

Shropshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2014

Executive Summary

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Introduction

In December 2013 arc⁴ was commissioned by Shropshire Council to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment to identify the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople from across the County. The overall objective of the research was to provide a robust evidence base to inform the consideration of planning applications, Local Plan preparation and monitoring and future reviews of Supporting People Strategies, and housing strategies.

Methodology

The methodology for this study comprised:

- Interviews with Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople;
- Desktop analysis of existing documents, data and pitch information;
- A census of sites reviewing total number of pitches, number of pitches occupied and vacant, and total number of households; and
- A Key Stakeholder on-line questionnaire for professionals who have direct contact with local Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities.

The primary fieldwork for this study comprised survey work with Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. This fieldwork was managed by Home Space Sustainable Accommodation (HSSA) and undertaken by Gypsy and Traveller fieldworkers. HSSA was involved in the design of the questionnaire and in the recruitment of fieldworkers. A total of 123 interviews were secured (Table ES1), 64 with households living on a pitch on a private site, 44 living on the local authority site, 7 with people living in bricks and mortar accommodation, 2 living on unauthorised developments and 6 with Travelling Showpeople on a yard.

Table ES1 Summary of achieved interviews by type of dwelling (as at 28/02/14)

		TABLE TOTAL	Property Type				
			Gypsies and Travellers on LA Site	Gypsies and Travellers on Private Site	Gypsies and Travellers in Bricks and Mortar	Unauthorised Encampment	Travelling Showpeople
TOTAL	Count	123	44	64	7	2	6
	Col %	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Unauthorised Encampment	Count	2				2	
	Col %	2%				100%	
Local Authority Site	Count	44	44				
	Col %	36%	100%				
Private Site	Count	64		64			
	Col %	52%		100%			
House (B&M)	Count	7			7		
	Col %	6%			100%		
Showperson	Count	6					6
	Col %	5%					100%

In conjunction with interviews with members of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community, a range of complementary research methods have been used to permit the triangulation of results. This includes a site census,

review of caravan counts, analysis of unauthorised transit encampments and stakeholder consultation.

Legislative and policy context

The report sets out the legislative and policy context within which the Council is working to address the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, which includes guidance and definitions set out within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning policy for traveller sites documentation from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). The following definition of Gypsies and Travellers is adopted:

'Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.'¹

The following definition of Travelling Showpeople is adopted:

'Members of a group organised for the purpose of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependents' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.'²

It is within this policy context that the Council has to plan future provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across its area. The National Planning policy emphasises the role of evidence and how it should be used within this context.

Paragraphs 8 and 9 of Planning policy for traveller sites state that:

'Local planning authorities should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities'.

Local planning authorities should:

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

¹ CLG Planning policy for traveller sites March 2012 Annex 1: Glossary bullet 1 page 8

² CLG Planning policy for traveller sites March 2012 Annex 1: Glossary bullet 2 page 8

The current picture: provision and pitch availability

Latest data from the Council indicates a total of 178 pitches of which 131 are occupied and 47 are vacant. The study achieved 108 interviews with households living on authorised pitches which represents a response rate of 82.4%. The survey also included responses from 6 showperson households and 2 households living on unauthorised encampments.

Data for households living on pitches have been weighted by a factor of 1.305 (based on 118 households interviewed out of 154 households living on authorised and unauthorised pitches $154/118 = 1.305$) to take account of the total Gypsy and Traveller population living on sites in Shropshire.

In terms of bricks and mortar households, 7 were interviewed as part of the survey. Although this may be an underestimate in the numbers living in this type of accommodation, no households were planning to move nor were there any newly-forming households identified in Bricks and Mortar accommodation who were planning to move.

Needs Analysis Modelling

The needs modelling is presented in Table ES2.

In terms of **need**, the model considers:

- The baseline number of households on authorised and unauthorised sites (as at May 2014);
- The number of households living in bricks and mortar accommodation (a minimum baseline based on achieved interviews) and the number wanting to move to a pitch;
- Existing households planning to move to a pitch in the next five years (currently on sites or in bricks and mortar accommodation);
- Emerging households (currently on sites or in bricks and mortar) and needing a pitch within the study area; to derive a figure for
- Total need.

In terms of **supply**, the model considers :

- Total supply of pitches on authorised sites;
- Turnover on existing authorised sites;
- Vacant pitches on authorised sites; to derive
- Total supply of authorised pitches based on turnover and existing pitch provision.

