

Berkshire Authorities Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment

Note on Recommended Methodology – Final Version

August 2012

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1. Introduction

Background to the Project

- 1.1 In March 2012, Wokingham Borough Council and Reading Borough Council commissioned Atkins, in association with ORS, to undertake an assessment of the future accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers¹. The objectives of the commission were separated into two distinct parts (as reproduced from the brief for this work):
- Part 1: To work with both Wokingham and Reading Borough Councils to develop an agreed common methodology to undertake the assessment
 - Part 2: Using the agreed methodology:
 - To provide data which will identify Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need separately from wider demand and aspiration;
 - To provide a robust and credible evidence base in order to support the Core Strategy, other LDF documents (now updated as the Local Plan) and any other planning policy documents or strategies relating to Gypsies and Travellers; and
 - To quantify Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need.
- 1.2 The key outcome of Part 2 of the work will be to provide a basis for identifying the scale of deliverable and developable sites required to meet Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need, as required by the Government's 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites'. The work will provide a robust estimate of need for the first five year period of the Local Plan, with longer term estimates (that will need to be updated later) provided for years six to fifteen. The work will also help to inform the determination of planning applications.
- 1.3 At the commission inception, the study team were required to complete Part 1 for both Reading and Wokingham, and to then go on to complete Part 2 only in Wokingham. Shortly after inception, the Government published 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' which set out a clear requirement for authorities to work collaboratively to assess accommodation need, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework which sets out a 'Duty to Cooperate' on planning issues that cross local authority boundaries. The later inclusion of the neighbouring Berkshire authorities of Windsor & Maidenhead, Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire in Part 1 of the work has therefore strengthened the study, providing an opportunity for joint working and the development of a methodology for assessing need that is consistent across the entire study area.

Purpose of this Note

- 1.4 This note addresses Part 1 of the commission to develop an agreed methodology on how to undertake the Needs Assessment for all five authorities (hereafter known as 'the Berkshire authorities'). It explores current guidance, previous gypsy and traveller needs assessment work commissioned in the study area, as well as best practice to identify a recommended approach to identify Gypsy and Traveller pitch need.
- 1.5 It should be noted that, although the original project brief did not require an assessment of Travelling Showpeople², Government policy requires authorities to assess their accommodation needs and have therefore been considered as part of this work, alongside Gypsy and Traveller need.

¹ Gypsies and Travellers are defined within Table 2.1 of this note.

² Travelling Showpeople are defined within Table 2.1 of this note.
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Structure of this Note

1.6 This note contains the following:

- Chapter 2 reviews the relevant guidance on how to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment;
- Chapter 3 looks at the previous approach used to undertake the 2006 Needs Assessment for the Thames Valley region, as well as a benchmarking exercise of other Needs Assessment work;
- Chapter 4 summarises the key factors which should be considered when developing an approach to undertake a Needs Assessment and provides potential options on how the study could be undertaken in the Berkshire authorities;

2. Guidance on Undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessments

Introduction

- 2.1 The assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs when carrying out a periodical review of housing needs, under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985, is a statutory requirement under section 225 of the Housing Act 2004. This commission will fulfil that requirement.
- 2.2 Government guidance on how local authorities should undertake a Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment has recently been amended with the publication of the Government's planning policy for traveller sites, entitled 'Planning policy for traveller sites' in March 2012. This chapter reviews the new guidance, alongside previous guidance where relevant, and provides details of:
- What **must** be included in any assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need in order to meet current guidance; and
 - Other factors which, in the view of the consultant, **are likely** to be required to ensure any assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need is robust

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

- 2.3 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites. The policy replaces ODPM Circular 01/2006: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites and Circular 04/2007: Planning for Travelling Showpeople.
- 2.4 The policy is clear that '*local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning*' but deliberately stops short of providing any recommendations on how local authorities should undertake the assessment.
- 2.5 All references to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (as previously required) have been removed from the policy and have been replaced by 'a robust evidence base'. This means that local authorities are able to determine the needs of travellers using their own methodology, although authorities may still follow the 2007 Guidance (or parts of it) if they wish. This note is part of the process to determine the most appropriate methodology for the Berkshire authorities.
- 2.6 The policy does clearly state that the evidence base used to establish accommodation needs should be robust, although no definition of what constitutes a robust definition is provided. Again, this note explores what, in the consultants view, a robust evidence base would constitute in the study area.
- 2.7 The policy does include a number of limited requirements for local authorities. These are requirements which **must** be addressed in any methodology:
- Pay particular attention to early and effective community engagement with both settled and traveller communities (including discussing travellers' accommodation needs with travellers themselves, their representative bodies and local support groups);
 - Co-operate with travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups, other local authorities and relevant interest groups to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of accommodation needs;
 - Identify permanent and transit site accommodation needs separately;

- Identify locally set targets of pitch need which will inform the identification of the supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites, and a supply of developable sites/broad locations for years six to fifteen of the Local Plan;
- Work collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. This is because the Government agrees that it is important to ensure that there is a common evidence base between local planning authorities where required. The policy, therefore, places an additional emphasis on the importance of cross-boundary working between local planning authorities in planning for traveller sites. It also references local planning authorities' duty to cooperate on strategic planning under the Localism Act provisions

2.8 The policy also contains definitions of gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople, which is retained from previous guidance (see Table 2.1). Any assessment of needs **must** consider all need generated from the population that meet either definition in the study area.

