies and Irish and Scottish Travellers may be able to demonstrate a right to culturally appropriate accommodation under the Equality Act (2010). In addition provisions set out in the Housing and Planning Act (2016) now include a duty (under Section 8 of the 1985 Housing Act that covers the requirement for a periodical review of housing needs) for local authorities to consider the needs of people residing in or resorting to their district with respect to the provision of sites on which caravans can be stationed, or places on inland waterways where houseboats can be moored. Draft Guidance⁴ related to this section of the Act has been published setting out how the government would want local housing authorities to undertake this assessment and it is the same as the GTAA assessment process. The implication is therefore that the housing needs of any Gypsy and Traveller households who do not meet the planning definition of a Traveller will need to be assessed as part of the wider housing needs of the area, for example through the SHMA or HEDNA process, and will form a subset of the wider need arising from households residing in caravans.

⁴ "Draft guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats." (March 2016)

4. Survey of Travellers

Interviews with Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 4.1 One of the major components of this study was a detailed survey of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population living in Southend-on-Sea.
- 4.2 Through the desk-based research ORS identified no public sites; no private sites; no temporary sites; no tolerated sites; no unauthorised sites; no transit sites; and no Travelling Showpeople yards.
- 4.3 As such it was not possible to complete any interviews with Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople living on sites or yards in Southend-on-Sea.

Figure 1 – Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites and yards visited in Southend-on-Sea

Site/Yard Status	Pitches/Plots	Interviews	Reasons for not completing interviews
Public Sites			
None	-	-	-
Private Sites			
None	-	-	-
Temporary Sites			
None	-	-	-
Tolerated Sites			
None	-	-	-
Unauthorised Sites			
None	-	-	-
Travelling Showpeople			
None	-	-	-
TOTAL	0	0	

Efforts to contact bricks and mortar

- 4.4 ORS applied a rigorous approach to making contact with bricks and mortar households as this is a common issue raised at Local Plan examinations and planning appeals. Contacts were sought through a range of sources including the interviews with people on existing sites and yards, intelligence from the Council and local housing providers, and adverts on social media (including the Friends Families and Travellers Facebook group), as well as writing to households on waiting lists for public sites.
- 4.5 At the time of concluding this report no contacts had been identified to interview (although a number of letters were sent by Registered Providers inviting known Gypsy and Traveller to contact ORS if they had any current or future accommodation needs).

5. Current and Future Pitch Provision

- 5.1 This section focuses on the additional pitch provision that is needed in Southend-on-Sea Borough currently and to 2033. This includes both any current unmet need and any need which is likely to arise in the future. This time period allows for robust forecasts of the requirements for future provision, based upon the evidence contained within this study and also secondary data sources. Whilst the difficulty in making accurate assessments beyond 5 years has been highlighted in previous studies completed by ORS, the approach taken in this study to estimate new household formation has been accepted by Planning Inspectors as the most appropriate methodology to use.
- 5.2 We would note that this section is based upon a combination of the on-site surveys, planning records and discussions with Officers from the Council.

New Household Formation Rates

- 5.3 Nationally, a household formation and growth rate of 3.00% net per annum has been commonly assumed and widely used in local Gypsy and Traveller assessments, even though there is no statistical evidence of households growing so quickly. The result has been to inflate both national and local requirements for additional pitches unrealistically. In this context, ORS has prepared a *Technical Note on Household Formation and Growth Rates (August 2015)*. The main conclusions are set out below and the full document can be found in the Joint Methodology Report.
- 5.4 Those seeking to provide evidence of high annual net household growth rates for Gypsies and Travellers have sometimes sought to rely on increases in the number of caravans, as reflected in caravan counts. However, caravan count data is unreliable and erratic – so the only robust way to project future population and household growth is through demographic analysis.
- 5.5 The Technical Note concludes that in fact, the growth in the national Gypsy and Traveller population may be as low as 1.25% per annum – much less than the 3.00% per annum often assumed, but still greater than in the settled community. Even using extreme and unrealistic assumptions, it is hard to find evidence that net Gypsy and Traveller population and household growth rates are above 2.00% per annum nationally.
- 5.6 The often assumed 3.00% per annum net household growth rate is unrealistic and would require clear statistical evidence before being used for planning purposes. In practice, the best available evidence supports a national net household growth rate of 1.50% per annum for Gypsies and Travellers. This view has been supported by Planning Inspectors in a number of Decision Notices. The most recent was in relation to an appeal in Doncaster that was issued in November 2016 (Ref: APP/F4410/W/15/3133490) where the agent acting on behalf of the appellant claimed that a rate closer to 3.00% should be used. The Inspector concluded:

In assessing need account also needs to be taken of likely household growth over the coming years. In determining an annual household growth rate the Council relies on the work of Opinions Research Services (ORS), part of Swansea University. ORS's research considers migration, population profiles, births & fertility rates, death rates, household size data and household dissolution rates to determine average household growth rates for gypsies and travellers. The findings indicate that the average annual growth rate is in the order of 1.5% but that a 2.5% figure could be used if local data suggest a relatively youthful population. As the Council has found a strong correlation between Doncaster's gypsy and traveller population age profile and the national picture, a 1.5% annual household growth rate has been used in its 2016 GTANA. Given the rigour of ORS's research and the Council's application of its findings to the local area I accept that a 1.5% figure is justified in the case of Doncaster.

- 5.7 In addition, the Technical Note has recently been accepted as a robust academic evidence base and has been published by the Social Research Association in its journal Social Research Practice. The overall purpose of the journal is to encourage and promote high standards of social research for public benefit. It aims to encourage methodological development by giving practitioners the space and the incentive to share their knowledge – see link below.

