

Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment 2024/5

Ashford Borough Council

Final Report
February 2025

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Ashford Borough 2024/25 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) provides the latest available evidence to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across the district.

The GTAA has included:

- A review of existing (secondary) data.
- A household survey, site/yard observation and review of planning application data.
- The GTAA assumes a total of 62 Gypsy and Traveller sites with 162 pitches (148 occupied and 14 vacant, with a total of 157 Gypsy and Traveller households and 7 non-Traveller households living on pitches. Household interviews were achieved with 124 households. Data from planning application data was used to obtain data from 11 further households who either refused to take part or were not available for interview. Therefore, data for 135 out of 157 households was obtained, representing an 86% response rate. 4 households living on the Travelling Showpersons yard in Ashford Borough were also interviewed (100% response rate). Interviews with 2 households living in bricks and mortar households were also achieved.

Data has been carefully analysed to provide a picture of current provision across Ashford Borough and an assessment of future need. The findings of the study provide an up-to-date, robust and defensible evidence base for policy development. We are very grateful to the Gypsy and Traveller communities' response across the borough for their very positive engagement with the work.

Population and current accommodation provision

The 2021 Census (Table RM032) identified a population of 686 people who identified as 'White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller' or 'Gypsy/Romany' plus 81 people identifying as 'Roma' living in Ashford Borough and an estimate of 225 households where the household reference person identifies as being a Gypsy/Traveller.

Across Ashford Borough there are currently 62 Gypsy and Traveller sites which are broken down further as follows:

- 1 council site, 16 pitches (12 occupied by 12 households, 4 vacant).
- 56 private authorised sites, 136 pitches (126 occupied by 135 Gypsy and Traveller households and 7 non-Gypsy and Traveller households, 10 vacant, with some households occupying more than one pitch as extended family groups).
- 5 unauthorised sites, 10 pitches (10 occupied by 10 households and 0 vacant)

- There is also 1 Travelling Showpersons yard with 4 plots (3 households, 1 vacant)

In summary, the GTAA assumes a total of 62 Gypsy and Traveller sites with 162 pitches (148 occupied and 14 vacant, with a total of 161 Gypsy and Traveller households and 7 non-Traveller households living on pitches). There are some households occupying more than one pitch as extended family groups. There is also one Travelling Showperson yard with 4 plots with 3 currently occupied and one vacant.

In January and July each year, councils carry out a Traveller caravan count to inform MHCLG statistics. The latest eight bi-annual MHCLG Traveller caravan counts (January 2020 to July 2024) reported an average of 174 caravans across all sites (79.2% on private sites, 11.3% on council sites and 9.5% on unauthorised sites). Caravans on the Showpersons yard have not been included in the council's caravan count and this should be rectified in future counts.

Planning policy requirements for needs assessments

The 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states in Paragraph 63 *'the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policy (including travellers)'*. A footnote in the NPPF then states *'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers' housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document'*.

The 2024 Planning Policy for Traveller Site (PPTS) document states that *'local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning' and 'ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies' and 'to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply'*.

In the absence of further guidance on preparing GTAAs, the methods adopted by arc⁴ reflect the PPTS, build upon those methods established through previous guidance, our practical experience and decisions made at planning inquiries and appeals.

Need assessment period

Need has been assessed over a short-term period: 2024/25 to 2028/29 and longer-term period 2029/30 to 2041/42 using demographic data.

Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirements

There is an overall minimum need for 115 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Ashford Borough over the period 2024/25 to 2041/42 (Table ES1). Of this need, 53 are needed in the first five years and 62 over the period 2029/30 to 2041/42. Needs analysis considers the needs arising from existing households, households on unauthorised sites, newly forming households, in-migrant households and current

vacancies on existing public and private sites. The annual net shortfall need is 6.4 pitches.

Table ES1 Gypsy and Traveller pitch need 2024/25 to 2041/42

| Period | Pitch need |
|--|------------|
| 5yr Authorised Pitch Shortfall (2024/25 to 2028/29) (A) | 53 |
| Longer-term need | |
| Over period 2029/30 to 2033/34 (B) | 17 |
| Over period 2034/35 to 2038/39(C) | 26 |
| Over period 2039/40 to 2041/42 (D) | 19 |
| Longer-term need TOTAL to 2041/42 (13 years) E=(B+C+D) | 62 |
| F. NET SHORTFALL 2024/25 to 2041/42 (A+E) (18 years) | 115 |
| G. Annual net shortfall | 6.4 |

Meeting the need

The council should consider the following to help meet identified residential pitch need:

- **Regularising sites** that are not permanently authorised (**10 pitches**)
- **Additional pitch provision using existing sites.** Respondents were also asked if their sites could be expanded either through a physical expansion or intensification of use to provide more pitches, or they had land which they wanted to develop for sites. **Between 42 and 60 additional pitches** could be delivered this way. The council has been provided with details of potential sites for expansion/intensification.
- **Household dissolution.** There is a potential for **21 pitches** to become available over the period to 2041/42 through household dissolution.

This potential supply could provide **between 73 and 91 pitches**. This has the potential to meet five-year need and make a significant contribution to meeting longer-term needs.

There are also 7 pitches on authorised sites that are occupied by non-Gypsy Traveller households which have been included as part of authorised pitch supply.

Further work is recommended to review the potential for additional pitch development on existing sites and the occupancy of permanent pitches.

Notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance households moving into Ashford Borough. It is therefore recommended the council has criteria-based policies to inform future planning applications for private sites should they arise.

Transit provision

It is recommended that the council considers developing a flexible approach to unauthorised encampment activity using negotiated stopping arrangements. It is recommended the council considers identifying areas of land that can be used for smaller encampments (up to 5 caravans), encampments of between 5 and up to 10 caravans and for larger encampments of at least 10 caravans to accommodate Travellers passing through the borough. It is recommended that the council works in partnership with other Kent authorities to develop a negotiated stopping policy to meet need as it arises.