Table 2.1 – Current definition of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Community	Definition
Gypsies and Travellers	<i>Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such</i>
Travelling Showpeople	<i>Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above</i>

Other Guidance

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments Guidance 2007

- 2.9 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments Guidance was published by the Government in 2007 and aims to provide advice on carrying out an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.
- 2.10 Although all references to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (and the need to follow the guidance) have been removed from the Governments current policy, the guidance remains a useful source of information to inform local authorities' approach to developing a robust evidence base. Local authorities are under no obligation to use the guidance, but can choose to follow all or part of it as long as the evidence base is robust and is in line with the Governments current policy. As such, it is useful to identify the key points set out in the guidance.
- 2.11 None of the following **must** be included as part of an accommodation needs assessment, although many of the points are considered **likely** to be required as part of a robust assessment. The consultant's views as to which points should be addressed as part of this work are included in Chapter 4.

Preparation

- The guidance states that the degree of sensitivity that often surrounds Gypsy and Traveller issues will make it very important to achieve buy-in to the Accommodation Needs Assessment process, from local politicians and the settled community. This is consistent with the requirement from the Government's current policy for early and effective consultation with settled and traveller communities
- Given the transitory nature of some Gypsy and Traveller communities, partnership working with neighbouring authorities is recommended. Again, this is consistent with the requirement from the Government's current policy;
- Wider consultation on the design and conduct of the assessment should be undertaken with local agencies and the local Gypsy and Traveller communities. This is also consistent with the Government's current policy;
- Council stakeholders that have working relationships with the local Gypsy and Traveller community should be used to establish trust in the work. It is also crucial that the purpose of the work is fully explained to the Gypsy and Traveller communities before the assessment begins.

Identification of Existing Population

- Existing local authority data should be used to identify all existing communities. This includes data on authorised, non-authorised and transit sites;
- Existing communities can also be identified through Council knowledge, including the traveller education service, which may have specific information on gypsies and travellers in bricks and mortar housing.

Survey

- It is recommended that the local authority or partnership conduct a specialist survey and/or qualitative research to obtain detailed information on accommodation needs. Response rates should be maximised wherever possible;
- Interview surveys are considered the most appropriate way to gather robust information and will yield much higher response rates and more reliable data than other methods;
- Cultural sensitivities should be carefully researched and considered during the design of the survey. Questions should be carefully phrased to avoid those which could cause offence, while at the same time secure necessary data in the same way that it is from others in the population generally. Advice should be sought from the communities themselves, and those who work with them, about the cultural sensitivities or language which may be problematic.
- The local authority will need some knowledge of travelling patterns before the survey takes place. If travelling patterns show lower numbers of gypsies and travellers at any point, the survey should be avoided during this time to maximise the sample.

Components of the Calculation of Need

- 2.12 Any assessment should identify the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers broken down by current and future needs. Needs should be further broken down by the type of accommodation required. The final estimate of additional need required in the study area should also take into account committed/planned supply. Each of these is considered below.
- 2.13 The Consultants' recommendations on how accommodation need could be calculated within the study area are identified in Chapter 4.

Breakdown of Accommodation Need

2.14 The guidance recommends that Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need should be quantified in terms of:

- site accommodation on private sites;
- site accommodation on socially rented residential sites;
- site accommodation on transit sites;
- bricks and mortar housing for owner occupation by Gypsies and Travellers; and
- affordable bricks and mortar housing.

2.15 This breakdown of need is still considered to be relevant for the study area as it clearly identifies what the demand for accommodation on pitches, as distinct from transit sites, would be. This is a requirement of Government's current policy. It also clearly identifies accommodation need which does not require pitches, such as bricks and mortar housing, which is essential for future land use policy.

Current Need

2.16 The guidance states that the level of current need should include the following components:

- Households seeking permanent site accommodation in the study area;
- On unauthorised encampments;
- On unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected;
- Concealed households or households which are currently overcrowded or in unsuitable conditions.

2.17 Whilst all of the above can identify total current need from the gypsy and traveller community, there is also a need to ensure that the need for **pitches**, rather than bricks and mortar housing, is understood. This means considering movement between bricks and mortar housing and pitches.

Future Need

2.18 Future need is made up of the following components:

- Household growth/new household formation;
- Net-migration to/from the study area;

2.19 Again, there is also a need to ensure that future movements between pitches and bricks and mortar housing are also taken into account.

