

Assessing local housing authorities' progress in meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities in England

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Universities of Salford and Birmingham

**ASSESSING LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITIES'
PROGRESS IN MEETING THE
ACCOMMODATION NEEDS OF GYPSY AND
TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES IN ENGLAND**

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GLOSSARY

The following terms are used in this report.

Term	Explanation
Allocations Development Plan Document	A document within the Local Development Framework which identifies and allocates land for various purposes.
Authorised local authority site / Registered Social Landlord site	An authorised site owned by either the local authority or a Registered Social Landlord.
Authorised Private site	An authorised site owned by a private individual (who may or may not be a Gypsy or a Traveller). These sites can be owner-occupied, rented or a mixture of owner-occupied and rented pitches.
Bricks and mortar	Permanent mainstream housing.
Caravan	Mobile living vehicle used by Gypsies and Travellers. Also referred to as trailers.
Core Strategy	Key compulsory Development Plan Document in the Local Development Framework which sets out principles on which other Development Plan Documents are built.
Communities and Local Government (CLG)	The main Government department responsible for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues
Development Plan Documents (DPDs)	Documents which outline the key development goals of the Local Development Framework
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA)	The main document produced or commissioned by a local authority that specifies the accommodation requirements for Gypsies and Travellers.

Gypsies and Travellers	In this report, this is the term used to include all ethnic Gypsies and Irish Travellers, plus other Travellers who adopt a nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life. It does not include Travelling Showpeople.
Local Plan / Local Development Framework (LDF)	A set of documents which a Local Planning Authority creates to describe their strategy for development and use of land in their area of authority.
Pitch	An area of land on a site / development generally home to one licensee household. Can be varying sizes and have varying caravan occupancy levels.
Regional Planning Body (RPB)	Prepares and reviews the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), incorporates the Regional Transport Strategy, and provides comments on planning policies prepared at the local level and on major planning applications submitted across the region.
Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)	Document which sets out the planning and transport policy for each region for a 15-20 year period. The strategies provide frameworks for determining planning applications, as well as for preparing both Local Development Documents and Local Transport Plans.
Site	An authorised area of land on which Gypsies and Travellers are accommodated in trailers / chalets / vehicles. It can contain one or multiple pitches.
Social site	An authorised Gypsy and Traveller site run by a local authority or Registered Social Landlord.
Travelling Showpeople	Commonly referred to as Showmen, these are a group of occupational Travellers who work on travelling shows and fairs across the UK

	and abroad. This report does not include accommodation requirements for Travelling Showpeople.
Unauthorised Development	This refers to a caravan / trailer or group of caravans / trailers on land owned (possibly developed) by Gypsies and Travellers without planning permission.
Unauthorised Encampment	Stopping on private / public land without permission (For example, camping at the side of the road)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In 2006 the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) concluded that Gypsies and Irish Travellers are the most excluded groups in Britain today. Advances in social mobility and access to power made by other disadvantaged groups in Britain, such as other ethnic minority groups, have simply not been matched by Gypsies and Travellers.

There is a recognised national shortfall in Gypsy and Traveller site pitches (the prime form of culturally appropriate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers in England – a pitch refers to the land required for one household). In order to address this, the Housing Act 2004 requires local housing authorities to carry out assessments of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. Those assessments must identify the extent of requirements and inform the development of long-term strategies to meet accommodation needs. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 01/2006 *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*, set out the new approach to needs-based planning to facilitate additional site provision to meet current shortfalls. The purpose of this research was to take stock of the extent of accommodation provision since the publication of the CRE report, *Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers* and Circular 01/2006.

Approach to the research

The research used the following approaches to gather relevant information to indicate progress towards pitch provision:

- An analysis of all available Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments and other documents indicating the number of pitches required for local authorities
- An analysis of the 2006-08 Caravan Count data
- A detailed questionnaire was sent to all 354 local authorities in England, resulting in 185 responses.

Legal and policy framework

Since the Housing Act 2004 there has been an enormous growth in the amount of published literature and central Government policy aimed at improving the accommodation

situation of Gypsies and Travellers. Circular 01/06, issued by the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, is the main document detailing the broad aims of the current policy towards the accommodation and planning objectives for Gypsies and Travellers. This specifies that the aims of the legislation and policy are to:

- Ensure that Gypsies and Travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision
- Reduce the number of unauthorised encampments
- Increase the number of sites and address under-provision over the next 3-5 years
- Protect the traditional travelling way of life of Gypsies and Travellers
- Underline the importance of assessing accommodation need at different geographical scales
- Promote private site provision
- Avoid Gypsies and Travellers becoming homeless, where eviction from unauthorised sites occurs and where there is no alternative accommodation.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 updated basic planning legislation on the provision of private accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. The existing system of using Development Plans to set out Local Planning Policies was revised and made way for the Local Development Framework (LDF). Within this, Core Strategies set out the overall planning framework for each local authority district and all other Local Development Framework policy documents will build on the principles in it and must comply with it. Every local authority has to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, and Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) provide the necessary evidence on Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirements to feed into the LDF.

Secondary source review: Findings

- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments and related pitch requirement documents indicate that pitch requirements for the first five years are estimated to be 5,733 pitches for 329 of the 354 local authorities in England: an average of 17.4 per authority. There are significant regional differences in pitch requirements: the East of England and South West have the largest requirement, the North East and London have the smallest.

An analysis of the number of caravans on authorised sites in January 2006 and 2008 suggest that there has been an increase in authorised pitch provision

across England. A total of 1,573 extra caravans were recorded on authorised sites in January 2008 compared to January 2006. This is a 13 per cent increase, equating to approximately 925 pitches.

- There are significant regional differences in the apparent rate of provision of additional authorised pitches from the Caravan Count: the South East has seen an increase of 21 per cent, the North East has experienced a reduction of 3 per cent.

Questionnaire: Findings

Progress on provision through the planning system

- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments have been completed in the great majority of local authorities.
- Local authorities have made only modest progress in developing formal planning documents. Only a fifth of local authorities have a Core Strategy setting out criteria for the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites. Reasons given by local authorities for not having in place a Core Strategy which sets out such criteria reflect the very variable picture of plan preparation across England. Reasons include:
 - The development of the Core Strategy was at an early stage
 - The Core Strategy had been approved before the issue of Circular 01/2006 and thus did not include criteria for the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites
 - The Core Strategy had been found unsound and withdrawn
 - Evidence of need was still being contested
 - Local government re-organisation was delaying the process
 - The regional spatial strategy process was not yet complete
 - Some local authorities reported that they were preparing Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Documents, essentially by-passing the Core Strategy.
- Some local authorities are working to identify land for Gypsy and Traveller sites informally rather than wait for the planning process.
- There have been 268 planning applications for site development or expansion relating to 888 pitches in responding local authorities.
- Between 2006 and 2008 local authorities granted a total of 250 planning permissions. These provided at least 793 pitches: 61 per cent of these were

permanent and 39 per cent were temporary.

- The appeal process remains a significant component in the provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches with 31 per cent of applications granted on appeal.
- Since 2006, responding local authorities opened a total of 42 new social residential pitches and brought 24 pitches back into use.
- Since 2006, a total of 539 private pitches had been completed although these are concentrated in a small number of local authorities and over a third have temporary rather than permanent planning permissions.
- At the current rate of pitch provision, it would take all responding local authorities an average of 10 years to meet the pitch requirements specified for a five-year period if temporary planning permissions are taken into account. It would take 18 years if only permanent permissions are considered.
- A total of 27 local authorities responding to the survey are on track to meet identified five-year pitch needs (including with temporary planning permissions); the majority (83 per cent) are not. Only 18 local authorities are on track to meet requirements through permanent planning permissions. However, local authorities appear more optimistic than this suggests:
 - 54 per cent think they will certainly or possibly meet identified shortfalls during the first five years
 - 37 per cent think they will certainly or possibly not meet shortfalls.

Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant

- In the context of an urgent national shortfall of almost 6,000 pitches revealed by Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments, a total of £56 million Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant was made available for 2006-08, and £97 million for 2008-11 for the development of socially rented pitches. One aim of the research was to check how this had been used by local authorities.
- From Communities and Local Government records we were able to analyse Grant awards of £54.6 million made between 2006 and 2008; a further £21.6 million was allocated in December 2008 after the research analysis was complete.
- Indications are that most of the Grant has gone to the refurbishment of existing sites, but some of the Grant has been awarded to new site provision and other initiatives.
- The survey of local authorities indicated that, in those authorities that responded, the Grants awarded should:

- Create 165 additional pitches
- Bring 23 pitches back into use
- Refurbish 928 existing pitches.

Housing-related support and housing strategies

- Almost half of local authorities have a policy or action relating to the provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers in their housing strategy.
- Over a third of local authorities have introduced a specific measure to support Gypsies and Travellers into and / or live in bricks and mortar housing since 2006. These include services such as floating support workers and the appointment of Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officers.

Views on progress and perceptions of barriers to progress

- Our survey asked local authorities to award marks out of 10 for the progress, both nationally and locally, on the provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation since 2006. The average assessment was:
 - 5.5 for national progress
 - 5.1 for progress locally.
- Local authorities noted a number of barriers to moving forward with the provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, these were:
 - Opposition to site developments and to Gypsies and Travellers by members of the settled community
 - Locating appropriate land for site / pitch development
 - The regional and local planning policy approach
 - Funding and finance
 - Conflicts with the broader needs of the local authority area
 - Leadership issues at a national level.

Conclusions

There are currently an estimated 8,263 pitches for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation across England. GTAAs suggest that in the first five years another 5,733 new pitches are required; this is almost a 70 per cent increase in pitch provision.

Progress has been made towards the provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches since 2006. However, this progress is slow in the majority of local authorities. The rate of progress

would need to double in order to meet the identified national pitch need, or quadruple if permanent planning permissions are to be achieved.

The survey of local authorities has revealed considerable consistency in identified problems: these frequently result from a complex planning system and the process of bidding for Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant.

Although some 'barriers' to provision might be seen as excuses, or delaying tactics from insufficiently committed authorities, the survey provides evidence of real issues which need to be resolved if progress on site provision is to accelerate in future. Even respondents from the most obviously committed and pro-active local authorities mention significant barriers to be overcome.

In the light of these findings, the following appear to be priorities:

- There should be greater leadership at national level not only signalling commitment to increasing site provision but also seeking to tackle the prejudice and racist stereotypes which underlie much of the resistance to site development.
- The planning system seems not to be working as intended, or at least as quickly as intended. The regional level introduces uncertainty and gives an excuse not to act locally. Procedures for developing Core Strategies and Allocations Local Development Documents are lengthy and lack flexibility. If the system remains unchanged, there should be clearer guidance on how local authorities should or can respond to applications and move forward pro-actively in advance of formal policies being in place.
- Both local authorities and central Government need to monitor temporary planning permissions. Such permissions on sites in 'unsuitable' locations simply defer difficult decisions, rather than providing a real answer for the long-term.
- Local authorities need more guidance and sharing of good practice on many topics related to site provision such as: engaging effectively with Gypsy and Traveller communities, establishing forums through which the concerns of the settled community can be heard, managing public consultations on highly contentious issues, finding suitable site locations and then making allocations in ways that mean that Gypsies and Travellers can still afford to buy land and develop sites. At present, the knowledge and confidence infrastructure seems inadequate.
- Local authorities should improve their monitoring of progress towards improving site provision for Gypsies and Travellers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Objectives and scope of the study

In 2006 the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) published its report *Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers*. The report examined a range of issues around Gypsies and Travellers and equality, and concluded that Gypsies and Irish Travellers are the most excluded groups in Britain today (CRE, 2006). Advancements in terms of social mobility and access to power made by other disadvantaged groups in Britain, such as other ethnic minority groups, have not been matched in relation to Gypsies and Travellers (Gil-Robles, 2005). In particular, *Common Ground* indicated the steps required to improve the accommodation circumstances of Gypsies and Travellers in England.

Also in 2006, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued Circular 01/2006 *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*, setting out the Government's new policy approach towards providing suitable accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. In response to the national shortfall in Gypsy and Traveller site pitches (the prime form of culturally appropriate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers in England), the Housing Act 2004 requires local housing authorities to carry out assessments of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in order to identify the extent of requirements and to develop appropriate long-term strategies to meet these. Where needs are identified, local Development Plan Documents must identify locations for additional Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) provide the evidence base for both housing and planning authorities about the extent of the shortfall. The great majority of GTAAs are complete or nearing completion across England but little is known about how much progress has been made on developing strategies and providing pitches since the introduction of the legislation.

This report aims to take stock of the progress made towards increasing site accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers in the intervening two years since the publication of *Common Ground* and Circular 01/2006.

Aim and objectives

The aim of this study was to provide hard data about the extent to which each local housing authority in England is meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, principally in respect of site provision. There are a number of specific objectives:

- To ascertain the quantity and quality of provision
- To investigate the speed at which identified accommodation shortfalls are being met
- To explore the use of ear-marked budgets for site provision.

Research approach

The approach to the study involved bringing together various secondary data sources and the results of a survey of local authorities across England.

- All available GTAAs were collated and analysed to ascertain the level of accommodation need identified for each local authority. These were supplemented, particularly in the South West, South East and East of England, by documents relating to emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) reviews where the RSS process impacted on the level of need identified.
- The bi-annual Caravan Count (January 2006-January 2008)¹ was analysed. Differences in numbers of caravans on authorised sites were analysed at local authority level as a proxy for site development or authorisation.
- Other potential sources of secondary data were considered including: centralised records of planning applications / decisions (which are not kept in a form which enables Gypsy and Traveller sites to be identified); Planning Inspectorate records of appeal decisions affecting Gypsy and Traveller sites (obtained but potentially misleading because there is no indication of the number of pitches affected by an appeal); centralised records of applications for the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant (no data could be obtained); and records of Gypsy and Traveller Grants awarded from 2006 to 2008. Only the last proved to be available and sufficiently reliable to be reported here.
- We carried out a postal / e-mail survey of all local authorities across England to establish their progress on assessing, planning for and delivering accommodation provision for Gypsies and Travellers. A total of 185 questionnaires were analysed – a response rate of 54 per cent. Details of the survey methodology are presented in Annex 1 along with the covering letter and questionnaire used. In the analysis of survey findings we developed a categorisation of local authorities: ‘high priority’ authorities have relatively high numbers of Gypsies and Travellers living on authorised sites and / or relatively high assessed future pitch requirements; ‘low priority’ authorities are at the

¹ The most recent Caravan Count available is July. However, the January figures are used in preference since summer figures are known to be ‘distorted’ by seasonal travelling which often appears to reduce the number of caravans on sites.

other end of the scale with very low current population and assessed requirements. The majority of authorities fall into the middle ‘medium priority’ category. Further details of how these categories have been defined are in Annex 4.

Structure of the report

This report is intended to help the Equality and Human Rights Commission understand the steps that local authorities have taken since 2006 in meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. It sets out the context and then looks at the progress being made by local authorities under a number of different headings. It also looks at some of the views on barriers and how these can be overcome:

- **Chapter 2** sets out the context for the study in terms of significant publications and Gypsy and Traveller related policies and support mechanisms.
- **Chapter 3** analyses the Caravan Count as a background indicator of progress in site provision.
- **Chapters 4 to 7** take the indicators of progress in turn and discuss the findings from the analysis of the survey of local authorities:
 - **Chapter 4** looks at progress made so far towards site provision through the new planning process.
 - **Chapter 5** considers the Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant in terms of applications made and grants received.
 - **Chapter 6** analyses findings related to housing-related support and the revision of housing strategies in view of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs.
 - **Chapter 7** considers issues around site quality based on the views and concerns of responding local authorities.
- **Chapter 8** looks at respondents’ views on the progress that has been made and explores barriers to moving forward with the provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision.
- **Chapter 9** offers some concluding remarks based on the findings of the research and provides an indication as to areas of priority in order to move forward with the provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.