Travelling Showperson plot requirements

There is one Travelling Showpersons yard in Ashford Borough with 4 plots. These plots are either occupied or used for regular staff who stay on the yard. The owner would like to increase the number of plots on the yard to 8 in order to meet emerging need on the yard and to provide winter quarters for staff. It is also recommended that the council develop a specific criteria-based policy to consider any applications coming forward over the plan period.

Policy recommendations

- The council should recognise the minimum need for **115 pitches** over the period 2024/25 to 2041/42. Of this need, 53 is over the short-term 5 year period 2024/25 to 2028/29 and 62 is over the longer-term (2029/30 to 2041/42) . A key driver of future pitch need is household formation. The GTAA has also identified potential supply of **between 73 and 91 pitches** through regularisation (10 pitches), potential expansion/intensification and new sites (42 to 60 pitches) and from household dissolution (21 pitches).
- Is it recommended the council appraise sites to explore their potential for providing additional pitches.
- There is a need to increase Travelling Showperson provision by 4 plots to support the needs of family and friends of the current yard owner. This additional need has the potential to be accommodated on the existing yard.
- To support the wider needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, the council should also set out criteria-based policies to inform future planning applications for small private Gypsy and Traveller sites and Showperson's yards should they arise over the plan period.
- To manage any unauthorised encampments, the council should develop a negotiated stopping policy to support the needs of Travellers passing through Ashford Borough. It is recommended that the council should identify areas of land that can be used for smaller encampments (up to 5 caravans), medium-

sized encampments (between 5 and up to 10 caravans) and larger encampments (more than 10 caravans). A negotiated stopping policy could be operated in conjunction with other Kent local authorities.

1. Introduction

Overview

- 1.1 In January 2024 arc⁴ was commissioned by Ashford Borough Council to prepare the 2024 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). The GTAA is part of the Local Plan evidence base.
- 1.2 The overall scope of the study is to ensure that the council has a robust evidence base to determine an appropriate level of residential pitch and transit provision over the period 2024/5 to 2041/42 and to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers to meet both the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) - defined need and the council's obligations under section 124 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

Who the study covers?

- 1.3 The 2024 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites provides the updated definition of Gypsies and Travellers as set out within Annex 1 of the 2014 PPTS:

“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, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.”
- 1.4 Similarly, the following definition from Annex 1 of the Guidance in respect of Travelling Showpeople is used:

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

‘For the purposes of this planning policy, “pitch” means a pitch on a “gypsy and traveller” site and “plot” means a pitch on a “travelling showpeople” site (often called a “yard”). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for “gypsies and travellers” and mixed-use pitches for “travelling showpeople”, which may/will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.’ (DCLG Planning policy for traveller sites December 2024 Annex 1, para 5).
- 1.6 For the purposes of this study, therefore, Gypsies and Travellers live on pitches within sites, whilst Travelling Showpeople live on plots within yards.

Geography and time frame for the study

- 1.7 This study relates to the geographical area of Ashford Borough.
- 1.8 The timeframe for the study is 2024/25 to 2041/42.
- 1.9 The base date for the study is February 2025.

Report structure

- 1.10 The GTAA 2024 report structure is as follows:
 - **Chapter 1 Introduction:** provides an overview of the study.
 - **Chapter 2 Policy and local context:** presents a review of the national policy context which guides the study.
 - **Chapter 3 Methodology:** provides details of the study's research methodology.
 - **Chapter 4 Review of current Gypsy and Traveller population and provision of pitches/plots:** reviews estimates of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population across the borough and existing site/yard provision.
 - **Chapter 5 Household survey:** presents relevant data obtained from the household survey research.
 - **Chapter 6 Pitch / plot / transit requirements:** focuses on current and future pitch/plot requirements. This chapter includes a detailed assessment of drivers of demand, supply and current shortfalls across the borough.
 - **Chapter 7 Conclusion and strategic response:** concludes the report, providing brief summary of key findings and recommendations.
- 1.11 The report is supplemented by the following appendices:
 - **Appendix A** Household questionnaires.
 - **Appendix B** Glossary of terms.

2. Policy context

Overview

- 2.1 This study is grounded in an understanding of the national legislative and planning policy context that underpins the assessment and provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- 2.2 This chapter sets out the policy context within which this GTAA has been prepared, including a consideration of the previous GTAA for the district.

Government policy and guidance

- 2.3 The 2024 National Planning Policy Framework states in Paragraph 63 *'the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies'*. It then lists a number of groups including Travellers. A footnote to the paragraph states *'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers' housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document'*.
- 2.4 The 2024 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document states that *'local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning' and 'ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies' and 'to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply'*.
- 2.5 Policy A of the 2024 PPTS relates to evidence needed to plan positively and manage development. This states *'in assembling the evidence base necessary to support their planning approach, local planning authorities should:*
- *pay particular attention to early and effective community engagement with both settled and traveller communities (including discussing travellers' accommodation needs with travellers themselves, their representative bodies and local support groups);*
 - *cooperate with travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups; other local authorities and relevant interest groups to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of their areas over the lifespan of their development plan, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities; and*
 - *use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of local plans and make planning decisions'*.
- 2.6 In the absence of further guidance on preparing GTAAs, the methods adopted by arc⁴ reflect Policy A of the PPTS; build upon those methods established through previous guidance; our practical experience and findings from planning inquiries and appeals.