The model then reconciles total need and existing authorised supply by summarising:

- Total need for pitches; and
- Total supply of authorised pitches.

The assessment of current need should, in line with the guidance, take account of existing supply and need. In the CLG model, current residential supply refers to local authority residential sites and authorised privately owned sites.

In this assessment we have reported the existing number of pitches on authorised local authority and private sites (this is the actual number of pitches on sites available for occupancy in May 2014) and increased capacity being delivered on a Local Authority site.

Description of factors in the model

Need

Current households living on pitches (1a to 1d)

These figures are derived from Local Authority data and the site census carried out as part of the fieldwork. Data would suggest there are 154 households living on pitches compared with 143 occupied pitches, suggesting there is some 'doubling up' taking place within Shropshire despite the availability of vacant pitches.

Current households in bricks and mortar accommodation (2)

This is a minimum figure based on the respondents who were interviewed as part of the fieldwork. There were a total of 7 households interviewed across Shropshire.

Households planning to move in the next five years (3)

This was derived from information from the household survey for respondents currently on authorised and unauthorised pitches and respondents in bricks and mortar accommodation who would prefer to live on a site. No existing households plan to move in the next 5 years.

Emerging households (4)

This is the number of households expected to emerge in the next five years based on household survey information from respondents living on authorised and unauthorised pitches and also people living in bricks and mortar accommodation. Analysis considers where emerging households are planning to move to. Out of 31 emerging households identified in the weighted analysis, all currently live on pitches and all planned to either stay on their current site (26) or move to a site elsewhere in the County (5).

Total need for pitches (5)

This is a total of current households on pitches (authorised and unauthorised), households planning to move in the next five years (either on pitches or in bricks and mortar accommodation) and demand from emerging households.

Table ES2 Summary of demand and supply factors: Gypsies and Travellers

1	Current pitch need from households	1a. On Council Sites	46
		1b. On Private Site - Authorised	95
		1c. On Private Site - Temporary Authorised	10
		1d. Unauthorised sites	3
		1e. Total (1a to 1d)	154
2	Current households in bricks and mortar accommodation (baseline information only)	2a. TOTAL	7
3	Existing households planning to move in next 5 years	Currently on sites	
		3a. To another pitch/same site	0
		3b. To another site in local authority area	0
		3c. To Bricks and Mortar	0
		3d. To a site/B&M outside study area	0
		Currently in Bricks and Mortar	
		3e. Planning to move to a site in LA	0
		3f. Planning to move to another B&M property	0
		3g. TOTAL net (3e-3c-3d)	0
		4	Emerging households (5 years)
4b. Currently on sites and planning to live on another site in LA	5		
4c. Currently in B&M planning to move to a site	0		
4d. Currently in B&M and moving to B&M (no net impact)	0		
4e. Currently on Site and moving to B&M (no net impact)	0		
4f. TOTAL (4a+4b+4c) excluding those moving to/within B&M	31		
5 Total Need	1e+3g+4f		
SUPPLY			
6	Current supply of authorised pitches	6a. Current authorised pitch provision (excluding turnover)	131
		6b. Current authorised pitches that are vacant	47
		6c. Increased capacity through refurbishment on Park Hall site	2
		6d. Total current supply (excluding turnover) 6a+6b+6c	180
7	Need minus supply (excluding turnover)	6d-5	5
8	Turnover on existing pitches	8a. Annual	7
		8b. 5 years	35
9	Total supply of pitches (5 yrs)	9a. Current authorised pitch provision and turnover (6d+8b)	215
RECONCILING NEED AND SUPPLY			
10	Total need for pitches	5 years (from 5)	185
11	Total supply of authorised pitches	5 years (from 6e)	180
12	Total supply of authorised pitches and turnover	5 years (from 9)	215
5yr Authorised Pitch Shortfall (2014/15 to 2018/19)			
12	Total shortfall excluding turnover	10-11	5
13	Total shortfall including turnover	10-12	-30

Supply

Current supply of pitches (6)

This is a summary of the total number of authorised pitches (excluding turnover) and the number of vacant authorised pitches. This suggests a total supply of 131 authorised occupied pitches (40 Council and 91 private) plus 9 occupied temporary authorised pitches. There are 48 pitches which are currently vacant (22 LA and 25 Private Authorised and 1 Private temporary). These figures include an additional 10 pitches (currently identified as vacant) being provided at Park Hall. This gives a total supply of 178 authorised pitches and 10 pitches with temporary permissions

Need minus supply (excluding turnover) (7)

This is a summary of pitch supply minus need. This suggests a need for 5 pitches before turnover rates on sites is considered.