2. CONTEXT

After many years of little attention, the last four years (since the Housing Act 2004) have seen an enormous growth in the amount of published literature and policy direction aimed at improving the accommodation situation of Gypsies and Travellers; new publications now appear on a regular basis. The majority of these publications aim to assist local authorities and other stakeholders to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in England. This chapter aims to briefly review the significant publications and provide an update on the context within which Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues are located.

Common Ground – the recommendations

In 2006, the then Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) published the report *Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers*. This document outlined a series of detailed recommendations aimed at ensuring greater equality for members of Gypsy and Traveller communities and advised service providers how best to achieve this. The report provided the first authoritative evidence of the extent to which local authorities had met their statutory duty to promote race equality and good race relations in their work on Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Within the report, the CRE expressed concerns about relations between Gypsies and Irish Travellers and other members of the public, with widespread public hostility and, in many places, Gypsies and Irish Travellers leading separate parallel lives.

The report's recommendations included measures relating to central Government, local authorities, police forces and the voluntary sector. Most of the recommendations pertained to central Government, but a number were specific to local authorities. The latter asserted that local authorities should:

- Develop a holistic corporate vision for all work on Gypsies and Irish Travellers
- Review all policies on accommodation for Gypsies and Irish Travellers
- Designate a councillor at cabinet (or equivalent) level, and an officer at no less than assistant director level, to coordinate the authority's work on all sites
- Emphasise that the code of conduct for councillors applies to their work in relation to all racial groups, including Gypsies and Irish Travellers
- Give specific advice to Gypsies and Irish Travellers on the most suitable land for residential use, how to prepare applications, and help them to find the information they need to support their application

- Identify and report on actions by local groups or individuals in response to plans for Gypsy sites that may constitute unlawful pressure on the authority to discriminate against Gypsies and Irish Travellers
- Monitor all planning applications and instances of enforcement action at every stage, by type and racial group, including Gypsies and Irish Travellers, in order to assess the effects of policies and practices on different racial groups.

Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers: a guide to responsibilities and powers

In 2007, Communities and Local Government published *Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers: a guide to responsibilities and powers*. This provides local authorities with a summary of their responsibilities and powers in relation to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and sets out the priorities of the legislation and policy:

- Adequate provision must be made for authorised sites
- The planning system and property rights must be respected and effective enforcement action taken promptly against problem sites
- The small minority who indulge in anti-social behaviour must be dealt with promptly and effectively before they cause further harm to relationships between communities.

Of importance to this study are the main sections of the guide which set out how the Government sees these priorities being achieved by local authorities:

- Each local authority must identify land for the sites that are needed in its area
- Local authorities and the police should use existing powers to deal with Gypsies and Travellers who camp on other people's land
- Local authorities and the police should deal with anti-social behaviour by Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community alike
- Local authorities should take the lead in assessing the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers alongside those of their settled population
- Locally assessed needs of Gypsies and Travellers are to be incorporated into the Regional Spatial Strategy
- Each local authority should play its part in meeting those needs through the planning system by identifying appropriate sites in local plans.

Planning policy since 2006 – Circular 01/2006

The main document detailing the broad aims of current planning policy towards the accommodation and planning objectives for Gypsies and Travellers is ODPM Circular

01/06 *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*. In particular, this specifies that the aims of the legislation and policy developments are to:

- Ensure that Gypsies and Travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision
- Reduce the number of unauthorised encampments
- Increase the number of sites and address under-provision over the next 3-5 years
- Protect the traditional travelling way of life of Gypsies and Travellers
- Underline the importance of assessing accommodation need
- Promote private site provision
- Avoid Gypsies and Travellers becoming homeless, where eviction from unauthorised sites occurs and where there is no alternative accommodation.

In September 2007, revised planning guidance in relation to the specific planning requirements of Travelling Showpeople was released in Circular 04/07. This replaces Circular 22/91 and aims to ensure that the system for pitch assessment, identification and allocation as introduced for Gypsies and Travellers is also applied to Travelling Showpeople.²

The Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant

The Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant provides capital funding for improving and increasing Gypsy and Traveller site / pitch provision by local authorities and Registered Social Landlords. From 2006-8 a national total of £56m was made available, managed by Regional Housing Boards or equivalents. A total of £97m has been made available over the 2008-11 period. Since 2006, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) have been able to set up and manage Gypsy and Traveller sites. Both local authorities and RSLs are eligible for funding under the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (GTAAs) – providing the evidence base

In order to ensure that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers are taken into account effectively, the Government provided guidance for designing, planning and carrying out GTAAs. It acknowledges that the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers are likely to differ from those of the rest of the population, and that they have hitherto been excluded from accommodation needs assessments. The guidance stresses the importance of

² The current study, in keeping with Common Ground, does not encompass provision for Travelling Showpeople.

understanding the accommodation needs of the whole Gypsy and Traveller population, and of ensuring that studies obtain robust data. It recognises the difficulties of surveying this population and recommends the use of:

- Qualitative methods such as focus groups and group interviews
- Specialist surveys of those living on various sites and in housing who are willing to respond
- Existing information, including local authority site records and the twice-yearly caravan counts.

The guidance recognises that there are challenges in carrying out these assessments and accepts that, while the approach should be as robust as possible, it is very difficult exactly to quantify unmet need.

Housing and homelessness strategies

Since the introduction of the Housing Act 2004, it has been made clear that Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs and requirements should feature in local authority Housing and Homelessness³ Strategies (Homelessness & Housing Support Directorate, 2006). Authorities have been informed that, in line with their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the needs and way of life of Gypsies and Travellers must be taken into account when considering accommodation applications.

Regional and local planning policy development

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) are carried out by local authorities, but they also provide the evidence needed to inform the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and Regional Housing Strategy (RHS). The assessment of accommodation need and pitch requirements is fed to the Regional Planning Body (RPB) for the RHS and RSS. The RSS then specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for each local planning authority in light of the GTAAs produced, and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region is taken. The local planning authority's Local Development Framework (LDF), composed of Core Strategy and Development Plan Documents (DPDs), must then identify specific sites to match pitch numbers from the RSS.

Each DPD is subject to examination in public and will be tested for 'soundness'. There are nine tests of soundness which are divided into procedural tests, conformity tests and coherence, consistency and effectiveness tests. In terms of GTAAs specifically, one of the tests of soundness will be whether it is founded on robust and credible evidence; the data

³ See Homelessness & Housing Support Directorate (2006). Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, Communities and Local Government.

CONTEXT

received and analysed through a GTAA is fundamental in providing a robust evidence base for the RHS and RSS.

The regional dimension to GTAAs is intended to ensure that all local authorities contribute to resolving the current shortage of authorised site accommodation in a strategic manner, which helps redress current imbalances in the pattern of provision, and enhances the sustainability of the Gypsy and Traveller site network.

Regions across England are at different stages in the RSS review process to take account of Gypsy and Traveller pitch needs. In the South West and the East Midlands, for example, individual authorities' pitch totals are included in RSS Proposed Changes documents, having been through consultation and examination in public. Elsewhere, and particularly in the northern regions, progress has been less rapid and approved RSS pitch totals for local authorities are unlikely to be available for several years.

ODPM Circular 01/2006 makes it clear that where there is clear evidence of need for Gypsy and Traveller sites, local authorities should not wait for the full regional process before identifying and bringing forward sites. This message has been reinforced by ministerial letter.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE CARAVAN COUNTS

A preliminary analysis of Caravan Count data was carried out to act as context to the more detailed information at local authority level collected through the questionnaire survey. The findings are reported here because they supplement survey data by providing information on all local authorities (LAs), rather than only on those which returned a questionnaire.

Analysis methods

The bi-annual Count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans is carried out each January and July by local authority officers. The process is coordinated by Communities and Local Government and the data is published on their website.⁴ The figures distinguish caravans on: authorised sites (socially rented and private); unauthorised sites on Gypsies' and Travellers' own land; and unauthorised sites on land not owned by Gypsies or Travellers. In the latter categories, distinction is made between sites which are 'tolerated' and those which are 'not tolerated'.⁵

Count figures have been criticised for their sometimes poor and inconsistent quality, with a general presumption that they understate the number of caravans. However, they do provide snapshots of approximate caravan numbers at local authority level and are useful in examining trends over time.

Here we have compared findings for January 2006 (just before the issue of Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 01/2006) and January 2008 (the January 2009 Count will not be published for several months). We have concentrated on caravans on authorised sites as a proxy for trends in authorised site provision over the two year period.⁶ In a very small number of cases, an authority's figures have been amended where it is clear that the start entry has been affected by non-response. Authorised sites are treated as a single category to avoid apparent changes where a social rented site transfers to the private sector or vice versa.

⁴ See:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingmanagementcare/gypsiesandtravellers/gypsiesandtravellersitedataandstat/>

⁵ Very generally, 'toleration' means that the local authority is not likely to be seeking enforcement action in the near future.

⁶ It can only be a proxy because some change might be accounted for by Gypsy and Traveller families having more or fewer caravans on their pitch, rather than a change in the number of pitches; some change may reflect shifts in recording practices.

The findings

Table 3.1 shows: the number of caravans in January 2006 and 2008; the change in numbers of caravans; and the percentage change this represents at national and at regional level.

Region	Caravans : authorised sites		Change in numbers	% change
	Jan 2006	Jan 2008		
North East	482	468	-14	-3
North West	1,129	1,192	+63	+6
Yorkshire & Humber	1,144	1,299	+136	+12
East Midlands	966	1,144	+178	+18
West Midlands	1,298	1,476	+178	+14
East	3,045	3,459	+414	+14
London	683	752	+70	+10
South East	2,255	2,722	+467	+21
South West	1,452	1,534	+81	+6
England	12,474	14,047	+1,573	+13

Over 1,500 more caravans were counted on authorised sites across England in 2008 than in 2006, representing a 13 per cent increase. Two points to note are:

- If the additional caravans are all on newly provided (or newly authorised) pitches, this represents approximately 925 additional pitches. This is on the assumption that there is an average of 1.7 caravans per pitch.⁷
- GTAAs and associated guidance suggest that Gypsy and Traveller communities experience an annual household formation rate of between two per cent and four per cent. The 13 per cent increase in caravans on authorised sites over two years suggests that provision has more than kept up with household formation and should have started to tackle the widely acknowledged backlog shortage of authorised pitches.

Table 3.2 attempts to express national and regional progress in terms of pitch changes (estimated by dividing the change in caravan numbers by 1.7) in relation to the estimated

⁷ See Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies, Communities and local Government (CLG), 2007.

residential pitch requirements for Years 1-5 from our survey (wherever possible), GTAAs or regional documents. The final column expresses the number of years it would take to meet five-year requirements at the rate of progress achieved over the two years 2006-8.

The current rate of progress is insufficient to meet the five-year requirements within five years – indeed, the rate would need to be more than doubled to achieve this. Regional progress varies considerably with South East and East performing relatively well and North East, South West and North West performing relatively poorly. The South West is perhaps of particular concern given the extent of requirements identified.

Region	Estimated need Years 1-5	Estimated pitch change 2006-8	Estimated years to meet need at this rate of progress
North East	129*	-8	Infinite
North West	600	37	32
Yorks & Humber	523	80	13
East Midlands	500	105	10
West Midlands	657	105	13
East	1,091	244	9
London	307	41	15
South East	876	274	7
South West	1,052	48	44
England	5,733	925	12

*GTAAs are mostly incomplete in the North East and this figure relates to four LAs only.

Bringing the level of analysis to local authority level, the bar chart in Figure 3.1 shows the number of local authorities recording different degrees of change in caravans on authorised sites between January 2006 and 2008. The majority of authorities (62 per cent) showed little change, defined as between a decrease of five and an increase of five caravans. Overall, more authorities recorded an increase in caravan numbers (greater than +5) than recorded a decrease (greater than -5) – 96 compared with 40.

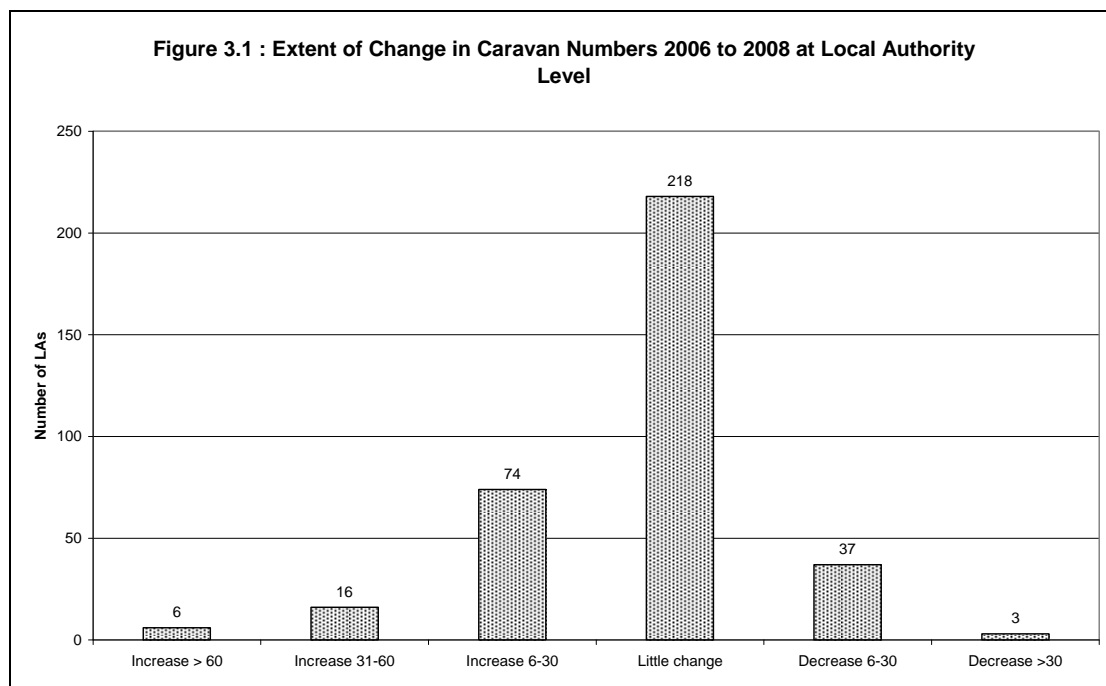


Table 3.3 summarises the authorities showing the most significant increases and decreases in caravan numbers between January 2006 and January 2008. Most of the authorities showing increases of more than 30 caravans are in the East and South East. No authorities had increases of this scale in the North East or the North West. Of the three authorities showing the most significant decreases in caravan numbers, two are in the South East and one is in Yorkshire & Humber. Future Counts will show whether the decline is temporary or lasting.

Table 3.3: Local Authorities with the largest increase and decreases in caravans 2006-8

Local authority	Region	Caravan numbers increased (+) and decreased (-) 2006-8
South Cambridgeshire	East	+137
Maidstone	South East	+90
Herefordshire	West Midlands	+71
South Bedfordshire	East	+65
Doncaster	Yorks & Humber	+64
Aylesbury Vale	South East	+62
Sevenoaks	South East	+56
South Bucks	South East	+55

Harrow	London	+51
King's Lynn & W. Norfolk	East	+44
Swale	South East	+43
Wychavon	West Midlands	+40
Wokingham	South East	+40
Chichester	South East	+39
Selby	Yorks & Humber	+37
Maldon	East	+37
Peterborough	East	+35
Fenland	East	+32
St Albans	East	+32
Slough	South East	+32
Mendip	South West	+32
South Derbyshire	East Midlands	+31
Runnymede	South East	-49
Elmbridge	South East	-37
Kingston upon Hull	Yorks & Humber	-36

4. PROGRESS TOWARDS SITE PROVISION THROUGH THE PLANNING SYSTEM

The new approach to providing Gypsy and Traveller sites is centred on the planning system. Chapter 2 noted the intended policy cascade from the assessment of requirements for additional Gypsy and Traveller sites / pitches, through strategies and policies to allocate land for sites, to the grant of planning permission for site development. This chapter follows the intended process in order to chart the progress that local authorities have made so far.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments

The first stage in the planning process is to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. Table 4.1 summarises answers to the set of survey questions about completeness, publication and acceptance of a local Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). Figures are presented for all local authorities (LAs) and those in the 'high priority' category, indicating relatively high numbers of Gypsies and Travellers on authorised sites and / or high assessed future pitch requirements (see Annex 4).