- 2.7 The calculation of pitch/plot requirements is based on established DLUHC modelling methodology, as advocated in *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance* (DCLG, 2007). Although this guidance was formally withdrawn in December 2016, in the absence of any updated guidance on the subject, it continues to provide a good practice approach for needs modelling.
- 2.8 Policy B of the 2024 PPTS relates to planning for traveller sites and requires Local Plans:
- *to be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and consistent with the policies of the NPPF; and*
 - *to set pitch targets for Gypsies and Travellers and plot targets for Travelling Showpeople as defined in Annex 1 which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities.*
- 2.9 Policy B (paragraph 10) sets out that local authorities should, in producing their Local Plan:
- a. *identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;*
 - b. *identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 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 (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.*
- 2.10 Policy B (paragraph 13) sets out that local authorities should ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and therefore ensure that their policies:
- a. *promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community;*
 - b. *promote, in collaboration with commissioners of health services, access to appropriate health services;*
 - c. *ensure that children can attend school on a regular basis;*
 - d. *provide a settled base that reduces both the need for long-distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment;*

- e. *provide for proper consideration of the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and well-being of any travellers who may locate there or on others as a result of new development;*
- f. *avoid placing undue pressure on local infrastructure and services;*
- g. *do not locate sites in areas at high risk of flooding, including functional floodplains, given the particular vulnerability of caravans; and*
- h. *reflect the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability.*

Intentional unauthorised development

- 2.11 The planning policy statement issued with PPTS 2015 [planning policy statement link here](#) and confirmed by Ministerial Statement [Ministerial Statement link here](#) makes clear that if a site is intentionally occupied without planning permission this would be a material consideration in any retrospective planning application for that site. Whilst this does not mean that retrospective applications will be automatically refused, it does mean that failure to seek permission in advance of occupation will count against the application.
- 2.12 In addition, PPTS 2024 (Paragraph 12) makes clear that in exceptional cases where a local authority is burdened by a large-scale unauthorised site that has significantly increased their need, and their area is subject to strict and special planning constraints, then there is no assumption that the local authority will be required to meet their Gypsy and Traveller site needs in full. This is intended to protect local planning authorities with significant land constraints from being required to provide for additional needs arising directly from large sites such as Dale Farm (a large unauthorised site in Essex).

Considering ‘Cultural’ and ‘PPTS’ need

- 2.13 The PPTS 2024 now contains a revised definition of Gypsy and Traveller which includes reference to people with a cultural tradition of nomadism or living in a caravan.

Previous GTAA

- 2.14 The previous Ashford Borough Council GTAA was published in 2018 and identified an overall need for 82 additional pitches (54 in the first five years (2017/18 to 2021/22) and 28 in the longer-term (2022/3 to 2030). There was a need for 54 pitches from households who met the former former PPTS nomadic habit of life test.

Responding to challenges

- 2.15 GTAA's are subject to intense scrutiny, particularly at planning inquiries and hearings. The methodological approaches taken by arc⁴ aim to maximise the robustness of evidence and measures include:
- An up-to-date assessment of the number of pitches on sites and the number of households living on pitches and any vacancies.
 - Maximising response rates from households.
 - Carefully considering the relationship between households and the pitches they occupy.
 - Sensitive analysis of the flows of existing households from and to local authority districts.
 - Consideration of overcrowding and concealed households.
 - Careful consideration of turnover on council / housing association pitches, with clear assumptions over future potential capacity from households moving away from pitches.
 - Longer-term modelling of need using detailed demographic information contained from household survey work.
 - Reasonable assumptions around the number of households in bricks and mortar accommodation who may want to move to a pitch.

Further contextual matters

- 2.16 The 2024 GTAA is being prepared at a time of notable change in the use of Gypsy and Traveller sites. There are a series of trends taking place which are affecting both the level of need across local authorities and the use of sites. The updated PPTS will result in higher levels of need being reported, particularly where previous GTAA's reported levels of pitch need based on the PPTS nomadic habit of life test.
- 2.17 Through our observational work elsewhere and discussions with agents, a more complex relationship between pitches, households and caravans is emerging. On some sites across the country, there has been a dramatic increase in occupancy, with additional caravans placed on sites. But these are not necessarily occupied by Gypsies and Travellers and there is evidence of pitches being used to accommodate new migrant communities. There are also concerns that residents are being displaced from their pitches, sometimes by force, and need to find somewhere else live, resulting in higher levels of in-migration to local authority areas.
- 2.18 Against the backdrop of these emerging trends, the residential pitch needs expressed in GTAA's should therefore be considered as a minimum need.

3. Methodology

Introduction

- 3.1 The GTAA research method is grounded in an understanding of the requirements of the NPPF and based on an established methodology which regularly withstands scrutiny at planning inquiries and hearings.
- 3.2 The methodology has comprised:
- a desktop analysis of existing documents, including data on pitches / sites, plots / yards and unauthorised encampments;
 - the collection of primary data, including household interviews with Gypsies and Travellers and information from planning applications; and
 - an assessment of accommodation needs taking into account all available data and information.
- 3.3 The information gathering has been carried out in three phases, as outlined below:
- Phase 1: Literature / desktop review.
 - Phase 2: Survey of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across the district.
 - Phase 3: Needs assessment and production of the GTAA 2024 report.

Phase 1: Literature/desktop review and steering group discussions

- 3.4 We have reviewed relevant literature, including legislative background and best practice information; and analysis of available secondary data relating to Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Ashford Borough. The research has progressed with input from local authority officers.

Phase 2: Fieldwork survey and interviews with Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 3.5 Our aim is to obtain interviews from all households living on sites using a standard questionnaire (Appendix A). This questionnaire has been carefully designed in consultation with councils, feedback from community representatives and planning agents. Site visits took place in May 2024, with interviews carried out during the period May to mid-June 2024. It was appreciated that this fieldwork period took place at the start of the main

travelling season and there was a plan to carry out further interviews in the autumn. However, the level of response was so high from this initial round of interviews that the data received was sufficient to allow a robust assessment of need. Indeed, it was one of the highest response rates achieved on a major study by arc⁴.