Estimating Potential Supply

2.20 The guidance recommends assessing the pitch provision available in the study area by considering the following:

- Number of vacant pitches on privately owned and local authority sites (both current and expected in the future);
- New local authority pitches which are planned in year 1;
- Applications for private site development/extension likely to gain planning permission in year 1;

2.21 Potential supply can also come from the net movement between pitches and bricks and mortar housing.

3. Previous Work to Assess Accommodation Needs

Introduction

- 3.1 This chapter looks at the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment for the Thames Valley Region, which covers the Berkshire authorities as part of a much larger study area, and identifies key lessons which can be drawn when developing the methodology for this work.
- 3.2 This chapter also looks at the benchmarking process of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments undertaken as part of the guidance commissioned by the Government on preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on this topic. The benchmarking exercise identifies common problems with needs assessments which this study will seek to avoid.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment for the Thames Valley Region

- 3.3 The Association of Councils of the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR) - the sub-regional Local Government Association for Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire – commissioned Tribal consultants to carry out an assessment of the accommodation and support needs of Gypsies and Travellers in 2006.
- 3.4 The key points of the methodology employed to undertake the work include:
- Meetings were held with officers in each local authority to obtain data on the size of the Gypsies and Travellers population;
 - A draft questionnaire was developed and piloted with Gypsies and Travellers on a single local authority site and a private authorised site;
 - Interviews were conducted with 164 people, which is an estimated 10-20% of the local gypsy and traveller population across the study area. Findings were then extrapolated to the estimated size of the wider gypsy and traveller population;
 - The calculation of accommodation need included many of the components required by the guidance available at the time (as considered in Chapter 2) although the robustness of the data used and the method of calculation has been questioned. This is considered below.

Calculation of Need

- 3.5 Paragraph 21 of the Executive Summary of the 2006 work recognises that the degree of confidence in some of the underlying assumptions used to calculate need is variable. Whilst the data used to estimate some components of need was considered to be relatively robust, other parts of the calculation relied on assumptions which may not necessarily be truly representative of the situation at an individual authority level.
- 3.6 Table 3.1 sets out the calculation for additional gypsy and traveller pitches in Wokingham (to use one authority as an example), as set out in the 2006 work. It should be noted that the table has been re-organised slightly from the original presentation in the report to make it more readable. The table includes a review of the data sources used for each component of need, as well as an assessment by the Consultants of the level of robustness of the data used.

Table 3.1 – Calculation of Need in 2006 Work – Wokingham

Ref	Component	Pitches	Assumptions made (as set out in the report)	Consultants Assessment
Current authorised population (2006)				
A	Current occupied pitches on local authority sites (2006)	28	Taken from information collected from local authority	Robust if latest local authority site records are used
B	Current occupied pitches on privately owned authorised sites (2006)	45	Taken from information collected from local authority	Relatively robust, although relies on secondary data which may not provide latest picture of occupation and does not consider potential occupation by non Gypsy and Travellers
Current need (2006)				
C	Unauthorised encampments	4	Takes data on unauthorised encampments from the Caravan Count	Not necessarily representative of the situation in the Borough. Relies on data on unauthorised encampments from the Caravan Count, which is not deemed suitable or up-to-date and is only representative of one point in time.
D	Unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected	1	Based on information collected from local authority	Robust, if based on latest local authority data
E	Concealed households in need of accommodation	17	Based on 12.5% concealed households requiring site accommodation	Not necessarily representative of the situation in the Borough. Applies a 12.5% estimate of concealed households based on findings of the whole study area.
F	In housing but with a need for site accommodation	16	Assumes that those in housing represent 40% of total population and that 30% would take up a place on a site if offered	Not necessarily representative of the situation in the Borough. Based on informed assumptions rather than robust evidence.
G	Total current need (2006)	38	C + D + E + F + G	
Future Need (2006 - 2011)				
H	Additional household formation 2006-2011	23	3% per annum compound growth over 5 years	Relatively robust, although the figure is not derived locally and is applied to a population of which the size is unknown
Potential Supply (2006)				
I	Number of authorised pitches due to be made available for letting	14	Taken from information collected from local authority	Robust, if based on latest information. Should also ensure that pitches become available in year 1 of the study
J	Number of existing pitches expected to become vacant through normal turnover	29	Based on turnover rate of 8%	Not necessarily representative of the situation in the Borough. Turnover rate based on turnover on socially rented sites alone, with the quality of data questionable
K	Pitches expected to become free from movement to bricks and mortar	9	Based on 12% of households on pitches who would take up housing if offered	Not necessarily representative of the situation in the Borough. Based on survey data across whole study area with pitch turnover data conflicting with this figure
L	New local authority pitches planned	7	Taken from information collected from local authority	Robust, if based on latest information. Should also ensure that pitches are available in yr 1 of the study
M	Total potential supply (2006)	59	I + J + K + L	
N	Total need for pitches	61	G + H	
O	Indicative need for additional pitches	2	N - M	