Table 4.1: Status of GTAA				
A1. Is there a complete GTAA covering your area?				
	All LAs		High priority	
Base : all LAs	185		36	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	173	94	34	94
No	12	6	2	6
A2. Has the report of the GTAA been published?				
Base : completed GTAAs	173		34	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	157	91	29	85
No	14	8	4	12
No answer	2	1	1	3
A4. Have the pitch requirements estimated in the GTAA for your authority been accepted as the basis for planning site provision?				

Base : completed GTAA's	173		34	
	No.	%*	No.	%*
Yes	104	60 (66)	17	50 (59)
No	53	31 (34)	12	35 (41)
GTAA did not allocate	13	8	4	12
No answer	3	1	1	3

* Figures in brackets are percentages calculated on a base excluding 'GTAA did not allocate' and 'no answer'.

GTAA's have been completed in the great majority of LAs. The exceptions are in the North East (excluding Durham), and in Essex where several authorities referred to the GTAA currently being produced by Fordham Research rather than the early GTAA produced by the University of Salford which, (in common with many early GTAA's) did not assess requirements at local authority level. All GTAA's are expected to be complete by early 2009.

Gypsy and Traveller organisations argue that it is important that GTAA findings are publicly available so that they can be used in planning applications and other discussions with LAs. Table 4.1 shows that the majority of completed GTAA's (91 per cent) have been published. Given the difference in sample sizes, the difference between the high priority LAs and all LAs is not significant.

The implication of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 01/2006 is that GTAA findings will form the evidence base for housing and planning strategies development. Not all of the early GTAA's split pitch requirements to local authority level. The third element on Table 4.1 shows that a sizeable minority of LAs (around a third) have not accepted their GTAA estimate of pitch requirements as the basis for planning site provision. Non-acceptance is unusually high in:

- South East 58%
- North West 50%
- London 46%

Reasons given for non-acceptance illustrate some concerns about the system in practice, relating to contested robustness of GTAA evidence and complexities introduced by the regional planning level. For example in the North West, reasons for non-acceptance were based around the need for further discussion, at either a regional or sub-regional level, about the level of requirements identified and / or where they should be met, as opposed to where they arose. In the South East, reasons were broadly around exploring different

provision options within the on-going South East Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)) process. Few reasons for non-acceptance were given by London boroughs but they included: perceived problems with the reliability of the GTAA methodology, authorities wishing to engage in cross-authority discussions about meeting requirements, and issues associated with the alterations to the London Plan (RSS).

It might be thought that LAs are more likely to accept low rather than high requirements. However, this proves not to be the case since the average residential pitch requirement (in answer to B1 on the questionnaire) for LAs which have accepted the GTAA estimates as the basis for planning purposes, is slightly higher (at 18.7 pitches) than that for LAs which have not accepted them (at 17 pitches).

Planning documents

A sequence of survey questions explored the extent to which LAs had completed important planning documents concerning Gypsy and Traveller site provision. ODPM Circular 01/2008 makes it clear that where there is need for site provision, Core Strategies should set out locational criteria to be used to guide the allocation of land for sites in Development Plan Documents (DPDs). Site allocation DPDs then identify actual land to be allocated for Gypsy and Traveller sites. Table 4.2 summarises LA progress in this respect.

Table 4.2: Preparation of planning documents				
A6. Does your authority's Core Strategy set out criteria for the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites to be used to guide the allocation of sites in the relevant Development Plan Documents?				
	All LAs		High priority	
Base : all LAs	185		36	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	37	20	8	22
In preparation	119	64	18	50
No	23	12	8	22
No answer	6	3	2	6
Estimated completion date where in preparation				
Base : LAs preparing	119		18	
	No.	%	No.	%
2009	24	20	1	6
2010	41	34	8	44

2011	37	31	8	44
2012	10	8	1	6
Unknown	7	6	-	-
A8. Does your authority have an approved Development Plan Document which details Gypsy and Traveller site allocations?				
Base : All LAs	185		36	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	6	3	2	6
In preparation	67	36	14	39
No	106	57	18	50
No answer	6	3	2	6
Estimated completion date where in preparation				
Base : LAs preparing	67		14	
	No.	%	No.	%
2009	10	15	1	7
2010	24	36	6	43
2011	17	25	4	29
2012	8	12	1	7
2013	3	4	1	7
No answer	5	7	1	7

As can be seen, progress in respect of these formal planning documents is quite modest. Only a fifth of LAs have a Core Strategy setting out criteria for the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites; almost two-thirds of LAs said that such a document was being prepared. Of these, most are expected to be completed between 2010 and 2011. A minority of LAs (32 per cent of all LAs and 25 per cent of high priority LAs) either already have, or expect to have, a Core Strategy setting out location criteria before the end of 2009.

Reasons given for not having in place a Core Strategy setting out criteria for the location of sites reflect the very variable picture of plan preparation across England. For example, some commented that their Core Strategy is at a very early stage, others that it had been approved before the issue of Circular 01/2006, and another again that their Core Strategy had been found unsound and withdrawn. Other factors included contested evidence of

need, local government re-organisation, waiting for the RSS and there being no or minimal need for sites. Some LAs noted that they were preparing Gypsy and Traveller DPDs, essentially by-passing the Core Strategy.

The second half of Table 4.2 shows that a smaller proportion still (only nine per cent of all LAs and eight per cent of high priority LAs), either already have an approved DPD which details Gypsy and Traveller site allocations or expect to have one by the end of 2009. Over half of LAs neither have such a DPD nor are preparing one currently. It also seems likely that, in some instances, the documents referred to as an ‘approved DPD’ were prepared under the previous planning system.

Overall, the formal planning system appears quite cumbersome and might be seen as not particularly helpful in a situation requiring rapid response.

Looking for land

Answers to a survey question on whether their authority is working actively to identify appropriate land to allocate for Gypsy and Traveller sites, suggest that some authorities are progressing informally despite slow progress with formal planning documents (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Is your authority actively working to identify appropriate land to allocate for Gypsy and Traveller sites? (A9)				
	All LAs		High priority	
Base : All LAs	185		36	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	116	63	24	67
No	64	35	10	28
No answer	5	3	2	6

Around two-thirds of LAs said that they were actively working to identify appropriate land to allocate for Gypsy and Traveller sites. There is little difference between all LAs and high priority LAs. LAs in the East Midlands, East and Yorkshire & the Humber were relatively more likely to say they were working to identify land (70 per cent or more of LAs). LAs in the North East and London were particularly unlikely to be identifying land (less than 50 per cent). District councils and Unitaries were more likely than Metropolitan Districts and London Boroughs to be working to identify land for sites.

The most significant reasons given for not working to identify land were:

- It would be premature because of the phasing of work on a Site Allocations DPD
- It would be premature because of progress with the RSS
- Evidence of need from the GTAA is still awaited, or is contested
- The LA has little need and considers that this can be met by responding to planning applications or site extensions.

Pitch requirement numbers

Estimating pitch requirements

One consequence of the policy framework at present is a potential lack of clarity about pitch requirement numbers at local authority level. There may be a figure from the GTAA and one from an emerging RSS. These may be the same (as is the case in most LAs in the South West) or different (as is often the case in the East of England where the RSS Preferred Option redistributes requirements so that all LAs have an allocation of at least 15 additional pitches to provide), and as may be the case in the South East, where consultation options include redistribution according to planning opportunities and constraints. Either or both may be contested by the local authority. One challenge for the current study has been to establish pitch requirement numbers at LA level across England.

We started by identifying residential pitch requirements (Years 1-5) from completed GTAAs; this required some adjustments to accommodate different plan periods or ranges. Where the GTAA did not identify requirements at LA level, we referred to emerging regional proposals. In a few instances in the North East neither source is available.

To supplement this secondary information, question B1 of the survey asked how many additional pitches the authority needs to provide / allocate in the first 5 year planning period. 165 of the 185 responding LAs (89 per cent) were able to give an answer for residential pitches. The proportion was lower for transit pitches (64 per cent) reflecting the tendency for GTAAs and the RSS processes to quantify residential pitches rather than transit pitch and stopping place requirements.

Not surprisingly, responding LAs took different measures of requirements:

- GTAA 92 (50%)
- RSS 35 (19%)
- Both GTAA and RSS 46 (25%)

- Other 4 (2%)
- No answer / NA 8 (4%)

GTAAs alone or as adopted by the RSS are obviously the most important source of information on requirements. Not surprisingly, the RSS / emerging RSS was most likely to be the source in the East, South East and South West regions. In a few instances, LAs drew attention to the differences in requirements identified by the RSS and GTAA.

Because there are different potential sources for requirements, it is not surprising that LA answers to question B1 on residential pitch requirements sometimes differed from our own figures based primarily on GTAAs and on the emerging RSS where no GTAA is available. In just over half of LAs (51 per cent) our figures were identical to those provided by the LA. In 16 per cent of LAs the LA provided a higher figure than we had assumed; in 20 per cent of LAs our estimate was higher than that of the LA. In the remaining 13 per cent of LAs we were unable to make a comparison because the LA did not answer question B1 or we could not estimate requirements ourselves.

In order to arrive at the best estimate of overall pitch requirements, we have:

- Confined the analysis to residential pitch requirements for Years 1 to 5
- Accepted the answer given by LAs to question B1 where appropriate
- In all other instances (where a responding LA did not provide an answer or for a non-responding LA) we have retained our GTAA / emerging RSS estimate.

In this way we are able to provide estimates for all but 15 LAs, almost all in the North East.

Analysis of pitch requirements

Table 4.4 summarises pitch requirements for all LAs across England where information is available. Pitch requirements vary widely between LAs. The majority of LAs (61 per cent) have relatively modest requirements of up to 15 pitches (the minimum allocated to each LA in the East of England Plan Preferred Option).

Table 4.4: Pitch requirements	
Number of LAs with information	329
Total pitch requirements for these LAs	5,733
Average pitch requirements per LA	17.4
Range of requirements	0 to 114

Number and percentage of LAs with requirements in bands		
	Number of LAs	%
Zero	27	8
1-5	58	18
6-10	50	15
11-15	65	20
16-20	36	11
21-30	39	12
31-40	22	7
41-50	12	4
51-60	10	3
61-70	4	1
71-80	1	*
81-90	4	1
91-100	-	-
Over 100	1	*

* Indicates a percentage less than 0.5.

There are 20 LAs with requirements for over 50 additional pitches. These LAs are widely spread across the country – all regions except London are represented: 5 LAs are in the South West, 4 in the East and 3 in the South East. Of the 20 LAs, 13 are district councils, 6 are unitaries or emerging unitaries and only 1 is a metropolitan district. It is clear that the geography of need for Gypsy and Traveller sites is rather different from that for housing need of the population as a whole.

Tenure split

Question B3 of the survey asked how the requirement for additional pitches was split between social and private provision. Only 29 LAs with a requirement for additional pitches were able to answer the question (16 per cent of all respondents). They demonstrated a mix of tenure splits:

- 13 said all would be social provision
- 9 said all would be private provision
- 3 said there would be a mix with social greater than private provision
- 3 said there would be a mix with private greater than social provision

- 1 said the split between social and private provision would be equal.

The widespread inability to answer the question about tenure split of requirements probably reflects the lack of a tenure split in most GTAAAs. However, it also suggests relatively unformed thinking about the practicalities of provision in most LAs.

Planning applications and permissions

A critical step on the way to site provision on the ground is the grant of planning permission. A sequence of questions in the survey aimed at establishing the number of applications made and permissions given for the development of private Gypsy and Traveller sites since February 2006. The majority of LAs were able to provide this information. Unfortunately, fewer authorities were able to provide information about the number of pitches than the number of sites involved. Table 4.5 summarises the answers. The first column shows the number (and percentage) of LAs which had **not** received a planning application or granted a permission in each instance. The remaining columns show the number of sites and pitches involved in each type of application / permission and also the number of LAs involved.

Type of application / permission	No. LAs zero	No. sites	No. pitches
Planning applications for site development / expansion	103 (56%)	268 (72 LAs)	888 (69 LAs)
Applications to renew temporary permissions	157 (85%)	31 (20 LAs)	93 (19 LAs)
Permanent permissions granted for site development / expansion	138 (75%)	104 (41 LAs)	385 (41 LAs)
Temporary permissions granted for site development/ expansion	154 (83%)	53 (25 LAs)	165 (24 LAs)
Permanent permissions granted for site development / expansion on appeal	155 (84%)	48 (24 LAs)	126 (24 LAs)
Temporary permissions granted for site development / expansion on appeal	155 (84%)	45 (24 LAs)	117 24 LAs)

There are several interesting points to note from this information:

- In all, there had been 268 applications for site development or expansion in 72 LAs (39 per cent). Applications involved at least 888 pitches (fewer LAs were able to provide information on this). The total number of sites granted permission either permanently or temporarily, directly or on appeal was 250, affecting at least 793 pitches. Time lags in the system, especially where appeals are involved, mean that some of the approvals will be the result of applications received in earlier years (and some of the applications have not yet been determined).
- As noted, 39 per cent of LAs received an application for new site development or expansion. Only 20 LAs (11 per cent of all 185 respondents) received an application for the renewal of a temporary permission. Taking these together, 76 LAs (41 per cent) received an application for either a new / expanded site or a renewal of permission.
- While, as noted above, it is not strictly accurate to compare grants of permission with applications because of time lags, the figures do give a broad indication of 'success' rates. In terms of sites, permanent permissions granted were equivalent to about 39 per cent and temporary permissions to about 20 per cent of applications. Taken together, permanent and temporary permissions were equivalent to about 59 per cent of applications for sites. In terms of pitches the figures are slightly different. Overall permanent and temporary permissions were equivalent to about 62 per cent of applications (43 per cent permanent and 19 per cent temporary).
- The appeals process is still significant in achieving planning permissions for sites.⁸ Appeals can arise following refusal of planning permission or against enforcement action, and are heard by a Planning Inspector. A significant minority of LAs (41 or 22 per cent) had had a permanent or temporary permission granted on appeal. This compares with 54 LAs (29 per cent) which had themselves directly granted either a permanent or temporary permission. 37 per cent of site permissions and 31 per cent of pitch permissions were granted on appeal. Circular 01/2006 has not influenced LAs to grant permissions under circumstances Planning Inspectors find acceptable at least for a temporary permission.

⁸ Information provided by the Planning Inspectorate showed that across England as a whole, permissions had been granted as a result of appeals against refusal of planning permission or enforcement action in 87 LAs between 1 January 2006 and 9 October 2008. We have not analysed the data further because there are no details of the number of pitches involved in an application.

- Of the 250 permissions granted for sites either directly or on appeal, 61 per cent were permanent and 39 per cent were temporary. The respective proportions for pitches were 64 per cent and 36 per cent (793 pitches in total). Thus a significant minority of permissions are temporary and have the effect of deferring rather than meeting requirements.
- The ratio between permanent and temporary permissions is very different for LA permissions and appeal decisions. In terms of pitches, 385 of the 550 permissions granted by LAs (70 per cent) were permanent compared with only 126 of the 243 (52 per cent) granted on appeal. Perhaps this is evidence that the Planning Inspectorate is using temporary permissions to encourage LAs to get on with the planning process, but it means that there will probably be some difficult decisions to make in a few years time when the permission expires, particularly if alternative site locations have not been identified by that stage.

Table 4.6 shows the number of pitches granted a planning permission – permanent or temporary, direct or on appeal – since February 2006 in authorities. The table is based on answers from 177 LAs which provided comprehensive details.

Table 4.6: Number of pitches granted planning permission (permanent and temporary, direct and on appeal) since February 2006		
	No. authorities	%
None	110	62
1-5	28	16
6-10	12	7
11-15	10	6
16-20	3	2
21-25	8	5
26-30	4	2
Over 30	2	1

No pitches had been granted permission in almost two-thirds of LAs (62 per cent). Nine of the 14 LAs with over 20 pitches given permission, are in the high priority category; all are district councils.