- 3.6 There were a total of 157 Gypsy and Traveller households living on pitches and interviews were achieved with 124 households. Data from planning application data was used to obtain data from 11 further households who either refused to take part or were not available for interview. Therefore, data for 135 out of 157 households was obtained, representing an 86% response rate.

Phase 3: Needs assessment and production of report

- 3.7 A detailed explanation of the pitch requirements is contained in Chapter 6 but briefly comprises analysis of the following:
- current pitch supply, households living in bricks and mortar accommodation; households planning to move in the next five years, and emerging households to give total need for pitches; and
 - supply based on the number of authorised pitches and turnover on sites on public pitches.
- 3.8 The overall need for pitches is then compared with the overall supply.

Pitches and households

- 3.9 One of the key challenges faced when assessing Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirements is the actual nature of pitches and how this relates to the number of households they can support.
- 3.10 PPTS 2015 refers to the need for local planning authorities to *'identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets' and 'relate the number of pitches/plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density'* (PPTS 2015, paragraph 10).
- 3.11 Planning decision notices usually refer to the number of pitches on a site or the specifics of what can be on a pitch e.g., statics, tourers; or specific individuals and/or households.
- 3.12 As part of the GTAA, it is essential that the characteristics of sites, the number of pitches and how many households these can support is carefully considered. There are a range of issues which need to be considered when reviewing site and pitch characteristics and their potential implications for future pitch and site requirements which are now summarised.

Site and pitch size

- 3.13 There are no definitive parameters for site or pitch sizes. Although now withdrawn, the DCLG Designing Gypsy and Traveller sites: good practice guide (2008) states in paragraph 4.4 that *'Gypsy and Traveller sites are designed to provide land per household which is suitable for a mobile home, touring*

caravan and a utility building, together with space for parking. Sites of various sizes, layouts and pitch numbers operate successfully today and work best when they take into account the size of the site and the needs and demographics of the families resident on them’.

- 3.14 Paragraph 4.47 states that *‘to ensure fire safety it is essential that every trailer, caravan or park home must be not less than 6 metres from any other trailer, caravan or park home that is occupied separately’.*
- 3.15 Paragraph 7.12 states that *‘as a general guide, it is possible to specify that an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan (or two trailers, drying space for clothes, a lockable shed (for bicycles, wheelchair storage etc.), parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area’.*
- 3.16 Paragraph 4.13 states that *‘smaller pitches must be able to accommodate at least an amenity building, a large trailer, drying space for clothes and parking for at least one vehicle’.*
- 3.17 As a general guide, it is suggested by arc⁴ that the minimum pitch size is 25m by 25m (625 square meters or 0.0625 hectares). This would support a twin-unit chalet/mobile home (15m x 6.5m), a tourer, an amenity shed/building (5m x 4m), two vehicle spaces (minimum 2.4m x 4.8m for each space) and turning circle for vehicles, amenity space and a small garden area/play space. Residential units need to be 3m from the pitch boundary and at least 6m apart. A slightly larger pitch of 25m by 30m (750 square meters or 0.075 hectares) would be appropriate for larger household units requiring several residential units.
- 3.18 In 2010, the Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain prepared a document ‘Travelling Showpeople’s sites: a planning focus – model standard package). This document was intended to provide guidelines to Travelling Showpeople and Local Planning Authorities when considering the needs of Travelling Showpeople.
- 3.19 This document confirmed that:
- A plot is a piece of land occupied by a Showperson with their family and equipment, used to store fairground rides, vehicles and other items as well as for living accommodation. The family unit can be large or small, for instance an extended family with grandparents, parents and children, or a single-family unit of parents and children.
 - A yard is two or more plots owned by the same family who may use this for their own family purposes or may let part out to other Showpeople.
 - A site is a group of plots where the land is owned by individual plot holders. Quite often a Showperson’s site will have a common shared access onto the main road network.
 - Showpeople’s sites do not fit neatly into the definition of a one land use category. The sites combine a residential use with a storage use, and maintenance is also likely to be carried out on site. The residential use can take the form of static homes and caravans.

- For a Travelling Showperson yard, the minimum size of a plot is 0.5ha and should include space for residential accommodation and equipment storage.

Occupancy

- 3.20 A pitch may accommodate more than one family unit, for instance it could include a family, older children who have formed their own household and other family members. This could lead to potential overcrowding, and this is considered as part of the GTAA household survey.
- 3.21 Private sites may restrict occupancy to close family / friends. This limits opportunity for others to move onto the site, but this restrictive occupancy may provide for emerging needs within a household, for example as grown-up children (previously living within a parent(s) or grandparent(s) home) form independent households of their own.
- 3.22 Quality, size of pitch and proximity of caravans on pitches vary dramatically.

Response

- 3.23 For each site, a pragmatic and reasonable judgement should be made as part of the GTAA regarding the number of pitches or sub-divisions on sites. This may relate to the number of families living on sites and could include a consideration of the potential intensification of sites (for instance through further sub-division, extension or use of vacant areas within the site). Capacity and layout of sites should be identified through site observation (directly or indirectly through Google maps or similar), planning history and local knowledge of planning, enforcement and liaison officers.
- 3.24 Pitches can become intensified or sub-divided once planning applications have been approved. These sub-divisions tend to be tolerated by councils. Often pitches become subdivided to provide space for newly-forming households, particularly from family members. The potential for pitch intensification/sub-division was considered on site visits and respondents were asked whether intensification/sub-division was possible on the site they lived on.

4. Review of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population and existing provision of pitches and plots

Overview

- 4.1 This chapter looks at the current picture in terms of the current population and demography of Gypsies and Travellers across Ashford Borough before going on to explore the extent and nature of provision across the area.