Turnover on existing pitches (8)

Turnover is based on the on the length of time respondents had lived on their current pitch as reported in the household survey. In the past 2 years, a total of 14 pitches have become occupied by a household moving to them. All of these households stated that they had been 'travelling all of the time' and they did not specify that they had moved from outside the County (which was one of the survey questionnaire options) and so it is assumed that they had travelled within the County. The model therefore assumes a total annual turnover of 7 pitches, which would create a supply of 35 pitches over the 5 years.

Total supply (9)

This figure is based on the total number of authorised permanent pitches available plus expected turnover and vacant pitch provision. The model assumes:

- A baseline supply of 131 authorised pitches (40 Council and 91 private);
- 47 vacant pitches (22 Council and 25 private); and
- 2 additional pitches being provided on the Park Hall site through refurbishment.

Additionally, turnover of 35 pitches is assumed for the period 2014/15 to 2018/19. The total supply figure is 215 (including turnover) and 180 (excluding turnover).

Reconciling Supply and Need

In summary, the model indicates a total need for 185 pitches across the County. This is compared with a current supply of 180 authorised pitches (131 authorised, 47 vacant and 2 additional pitches on Park Hall) plus a supply through turnover of 35 pitches over 5 years. Furthermore, analysis at this stage does not factor in the potential for additional pitches which are subject to planning permission, nor any expansion of existing sites. It should be noted that the Council are actively seeking to deliver a minimum of 5 pitches over the period 2015-2018.

Table ES3 provides a summary of the future pitch requirement calculation. Each component in the model is now discussed to ensure that the process is transparent and any assumptions clearly stated.

Table ES3 Summary of current pitch supply and shortfalls (2014/15 to 2018/19)

	Shropshire Total
Current authorised supply	131
Vacant pitches (May 14)	47
Additional pitches on Park Hall site	2
Total authorised supply	180
Total need (5 years)	185
Total shortfall (excluding turnover)	5
Expected turnover of pitches	35
Total shortfall (including turnover) (the negative number indicates sufficient supply)	-30

Longer-term pitch requirements

Assessing the future requirements of Gypsies and Travellers over the next 5 years has been based on detailed information obtained from the household survey. This exercise should be repeated at least every 5 years to ensure that the evidence base is up to date.

Future household formation

The household survey provides demographic information on Gypsy and Traveller households and from this the number of children expected to reach 18 can be calculated. Table ES4 suggests that a total of 24 children are expected to reach the age of 18 over the period 2019/20 to 2026/27 (8 years). A standard assumption is that half of these children will form new households, bearing in mind that women tend to move away on marriage and men tend to stay in close proximity to their families on marriage. This would result in an increase of 12 additional households which may require pitch provision. However current pitch provision and likely turnover is expected to address the need for pitches from these households. The Council should continue to monitor requirements for pitches as reflected in planning policy CS12 which seeks to allocate sites to meet identified need.

Table ES4 Baseline information on the total number children expected to reach 18 and the resulting number of households expected to form 2019/20 to 2026/27

	Time period		
	2019-23	2024-26	Total
Total number of children expected to form households at the age of 18	13	11	24
Total number of households expected to be formed	7	5	12

Showpeople Requirements

There is currently one yard in Shropshire accommodating 5 households. There is no evidence of additional need other than to find an alternative yard for the current households living in Shropshire. It is proposed that a new yard be provided in the Oswestry locality for an initial temporary period of 2 years with a view to formalising this plot provision or finding an alternative, permanent yard in another location.

Transit Requirements

24% of survey respondents expressed a need for transit provision across the study area. Overall there is a recommendation for 5 transit pitches across the County over the next five years, based on the Council's knowledge of the travelling behaviour of households passing through Shropshire. Shropshire Council has identified transit provision as a priority, particularly on the M54 corridor, with liaison with an adjoining Authority ongoing. The Council is therefore currently seeking to address this need at the earliest opportunity and deliver a transit site for 5 or 6 pitches. There may be scope if required to accommodate some transit need on existing Council land

Household Survey Data: Key Information

Home Base Characteristics

Overall, 98% of respondents said that the place they were interviewed was the place where they usually lived. No respondents said they had another home base. The majority of respondents said that they lived where they did to be close to family and friends (71%) while 29% said that nowhere else was suitable.