Changes in the way planning applications are considered

Question D10 asked LAs whether there had been any change in the way planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites are considered since the issue of ODPM Circular 01/2006 in February 2006. 65 LAs (35 per cent) said that there had been a

change; 111 (60 per cent) said that there had been no change; and 9 (5 per cent) were unable to say.

The requirements imposed by Circular 01/2006 itself proved to be the main driver for change in the way LAs consider planning applications. Many said that planning officers currently regard Circular 01/2006 as a material consideration in their decisions until its provisions are more formally reflected in Core Strategies. Some LAs mentioned specific ways in which 01/2006 had influenced their planning policy, in terms of: sustainability issues, suitability of locations and providing sites where evidence demonstrates a shortfall in provision. For a small number of authorities, the GTAA had also influenced the way in which applications are to be dealt with, for example:

A more positive, pro-active approach adopted not just because of Circular but also as a result of GTAA findings and of SE Plan Review work.

Pitch provision achieved

The crucial issue for this study was to determine exactly how many Gypsy and Traveller sites / pitches have been provided since February 2006. An indication of possible pitch provision based on the Caravan Counts was presented in Chapter 3. The more detailed analysis below is based on the local authority survey which asked about numbers of social and private pitches created and lost over the period. Information, of course, only relates to responding LAs.

Social pitch provision

Table 4.7 shows social pitch provision (by local authorities or registered social landlords) since February 2006, distinguishing between pitches planned, in development and opened. In each category, the first figure shows the number of LAs and the second the number of pitches involved. For example, 29 pitches have been opened on new residential sites across four LAs.

	In planning		In development		Opened	
	LAs	Pitches	LAs	Pitches	LAs	Pitches
Residential: new sites	2	24	-	-	4	29
Residential: expanded sites	5	19	-	-	4	13
Residential: re-opened pitches	-	-	-	-	2	24
Transit: new sites	2	22	2	23	-	-

Transit: expanded sites	-	-	2	12	1	8
Transit: re-opened pitches	-	-	-	-	2	24

Base = all LAs (185)

Progress seems modest. Across the 185 responding LAs, 42 new social residential pitches (on new and expanded sites) have been opened and 24 have been brought back into use. A further 43 social residential pitches are in the planning process. 8 new transit pitches have opened (on an expanded site) and 24 have been brought back into use. 35 new transit pitches are in development and 22 are in the planning process. To give a very rough – and possibly over optimistic – estimate of progress nationally, these figures might be doubled (taking account of a response rate of just over 50 per cent which might include a disproportionate share of more active LAs).

Of the 50 additional pitches (residential and transit) provided on new or expanded sites, 13 (26 per cent) were provided by high priority LAs – all residential pitches on expanded sites. The remaining 37 additional social pitches were provided in medium priority LAs.

Question D3 of the survey asked LAs about any losses to the provision of social pitches since February 2006. Three LAs reported the combined loss of 19 pitches (all residential). Most of these (15 pitches) are still available for Gypsy and Traveller use. The remainder were lost for management reasons or because of very poor condition.

Private pitch provision

Questions D5 and D6 of the survey asked how many private residential and transit pitches had been completed (occupied or ready for occupation) within the authority since February 2006. Around 1 / 10th of those responding were unable to answer. Table 4.8 below shows the number of pitches recorded in each category and whether the planning permission was permanent or temporary. The lower part of the table shows the number and percentage of LAs with different levels of provision. Perhaps the most striking feature of the table is the large number of LAs (138 or 82 per cent) where no private pitches had been completed.

Type of pitch	Permanent permission	Temporary permission
Residential pitches	302 (32 LAs)	237 (31 LAs)
Transit pitches	15 (2 LAs)	-

Number of pitches	Permanent permission		Temporary permission	
	No. LAs	%	No. LAs	%
None	132	80	138	82
1-5	14	9	18	11
6-10	6	4	6	4
11-15	5	3	4	2
16-20	4	2	1	1
21-25	2	1	1	1
26-30	-	-	-	-
Over 30	1	1	1	1

In total, 539 private pitches have been completed, of which 237 (44 per cent) have only a temporary planning permission. 15 private transit pitches have been provided, all with a permanent planning consent.

Five LAs had over 20 completions. Two are in the East of England and one each in the South West, South East and West Midlands. All are high priority LAs and are district councils.

Question D7 of the survey asked whether any private Gypsy and Traveller sites have closed or otherwise ceased to be available for use by Gypsies and Travellers since February 2006. 9 LAs (5 per cent) said sites had been lost. Losses reported involved 68 residential and 40 transit pitches. Four of the LAs reporting private pitch loss are in the high priority category.

Local authorities gave a number of reasons for the loss of private pitches for Gypsy and Traveller use including changing to non-Gypsy and Traveller occupancy, dispute between family members or residents and, in one case, expiry of a temporary planning permission.

All pitch provision

In order to get a clearer impression of progress on all forms of pitch provision, we created a new variable combining both social and private additional pitches (new and expanded social residential and transit pitches from question D1 + completed private residential and transit pitches with permanent and temporary planning permissions from questions D5 and D6). 160 LAs provided information on all these questions allowing us to compute this variable. Of the 160, 109 (68 per cent) had no completed additional pitches since February 2006. Progress on this measure is summarised in Table 4.9.

Number of pitches	No. authorities	%
None	109	68
1-5	23	14
6-10	8	5
11-15	7	4
16-20	2	1
21-25	5	3
26-30	4	3
Over 30	2	1

In all, the 160 LAs added 572 pitches. Of the 11 LAs which added over 20 pitches, five are in the East of England, three are in the South East and one each is in the South West, East Midlands and West Midlands. All except one are in the high priority category and all are district councils.

The relationship between priority category (that is, current population and / or assessed need) and additional pitches is quite strong. The average number of additional pitches by priority category is:

- High 15.2 pitches (25 LAs)
- Medium 1.6 pitches (110 LAs)
- Low 0.6 pitches (25 LAs)

This would indicate that, generally speaking, the ‘right’ LAs (those deemed high priority) are making progress – although not all the ‘right’ LAs are making progress (out of the 25 providing data, four of the high priority LAs had no additional pitches, and a further four had only up to five).

Assessments of adequacy of progress

Whether the rate of progress is ‘adequate’ depends on the relationship between pitch additions and assessed need. Analysis is confined to a reduced sample of the LAs where information is available on both estimated residential pitch needs and additional pitch completions. It assumes that the period since February 2008 is two years and that the annual completion rate can be estimated by halving the additional pitch figure (it is actually longer than two years, but this might be seen as compensating for a predictably slow start in the process). Table 4.10 shows the average number of years needed to meet five-year

pitch requirements at the rate achieved since February 2006. The first column shows the picture if all completions are included, including those with temporary planning permissions, the second includes only pitches completed with permanent planning permissions. As can be seen, this significantly affects any assessment of ‘adequacy’ of progress.

Table 4.10: Assessed ‘adequacy’ of progress on pitch completions since February 2006		
Priority category	Average number of years needed to meet five-year pitch requirements at current rate of progress	
	All completions	Completions with permanent permission
Base: all LAs	155	158
All LAs	10	18
High priority	6	10
Medium priority	21	40
Low priority	9	69

Overall, the figures suggest that, taking all completions, the rate of progress needs to double to meet five-year requirements. However, if only completions with a permanent planning permission are considered, the rate needs almost to quadruple. The analysis on the basis of the Caravan Count in Table 3.2 above suggested that five-year requirements might be met in 12 years, somewhere between the two figures in Table 4.10.

Whether looking at all completions or those achieved with permanent planning permissions, high priority LAs are performing better than others. Their rate of progress in terms of pitches with permanent permission needs to double, but a much greater increase is necessary among medium and low priority LAs.

At individual LA level and looking at all completions, 27 LAs (or 17 per cent from the 155 respondents providing all necessary information) are on track to meet five-year pitch needs in five years if the same rate of progress is maintained; 13 of these are in the high priority category. Restricting the analysis to completed pitches with permanent planning permissions, only 18 LAs (or 11 per cent of the 158 providing information) are on track; 10 of these are in the high priority category.

The implication of this is, of course, that the great majority of LAs are not on track to meet five-year needs in five years – even including the use of temporary planning permissions – unless the rate of progress on provision increases, often significantly. Over two-thirds of

LAs (68 per cent) have achieved no pitch completions at all since February 2006, and 79 per cent have not achieved any completions involving permanent planning permissions.

Local authority perceptions of likelihood of meeting pitch shortfalls

This analysis can be compared with local authorities’ perceptions of whether identified pitch shortfalls will be met during the first five-year planning period (question B4 in the survey). LAs proved markedly more optimistic than might be expected in the light of the above analysis (Table 4.11).

Almost 1 LA in 10 could not, or would not say whether their requirements were likely to be met within five years. Overall, the majority (54 per cent) were optimistic and said yes – either certainly or probably. Among the high priority LAs, slightly more were pessimistic than optimistic. This may reflect the relatively more challenging situation faced by their authority.

Table 4.11: Will the identified shortfalls be met during the first five year planning period? (B4)				
	All LAs		High priority LAs	
Base: all LAs	185		36	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes certainly	5	3	1	3
Yes probably	94	51	15	42
No unlikely	63	34	16	44
No certainly	6	3	1	3
No answer/DK/NA	17	9	3	8

The following variables were checked for a relationship with perceived likelihood of meeting requirements in the first five years:

- **Region:** Optimists are more likely to be in southern regions; pessimists are more likely to be in northern regions; the Midlands are average. This may reflect the generally more advanced state in the south including RSS progress. It broadly tallies with the pattern of estimated pitch completion relative to requirements based on the Caravan Count in Table 3.2.
- **Formal planning progress:** There is no relationship between answers on likelihood of meeting shortfall and having a Core Strategy or DPD. It is tempting to conclude that the formal planning processes are not very influential on progress.

- **Actively looking for land:** Optimists are more likely than pessimists to be looking for land.
- **Extent of requirements:** On average, optimists have lower pitch requirements (17.4 pitches) than pessimists (24.3 pitches).

These are realistic relationships and suggest that survey answers have some relationship to reality. However, given the apparent lack of progress in terms of additional pitches delivered on the ground, they seem rather over-optimistic.

Reasons for thinking identified shortfalls would not be met in the first five-year planning period were varied. Answers included references to: the lack of suitable sites; the volume of pitches needing to be developed; the current lack of agreement between sub-regional LAs as to where need should be met; and the time it will take to identify land, secure planning permission and develop a site. However, almost all responding LAs referred to some element of the planning framework and the development of planning documents (Core Strategies and / or RSS) as reasons why the shortfall will not be met within five years. This was the case across all regions. Examples of comments include:

The identification of new sites within the Allocations DPD will not be through its processes till 2011 at the earliest. In reality this will need to respond to provision figures provided from the Regional Spatial Strategy and these will not be approved until 2010/11. It is not therefore possible to put any timescale on when provision can be achieved.

2011 is little more than 2 years away and the LDF will not be progressed to a sufficient extent by that date. The Council has to operate the LDF system as set out in Government statute and regulations. The processes involved in the current LDF system do not lend themselves to bringing forward any sites – whether for housing, Gypsy and Travellers, employment etc – quickly. Planning applications and schemes could in theory be progressed either privately or by the Council via planning applications and using existing UDP policies. However as expressed above there appears little prospect of private individuals bringing sites forward at present.

It is not realistic to expect local authorities to be able to deliver 1,634 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers across the (South West) region by 2011 through Development Plan Documents. There is insufficient time for these documents to be

prepared, examined and implemented by that date. Whilst it is accepted that the need to provide sites is urgent, setting undeliverable targets in RSS is not the answer. The RSS needs to set a more realistic timescale for delivery.

These comments underline the significance of the conclusion reached by the Independent Task Group on Site Provision and Enforcement for Gypsies and Travellers in its Final Report *The Road Ahead* in 2007:

The Task Group view – and that of most who gave evidence – is that the planning framework now in place should deliver sufficient accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers over time. The challenge is to increase the pace at which that framework is implemented. (p. 13)

ODPM Circular 01/2006 stresses that LAs in areas with evident need should not wait for the completion of the RSS before preparing policies and Site Allocation DPDs. It is clear from our survey that not all LAs are heeding this advice; it is also clear that these processes themselves are lengthy, particularly when dealing with potentially contentious topics such as Gypsy and Traveller site provision.

5. GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES GRANT

Chapter 2 noted that the main financial support for site provision is the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant. This started as a grant to assist the refurbishment of sites owned by local authorities and has since been widened to include 100 per cent support for new site development by local authorities and registered social landlords. Priority in awarding grants has shifted from refurbishment to new site development. Priority is also given to 'innovative' proposals for facilitating site development by Gypsies and Travellers themselves. This chapter looks at information on grants and uses information gained from both secondary sources (the Communities and Local Government (CLG)) and the survey of local authorities.

CLG information on Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants 2006-8

The analysis of secondary data on Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants pre-dated the announcement on 18 December 2008 of awards made in 2008/9. These awards amounted to £21.6 million for work on 43 sites or initiatives, including 6 new sites. It has not been possible to include this latest round of awards in the more detailed analyses below.

The CLG information (CLG, undated) shows a total of £54.6 million in awards in 2006 to 2008.⁹ The published figures show the size of grant awarded by recipient LA (including county councils) and the name of the site involved. To bring it into line with other information presented here, we have allocated awards to the district in which the site affected is located (rather than grant recipient LA).

The published data does not specify which awards were for refurbishment and which were for new site provision or other initiatives. In order to try to establish relative proportions, we analysed awards by whether the LA in which the grant-aided site is located had an existing social site in Table 2 of the January 2008 Caravan Count. This is not a definitive indication of a distinction between grants for refurbishment or new site development since:

- Some grants were awarded for existing sites which did not appear in Table 2 because of their management arrangements (based on researchers' personal knowledge); and
- Some grants could be for new sites in LAs which already have an existing site.

Despite these caveats, the analysis does indicate the extent to which grant awards are spreading provision.

⁹ Tables available at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingmanagementcare/gypsiesandtravellers/gypsiesitesgrants>

Category	No. LAs	% LAs	Grant (£)	% of grant	% of LAs with grant	Av. grant LA with award (£)
LA Site	194	56	39,838,786	74	52	398,388
No LA site	150	44	13,928,671	26	7	1,266,243
Total	344	100	53,767,457	100	32	484,392

Table 5.1 shows that 74 per cent of grants awarded between 2006 and 2008 went to LAs with an existing LA site shown in Table 2 of the January 2008 Count. A significant proportion of this is likely to be for refurbishment. However, the average size of grant per site (not necessarily made in a single award) was significantly higher in LAs where there is no LA site. A total of 11 LAs received grant without an LA site in the January 2008 Table 2 Count (Table 5.2). Of these, only one is in the high priority category.

Waveney	£170,000	Appears to be an existing site which does not appear in Table 2 because it is privately managed
Gedling	£646,675	New site joint with Nottingham
Forest Heath	£748,500	Existing LA-owned site, privately managed
Southampton	£997,295	New transit site
Corby	£1,293,948	Seems to be bringing a closed site back into use
North Norfolk	£1,409,000	Two new sites planned
Derby	£1,415,708	New site
Rugby	£1,419,500	LA purchase / development of part of private site
South Holland	£1,753,164	Three new sites planned
Colchester	£1,972,348	New site (perhaps replacing a former site)
Nottingham	£2,102,533	New site joint with Gedling

Other new sites / initiatives in areas with an existing LA site (from the name given in the grant listing) are:

- Taunton Deane 100,000 G&T Site Acquisition Fund
- North Wiltshire 150,000 G&T Community Trust Fund
- Lewisham 382,500 Former Watergate School Site

There may be other new sites or expansions 'hidden' in the list in areas with existing sites – indeed the survey results reported below suggest that this is so.

A further analysis of CLG data was carried out to check the extent to which Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants have been awarded to LAs in our high priority category (Table 5.3).