Census data

- 4.2 In October 2023, the ONS published detailed census data relating to Gypsy and Traveller populations. This provides valuable insights into the population dynamics and comparisons with overall populations.
- 4.3 The 2021 Census (Table RM032) reported a population of **686** people who identified as 'White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller' or 'Gypsy/Romany' plus 81 people identifying as 'Roma' living in Ashford Borough. The total number of households was estimated to be **225** based on the number of Household Reference People, with an estimated 148 households living in bricks and mortar accommodation. This compares with 531 people living in 167 households from the 2011 Census.
- 4.4 Table 4.1 sets out a range of data relating to people identifying as Gypsies and Travellers from the 2021 Census. In summary:
- 66% live in bricks and mortar accommodation and 34% live in a caravan/mobile structure.
 - 64.6% rent (14.2% privately and 50.4% from a social landlord) and 35.5% are owner occupiers.
 - 28.4% are overcrowded compared with 6.6% of the general population.
 - 7.2% are singles, 5.8% couples no children, 36.7% couples with children, 34.5% single parents and 15.8% other household types.
- 4.5 In terms of health, 70% of Gypsies and Travellers said their health was very good/good and 12.9% said it was bad/very bad. The overall net health satisfaction score (% saying very good/good minus bad/very bad) was 57.1% compared with 78.4% of the overall population.
- 4.6 Please note that the data reported from the census may differ from the findings of the household survey. This is because of the small population base of the Gypsy and Traveller population and data highly influenced by the level of response to both the 2021 Census and 2024 household survey.

Table 4.1 Characteristics of properties and households which are occupied by people identifying as Gypsy and Traveller from 2021 Census.

| Theme | Category | Number of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller | % of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller | % of total population |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|-----------------------|
| Dwelling Stock | Detached whole house or bungalow | 70 | 9.9 | 34.6 |
| | Semi-detached whole house or bungalow | 195 | 27.7 | 31.8 |
| | Terraced (including end-terrace) whole house or bungalow | 120 | 17.0 | 23.0 |
| | Flat, maisonette or apartment | 80 | 11.3 | 9.5 |
| | A caravan or other mobile or temporary structure | 240 | 34.0 | 1.1 |
| | Total | 705 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Tenure | Owned: Owns outright | 190 | 27.0 | 26.8 |
| | Owned: Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership | 60 | 8.5 | 41.4 |
| | Private rented or lives rent free | 100 | 14.2 | 18.2 |
| | Rented Social rented | 355 | 50.4 | 13.6 |
| | Total | 705 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Occupancy | Occupancy rating of bedrooms 0 or more | 505 | 71.6 | 93.4 |
| | Occupancy rating of bedrooms -1 or less | 200 | 28.4 | 6.6 |
| | Total | 705 | 100 | 100 |
| Household composition | One person household: Aged 66 years and over | 10 | 1.4 | 5.0 |
| | One person household: Other | 40 | 5.8 | 5.5 |
| | Single family household: Couple family household: No children | 40 | 5.8 | 14.3 |
| | Single family household: Couple family household: Dependent children | 195 | 28.1 | 34.3 |
| | Single family household: Couple family household: All children non-dependent | 60 | 8.6 | 9.5 |
| | Single family household: Lone parent household | 240 | 34.5 | 11.3 |
| | Other household types | 110 | 15.8 | 20.1 |
| | Total | 695 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| General Health | Very Good | 330 | 47.1 | 48.5 |
| | Good | 160 | 22.9 | 34.5 |
| | Fair | 120 | 17.1 | 12.5 |
| | Bad | 60 | 8.6 | 3.6 |
| | Very Bad | 30 | 4.3 | 1.0 |
| | Total | 700 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | Net health score (VG+G-B-VB) | | 57.1 | 78.4 |

Note 1 : # indicates data are suppressed as they relate to a small number of people.

Source: 2021 Census

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/gypsyoririshtravellerpopulationsenglandandwales/census2021>

Caravan Count information

- 4.7 Snapshot counts of the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans were requested by the government in 1979 and have since been undertaken every January and July by local authorities. An annual count of Travelling Showperson caravans takes place every January. The counts provide a source of information on the number of caravans located on authorised and unauthorised sites but do not record the actual number of pitches on sites/yards.
- 4.8 The figures for the last seven Traveller caravan counts (January 2020 to January 2024) for Ashford Borough are set out in Table 4.2. Data shows an average of 176 caravans across the area. Of these, 11.3% were in council sites, and 79.3% were on private sites and 9.4% were on unauthorised sites.

Table 4.2 Bi-annual Traveller caravan count figures January 2020 to July 2024

| Ashford Borough | Authorised sites (with planning permission) | | Unauthorised sites (without planning permission) | Total |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|---------------|
| | Social Rented | Total Private (inc. temporary permission) | Total Unauthorised | |
| Jan-20 | 22 | 125 | 10 | 157 |
| Jul-21 | 20 | 166 | 14 | 200 |
| Jan-22 | 20 | 156 | 14 | 190 |
| Jul-22 | 23 | 134 | 13 | 170 |
| Jan-23 | 17 | 150 | 18 | 185 |
| Jul-23 | 19 | 118 | 22 | 159 |
| Jan-24 | 18 | 125 | 25 | 168 |
| Jul-25 | 18 | 125 | 16 | 159 |
| Latest 8-count average | 20 | 137 | 17 | 174 |
| Latest 8-Count % Average | 11.3% | 79.2% | 9.5% | 100.0% |

Source: MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count, Live Table
Counts not taken in July 2020 or Jan 2021 due to the COVID pandemic

- 4.9 Over the period 2018 and 2024, there were no Travelling Showperson's caravans recorded (Table 4.3) in Ashford Borough. However, there is one Showperson's yard accommodating three households which should have been reflected in these figures.