<http://the-sra.org.uk/journal-social-research-practice/>

- 5.8 ORS assessments take full account of the net local household growth rate per annum calculated on the basis of demographic evidence from the site surveys. The 'baseline' includes all current authorised households, all households identified as in current need, as well as households living on tolerated unauthorised pitches or plots who are not included as components of current need. The assessments of future need also takes account of modelling projections based on birth and death rates, fertility rates, household dissolution, and in-/out-migration.
- 5.9 Overall, the household growth rate used for the assessment of future needs has been informed by local evidence. This demographic evidence from the household interviews has been used to adjust the national growth rate of 1.50% up or down based on the proportion of those aged under 18 by planning status. This often leads to different formation rates being applied to households that do and do not meet the planning definition – for example many households that do not meet the planning definition are retired and do not have children and the result of this is to reduce the rate of new household formation.
- 5.10 In certain circumstances where the numbers of households and children are low it may not be appropriate to apply a percentage rate for new household formation. In these cases a judgement will be made on likely new household formation based on the age and gender of the children.

Breakdown by 5 Year Bands

- 5.11 In addition to tables which set out the overall need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, the overall need, if identified, is broken down by 5 year bands as required by PPTS (2015). The way that this is calculated is by including all current need (for example from unauthorised pitches, pitches with temporary planning permission, concealed and doubled-up households, teenage children in need of a pitch of their own in the next 5 years, and net movement from bricks and mortar) in the first 5 years. In

addition, where identified, the total net new household formation is split across the 5 year bands based on the rate of growth that was applied – as opposed to being spread evenly.

Planning Status of Households

- 5.12 Given that no Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople were identified in Southend-on-Sea it was not necessary to determine the status of any households against the planning definition in PPTS (2015).

Bricks and Mortar Interviews

- 5.13 Despite all the efforts that were made it was not possible to complete any interviews with Gypsy and Traveller households living in bricks and mortar in Southend-on-Sea as none were identified through the adverts that were placed, or discussions with Council Officers. In addition no households in bricks and mortar are known to have approached the Council during the GTAA study period seeking a site and none have declared themselves homeless. Given that no one came forward during the study period, it is fair to conclude that no allowance should be made for bricks and mortar households because none have identified themselves as being in need.

Pitch Needs – Gypsies and Travellers

- 5.14 There were no Gypsies or Travellers identified living in Southend-on-Sea so there is no current or future need for additional pitches.

Plot Needs – Travelling Showpeople

- 5.15 There were no Travelling Showpeople identified in Southend-on-Sea so there are no current or future need for additional plots.

Transit Recommendations

- 5.16 Analysis of previous stakeholder interviews, Traveller Caravan Count Data and data collected by the Essex County Traveller Unit (ECTU) shows that there are high and increasing numbers of unauthorised encampments in many parts of Greater Essex. However, the analysis does not provide a detailed enough spatial view on where and how much provision is needed. It also does not explore issues such as small numbers of households accounting for multiple records of encampments.
- 5.17 As such it is recommended that further work is undertaken to complete more in-depth analysis of data recorded by ECTU and other relevant sources. This work will be completed by ORS over the next 12 months.
- 5.18 Discussions held with Officers from ECTU have confirmed that analysis of 'Direction to Leave Notices' may provide a more robust spatial appraisal of current and future transit needs. They have advised that each of these notices contains information such as the number of caravans and vehicle registration details. From this information ORS believe that they would be able to establish with a higher degree of certainty, the number of transit sites or stopping places required throughout Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock.

- 5.19 This additional analysis will include work on identifying the number of households accounting for multiple records of encampments; analysis of the average number of caravans per encampment and the average length of stay; and identification of the most common locations for encampments. It is hoped that the outcomes of this work will be to identify a figure for the average number of transit caravan spaces that are needed at any given point in time; whether this can be addressed through permanent transit sites, emergency stopping places and negotiated stopping arrangements; and where the geographic need is for new transit provision.
- 5.20 In the meantime it is recommended that the situation relating to levels of unauthorised encampments throughout the area should continue to be monitored by ECTU and individual local authorities whilst any potential changes associated with PPTS (2015) develop.
- 5.21 Finally work to address unauthorised encampments is a complex issue and it is recommended, through the duty to cooperate, that individual local authorities work closely with Essex County Council and ECTU both to identify the need for future transit provision and how to deal with unauthorised encampments when they occur.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 This study provides an robust evidence base to enable the Council to assess the housing needs of the Travelling Community as well as complying with their requirements towards Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople under the Housing Act 1985, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 2014, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) 2015, and the Housing and Planning Act 2016. It also provides the evidence base which can be used to support Local Plan policies.

Gypsies and Travellers

- 6.2 In summary there is a need for **no additional pitches** in Southend-on-Sea as no Gypsy or Traveller sites or households to interview in bricks and mortar were identified.

Travelling Showpeople

- 6.3 In summary there is a need for **no additional plots** in Southend-on-Sea as no Travelling Showpeople yards or households to interview in bricks and mortar were identified.

Transit Provision

- 6.4 Whilst there is historic evidence to suggest that there may be a need for some form of transit provision in Greater Essex, it is not recommended that any should be provided at this point in time as the robustness of the data which could indicate this is not considered to be sufficient. It is recommended that the situation relating to levels of unauthorised encampments should continue to be monitored whilst any potential changes associated with PPTS (2015) develop. It is also recommended that further work is completed to identify the need for transit provision on an Essex-wide basis. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is therefore recommended to engage, through the Duty to Cooperate, with the other Essex authorities and Thurrock in the future to ensure this work on Transit Sites can be completed. This will establish whether there is a need for investment in more formal transit sites or emergency stopping places.