Category	No. LAs	% LAs	Grant (£)	% of grant	% of LAs with grant	Av. grant LA (all) (£)
High	49	14	11,295,366	21	61	230,518
Medium	239	70	40,531,468	75	33	169,588
Low	56	16	1,940,623	4	4	34,654
Total	344	100	53,767,457	100	32	156,588

The majority of grants have been awarded to LAs in the 'medium' category (75 per cent) which comprise the great majority of LAs (70 per cent). However, the high priority LAs are more likely to have been awarded grants (61 per cent of high priority LAs, compared to 32 per cent overall, received grants), and they take more than their 'share' of the awards. The clearest point is the very low amount of grants awarded to the low priority category (only one LA received a grant). This implies that there may have been some targeting of funds but also suggests that there are different criteria for awarding of Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants from those we have used to identify high priority LAs.

Survey information on the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant

A section of the survey questionnaire dealt with applications for, and awards of, Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants. A total of 61 (33 per cent) of the 185 responding LAs said that a grant application and / or award had been made for a site in their area since February 2006. All answers pre-dated the December announcement of awards for 2008/9.

Thus, two-thirds of survey respondents had not made a grant application or received an award; question E2 asked them why no application had been made. Four main themes emerged from reasons given for not applying for a grant:

- The LA is not yet ready to apply for a grant for a new site, because requirements have not yet been agreed and / or the planning process has not yet reached the stage of identifying land for sites. This was by far the most frequently mentioned reason.
- The LA is looking for land but has not yet found suitable or acceptable sites.
- Either there is no existing site in the LA (and therefore no need for refurbishment) or an existing site has already been refurbished. Some LAs giving this sort of reason appear to still see the grant as primarily for refurbishment.
- There is no evidence of need in the area, or at least no need for social site provision.

There were some other specific reasons given, sometimes related to initiatives and proposals which had stalled or failed, for example because of public objections or shortage of staff to work up a bid.

Table 5.4 shows the pattern of grant applications and awards since February 2006 on the basis of survey information. It distinguishes between different types of work and for each, shows the number of LAs and the number of sites involved. A distinction is made between additional or re-opened pitches consequent on grant proposals and existing pitches affected.

Not all answers were complete, but some general comments can be made:

- Despite priority for additional provision, most grant applications and awards are for refurbishment of existing sites.
- Generally, applications exceed awards because LAs were awaiting the announcement of the current round of grants (made 18 December) and because some applications are unsuccessful. For refurbishment grants, where awards exceed applications, this presumably reflects the time lag / carry-over between applications and awards.
- The awards to these responding LAs should create 165 additional pitches and should bring 23 pitches back into use as well as refurbishing 928 existing pitches.

Table 5.4: Grant applications / awards since February 2006				
Nature of grant	No. LAs	No. sites	Pitches affected	
			Additional / re-used	Existing
Application for new site	17	25	189	-
Grant award for new site	11	16	136	-
Application for refurb including additional pitches	14	19	43	296
Grant award for refurb including additional pitches	8	10	29	166
Application for pitches back into use with / without refurb	4	4	39	35
Grant award for pitches back into use with / without refurb	1	1	23	0
Application for refurb not including additional pitches	31	39	-	703
Grant award for refurb not including additional pitches	33	43	-	762

Of the 19 LAs awarded grants involving additional pitches – either through a new site or a site expansion, only seven (37 per cent) are in our high priority category.

The survey also asked about pitches actually added and opened through grant-aided projects since February 2006. Pitch completions are much more modest than grant applications or awards. Only seven additional residential pitches (in three LAs, two of which are high priority) and eight additional transit pitches (in a single medium priority LA) had been completed. Total costs had been covered except in a single authority where the additional pitches were provided as part of a refurbishment scheme.

A similar question asked about the number of pitches actually benefiting from completed grant-aided works since February 2006. 677 existing residential pitches in 31 LAs and 43 transit pitches in 4 LAs had benefited from grant-aided refurbishment.

It is clear from survey answers that the refurbishment which has taken place is significant on a number of sites and relatively minor on others. It is not possible from the information provided to quantify the split between 'major' and 'minor'; it might also be misleading since it is clear that much refurbishment work is phased and the works reported could appear minor while the whole programme would be major. Relatively minor works include general

repairs and maintenance to the redevelopment of utility / amenity blocks (the most common form of refurbishment) and creation of additional pitches and community buildings. The selected examples in Table 5.5, illustrate some of the more extensive refurbishment work.

Table 5.5: Examples of major grant-aided works on sites since February 2006
Example 1
<p>Phase 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven plots / utilities and associated works • Electrical works, including sub-mains to seven plots • Water, including sub-mains to seven plots • Storm water interceptor • Foul drain pump station • Landscaping <p>Phase 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six plots / utilities and associated works • Electrical / water supply to six plots • Site roads, paving and drainage <p>Phase 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six plots / utilities and associated works • Electric / water supply to six plots • Community building and play space • Remaining site roads, paving and drainage • Barrier • CCTV
Example 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refurbishment and upgrading of amenity blocks • Resurfacing of pitch hard-standings

- Fencing of pitches
- Resurfacing of sites carriageway
- Remodelling of site entrance to improve safety
- Implementation of a new surface water drainage system remodelling
- Refurbishment of site office to provide meeting room facility

Example 3

- Additional areas of concrete hard-standing on each plot
- Delineation between pitches using concrete block walls
- Internal and external works to all amenity blocks
- Upgrading of all roadways to adoptable standards including traffic calming and street lighting
- Conversion of an office block for use as a meeting room for one-to-one education and health visits and other community based activities
- Provision of an equipped play area
- Provision of independent water and key meters to each plot to enable residents to budget and look after their own utilities
- Perimeter fencing on all sides of the site and a planting scheme of trees and shrubs
- A new independent sewage treatment plant
- Provision of a recycling area

A survey question asked about the source of funds used to top-up grants for refurbishment which can only cover 75 per cent of approved costs. There were three broad sources of top-up funding: the 'general fund' of a local authority (the most common source); county councils; and the housing revenue fund. One LA referred to funds obtained from a 'private sector renewal fund' and another LA referred to achieving matched funds from both a housing association and a housing revenue account.

Question E9 of the survey asked how much LAs had been granted from the £56 million made available by CLG for Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant 2006-8. 40 responding LAs had together received £28,962,940 (average £724,024). Less than a third of this had been

spent by the time of the survey: £9,087,907 (average £227,198). The main reason for not spending was timing and not yet having made expenditure rather than using the money for something else. The second part of E10 about the amount committed was answered inconsistently and cannot be analysed.

Written-in answers suggest that some LAs were experiencing problems in spending grants awarded, but it is not clear whether the information provided in this voluntary manner is comprehensive and it would be unwise to draw firm conclusions.

6. HOUSING-RELATED SUPPORT AND HOUSING STRATEGIES

While the main focus of this study is on site provision, one section of the survey questionnaire dealt with housing strategies and support for Gypsies and Travellers accessing and / or retaining bricks and mortar accommodation. While not discussed at length here, it is important to remember that in many authorities – particularly heavily urbanised LAs – the majority of their Gypsy and Traveller population probably lives in bricks and mortar. This chapter looks at the mechanisms that responding LAs have been putting in place within their housing strategy documents, in the light of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need and housing-related support needs.

Housing strategies

The Housing Act 2004 makes clear that, where there is evidence of accommodation need for Gypsies and Travellers, housing strategies as well as planning strategies should address those needs. Table 6.1 shows how many LAs currently include in their housing strategy a policy or action aimed at providing or facilitating the provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.

	No. LAs	%
Yes policy / action	90	49
In preparation	40	22
No policy / action	44	24
No answer	11	6

Just under half of LAs said they had a policy or action in their housing strategy, and a further fifth said such a policy was in preparation (almost always estimated for completion by the end of 2009). Just under a quarter said that there was no such policy. Reasons for Gypsies and Travellers not featuring in housing strategies included:

- No established need for Gypsy and Traveller sites
- Awaiting the results of the GTAA
- The housing strategy is currently being updated and the revised version will include Gypsies and Travellers
- All community members are considered on an equal basis.

Table 6.2 shows that the likelihood of having a policy / action in the housing strategy varied regionally, with the North East, South East and Yorkshire and Humber being particularly above average, and London and the West Midlands below average. Metropolitan districts are most likely to have a policy in their housing strategy. There is no clear relationship with the priority categorisation other than low priority LAs being relatively unlikely to have a relevant policy in their housing strategy.

Table 6.2: Likelihood of a housing strategy policy or action relating to provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers by region, type of LA and priority category			
Region	% LAs yes	Type of LA	% LAs yes
North East	67	London Borough	18
North West	44	Met district	62
Yorks & Humber	60	Unitary / protoU	56
East Midlands	52	District council	48
West Midlands	33		
East	47	Priority	
London	18	High	44
South East	62	Medium	52
South West	52	Low	40
All	49	All	49

Support measures introduced since February 2006

Questions were asked about whether any specific measures had been introduced since February 2006 to help Gypsies and Travellers to access bricks and mortar accommodation (F3) or to provide support to Gypsies and Travellers to help them move into and / or retain bricks and mortar accommodation. Table 6.3 summarises the answers. It is important to remember that these answers relate to measures introduced since February 2006, and do not show where such measures were in place prior to that date.

Table 6.3: Specific measures introduced since February 2006 to help Gypsies and Travellers access, move into or retain bricks and mortar accommodation				
	Help Gypsies / Travellers access bricks and mortar accommodation		Provide support to Gypsies / Travellers to help them move into / retain bricks and mortar accommodation	
	No. LAs	% LAs	No. LAs	% LAs
Yes	43	23	55	30

No	134	72	121	65
No answer	8	4	9	5

Overall, 66 LAs (36 per cent) had introduced either or both sorts of measure. The characteristics of LAs introducing measures are in the Table 6.4 below.

Measures to assist Gypsies and Travellers to access, or to support them in moving into or retaining, bricks and mortar accommodation are particularly likely to have been taken by LAs in the West Midlands and North West; unitary / emerging unitary authorities and metropolitan districts and high priority LAs. They are particularly unlikely to have been taken in the North East and low priority LAs.

Table 6.4: Likelihood of having introduced a specific housing support measure by region, type of LA and priority category			
Region	% LAs yes	Type of LA	% LAs yes
North East	25	London Borough	36
North West	46	Met district	46
Yorks & Humber	40	Unitary / protoU	52
East Midlands	32	District council	33
West Midlands	57		
East	32	Priority	
London	36	High	52
South East	30	Medium	39
South West	36	Low	12
All*	38	All	38

* Excludes LAs not giving an answer.

The actual measures introduced were varied and included services which specifically targeted Gypsies and Travellers in some way:

- Gypsies and Travellers included in ethnic monitoring forms
- Welfare checks regularly carried out
- Prioritisation of Gypsies and Travellers on housing need waiting lists
- Supporting People funding to provide 'housing-related support' to site and bricks and mortar based households (often on a county-wide basis)
- Specific Gypsy and Traveller liaison officers appointed

- More specific research into housing and related support needs commissioned.

A large number of other authorities which reported measures having been introduced referred to the introduction of a Choice Based Lettings service which offers a more transparent means of accessing bricks and mortar accommodation to all members of the local community. An unusual initiative is worthy of note:

The Affordable Housing Enabling Team has been working with local families to identify suitable land for affordable housing and open market value housing. Expertise and funds are provided to secure planning permission. The project has been going about 9 months and looks like it will secure about 20 affordable homes and 10 open market. The affordable housing will be restricted to local persons including the land owners who are from the local established Gypsy and Traveller community.

7. QUALITY OF GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES

The quality of site provision was an element in the brief for this study. This is obviously a very relevant concern since there has been much criticism of many of the local authority (LA) sites provided prior to 1994 when the duty to provide sites (under the Caravan Sites Act 1968) was removed. Sites have been criticised for their size and design, but particularly for their location and environment – for example, remote from services, next to industrial areas, major roads, railways or refuse tips. Some private sites have been developed where Gypsies and Travellers were able to buy affordable land and there are examples of sites under major pylon lines or adjacent to major roads or airports.

In developing the survey questionnaire, we noted that questions about the quality of newly provided sites were unlikely to be answered fully. It was agreed to include questions about concerns respondents had about existing social Gypsy and Traveller sites in their area (Section C). Respondents were not asked about private sites due to the general lack of knowledge local authorities tend to have about these sites. Respondents were asked to describe any significant outstanding concerns over: physical condition / state of repair; site layout or design; site location / access to services etc; neighbouring land uses and environment; and other. Answers proved to require some interpretation:

- Where a return from an authority with a social site left all boxes blank, we assumed that they had no concerns
- Some entries appeared to describe the site, rather than express concerns. For quantitative analysis, we only coded as ‘concerns’ answers which were clearly critical of the site.

A total of 102 LAs said that there was a social site in their area, run by a local authority or registered social landlord. However, eight explicitly said that they had no information on site quality. Table 7.1 shows the number of LAs expressing concern on each feature of sites in their area, and the proportion this represents of the 94 LAs which provided information. The second part of the table summarises the number of concerns raised.

In terms of the type of concern expressed, slightly more LAs were concerned about the physical condition or state of repair of a site than the other factors, which were of broadly similar significance. This suggests an ongoing need for financial assistance with refurbishment.

Table 7.1: Significant outstanding concerns about social Gypsy and Travellers sites (C2)		
Nature of concern	Number of LAs expressing concern	%
Base : LAs with a site providing information	94	
Physical condition / state of repair	34	36
Site layout or design	24	26
Site location / access to services etc	23	24
Neighbouring land uses and environment	22	23
Other	17	18
Number of concerns noted		
None	32	34
One	30	32
Two	16	17
Three	9	10
Four	5	5
Five	2	2

A third of LAs with a social site had no significant concern at all, and a further third had a single concern. The combination of concerns suggests that a minority of sites have fairly serious quality problems, although judgements are likely to be subjective with respondents applying different quality thresholds in their answers. Of the seven LAs expressing four or five concerns, three are metropolitan districts, one is a London Borough and three are district councils.

LAs expressing more than a single concern also had above average additional pitch requirements (25.4 pitches) suggesting that issues of quality and quantity may affect the same set of LAs.

Table 7.2 presents examples of concerns expressed under each heading. Some show that judgements are not always simple as to what actually should be of concern. Concerns and comments as a whole sometimes demonstrate trade-offs – for example, poor neighbours but good access to services.

<p>Table 7.2: Examples of significant concerns about social sites expressed by local authorities</p>
<p><i>Physical condition / state of repair</i></p>
<p>Example 1: The utility sheds at the [XXX] and [XXX] sites have not been refurbished for several years. The kitchen and bathroom areas are in need of renewal. The [XXX] site has also suffered from vandalism and as such the majority of the utility sheds are in very poor state of repair. They require additional refurbishment works.</p> <p>Example 2: The amenity units on one of the sites need to be refurbished particularly the kitchens and bathrooms that need to be made decent. The units also require rewiring and [improvement to earthing arrangements], as well as new heating units for the bathrooms. Most pitches now do not have any perimeter fences and the residents have created their own using a variety of materials. New fences need to be developed to improve the appearance of the site and address health and safety issues.</p> <p>Example 3: Failing infrastructure in both sites including sewage / waste water treatment / management, site roads, street lighting, pitch sizes, pitch location, electrical supply.</p>
<p><i>Site layout or design</i></p>
<p>Example 1: No communal area or play space.</p> <p>Example 2: The sites are limited in size and this is a constraint in providing any additional plots or substantial additions to the existing utility sheds.</p> <p>Example 3: [XXX] site is located down a long lane, which gives rise to fly tipping.</p> <p>Example 4: The site has a narrow unadopted road providing access to the dwellings with minimal scope for easy turning round or access / exit for emergency vehicles. The pitches and access road are concrete with no soft / earth / grassed garden areas for children to play. The metal fences around the pitches are like cattle markets and the site is surrounded by an 8ft fence.</p>
<p><i>Site location / access to services etc</i></p>
<p>Example 1: The location of the site is not ideal as it is some distance from local services, on the slip road to the [A road] and in close proximity to overhead cables / pylons. However [XXX] site is a large (41 pitch) popular</p>

local authority site, which could not easily be replaced. Access to the [A road] is useful for Gypsy / Traveller men who drive to work over a wide radius, but less useful for Gypsy / Traveller women who need to access local shops, schools etc.