In terms of length of stay, 7% had stayed on the pitch for 5 years or over while most (64%) had been on the pitch for between 2 and 4 years. In terms of accommodation types nearly half (47%) lived in a trailer or wagon and the same percentage lived in a chalet or mobile home. 7% lived in either a house or bungalow.

Tenure

Overall, 98% of respondents (120 households) own their own home, 2% rent privately and 1% rent from a Housing Association or Registered Provider. In terms of land ownership, 49% rent the land privately; 42% rent the land from the Council; 1%

own the land themselves; 2% neither own or rent the land (unauthorised); and 6% stated not applicable.

Repairs and improvements

99% described the state of repair of their home as being good or very good. Across all respondents, there were no improvements stated as being necessary.

Space standards and overcrowding

100% of respondents felt they had enough space for their trailers and wagons.

Of respondents living on authorised pitches/plots, 100% felt there was sufficient space in their amenity block/sheds and 100% felt that there was sufficient space overall on their pitch/plot.

Only one respondent felt that their home was overcrowded; namely a Gypsy and Traveller household living in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Location and safety

98% overall stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the location of their home.

Planned moves

Respondents were asked whether they planned to move over the next five years. All respondents plan to stay where they are (100%).

Travelling

Respondents were asked whether they had travelled in the previous year – 18% had (22 respondents) while the rest (82% or 101 respondents) had not. Of those who had travelled they tended to travel for less than two weeks in the year (63% or 12 respondents). Issues raised by those who had travelled were ‘no places to stop over’ (65%); ‘closing of traditional stopping places’ (40%) and ‘abuse, harassment or discrimination’ (80%).

Around a quarter (24%) of all respondents thought that there was a need for transit site(s) in Shropshire and nearly all (97%) who said this thought that the Council should manage the site.

Homelessness

Overall three respondents (2%) said that they had been homeless prior to moving to their existing home.

Wider service and support needs

All respondents interviewed (100%) stated that being near a doctor is important. In terms of the use of services, the most used services were Doctor (GP) and Dentist. GP services were accessed by 98% of respondents, and Dentists were accessed by 50% of respondents in the twelve-month period prior to the survey. Additionally one-third (33%) had used the Accident and Emergency service. The proportion of respondents using other services tended to be considerably lower, with 13% using traveller education, 13% Citizens Advice and 3% health visitors.

Long term illness and disability

Asthma and arthritis are the main long-term illnesses identified. 63 respondents provided responses to these questions and of these 48% mentioned asthma and 38% mentioned arthritis. Only one respondent had experienced any problems accessing health services in the previous year and that had been in relation to getting an appointment.

Stakeholder consultation

There was limited knowledge amongst stakeholders responding to the on line survey about the issues most affecting Gypsies and Travellers across the study area. Stakeholder respondents did, however, identify a number of barriers locally to new provision including:

- Identification of suitable sites;
- Land ownership;
- Funding;
- Management and enforcement;
- Local opposition; and
- Lack of political support.

Stakeholders felt that it was important for the Local Plan to have in place appropriate policies for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople that will enable their needs to be met. It was also identified as important for the Council to continue to engage with neighbouring councils in respect of the findings of the research and subsequent policy development and implementation.

Conclusions and recommendations

The overarching purpose of this study has been to identify the accommodation requirements of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across Shropshire. Analysis has demonstrated that there is a shortfall of 5 pitches over the period 2014/15 to 2018/19 but it is expected that anticipated additional pitch provision will address this shortfall. That said, the Council should continue to engage with the travelling community to identify any emerging need to ensure that the level of provision of pitches and plots remains appropriate for the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population across the County.

Over the longer-term (2019/20 to 2026/27) analysis of demographic information from the household survey would suggest an additional 12 households may require pitch provision. However current pitch provision and likely turnover is expected to address the need for pitches from these households.

Satisfaction with sites and locations is almost 100% indicating that the current Gypsy, Traveller community may stay relatively settled. Overcrowding, site size and space as well as property condition were not identified as a problem locally, again indicating that the community is relatively content with their current accommodation.

The Council should work with local Travelling communities to monitor activity both in terms of unauthorised encampments and capacity on sites across the County.

Further research should be undertaken in five years to review the position in respect of accommodation need and requirements of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Shropshire. The model utilised for this study can also be updated and reviewed regularly within the next four to five years ensuring that requirements can be monitored using the current household surveys as a baseline and updating changing factors such as turnover (where known); site updates in terms of pitches/plots and in terms of new planning applications, permissions and other changes to the status of sites/yards.