Lessons from the 2006 Work

- 3.7 As recognised in the Executive Summary of the 2006 work, some parts of the calculation of need could be improved by reducing the reliance on informed assumptions. A number of lessons can be drawn from the analysis of the 2006 work, which should be taken into account when developing the methodology for the update to the study:
- There is a need for a survey which gathers robust data at the local level that is truly representative of the gypsy and traveller population in the study area. This means securing response rates on private and unauthorised sites similar to those on local authority sites;
 - There was a lack of clarity in the 2006 work over what was included in the baseline data. There is a need for clear evidence illustrating the baseline position, in order to provide a robust foundation for calculations of future need and to enable monitoring in future years;
 - The Government's Caravan Count should not be relied upon to provide estimates of need from unauthorised encampments given the unreliability of the data and in inability of the data to truly reflect actual need. Instead, data should be collected from the household survey wherever possible;
 - Any calculation of need should be very careful to avoid any incidences of double counting;
 - Using pitch turnover is not necessarily the most appropriate way to identify potential supply through normal turnover. Past turnover rates are not necessarily a good indication of future turnover and can vary widely between local authority and private sites;
 - Care should be taken when using pitch turnover rates as a potential source of supply. Pitch turnover rates in the 2006 work appear to be particularly high and have not been based on evidence that is truly reflective of the situation across the study area. There is a need for evidence of turnover that is truly reflective of all pitch types and not just those where data is easily available (such as local authority sites);
 - The gypsy and traveller population living in bricks and mortar housing is unknown and very hard to estimate. This makes the extrapolation of survey findings to an unknown population liable to produce significant errors. Needs generated from movement between pitch sites and bricks and mortar is best dealt with using data on actual demand without extrapolating;
 - Migration is not covered by the 2006 work. This is largely because there is a lack of evidence of demand from outside the area. Recent data shows that the study area may have experienced some degree of net in-migration, which needs to be addressed as part of the study;
 - The 2006 work did not consider need beyond 2011. With the Government's policy requiring authorities to identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for pitch growth up to year fifteen of the Local Plan, accommodation need will need to be considered for a fifteen year period.
- 3.8 Further details of how the Consultants propose to address the above points are set out in chapter 4.

RSS Benchmarking Exercise

- 3.9 Research was commissioned in 2007 by Communities and Local Government in partnership with the Government Office for the East of England and the Regional Assemblies for the East, South East and South West to undertake a benchmarking exercise of the robustness and consistency of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments.

3.10 The exercise provides a very useful basis on which to identify common pitfalls with this type of work which should be avoided in the development of a methodology for the study area. The key lessons are:

- The study should ensure that all appropriate groups considered in the assessment. This may include gypsies and travellers in housing, as well as authorised and unauthorised sites, Travelling Showmen and New Age Travellers;
- The survey method needs to be reliable. This means maximising the sample interviewed and achieving high response rates across all types of accommodation. Questionnaires also need to be clear and focused on key questions;
- The study should be careful to avoid double counting, especially when considering demand from waiting lists and need from concealed and overcrowded households;
- The study should consider unauthorised development as an indication of need. Most Assessments take account of unauthorised development on a one-for-one basis
- Assessments which have included analysis of need from unauthorised encampment suggest that the proportion of 'transit' and 'local' need varies widely. An Assessment that assumes that all unauthorised encampments requires residential pitches is likely to over-estimate requirements where as an assessment which makes no allowance where this is a common occurrence probably under-estimates requirements;
- Many assessments have made an allowance for future household growth of around 3% per annum, however it is more robust to estimate future household growth based on the demographic profile of the study area;
- The consensus with most Assessments is that net movement between pitches and housing will be to pitches. However, estimating the scale of flows between pitches and housing is very difficult given the lack of data on the gypsy and traveller community in housing;
- The study should consider net-migration to the study area, taking into account the constraints of site-provision (or lack of) and general regional migration dynamics. Migration flows often respond to employment opportunities, with growth rates in more prosperous areas likely to be higher than elsewhere;
- The study should consider need rather than aspiration. This means collecting information on affordability where possible;
- The study should consider supply from:
 - Currently vacant pitches which will be occupied during the assessment period;
 - Any sites/pitches currently programmed;
 - Any sites likely to be granted planning permission in the assessment period;
 - Net pitches vacated by people moving to housing
 - Net pitches vacated by people moving out of the study area
 - Pitches vacated in other ways, for example by death of a sole occupier
 - The Study should ensure that turnover rates are not double counted with other ways in which vacancies can arise (as set out above).