Example 2: Poor – one site is located well away from bus services, shops and medical services. The second site is constructed on a historical land fill site. The second site is also partially located in a primary flood plain and the main access road to the site is located entirely within the primary flood plain.

Example 3: Site locations are rural with little access to services, however due to the rural nature of the district they are very popular.

Neighbouring land uses and environment

Example 1: Neighbouring land uses are light industrial, and the site is adjacent to a major road flyover, so the environment is unattractive but not unsafe.

Example 2: Surrounding land use is commercial. Odour and noise from Waste Transfer Station. Traffic noise / dust from heavy vehicles accessing other commercial sites such as Cement Batching plant. Some congestion on access road during busy periods at the waste transfer station and when commercial vehicles are parked on narrow private road.

Example 3: [XXX] site does not serve any residential properties and there are no homes in the vicinity of the travellers site. There are business premises to the north and west of the site, a refuse transfer station to the east, and open ground and river [XXX] to the south (opposite the entrance to the site).

Other

Example 1: 55.6 per cent reported that they experienced harassment, although mainly from other Gypsies and Travellers.

Example 2: The area around the site is used by fly tippers, mainly from the settled community, which gives the area a poor appearance and leads some to assume that this is caused by the Gypsies themselves. Joint work is being done as part of the planning for the refurbishment between the county council and [XXX] District Council's environment service to address this.

8. VIEWS ON PROGRESS AND BARRIERS TO PROVISION

The final section of the survey questionnaire to local authorities asked respondents for their views on the progress, at both national and local level, on meeting Gypsy and Traveller needs since 2006. Their views as to barriers to progress were explored as well as comments on how their authority is tackling such barriers. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity in order to encourage open answers to this section of the questionnaire.

Views of progress

Table 8.1 shows respondents' awards of marks out of 10 for satisfactory progress on provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites since 2006. At least a fifth of respondents did not answer the question at all – a higher number failing to mark national than local progress. Overall, assessments are most likely to be in the middle of the range. The average mark is slightly higher for national than for local progress.

Marks out of 10	National level		Local level	
	No. LAs	% LAs	No. LAs	% LAs
1	3	2	4	2
2	2	1	9	5
3	16	9	21	11
4	12	7	14	8
5	30	16	46	25
6	32	17	21	11
7	24	13	17	9
8	11	6	10	5
9	1	1	3	2
10	1	1	3	2
No answer	53	29	37	20
Average mark	5.5		5.1	

We carried out a number of analyses to see whether the mark awarded for local progress related to any of the more 'objective' measures of progress from the survey, such as pitch completions, grant applications or awards, having formal planning documents in place and

perceived likelihood of meeting pitch shortfalls within five years. Virtually no relationships were revealed, and the details of the analyses are not presented here. Table 8.2 shows the average mark awarded for local progress by region, type of authority and priority category. Again, it is hard to see obvious relationships with progress achieved or local circumstances.

Table 8.2: Average mark awarded for local progress by region, type of LA and priority category			
Region	Average mark	Type of LA	Average mark
North East	6.0 (7 LAs)	London Borough	5.1 (8 LAs)
North West	5.3 (23 LAs)	Met district	5.8 (24 LAs)
Yorks & Humber	4.8 (10 LAs)	Unitary / proto-U	4.8 (22 LAs)
East Midlands	4.8 (13 LAs)	District council	5.0 (94 LAs)
West Midlands	5.2 (18 LAs)		
East	5.9 (26 LAs)	Priority	
London	5.1 (8 LAs)	High	5.2 (25 LAs)
South East	5.1 (21 LAs)	Medium	5.1 (105 LAs)
South West	3.9 (22 LAs)	Low	5.2 (18 LAs)
All	5.1	All	5.1

Barriers to provision

A total of 147 local authorities provided views on what they perceived the barriers to progressing with Gypsy and Traveller site provision to be. Some of the responses were relatively short, consisting of a number of bullet points. In many cases however, this section generated significant scope for respondents to provide detail about the areas they felt to be problematic. Although there were many varied responses the great majority of them had obvious themes. These were:

- The effect of public / elected member opposition and negative media issues
- Inability to identify appropriate land / Green Belt issues
- The regional / local planning approach and the lack of effective 'tools'
- Funding and finance
- Conflict with broader needs of the local authority area
- Leadership issues.

Each of these is examined in more detail below.

Opposition to site developments and Gypsies and Travellers

By far the most frequently cited barrier to moving forward with provision was attributed to 'local opposition', 'political objections / will' or 'public acceptance of planning proposals'. This had a number of elements including local community members, elected members of the local authority and media representation (local and national) of Gypsies and Travellers. Although some authorities had clearly begun the process of public discussion of Gypsy and Traveller needs, it was also clear that a number of authorities had not moved forward and their perceived barrier was 'anticipated resistance from existing residential communities' rather than actual experiences of opposition. It seems therefore, that some authorities are delaying provision due to a lack of knowledge about how to proceed with local politics.

A comment from a local authority in the North of England notes the continuing apparent 'acceptability' of prejudice towards Gypsies and Travellers:

Negative media still seems to be acceptable for Gypsies & Travellers when would not even be considered for other Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups.

A comment from a local authority in the Midlands tries to explore the nature of this prejudice:

The main barrier is that local residents, not all, have an ingrained fear (almost hatred) of Travellers and their reputation is one of disruption, theft and vandalism and that they do not have to conform to the social rules of society or be subject to the laws that a settled community has to comply with. This, of course, becomes more contentious where an illegal site has been established within a community or a planning application is made for such a site. A true Romany Gypsy is far more likely to be accepted than for example an Irish Traveller, again, due to the perceived history and culture of these groups.

One respondent alluded to the way in which they saw public opposition being linked to the local political context:

The provision of sites is obviously controversial politically as many local residents would oppose any provision. Planning has to take on board the concerns of local

residents and sites are likely to get far more representations opposing any proposals than supporting it. I am sure many elected members who wish to retain their seats would see the provision of a site in their area as a sure way to ensure they do not get re-elected.

Such prejudice was seen to involve over-reaction to perceived problems associated with Gypsies and Travellers and how they should be dealt with:

The perception of the travelling community appears to be based on stereotypes and is unhelpful when working within this community. Local businesses based near established sites actively pursue the council to relocate them, knock them down, evict whole sites when one person may be the problem. Over-reaction to any problem on a travellers site in contrast to that in housing.

One respondent in the East of England clearly had direct experience of public views, and lack of understanding, of Gypsies and Travellers and how this impacted upon the planning process:

The sheer scale, anger and degree of fear of the general public to consultation on additional site provision cannot be over-estimated. Having just commenced such a consultation, the response has been predictable, loud, intense and overwhelming. It is, without any fear of exaggeration, the most controversial issue ever dealt with by this authority. There is very widespread misunderstanding by the public on this issue. There is surprisingly often an ignorance of Gypsy and Traveller lifestyles, of the presence of local Gypsy and Traveller communities and a false assumption that they are somehow 'invaders' from outside as if from Mars, not locals seeking better accommodation. The response is often expressed that Gypsies and Travellers will ruin lives, disrupt education and raise crime; but we find that in large part the same people don't know where Gypsies and Travellers live locally and what the current impact is (or lack of it) on local living.

It was noted that where additional provision looked to simply extend existing sites there was likely be less opposition than if brand new sites were being developed:

There may be problems in identifying any brand new Traveller sites, but there is likely to be relatively little opposition to modest extensions on the current sites in the future, which should be sufficient to meet the identified additional need in the GTAA.

Locating appropriate land for site / pitch development

Although a separate issue, identifying appropriate land which can be developed as a Gypsy and Traveller site was inextricably linked to public opposition to Gypsies and Travellers:

Finding suitable available land. There is also concern over the cost of implementing sites if / when land is found. There is a high degree of political sensitivity due to the likely impact of locating new Gypsy and Traveller sites especially in a small borough which is tightly bound by green belt areas.

Many responding LAs simply stated that there was a lack of suitable or appropriate land or sites for development within their area. There was a clear belief from respondents working in predominantly urban areas that suitable land was very difficult to locate and their urban nature meant land was not available for the sort of development required for Gypsy and Traveller sites:

[Our] urban nature restricts opportunity to identify land or apply for planning permission.

Identification of land given competing priorities for general new homes provision in the context of boundaries drawn tightly around an existing urban area.

Pressure on land – If we allocate land for new Gypsy and Traveller provision this will affect the supply available for housing and other developments.

This was a particularly significant issue reported in London:

We are a densely populated inner London Borough, and the availability of suitable undeveloped land is very limited.

Conversely, respondents from authorities where there was Green Belt designation gave this and similar issues such as the presence of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

(AONB) as a reason why finding appropriate land was an issue, particularly in the South West:

Finding suitable available land. There is a high degree of political sensitivity due to the likely impact of locating new Gypsy and Traveller sites especially in a small borough which is tightly bound by green belt areas.

The District has a high number of environmentally sensitive areas – AONB, Green Belt, Flood plains, all of which limit possible site locations. We are prepared to be flexible in the Green Belt and consider sites rather like affordable housing exception sites, but the Heathland issue is a significant barrier in these areas (this issue affects our normal housing provision as well as the Gypsy sites).

The planning policy context for the protection of eg: green belt land, AONB and the open countryside. Gypsy site development does not fit easily with a national planning policy framework geared to preventing development outside existing settlements. There are very few if any appropriate opportunities within existing developed areas within the Borough.

A number of responses hinted that the demands for a site to meet a number of criteria meant that sites had been discounted in the past:

Locating sites that are 'fit for purpose'. A number of sites have previously been identified within the borough but have had to be discounted for a variety of different reasons including; poor access, land ownership, proximity to industry and size.

The regional / local planning policy approach

A significant number of responses referred to the regional (RSS) or local (LDF) planning process as the main barrier to meeting the requirements. Many such comments raised timing issues required to go through the process, for example:

The time it takes to adopt Development Plan Documents (such as the Core Strategy and Allocations document).

Procedural – time required to prepare Development Plan Documents and associated requirements such as sustainability appraisals. Assuming a speedy

route through the procedures implies that a Sites Allocations Development Plan Document commencing today would be unlikely to be adopted until March 2011.

It is a shame that the single issue RSS review has focussed on such a short timescale up to 2011. A lot of work is needed to address this time period. However this in my view is not strategic thinking. It would have been far more sensible to have addressed the issue in the roll forward of the RSS. My own authority has commenced work on the LDF this year looking at the period 2012-2026 which would have been able to properly address all matters in a far more professional strategic manner. What we have at the moment is panic and then reactions which is very stressful for the local communities involved, applicants, elected members and probably most importantly my young planning officers who are caught in the middle trying to provide a professional service.

Other responses discussed the lack of clarity within the regional planning guidance as being a significant barrier:

I also consider that awaiting RSS guidance has been used as an excuse not to meet provision set out within the needs assessment. The wording of the RSS in terms of 'working across administrative boundaries' is being used to delay LA provision as there still seems to be uncertainty as to whether or not provision for a district has to be 'within' the district. This uncertainty is then used as a justification for delaying action.

The large and unresolved disparity between our GTAA recommendation of [XX] pitches and the RSS single issue review recommendation of a minimum of 15 pitches per authority, has stalled further work aimed at increasing pitch provision.

One responding LA drew particular attention to the lack of 'tools' at the disposal of LAs to deal flexibly with the provision of sites:

Having completed the GTAA and begun the process of feeding the results through the Housing Strategy and Core Strategy processes, time has elapsed and the incentive to take more immediate proactive steps has not been sufficiently great to tackle this sensitive task. Circular 1/2006 provides good guidance for the plan-

making process but is less useful as a tool to guide the consideration of windfall planning applications, i.e. those decisions taken prior to having an LDF policy in place.

Funding and finance

Issues around funding Gypsy and Traveller pitches were raised by a number of responding LAs. In a number of instances, issues referred to Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants being insufficient to cover the pitch requirements of all LAs across the country / region. In other instances responding LAs talked about how the Grant was administered, for example:

The grant scheme could be more front-loaded. If it was turned into a set amount 'gift' from Central Government then the Local Authority could go out and buy land if they did not have suitable land of their own (which we don't). Though identifying sites is one of the early pieces of work a Local Authority does, it's what happens afterwards that slows the process down – we need to be enabled to act quickly.

The process of grant allocation is very restrictive due to the short time period set for bidding. Authorities may not be in a position to bid for grants available during this time and therefore maybe missing out on vital resources required to enable sites to be found or refurbished.

A small number of other authorities talked about the economic reality of developing Gypsy and Traveller sites which are, compared with some housing developments, low density:

Affordability of sites is a particularly key issue. In an area experiencing very high levels of growth the 'hope value' attached to any developable piece of land makes it very difficult for any potential Gypsy and Travellers sites to be developed.

The financial pressure that authorities are under, which makes the release of sites for less than greatest financial value, less likely.

The industry is not very competitive, as few companies want to get involved with this type of work. This allows some companies to monopolise the industry and charge extortionist prices to carry out the work.

Conflict with broader needs of the local authority area

Barriers caused by taking the need to develop Gypsy and Traveller sites and balancing this with the broader needs of the local area were related to financial issues:

The town needs to create a new and better housing and tourism offer that won't be helped by providing additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

Although Gypsies and Travellers are undoubtedly a high priority group, the Council currently has a significant problem with homelessness, which impacts on expenditure on the Council's General Fund (through use of temporary accommodation), and meeting this general housing need is therefore a greater priority for the Council than meeting the additional needs of the Gypsy and Traveller Community.

There is a severe shortage of general needs social housing in the Borough and limited availability of new sites for development. Any site that was identified for possible use as a Gypsy and Traveller site would be in direct competition with the need for use as social housing development site and the need for the provision of a Gypsy and Traveller site would need to be balanced against the need for bricks and mortar social housing.

Leadership issues

Although only mentioned by a small number of responding LAs, issues around leadership and ownership of Gypsy and Traveller issues were most important for some respondents. Some felt that central Government should be more involved than they currently had been:

Government should take the lead in raising a positive image of Gypsies and Travellers, and better communication with local politicians and the community as a whole, ensuring that local delivery of Gypsy and Traveller related services is seen positively by local politicians, rather than being seen as a vote loser.

It would be most helpful for all political parties to make a clear statement of policy for provision as the abiding view seems to be that if other parties were to take power then all the legislation regarding provision would be rescinded and all that is required is to wait for this imagined 'sea change'!

Other responding LAs talk about the role the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) itself should take in moving this agenda forward:

Prejudice and racial hatred towards Gypsies and Travellers plays a major part in preventing progress in site provision. There have not been enough national leaders from all political parties, the professional bodies – RTPI etc and the EHRC – in speaking out against the prejudicial media coverage and local protest at proposed sites and site policies. Without the voice of nationally respected leaders / public officials being heard to condemn the prejudice and to positively support the need for sites, then progress will not be adequately made and the local pressure on councillors will prevail. Local authorities need to take on board that site proposals are likely to stir up anti-Gypsy and Traveller racism and therefore they need to be proactive if they are to prevent damage to good race relations. If authorities publicise that they will apply the RTPI 'Code of Conduct for Dealing with Racist Representations' i.e. that they will not accept racist lobbying, this would be a beginning.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission need to 'do more' in terms of guidance and practical support. They need to ensure that this is delivered to Local Authorities in a robust way.