Table 4.3 Annual Travelling Showpeople caravan count figures January 2018 to January 2024

| Ashford Borough Count | Authorised sites with planning permission | | Unauthorised sites without planning permission | Total |
|-----------------------|---|---------------|--|-------|
| | Social Rented | Total Private | Total Unauthorised | |
| 2018 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2019 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2020 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2022 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2023 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2024 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Five-Count Average | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Five-Count % Average | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Source: MHCLG Travelling Showpeople Caravan Count, Live Table 3
Counts not taken in Jan 2021 due to the COVID pandemic

Local sites and yards

- 4.10 Authorised sites are those with planning permission and can be on either public or privately-owned land. Unauthorised sites are made up of either longer-term (approximately three months or longer) unauthorised encampments and can be considered to be indicative of a permanent need for accommodation (in some instances local authorities class these as tolerated sites and do not take enforcement action to remove them); and unauthorised developments, where Travellers are residing upon land that they own and that does not have planning permission (see Appendix B for more detailed definitions).
- 4.11 Table 4.4 sets out the range of sites across Ashford Borough. There are currently 62 Gypsy and Traveller sites which are broken down further as follows:
- 1 council site, 16 pitches (12 occupied by 12 households, 4 vacant)
 - 56 private authorised sites, 136 pitches (126 occupied by 135 Gypsy and Traveller households and 7 non-Gypsy and Traveller households, 10 vacant, with some households occupying more than one pitch as extended family groups).
 - 5 unauthorised sites, 10 pitches (10 occupied by 10 households and 0 vacant)
 - There is also 1 Travelling Showpersons yard with 4 plots (3 households, 1 vacant)
- 4.12 In summary, the GTAA assumes a total of 62 Gypsy and Traveller sites with 162 pitches (148 occupied and 14 vacant, with a total of 157 Gypsy and

Traveller households and 7 non-Traveller households living on pitches. There are some households occupying more than one pitch as extended family groups. There is also one Travelling Showperson yard with 4 plots with 3 currently occupied and one vacant (Table 4.5).

- 4.13 Table 4.6 sets out the summary position regarding pitches/plots, vacancy and occupancy. This provides a transparent base position from which the modelling of future pitch need in Section 6 can proceed. However, it should be acknowledged that the existing private sites are mainly for extended family groups and the ability to live on these sites is therefore restricted. The location of sites and yards is also presented in Map 4.1.

Table 4.4 List of Gypsy & Traveller pitches on sites in Ashford Borough

| Site Code | Site Name | Address | Postcode | Type of Site | Total pitches | Total occupied pitches | Total vacant pitches | Total G&T households | Total non-G&T households | G&T Response | Non-response |
|-----------|-----------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| LA1 | | | TN23 3DT | Public | 16 | 12 | 4 | 12 | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| Priv1 | | | CT4 7DG | Private Authorised | 6 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Priv2 | | | CT4 8AG | Private Authorised | 4 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Priv3 | | | TN27 0NS | Private Authorised | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Priv4 | | | TN27 0NS | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Priv5 | | | TN27 9BY | Private Authorised | 5 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Priv6 | | | TN27 0SS | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Priv8 | | | TN26 3ET | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Priv9 | | | TN27 8QW | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Priv10 | | | TN27 8JJ | Private Authorised | 7 | 7 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| Priv11 | | | TN27 8LJ | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Priv12 | | | TN27 8LW | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Priv13 | | | TN27 8DY | Private Authorised | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Priv14 | | | TN27 8BU | Private Authorised | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |

| Site Code | Site Name | Address | Postcode | Type of Site | Total pitches | Total occupied pitches | Total vacant pitches | Total G&T households | Total non-G&T households | G&T Response | Non-response |
|-----------|-----------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Priv15 | | | TN27 8BH | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Priv16 | | | TN26 3HJ | Private Authorised | 6 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Priv17 | | | TN26 3HA | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Priv18 | | | TN26 3BY | Private Authorised | 5 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Priv19 | | | TN26 3JN | Private Authorised | 12 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Priv20 | | | TN26 3JN | Private Authorised | 5 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Priv21 | | | TN26 3JN | Private Authorised | 6 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Priv22 | | | TN26 3DS | Private Authorised | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Priv23 | | | TN26 1JY | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Priv24 | | | TN26 1JN | Private Authorised | 5 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Priv26 | | | TN23 3AB | Private Authorised | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Priv27 | | | TN23 3AB | Private Authorised | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Priv28 | | | TN23 3AB | Private Authorised | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Priv29 | | | TN23 3AB | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Priv30 | | | TN26 1LJ | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| Site Code | Site Name | Address | Postcode | Type of Site | Total pitches | Total occupied pitches | Total vacant pitches | Total G&T households | Total non-G&T households | G&T Response | Non-response |
|-----------|-----------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Priv31 | | | TN26 1LX | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Priv32 | | | TN26 1LX | Private Authorised | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Priv33 | | | TN26 1LX | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Priv34 | | | TN26 1LX | Private Authorised | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Priv35 | | | TN26 1LX | Private Authorised | 4 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Priv36 | | | TN26 1LX | Private Authorised | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Priv37 | | | TN26 1LX | Private Authorised | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Priv38 | | | TN26 1LX | Private Authorised | 4 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Priv39 | | | TN26 1LX | Private Authorised | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Priv40 | | | TN26 2LX | Private Authorised | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Priv41 | | | TN25 7JF | Private Authorised | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Priv42 | | | TN25 7JF | Private Authorised | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Priv44 | | | TN26 1NH | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Priv45 | | | TN27 8FJ | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Priv46 | | | TN27 0AL | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