4. Recommended Approach to Undertaking the Assessment

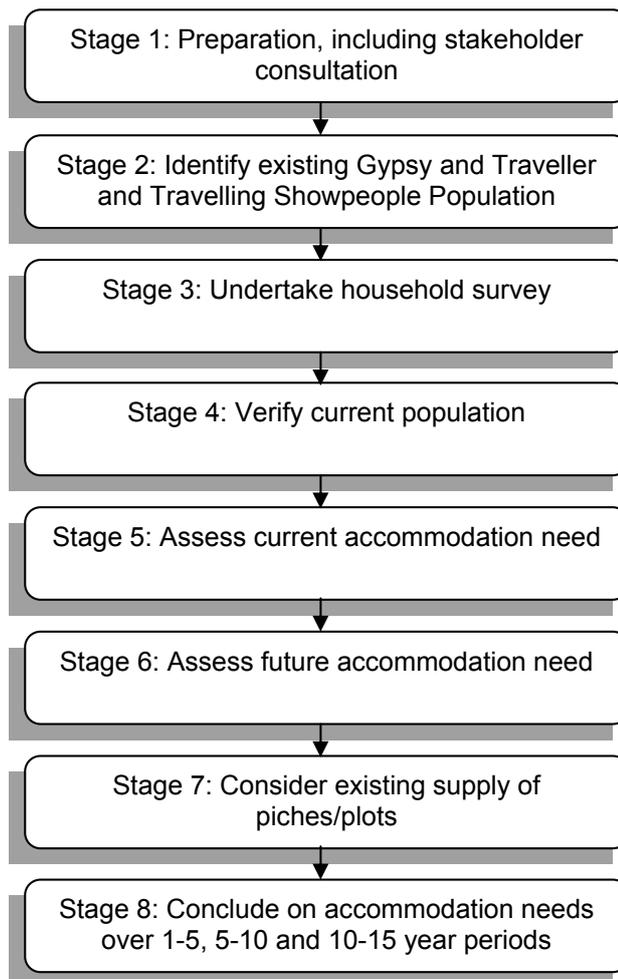
Introduction

4.1 This chapter proposes a broad methodological structure to undertake the work, as well as some detailed considerations of how each stage of the methodology should be undertaken. The proposals draw upon on the policy, guidance and lessons from previous work identified in Chapters 2 and 3.

Proposed Methodology Structure

4.2 It is proposed that an accommodation needs assessment could be undertaken following an eight stage methodology (see Figure 4.1). The sub-tasks which make up each of the stages are considered in more detail below.

Figure 4.1 – Proposed Methodology Structure



Stage 1: Preparation of the Study

4.3 The key points to address at the outset of the study are:

- Early and effective engagement with both settled and traveller communities;
- Cooperation with travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups;
- Collaborative working with neighbouring authorities; and
- Explaining the purpose of the study to the local gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople community.

Early and effective engagement with both settled and traveller communities

Reference: Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012

4.4 Proposed Approach: Stakeholder consultation should ideally be undertaken at two stages early in the project. First, the methodology used should be consulted upon with wider stakeholders from planning, the traveller education service, any gypsy and traveller working group, local authority site management, key Gypsy and Traveller site landowners and planning consultants involved in this area of work. Council Members should also be invited to represent the settled community. Parish Council's could also be given the opportunity to comment.

4.5 The second consultation should be focused on the Gypsy and Traveller community and should be a structured opportunity to identify key issues relating to accommodation need. This is likely to include Gypsy and Traveller families as well as representatives from the Gypsy Council and Showmen's Guild. The Gypsy and Traveller community should also have an opportunity to comment on and shape the final agreed methodology.

Co-operate with travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups

Reference: Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012

4.6 Proposed Approach: As set out above, Gypsies and Travellers should be consulted upon as part of the early stakeholder event. This will also include representatives from the Gypsy Council and Showmen's Guild, as well as input from key landowners, the traveller education service and the gypsy and traveller working group.

4.7 In addition to this, effective consultation with **all** Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople families identified in each authority should be undertaken through structured interviews to obtain robust evidence on accommodation need. This is considered further in Stage 3 below.

Work collaboratively with neighbouring planning authorities

Reference: Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2012

4.8 Proposed Approach: Part 1 of this study is currently being undertaken with five of the Berkshire authorities. This provides an opportunity to ensure cooperation between authorities and to ensure a consistent approach to identifying accommodation need.

4.9 The Berkshire authorities will also need to ensure that they cooperate with other neighbouring authorities (in Oxfordshire and Hampshire for example) to ensure that sub-regional issues that may impact on this project can be fully understood. This means reviewing the current evidence base as well as consulting with relevant stakeholder groups in these authorities to obtain a robust understanding of sub-regional issues, such as migration, and their potential impact on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs in the Berkshire authorities.

Council stakeholders to explain the purpose of the work to Gypsy and Traveller communities

Reference: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance 2007

- 4.10 Proposed Approach: The Berkshire authorities have good knowledge of the location of existing Gypsy and Traveller communities through their work on the bi-annual caravan count, traveller education work, local authority site management and other planning officers involved in unauthorised development. Council stakeholders, preferably those that have good existing relationships with the local gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople community, should visit the local community to verbally explain the purpose of the study at an early stage.