One LA highlights the potential issue around what they see as a current lack of clear direction and demonstrates the sheer complexity of the issue, particularly for those authorities who have, historically, been more active than others:

In opposition to previous advice, current Government guidance is that Gypsy and Traveller sites should be provided in close proximity to the settled community and that this will contribute to the creation of cohesive communities. The feedback received during the course of our consultation might suggest that before this can happen, there is a need to raise public awareness both locally and nationally, with the support of bodies such as the EHRC. The lack of awareness referred to above has been demonstrated in articles in the local and national media, prompted by the consultation. There has been criticism of the council by some groups that we have not dealt adequately with the nature and extent of some of this publicity. However,

planners are in the process of raising the matter of how to address this with their professional institute. In addition, like other local authorities, it appears that the council is being criticised for the inadequacy of its site provision for Gypsies and Travellers with no recognition being given to the additional pitches that have been provided in recent years.

In addition to these main themes, responding LAs also felt that a significant barrier was not having an established relationship with local Gypsy and Traveller communities. Although the needs assessment told them the quantity of accommodation required, and possibly indicated tenure preference, there was a need to discuss issues such as location and to develop a partnership to oversee the development of accommodation. In addition, a number of LAs were still debating the evidence of need as provided by their Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) and the lack of robustness therein.

Steps taken to tackle barriers

The precise steps taken by the responding LAs to tackle what they perceived as barriers to provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites were as varied as the local communities which they serve. Some LAs had organised specific events, some had formed groups to tackle the issues arising, others had developed strategies which can be put in place to move the issue on.

Broadly, there were four main themes to tackling some of the barriers presented above:

- The development and establishment of systems / groups which encourage joint-working
- Awareness raising and engagement activities aimed at Gypsies and Travellers, local authority officers, elected members and the wider community
- Actively searching for appropriate sites
- Engaging with the Local Development Framework (LDF) process.

However as can be seen above, a number of the barriers identified, that is, national leadership, regional and local planning process, are out of the hands of officers of the local authorities concerned.

9. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The year 2006 saw the publication of the Commission for Racial Equality report *Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers*, which made a number of recommendations aimed at improving accommodation provision for Gypsies and Travellers in England. In the same year, ODPM Circular 01/2006 *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites* set out the new policy framework for the needs-based provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites. A common theme from both sources is the need to act quickly to redress current under-supply of sites and increase pitch provision over the next 3-5 years. Almost three years have now elapsed since the Circular was issued, and it is very useful to take stock of progress achieved in site provision thus far.

The overall message from this study is that local authorities have made progress since 2006, but that progress has been patchy and has been insufficiently rapid to meet assessed requirements in the great majority of authorities. We estimate that it will take almost 20 years to meet the first five-year pitch requirements if the rate of progress achieved in providing Gypsy and Traveller pitches with permanent planning permissions since February 2006 is maintained and not increased. Thus the overall rate of provision is almost four times too slow, although high priority authorities¹⁰ as a group have performed somewhat better.

Circular 01/2006 establishes a policy process which starts with the assessment of needs and proceeds to the identification of land for site development through regional and local planning documents. Our survey shows that needs assessment is almost complete across England although the findings are not always accepted as a basis for planning. However, a minority of local authorities have a Core Strategy setting out criteria for site identification, and a tiny minority (three per cent only) have a Development Plan Document making allocations of land for Gypsy and Traveller sites. It will obviously be some time before the formal planning framework is fully implemented.

Some planning permissions for new or extended sites are being granted in advance of completion of the formal planning documents. Over a third (38 per cent) of LAs responding to our survey reported at least one planning permission granted in their borough since February 2006 relating to a total of 793 pitches and some 250 sites. However, the survey shows:

- Almost a third of pitches receiving planning permission (31 per cent) did so

¹⁰ Defined in terms of a relatively large Gypsy and Traveller population living on sites and / or relatively high future pitch requirements (see Annex 4).

after an appeal against refusal of planning permission or planning enforcement action. Thus, there is still some evidence of local planning authorities resisting applications for sites which the Planning Inspectorate subsequently agree to, at least on a temporary basis.

- Over a third of pitches receiving planning permission (39 per cent) received temporary rather than permanent planning permission. Temporary permissions have been granted by local authorities and on appeal on the assumption that, by the time the permission expires after say, five years, more suitable land will have been identified through the planning process to which the Gypsies and Travellers can move. Unless the planning system achieves greater momentum, it is, we believe, questionable whether the situation at the end of the temporary permission will be materially different and more positive.

Figures collected by the survey suggest that most site provision actually achieved since February 2006 has been on private sites rather than sites developed or extended by local authorities and registered social landlords. This is despite the award of some £54.6 million in Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grants between 2006 and 2008, with a further £21.6 million awarded in December 2009 after the survey results had been analysed. Since February 2006, LAs responding to our survey had received Grant awards which should refurbish 928 existing pitches, bring 23 unused pitches back into use and provide 165 additional pitches on new or extended sites. Fewer pitches had been created or had had works completed with Grant aid since February 2006 – in particular only 15 additional pitches had been completed by responding LAs. Many commentators, including some respondents to our survey, take the view that the amount of money available through the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant is insufficient to match need. Certainly these figures suggest that a step change is needed if the grant is to contribute significantly to meeting pitch requirements quickly.

The provision of additional pitches is a priority for Grant aid. However, our survey suggests that some sites run by local authorities or registered social landlords still require refurbishment. Over a third of the responding LAs with a social site in their area expressed concern over a site's physical condition or state of repair. A small minority of social sites evidently suffer from a combination of problems, including location and access, and neighbouring uses and environment such that re-location and redevelopment seems likely to be the best course of action. Such needs are not always reflected in pitch requirements estimated in current Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs). This is an additional concern to be addressed in future which the current focus on addressing numerical under-provision has somewhat obscured.

Our analysis is therefore, that some progress has been made, but that much more remains to be done. In this context, it is especially relevant to look at the barriers to site provision identified by survey respondents; it is important to understand the factors involved in order to move forward.

While some 'barriers' might be seen as excuses or delaying tactics from insufficiently committed authorities, we believe that the survey provides sufficient evidence of real issues which need to be resolved if progress on site provision is to accelerate in future. Even respondents from the most obviously committed and pro-active LAs mention significant barriers to be overcome. The survey reveals considerable consistency with themes around the complexities of the planning system and the process of bidding for the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant recurring at different points in the questionnaire.

In the light of these findings, the following appear to us to be priorities:

- There should be greater leadership at national level, including by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, not only signalling commitment to increasing site provision but also seeking to tackle the prejudice and racist stereotypes which underlie much of the resistance to site development.
- The planning system seems not to be working as intended, or at least as quickly as intended. The regional level introduces uncertainty and gives an excuse not to act locally. Procedures for developing Core Strategies and Local Development Documents (making land allocations for sites) are lengthy and lack flexibility. If the system remains unchanged, there should be clearer guidance on how local authorities should / can respond to applications and move forward pro-actively in advance of formal policies being in place. Temporary planning permissions on sites in 'unsuitable' locations seem to be storing up difficult decisions for the future rather than providing a real answer.
- There is a need for more guidance and sharing of good practice on many topics related to site provision – such as engaging effectively with Gypsy and Traveller communities, establishing forums through which the concerns of settled community can be heard, managing public consultations on highly contentious issues, finding suitable site locations and then making allocations in ways that mean that Gypsies and Travellers can still afford to buy land and develop sites. At present, the knowledge and confidence infrastructure seems inadequate.

A final point relates to information availability and progress monitoring. We have spent quite a lot of time and effort trying to piece together information from primary and secondary sources to chart progress on site provision since February 2006. It is clear from

some exchanges in the course of chasing survey responses that some local authorities were finding it hard to assemble the fairly basic information we were seeking. This situation should improve with the inclusion of *H4: Net additional Gypsy and Travellers pitches delivered* as one of the Core Output Indicators for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks.¹¹ It would be helpful if local authorities, in developing systems to enable them to record this information, took the opportunity to also improve the quality of Caravan Count returns, records of planning applications and decisions, and incidence of unauthorised encampments and developments.

¹¹ Communities and Local Government, RSS / LDF Core Output Indicators update 2/2008, July 2008. Available at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/coreoutputindicators2>

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ANNEX 1: THE SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The local authority survey was the main source of primary information for the research and the findings are fully presented in this report in Chapters 4 to 8.

A questionnaire was developed, with the involvement of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which sought to identify a number of indicators of progress including:

- The status of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA), acceptance of an estimate of pitch requirements for planning purposes and proposed tenure split of future provision
- Views on the quality of any 'social site' (a Gypsy and Traveller site owned by a local authority or registered social landlord) in the area
- Progress in meeting shortfalls through social site provision and private site provision facilitated by the planning system
- Progress on developing new sites or pitches and refurbishing existing social sites through the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant, including source of any associated funding
- Strategic plans and timescales for implementing provision over the coming years
- Reported barriers to moving forward with site provision
- Support measures introduced to assist Gypsies and Travellers access and retain bricks and mortar housing.

A copy of the questionnaire and the covering letter used are presented in Annexes 2 and 3.

Where we had up-to-date details of the relevant officer involved in Gypsy and Traveller accommodation affairs, we sent out the letter and questionnaire by email. Where we had no previously identified contact officer it proved impossible, for data protection and other reasons, to get comprehensive email addresses. In these authorities, the survey was sent by post addressed to the 'Head of Planning'. Out of a total of 354 authorities, 119 surveys (34 per cent) were sent by post and 235 surveys (66 per cent) were issued electronically. Local authorities were given two weeks to complete the survey. At the end of the two weeks, all non-respondents were sent a reminder to encourage a reasonable response rate.

Responses from particular authorities were pursued more intensively than others. These 'high priority' authorities were identified on the basis of a high number of Gypsies and Travellers living on sites (as indicated by the Caravan Count) and / or the level of need identified in their GTAA. Annex 4 explains in more detail how 'high priority' authorities were defined. High priority authorities were sent general reminders by email or post but were also contacted on a number of occasions by email or phone to stress the importance of participation and to arrange time extensions where necessary.

Response rate

A total of 185 questionnaires were returned and subsequently analysed;¹² not all returned questionnaires for completed fully. Replies from two areas which are due to have unitary status from April 2009 were for the county area as a whole. These have been classed as unitary authorities. This means that, in our analysis, the total number of LAs in England is 344.

Region	Number of LAs	Responding LAs	% response
North East	17	9	53
North West	43	25	58
Yorks & Humber	21	10	48
East Midlands	40	21	53
West Midlands	30	21	70
East	48	32	67
London	33	11	33
South East	67	29	43
South West	45	27	60
Total	344	185	54

The overall response rate (54 per cent) is reasonable for a postal / email survey with a relatively short deadline for response. A further factor which may affect response is the nature of the questionnaire which potentially requires inputs from several departments and in two-tier areas, it may need input from the county council.

Regional response rates differ with very good rates in the West Midlands, East and South West, and particularly poor rates in London and the South East. Poor response in the South East may be the consequence of the fact that the Issues and Options Consultation

¹² Three further questionnaires were received too late to be included in the analysis.

on the Gypsy and Traveller Review of the South East Plan was taking place at the same time as the survey.

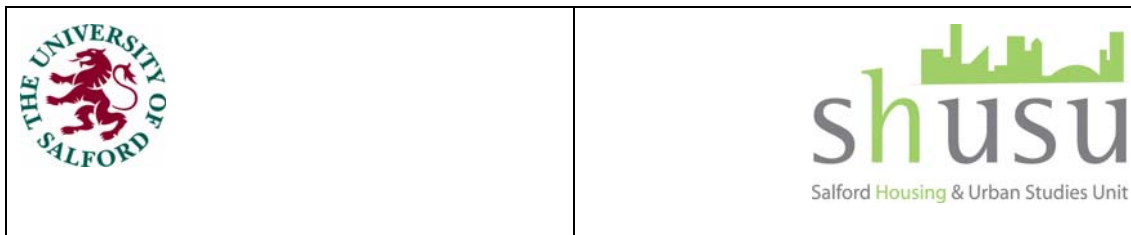
Type of LA	Number of LAs	Responding LAs	% response
London borough	33	11	33
Metropolitan district	36	26	72
Unitary / proto-unitary	49	25	51
District council	226	123	54
Total	344	185	54

Response was highest among metropolitan districts and lowest among London boroughs. There was very little difference in response rates between single- and two-tier authorities when London boroughs, metropolitan districts and unitaries are combined.

As noted above, LAs were split according to 'priority' categories (see Annex 4). Response was highest among LAs in the high priority category. This reflects the greater efforts put into chasing response. However, even after both postal / email reminders and telephone chasing, over a quarter of the high priority LAs failed to respond.

Priority	Number of LAs	Responding LAs	% response
High	49	36	73
Medium	239	124	52
Low	56	25	45
Total	344	185	54

ANNEX 2: COVERING LETTER OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES



15th October 2008

To: Lead officer on Gypsy/Traveller accommodation

Cc: Chief Executive

Dear Colleague

Research into Local Authorities' Progress in Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers

We are writing to ask for your participation in an important piece of research being undertaken for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

You will be aware that the Government is committed to resolving the long-standing inequalities in the provision of accommodation for members of Gypsy and Traveller communities. This commitment is demonstrated in law through the Housing Act 2004 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and through associated guidance (Circular 01/2006). The aim of this legislation is to ensure that members of Gypsy and Traveller communities have equal access to decent and appropriate accommodation options in the same way as all other members of society.

A key component in resolving these inequalities was the requirement to assess the shortfall of culturally appropriate accommodation (in the form of Gypsy and Traveller sites/pitches) via local authority Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (GTAAs). Once shortfalls have been identified, local authorities, in line with broader mainstream housing needs, are required to produce strategies and allocate land in order

to ensure these accommodation needs are met. Working towards meeting these needs will ensure full compliance with the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), particularly the duty on all public authorities to eliminate all racial discrimination and promote race equality and good race relations.

As you may know, in 2006 the then Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) published the report *Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers*. This document outlined a series of detailed recommendations aimed at ensuring greater equality for members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities and advising service providers how best to achieve this. The report provided the first authoritative evidence of the extent to which local authorities had met their statutory duty to promote race equality and good race relations in their work on Gypsy and Traveller sites.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission was established on 1 October 2007 by the Equality Act 2006. They inherited the work of the Commission for Racial Equality as well as other equality issues relating to gender, gender identity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, and human rights. The Commission also has statutory duties to work towards the elimination of discrimination and harassment and to promote good relations within and between groups in society.

Two years on from the publication of *Common Ground* the EHRC have commissioned both the University of Salford and the University of Birmingham, to investigate the progress local authorities have made in providing accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.

The EHRC needs this information in order to monitor progress and to discover any problems which need to be resolved in order to help move the process forward at a local, regional and national level. All local authorities invited to take part in this research will be listed in the Commission's final report and those who respond will be acknowledged.

This is an important and timely study aiming to benchmark the progress made to date by local authorities in England and a high response rate is therefore necessary to ensure our analysis and assessment is as comprehensive as possible. We need your assistance in ensuring that we gain as accurate a picture as possible about the current situation and future objectives around Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision.

We are sending you a short questionnaire with details of how to complete and return it to Pat Niner at the University of Birmingham given on the front page.

The date for response is 7 November 2008.

Survey answers will be assessed along with details from each GTAA in order to examine the current situation. The findings will be brought together in a report to the Equality and Human Rights Commission in December 2008.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation

Yours sincerely



Dr Philip Brown Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit The University of Salford p.brown@salford.ac.uk	Pat Niner The Centre for Urban and Regional Studies The University of Birmingham p.m.niner@bham.ac.uk
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NB : This letter is being sent with the questionnaire to key officers in each local authority directly involved in Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues. A copy of the letter only is being sent to the Chief Executive Officer.

ANNEX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MONITORING PROGRESS IN MEETING GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) wishes to assess the progress that local authorities have made in assessing and meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers since the issue of ODPM Circular 01/2006 *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites* in February 2006. This survey forms an important part of the research evidence.