| Site Code | Site Name | Address | Postcode | Type of Site | Total pitches | Total occupied pitches | Total vacant pitches | Total G&T households | Total non-G&T households | G&T Response | Non-response |
|-----------|-----------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Priv47 | | | TN27 8BH | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Priv48 | | | TN25 4JJ | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Priv49 | | | TN26 3EF | Private Authorised | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Priv50 | | | TN27 8QW | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Priv51 | | | TN27 8EH | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Priv52 | | | TN26 3JP | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Priv53 | | | TN26 1LX | Private Authorised | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Priv54 | | | TN26 3HU | Private Authorised | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Priv55 | | | TN26 3SZ | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Priv56 | | | TN25 7JL | Private Authorised | 4 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Priv57 | | | TN27 8BH | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Priv58 | | | TN26 1LX | Private Authorised | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Priv59 | | | TN25 7HT | Private Authorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Unauth1 | | | TN25 4JJ | Unauthorised | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unauth2 | | | TN26 1HG | Unauthorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| Site Code | Site Name | Address | Postcode | Type of Site | Total pitches | Total occupied pitches | Total vacant pitches | Total G&T households | Total non-G&T households | G&T Response | Non-response |
|-----------|-----------|---------|----------|--------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Unauth3 | | | TN27 0BT | Unauthorised | 4 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Unauth4 | | | TN30 6UJ | Unauthorised | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Unauth5 | | | TN27 8PF | Unauthorised | 4 | 4 | | 4 | | 4 | |

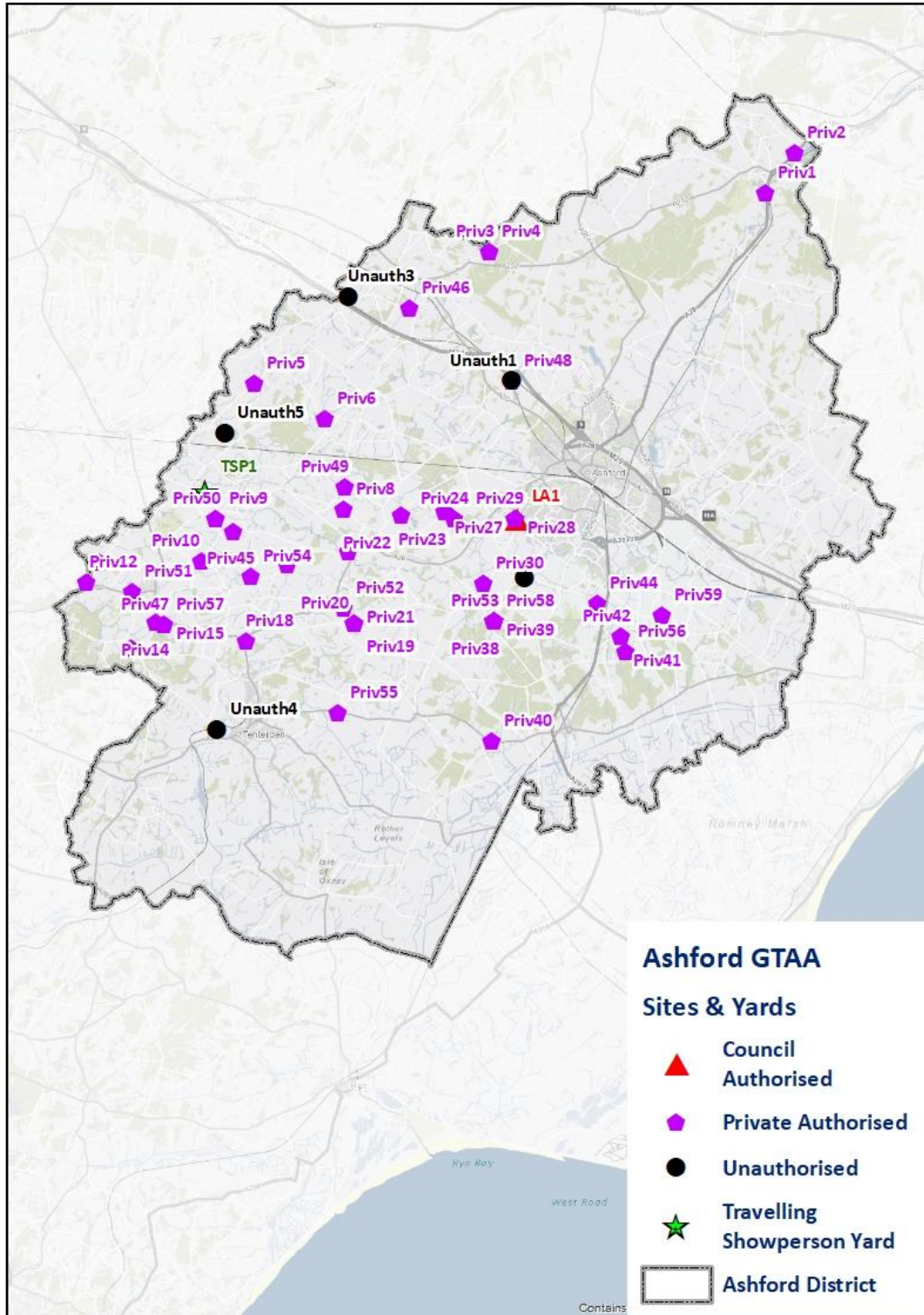
Table 4.5 List of Travelling Showperson plots on yards in Ashford Borough

| Yard Code | Site Name | Address | Postcode | Type of Yard | Total plots | Total occupied pitches | Total vacant pitches | Total TSP households | TSP Response | Non-response |
|-----------|-------------|--------------------------|----------|--------------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| TSP1 | Circus Farm | Burnthouse Lane, Smarden | TN27 8PT | Private Authorised | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 0 |

Table 4.6 Summary of sites/yards, pitches/plots, occupancy and response

| Gypsy and Traveller | No. sites | Total pitches | Total occupied pitches | Total vacant pitches | Total G&T households | Total non-G&T households | G&T Response | Non-response | Non G&T Response |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| LA | 1 | 16 | 12 | 4 | 12 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Priv Auth | 56 | 136 | 126 | 10 | 135 | 7 | 114 | 16 | 4 |
| Unauth | 5 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 62 | 162 | 148 | 14 | 157 | 7 | 135 | 17 | 4 |
| Travelling Showperson | No. yards | Total plots | Total occupied plots | Total vacant plots | Total TSP households | Total non-TSP households | TSP Response | Non-response | |
| Private Authorised | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | |

Map 4.1 Location of Gypsy and Traveller sites and Travelling Showperson’s yard in Ashford Borough



5. Household survey findings

- 5.1 This chapter presents the findings of the household survey, which was carried out to provide primary data to inform this GTAA. The survey aimed to reach as many Gypsy and Traveller and households living in the study area as possible. It was conducted using the questionnaire presented in Appendix A.