Stage 2: Identify Existing Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Population

Use local authority knowledge to identify all authorised, non-authorised and transit sites

Reference: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance 2007

- 4.11 Proposed Approach: As set out above, the Berkshire authorities have a good understanding of the location of all authorised, non-authorised and transit sites in each authority. This will be used as a starting point to identify existing families as part of the survey process. Additional families not picked up as part of this process (if any) may be identified through the interviews with gypsy and traveller families (see Stage 3), who may know about families not currently known to the each authority.

Stage 3: Undertake Household Survey

- 4.12 An effective household survey is critical to obtaining a robust assessment of household accommodation need. The following points should be considered when undertaking the survey:

Wider consultation on the design and conduct of the assessment with local agencies and Gypsy and Traveller communities

Reference: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance 2007

- 4.13 Proposed Approach: Authorities should ideally consult with Gypsy and Traveller families on the design and conduct of the assessment as part of the early stakeholder consultation process (see Stage 1 above). This should include an opportunity to comment on the type and suitability of questions included in the proposed interviews. However, the Consultants experience has shown that it can often be more effective to monitor the effectiveness of the questionnaire during the survey process itself.

- 4.14 Council stakeholders should also be given an opportunity to comment on the questionnaire.

Conduct a specialist survey and maximise response rates

Reference: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance 2007

- 4.15 Proposed Approach: It is proposed to undertake interviews of all gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople households in each authority. The consultants have achieved response rates of 75%+ in many other local authorities. The final questionnaire will be subject to the consultation process (see above), but is likely to include questions on:

- Household profile
- New household formation

- Attractions of the area
- Current accommodation, including size and quality
- Site provision
- Planning Permission
- Service provision at sites
- Site security
- Current travelling patterns
- Travelling history
- Transit sites
- Connections to the area
- Length of stay and location of previous residence
- Future plans and accommodation needs
- Affordability
- Income and benefit take-up
- Support needs

Ensure coverage of all groups

Reference: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance 2007

- 4.16 Proposed Approach: The survey process will attempt to interview all Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople families in the study area. This includes all families as defined by the Government's policy on planning for Gypsies and Travellers and set out in Table 2.1. Families that do not meet this definition will not be included in the assessment. This will be checked on site as part of the household survey.

Ensure cultural sensitivity

Reference: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance 2007

- 4.17 Proposed Approach: The Consultants will use a highly experienced small team of fieldworkers who have specialised in Gypsy and Traveller surveys, and have thus developed a good understanding of the cultural sensitivities of this type of work. As well as understanding the culture and mores of the communities, they have come to understand the organisation and patterns of development of the various kinds of sites

Ensure survey method is reliable

Reference: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance 2007

- 4.18 Proposed Approach: The Consultants propose to undertake structured interviews, which is a much more reliable survey method than other methods such as postal questionnaires. To achieve reliable high quality data with good response rates it is essential that only highly trained social researchers should undertake the surveys. The interviewers used in this project will be accredited under the Interviewer Quality Control Standards (IQCS) and meet Market Research Society standards.

Ensure the survey is not affected by seasonal travelling

Reference: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance 2007

- 4.19 Proposed Approach: Given the time constraints of the study, the surveys will need to be undertaken during the summer/early autumn months in many authorities. Seasonal fluctuations of the gypsy and traveller population are thought to be relatively minor in the Berkshire authorities and should not impact on the survey. The survey process will avoid any significant gypsy and traveller events. However, it is recognised that Travelling Showpeople are often away in the summer months. If this is the case, the survey team will revisit at a later date.

Stage 4: Verify Existing Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Population

- 4.20 The first step to identifying accommodation need is to ensure that each authority has a robust baseline of the authorised Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople household population. The key source of information to identify the current household population will be the survey. However, if some households refuse to participate in the survey, it may be necessary to use secondary data where it is judged to be up to date and relevant.
- 4.21 Table 4.1 illustrates how the current authorised population would be derived. Although data on the total population is useful, it is important to remember that the key unit for assessing future need is the household.
- 4.22 It should also be noted that the current household baseline should be identified separately for both Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households.

Table 4.1 – Current Authorised Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Households

Ref	Component	Data Source
A	Socially rented pitches/plots	Household survey and Council information
B	Pitches/plots on private authorised sites	Household survey and planning application data
C	Total authorised residential supply	Sum of A+B

- 4.23 In addition to the authorised population, each authority should also derive a baseline of unauthorised households. This will feed into the assessment of current accommodation need (Stage 5).
- 4.24 Ideally, each authority should produce a figure which clearly illustrates the distribution of sites and the number of households recorded at each by type. This will enable the baseline information used in the assessment to be shown in a clear and concise manner.