Details of how to complete the questionnaire are given on the next page. Please complete and return it by **7 November 2008**. Please return it by e-mail to P.M.Niner@bham.ac.uk or in hard copy by post to:

Pat Niner Centre for Urban and Regional Studies University of Birmingham Edgbaston Birmingham B15 2TT
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If you have any queries about completing the questionnaire, please contact Pat Niner (P.M.Niner@bham.ac.uk and 0121 414 5024) or Phil Brown (P.Brown@salford.ac.uk and 0161 295 3647)

Local authority	
Contact name	
Telephone number	
E-mail address	

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MONITORING PROGRESS IN MEETING GYPSY AND TRAVELLER
ACCOMMODATION NEEDS

INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire survey is an important element of research commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to monitor local authority progress in assessing and meeting the culturally-specific accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers following the publication of ODPM Circular 01/2006 *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*.

The focus of the survey is provision of caravan sites/pitches for **Gypsies and Travellers**, including New Travellers where appropriate, but excluding provision specifically intended for Travelling Showpeople.

The questionnaire is being sent to all local housing authorities in England. Information provided in the questionnaire will be analysed, along with material from GTAAs and the Caravan Count, at the level of the individual local authority. **This will be reported to the EHRC and may appear in published reports. The EHRC will be informed which authorities have responded and not responded to the survey and a list will be published in their final report.**

In order to better understand the current position, some opinion information is requested in Section G. **Answers to these questions (Section G only) will be reported on a non-attributed basis only and the anonymity of responding authorities will be maintained.**

We have tried to keep the questionnaire as short as possible. For clarity, it is divided into sections:

- A. The Gypsy and Traveller Site Planning Process
- B. Identified Pitch Shortfalls
- C. Social Site Quality
- D. Progress on Pitch Provision since February 2006
- E. Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant
- F. Other Accommodation
- G. Views and Comments

We recognise that it may be necessary to involve planning, housing and Gypsy and Traveller officers in completing the survey. In particular, local housing authorities might wish to contact their County Council where they own and/or manage a Gypsy and Traveller site within the district boundaries.

Instructions about how to complete the questionnaire are normally in ***bold and italics***. There may be questions where the options given for answers do not adequately express your views – in such cases please write in to provide a more appropriate answer or to explain the answer you have given. Most of the questions ask for a box to be ticked – if completing this electronically use an X in the box if that is easier.

A. The Gypsy and Traveller Site Planning Process

Note : In this section and throughout the questionnaire a ‘pitch’ means the area of a site occupied by a single family – broadly equivalent to a dwelling-house.

A1. Is the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) covering your area complete? ***Please tick one box***

Yes		<i>Go to A2</i>
No – please give estimated completion date:		<i>Go to A5</i>

A2. Has the report of your GTAA been published? ***Please tick one box***

Yes	
No	

A3. Have the pitch requirements estimated in the GTAA for your local authority been accepted as the basis for planning site provision? **Please tick one box**

Yes		Go to A6
No		Go to A4
GTAA does not allocate requirements at LA level		Go to A5

A4. Why not? **Please write in**

A5. How have pitch requirements been allocated between authorities in the GTAA sub-region? **Please write in**

A6. Does your authority's Core Strategy set out criteria for the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites to be used to guide the allocation of sites in the relevant Development Plan Documents? **Please tick one box**

Yes		Go to A8
In preparation – please give estimated completion date:		Go to A8
No		Go to A7

A7. Why not? **Please write in**

A8. Does your authority have an approved Development Plan Document which details Gypsy and Traveller site allocations? **Please tick one box**

Yes		Go to B1
In preparation – please give estimated completion date:		Go to A9
No		Go to A9

A9. Is your authority actively working to identify appropriate land to allocate for Gypsy and Traveller sites? **Please tick one box**

Yes		Go to B1
No		Go to A10

A10. Why not? **Please write in**

B. Identified Pitch Shortfalls

B1. How many additional pitches does your authority need to provide/allocate in the first five year planning period (e.g. 2006-2011)? Please distinguish between pitches for residential (permanent) use and transit pitches or stopping places.

Type of pitch	Pitches required <i>(enter number)</i>	Don't know <i>(please tick)</i>
Residential (permanent)		
Transit or stopping place		

B2. What is the source of this pitch requirement? **Please tick as many boxes as appropriate**

GTAA	
Regional Spatial Strategy	
Other – please specify:	

B3. How are these requirements split between social (local authority or registered social landlord) and private provision?

Tenure of provision	Requirements (<i>enter number or proportion</i>)	Don't know (<i>please tick</i>)
Social provision		
Private provision		

B4. Will the identified shortfalls be met during the first five year planning period (e.g. by 2011)? **Please tick one box**

Yes – certainly		Go to C1
Yes – probably		Go to C1
No – unlikely		Go to B4
No – certainly		Go to B4

B5. Why not? When will the identified shortfalls be met? **Please write in**

C. Social Site Quality

C1. Is there one or more social (local authority or registered social landlord) Gypsy and Traveller site in your area? **Please tick one box**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Go to C2
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Go to D1

C2. Please describe any significant outstanding concerns over the quality of any social Gypsy and Traveller sites in your area. **Please write in in the grid below (add sheets if necessary for hard-copy completion)**

Physical condition/ state of repair	
Site layout or design	
Site location/access to services etc	
Neighbouring land uses and environment	
Other	

D. Progress on Pitch Provision since February 2006

D1. How many pitches have been provided on **social Gypsy and Traveller sites** (local authority and registered social landlord) in your authority area since February 2006.

Please enter the number of pitches in the appropriate cell in the grid below.

If none have been provided please tick here and leave the grid blank

None	
------	--

Please enter number of pitches affected

Type of pitch	In the planning process	In development (being built)	Opened
Residential: new site			
Residential : expanded site			
Residential : existing pitch re-opened			
Transit : new site			
Transit : expanded site			
Transit : existing pitch re-opened			

D2. How many pitches on **social Gypsy and Traveller sites** have closed or otherwise ceased to be available since February 2006? How many pitches on social Gypsy and Traveller sites have been sold or transferred from social ownership since February 2006 but remain available for use by Gypsies and Travellers?

If none have been closed/lost/transferred please tick here and leave the grid blank and go to D4

None	
------	--

Please enter number of pitches affected

	Residential pitches	Transit pitches
Pitches closed/ceased to be available		
Pitches sold/transferred still available for use by Gypsies and Travellers		

D3. What were the reasons for pitch closure/loss/transfer? **Please write in**

D4. Please complete the grid below to provide information on the number of sites and pitches involved in planning applications and approvals relating to **private Gypsy and Traveller sites** since February 2006.

Please enter numbers

	Number of sites	Number of pitches
Planning applications received for site development or expansion		
Applications received to renew temporary planning permissions		
Permanent planning permissions granted for site development or expansion		
Temporary planning permissions granted for site development or expansion		
Permanent permissions for site development or expansion granted on appeal		
Temporary permissions for site development or expansion granted on appeal		

D5. How many pitches with permanent planning permission on **private Gypsy and Traveller sites** have been completed (occupied or ready for occupation) in your area since February 2006? Please include any previously unauthorised private pitches granted permanent planning permission during the period.

Type of pitch	Pitches <i>(enter number)</i>	Don't know <i>(please tick)</i>
Residential (permanent)		
Transit or stopping place		

D6. How many pitches with temporary planning permission on **private Gypsy and Traveller sites** have been completed (occupied or ready for occupation) in your area since February 2006? Please include any previously unauthorised private pitches granted temporary planning permission during the period.

Type of pitch	Pitches <i>(enter number)</i>	Don't know <i>(please tick)</i>
Residential (permanent)		
Transit or stopping place		

D7. Have any pitches on **authorised private Gypsy and Traveller sites** (i.e. with planning permission) closed or otherwise ceased to be available for use by Gypsies and Travellers since February 2006? ***Please tick one box***

Yes		<i>Go to D8</i>
No		<i>Go to D10</i>
Don't know		<i>Go to D10</i>

D8. How many pitches have been lost?

Type of pitch	Pitches <i>(enter number)</i>	Don't know <i>(please tick)</i>
Residential (permanent)		
Transit or stopping place		

D9. Please give the background (as you understand it) to the loss of authorised private pitches for use by Gypsies and Travellers (e.g. site transferred to mobile home use or migrant workers; land sold for housing). **Please write in**

D10. Has there been any change in the way planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites are considered by your authority since the issue of ODPM Circular 01/2006 in February 2006? **Please tick one box**

Yes		Go to D11
No		Go to E1

D11. What changes have been made? **Please write in**

E. Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant

Note : All references to Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant should be taken to also include Gypsy Sites Refurbishment Grant

E1. Please provide details in the grid below for any applications for Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant affecting sites (existing or proposed) in your authority area. Please include both applications made and any grants actually received since February 2006.

If there have been no applications/grants since February 2006, please tick here, leave the grid blank and go to E2

None	
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	Number of sites	Number of pitches
Applications made for new site development		(additional pitches)
Grants awarded for new site development		(additional pitches)
Applications made for site refurbishment including additional pitches		(existing pitches affected) (additional pitches)
Grants awarded for refurbishment including additional pitches		(existing pitches affected) (additional pitches)
Applications made to bring pitches back into use, with or without refurbishment of other pitches		(existing pitches affected) (pitches back into use)
Grants awarded to bring pitches back into use, with or without refurbishment of other pitches		(existing pitches affected) (pitches back into use)
Applications made for refurbishment NOT including additional pitches or pitches brought back into use		(existing pitches affected)
Grants awarded for refurbishment NOT including additional pitches or pitches brought back into use		(existing pitches affected)

Now go to E3

E2. Why has no application been made? **Please write in**

E3. How many additional pitches have been completed (occupied or ready to occupy) using Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant in your authority area since February 2006?

Please enter number of additional pitches

Type of site	Additional pitches
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Residential	
Transit	

E4. Did the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant cover the whole development cost for the additional pitches? **Please tick one box**

Yes		Go to E6
No		Go to E5

E5. What was the source of the non-grant aided expenditure? **Please write in**

E6. How many existing pitches have benefited from refurbishment using Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant in your authority area since February 2006?

Type of site	Number of pitches affected
Residential	
Transit	

Please answer E7 and E8 if any pitches have benefited from refurbishment since February 2006; others go to E9

E7. What refurbishment works were carried out? **Please write in**

E8. What was the source of non-grant aided expenditure on site refurbishment? **Please write in**

E9. Overall, how much has your authority been granted from the £56 million made available by Communities and Local Government for Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant 2006-2008? **Please write in amount**

Amount	£
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E10. And how much of this (non-ring-fenced) Grant has been spent on the provision or refurbishment of Gypsy and Traveller sites?

Amount spent	£
Amount committed	£

F. Other Accommodation

F1. Is there a policy or action in your authority's Housing Strategy aimed at providing or facilitating the provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers? **Please tick one box**

Yes		Go to F3
In preparation – please give estimated completion date below		Go to F3
No		Go to F2

F2. Why not? **Please write in**

F3. Have any specific measures been introduced since February 2006 to help Gypsies and Travellers to access bricks and mortar accommodation in your area?

Yes		Go to F5
No		Go to F4

F4. What measures have been introduced? ***Please write in***

F5. Have any specific measures been introduced since February 2006 to provide support to Gypsies and Travellers to help them move into and/or retain bricks and mortar accommodation in your area?

Yes		Go to F6
No		Go to G1

F6. What measures have been introduced? ***Please write in***

G. Views and Comments

Note : Any answers provided in this section of the questionnaire will be treated as confidential to the research team and reported only in a generalised, non-attributed manner

G1. In your view, is the progress made since 2006 on provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites satisfactory at national level? Is it satisfactory at local level? Please award a mark out of 10 where 1 is not satisfactory and 10 is highly satisfactory.

	Mark out of 10
National progress	
Local progress	

G2. In your experience, what are the main barriers to provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites in your area? ***Please write in***

G3. What steps are being taken by your local authority to tackle these? ***Please write in***

G4. Any other comments you would like to make about Gypsy and Traveller site requirements and/or provision. ***Please write in***

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

ANNEX 4: THE DERIVATION OF 'PRIORITY' CATEGORIES

Local authorities were categorised according to 'priority' partly as a guide to targeting the chasing of response, partly as an analytical factor. The objective was to distinguish LAs which are higher 'priority' in terms of the size of the current Gypsy and Traveller population on sites **and / or** the extent of additional pitch requirements. At the other end of the scale were LAs with very low current population **and** requirements.

These criteria were operationalised as follows:

- The number of caravans on authorised sites in the January 2008 Caravan Count, was taken as a proxy for the Gypsy and Traveller sited population. LAs with over 100 caravans were taken as of high priority; LAs with up to five caravans were potentially treated as of low priority in conjunction with pitch requirements.
- There are several possible ways to identify requirements. The approach taken here was to:
 - Take the GTAA measure of additional residential pitch requirements for Years 1-5 wherever possible. This sometimes meant adjusting figures where the time period of the estimate was longer than five years. This was done on a pure pro-rata basis by taking, for example, 5/8 of requirements where an eight-year period was involved. Where the GTAA gave a range of requirements, the mid-point was taken.
 - Where the GTAA did not apportion residential pitch requirements to LA level, we used the most recent estimates from the regional planning process (the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes in the South West, the Preferred Option in the East of England and Option 1 (need where it arises) from the South East's Issues and Options Consultation). On this basis, it proved impossible to classify 17 LAs in the North East where GTAAs are not yet complete and the RSS does not apportion pitch requirements to individual LAs.

An estimated residential requirement of more than 40 pitches was taken as 'high' priority. A requirement of up to five pitches was taken as 'low' priority in combination with current low number of caravans.

Thus 'high' priority LAs have over 100 caravans on authorised sites **and / or** a residential pitch need (Years 1-5) of over 40. 'Low' priority LAs either have up to five caravans on authorised sites **and** up to five pitch requirements, or zero caravans in those LAs where

there is no GTAA or RSS estimate of requirements. The majority of authorities fall between the two extremes and are classed as 'medium' priority. Numbers are:

- High priority 49 LAs
- Medium priority 239 LAs
- Low priority 56 LAs

High priority LAs are disproportionately likely to be in the East, South East and South West (65 per cent of high priority LAs are in these regions compared with 47 per cent of all LAs). Low priority LAs are disproportionately likely to be in the North East, North West and East Midlands (54 per cent of low priority LAs are in these regions compared with 29 per cent of all LAs).

High priority LAs are disproportionately likely to be district councils in two-tier government areas (73 per cent of high priority LAs compared with 66 per cent of all LAs are district councils), and unlikely to be metropolitan districts or London Boroughs (eight per cent of high priority LAs compared with 20 per cent of all LAs are metropolitan districts or London boroughs).

Contact us

You can find out more or get in touch with us via our website at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com

or by contacting one of our helplines below:

Helpline - England

Telephone: 0845 604 6610

Textphone: 0845 604 6620

Fax: 0845 604 6630

Helpline - Scotland

Telephone: 0845 604 5510

Textphone: 0845 604 5520

Fax: 0845 604 5530

Helpline - Wales

Telephone: 0845 604 8810

Textphone: 0845 604 8820

Fax: 0845 604 8830

9am–5pm Monday to Friday except Wednesday 9am–8pm.

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Calls may be monitored for training and quality purposes.

Interpreting service available through Language Line, when you call our helplines.

This report is available for downloading from our website.

If you require it in an alternative format and/or language please contact the relevant helpline to discuss your needs.

This report reviews the performance of English local authorities in providing appropriate sites for Gypsies and Travellers. It specifically focuses on the extent of progress towards targets in local and regional strategies.

WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN ON THIS TOPIC:

- The lack of appropriate residential and transit accommodation underpins a range of other problems that Gypsies and Travellers experience, from access to education to appropriate healthcare.
- The Government requires local authorities to assess Gypsies' and Travellers' accommodation needs and to increase the number of sites available.

WHAT THIS REPORT ADDS:

Drawing on both national data and a survey of local authorities, this report finds that:

- Local authorities are making progress towards increasing site provision; however, the rate of progress is often extremely slow.
- Government funding is largely being used to refurbish existing sites rather than provide new ones.
- Many planning applications are turned down by local authorities but granted by the Planning Inspectorate on appeal.
- Providing temporary permission for sites simply stores up problems for the future.

The report also sets out the barriers to better progress and makes recommendations on how to overcome these.