Stage 5: Identify Current Accommodation Need

- 4.25 There are four key components of current need. Total current need (which is not necessarily need for additional pitches) is simply the sum of the following:
- Overcrowded households;
 - Households on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected;
 - Net movement between pitches/plots and bricks and mortar; and
 - Need for transit pitches.

- 4.26 Table 4.2 summarises the data sources that should be used to estimate each of these components, with further detail provided below.
- 4.27 The assessment of current need should be undertaken separately for the Gypsy and Traveller population to the Travelling Showpeople population.

Table 4.2 – Components of Current Accommodation Need

Ref	Component	Data Source
D	Overcrowded households	Household survey and Council site waiting list
E	Households on unauthorised developments	Household survey and planning data
F	Net movement between pitches and housing	Household survey and waiting list
G	Need for transit pitches	Data on scale and frequency of unauthorised encampments and household survey
H	Total Current Need	D+E+F+G

Overcrowded households

4.28 Proposed Approach: Overcrowded households will be identified through the site survey process which will provide robust information on this level of need and the reasons behind it. It is proposed that households themselves should define whether they are currently living in overcrowded conditions, although this will need to be justified objectively including through the application of model standards for Caravan Sites, as set out by the Government in 2008.

4.29 Waiting lists for Council sites can also be a useful indicator of overcrowded households, although they can sometimes be out of date. The household survey data will take primacy over waiting list information.

Households on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected

4.30 Proposed Approach: Households on unauthorised developments will be identified as part of the household survey. This will provide robust, up-to-date information on the scale of need from unauthorised developments. It is proposed that the scale of need from unauthorised developments should be dealt with on a one-for-one basis, as long as the household are settled in the borough. The definition of ‘settled’ is proposed to include all households who have been in the authority for at least a year and who state, as part of the household survey process, that they will remain in the borough for the study period.

Net movement between pitches and housing

4.31 Proposed Approach: Households that wish to move from pitches to housing will be identified as part of the household survey. Gypsy and Traveller households currently in housing are much harder to identify.

4.32 The most common approach to addressing the needs of bricks and mortar households in other studies has been to interview a small sample (50 households). If 10% of these households identify that they wish to move back to sites, this has then been extrapolated to an estimate of size of the bricks and mortar population.

4.33 This type of modelling is only legitimate if the interview sample was taken from a full random sample of the population. However, when interviewing Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar it is almost impossible to achieve a full random sample because much of the population is hidden. It is typically households who are looking to move back to sites who are most visible and

easy to find. By interviewing this group and then extrapolating the results to the wider population we believe that serious modelling mistakes have been made by other consultants.

- 4.34 The inability to identify a genuinely random sample of Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar means we cannot recommend simply interviewing those so identified in the same way as we propose to do with Gypsies and Travellers living on caravan sites – because the results from such an exercise will not be statistical reliable. Instead we propose to use a combination of waiting list records and interviews to identify the number of households who wish to leave bricks and mortar for sites. In our view the only meaningful way in which to count households seeking to leave bricks and mortar housing is on an individual basis. This means that if the household does wish to move to a site they count as one additional household in the pitch requirement and their desire to move is not extrapolated to the wider population.

Need for transit pitches

- 4.35 The need for transit pitches will be identified through a number of sources:
- Data on the scale and frequency of unauthorised encampments in the study area provided by the Council;
 - Interviews with households on unauthorised encampments (if any);
 - Analysis of travelling patterns through information collected as part of the interview process

Calculation of current accommodation need

- 4.36 Using the above data, conclusions on the following types of current accommodation need will be derived:
- Total number of pitches (for gypsy and travellers)³ and plots (for travelling showpeople)⁴ on private sites;
 - Total number of pitches and plots on socially rented sites;
 - Total number of transit pitches; and
 - Bricks and mortar housing

Stage 6: Identify Future Accommodation Need

- 4.37 There are two key components of future need. Total future need is simply the sum of the following:
- New household formation expected during the 15 year study period;
 - Net-migration in/out of each authority; and
 - Temporary consents that will expire
- 4.38 Table 4.3 summarises the data sources that should be used to estimate each of these components, with further detail provided below.
- 4.39 The assessment of future need should be undertaken separately for the Gypsy and Traveller population to the Travelling Showpeople population.
- 4.40 Future need will also need to be identified in terms of need generated for years 1-5, 5-10 and 10-15 of the study period (considered further below). This is in line with the requirements of Government policy.

³ A pitch means a pitch on a 'gypsy and traveller' site

⁴ A plot means a pitch on a 'travelling showpeople' site, which may need to incorporate space for the storage of equipment
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Table 4.3 – Components of Future Accommodation Need

Ref	Component	Data Source
I	New household formation	Household survey
J	Net-migration	Can be estimated using waiting list for Council sites, although cannot be meaningfully done for private sites
K	Temporary consents	Planning application data
L	Total future need	I+J+K

New household formation

4.41 Proposed Approach: New household formation will be identified through the interview process which will ask questions on the expected number of new households that will be formed during the study period. Any double counting with overcrowded households will be avoided.

Estimate of net-migration

4.42 Proposed Approach: Net-migration is an important element of future need. It is proposed that net-migration to local authority sites can be determined by analysing the waiting list for these sites, as long as the data is considered to be up-to-date. Double counting between authorities will be avoided by ensuring that migration aspirations are only counted once. Due to the inherent difficulties in estimating it, net-migration to private sites is usually best dealt with by applying site criteria to expand or find new sites. However, the study should include a broad estimate of the potential scale of net-migration by including an analysis of the following:

- An analysis of the number of households that have moved to the study area over the past five years;
- An analysis of the factors driving migration flows. The survey will identify if migration is due to ‘push’ factors such as lack of provision elsewhere or ‘pull’ factors such as employment or family attractors. It is proposed that the trend for ‘pull’ migration should be projected to estimate future needs, but the trend for ‘push’ migration should not
- Consultation with neighbouring authorities and the Gypsy Council to establish qualitative information on migration flows

Temporary consents

4.43 Households that are subject to temporary consents that will expire in the study period may also form a component of future need. If the household survey reveals that the household intends to stay in the local authority after the consent expires, they essentially form part of the future need requirement.

Estimating need across each five year period

4.44 As set out above, the Government requires accommodation need to be estimated for years 1-5, 5-10 and 10-15 of a Local Plan to inform the identification of sites for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Years 1-5 are the most important as a Local Plan needs to identify specific sites which are deliverable, with a requirement for broad locations of developable sites for years 5-15.

4.45 Whilst the study can produce a relatively robust estimate of future need for the first five year period, it is much harder to do so meaningfully for any longer period of time. The assessment of need will therefore have to be updated on a regular basis.

4.46 However, in order to estimate the longer term need, the study should provide estimates by extrapolating the rate of household formation to the total population and drawing upon the trend of net-migration over the previous five year period (as identified in the household survey). Types of accommodation need will be derived by extrapolating data on accommodation preferences collected by the household survey.

Calculation of future accommodation need

4.47 Using the above data, conclusions on the following types of future accommodation need will be derived for each five year period:

- Total number of pitches (for gypsy and travellers) and plots (for travelling showpeople) on private sites;
- Total number of pitches and plots on socially rented sites;
- Total number of transit pitches; and
- Bricks and mortar housing

Stage 7: Consider Existing Supply of Pitches/Plots

4.48 The study will consider potential sources of existing supply to meet current and future need identified. Table 4.4 shows the types of existing supply and the data sources for each

Table 4.4 – Potential Sources of Existing Supply

Ref	Component	Data Source
M	Currently vacant pitches which could be occupied during the assessment period	Identified during site survey
N	Any local authority sites/pitches currently programmed	Identified through consultation with the Council. Only sites/pitches that are committed within the study period will be included
O	Any sites likely to be granted planning permission in the assessment period that are deliverable	Identified through consultation with the Council. Only sites/pitches that are certain to be granted permission within the study period will be included
P	Net pitches vacated by people moving to housing within the first five year period of the study	Identified from household survey
Q	Net pitches vacated by people moving out of the study area within the first five year period of the study	Identified from household survey
R	Total existing supply	M+N+O+P+Q

Stage 8: Conclude on Accommodation Need

4.49 The final stage will draw together the findings on current and future need, as well as potential supply, to provide recommendations on the need for additional accommodation. Again, the results will be broken down into need for years 1-5, 5-10 and 10-15 of the study period and will be identified for the following types of accommodation need:

- Total number of pitches (for gypsy and travellers) and plots (for travelling showpeople) on private sites;
- Total number of pitches and plots on socially rented sites;
- Total number of transit pitches; and
- Bricks and mortar housing

4.50 It is expected that the results will be provided in a summary table similar to that set out in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 – Indicative Summary Table Illustrating Total Pitch Requirement

Ref	Component
Current authorised households	
A	Socially rented pitches/plots
B	Pitches/plots on private authorised sites
C	Total authorised residential supply
Current household accommodation need	
D	Overcrowded households
E	Households on unauthorised developments
F	Net movement between pitches and housing
G	Need for transit pitches
H	Total Current Need
Future household accommodation need	
I	New household formation
J	Net-migration
K	Temporary consents
L.1	Total future need (years 1-5)
L.2	Total future need (years 5-10)
L.3	Total future need (years 10-15)
Potential supply (years 1-5)	
M	Currently vacant pitches which could be occupied during the assessment period
N	Any local authority sites/pitches currently programmed
O	Any sites likely to be granted planning permission in the assessment period that are deliverable
P	Net pitches vacated by people moving to housing within the first five year period of the study
Q	Net pitches vacated by people moving out of the study area within the first five year period of the study
R	Total existing supply
S.1	Total Need for additional pitches (years 1-5)
S.2	Total Need for additional pitches (years 5-10)
S.3	Total Need for additional pitches (years 10-15)