Gypsy and Traveller households living in Ashford Borough

- 5.2 A review of the characteristics of Gypsy and Traveller households living in Ashford Borough has been based on data from a total of 137 households living on sites based on 126 interviews as part of the 2024 GTAA and data for 11 households from planning application data.
- 5.3 The number of responses achieved is summarised for each question. The household data are presented in a manner which maintains respondent confidentiality. If analysis refers to 'small numbers' this means 4 or fewer households responding to a question.
- 5.4 **Ethnicity** (base=130): Of household representatives interviewed 94.6% described themselves as Gypsy (including Romany, Romany Gypsy and English Gypsy and 5.4% as Irish Traveller.
- 5.5 **Household size** (base=136): 16.9% of households were single person; 29.4% two person; 25% three person; 14.7% four person, 5.1% five person and 8.8% six or more people.
- 5.6 **Household type** (base=136): 16.9% were singles, 24.3% were single parents, 20.6% were couples, 20.6% were couples with child(ren) which can include non-dependent children, 17.6% were multi-adult families or extended families, such as couples with siblings living with them and other household such as friends sharing.
- 5.7 **Age profile** (base=378): The household survey identified a total of 410 Gypsies and Travellers living on sites in Ashford Borough of these accurate age information was available for 378 people. The age profile is as follows: 28.6% aged 13 or under, 7.4% aged 14-17, 27.2% aged 18-34, 13.5% aged 35-49, 13% aged 50-64 and 10.3% aged 65 and over.
- 5.8 **Length of residence** (base=125): 6.4% had lived at their current place of residence for less than 5 years, 18.4% between 5 and less than 10 years, 17.6% between 10 and less than 15 years, 9.6% between 15 and less than 20 years and 48% for 20 years or more.
- 5.9 **Overcrowding** (base=81): When asked if their home was overcrowded, 12.3% said yes and 87.7% said no. When asked whether their pitch was overcrowded (base=80), 11.3% said yes and 88.7% said no.

Help and support needs

- 5.10 Respondents were asked if they had any broader help and support needs. Several respondents mentioned illness and disability but there were no specific support needs identified for which households required assistance.

Travelling Showpeople

- 5.11 An interview was carried out with the owner of the Travelling Showpersons yard at Circus Farm, Smarden. This provided details of occupants. Given the small number of people living on plots it would not be appropriate to provide further details in this report.

Stakeholder feedback

- 5.12 As part of our research, arc⁴ contacted a range of stakeholders to obtain feedback on Gypsy and Traveller matters. Four stakeholders responded and comments are now summarised. Please note these are the views of stakeholders (which included local authority officers and officers from neighbouring districts) and not necessarily the views of the council or arc⁴.
- 5.13 The main issues raised are summarised below:
- The GTAA contributes to the Duty to Cooperate but discussions should continue with neighbouring local authorities.
 - Strategic provision of transit sites across Kent is an important issue for all authorities across the county. It was recommended in Canterbury City Council's most recent GTAA that the council continue discussions with LPAs across Kent to determine the level of transit need required and how this could be provided for on a county scale.

6. Gypsy and Traveller pitch and transit site requirements

Introduction

- 6.1 This section reviews the overall pitch and plot requirements of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across Ashford Borough. It takes into account current supply and need, as well as future need, based on modelling of data. This chapter also considers transit pitch requirements for Gypsies and Travellers. Finally, the chapter presents planning policy recommendations.
- 6.2 The calculation of pitch requirements is based on modelling as advocated in *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Guidance (DCLG, 2007)*. Although now formally withdrawn, the former DCLG guidance still provides the best-practice approach towards the assessment of pitch and plot needs (see Chapter 2 for further discussion).
- 6.3 This approach requires an assessment of the current needs of Gypsies and Travellers and a projection of future needs. It advocates the use of a survey to supplement secondary source information and derive key supply and demand information. Modelling presents an overall need based on the 2012 PPTS definition which is also called the ‘cultural’ need.

Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirement model overview

- 6.4 Pitch need is assessed for two time periods. A short-term *5-year model* looks at need over the next five years (2024/25 to 2028/29). A longer-term model looks at need over the period to 2041/42 using demographic data.
- 6.5 In terms of *need*, the 5-year model considers:
- the baseline number of households on all types of site (authorised, unauthorised and temporary authorised sites) as of May 2024;
 - existing households planning to move in the next five years (currently on sites and also from bricks and mortar) and where they are planning to move to;
 - emerging households currently on sites and planning to emerge in the next five years and stay within the study area on a pitch; to derive a figure for total pitch need
- 6.6 In terms of *supply*, the model considers:
- total supply of current pitches on authorised sites;
 - supply from new sites being developed; and
 - vacant pitches on authorised sites.
- 6.7 The model then reconciles total need and existing authorised supply over the next five years by summarising:

- 6.8 The longer-term model then considers the need over the period to 2041/42. This is based on the age profile of children under 13 living in Gypsy and Traveller households on pitches.

Ashford Borough pitch need analysis: Description of factors in the 5-year need model

- 6.9 Table 6.1 provides a summary of the 5-year pitch need calculation. Each component in the model is now discussed to ensure that the process is transparent and any assumptions clearly stated.

Cultural Need

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

- 6.10 These figures are derived from council data and site observation data. In summary there are a total of 157 households living on pitches (See Table 6.1).

Current households in bricks and mortar accommodation (2)

- 6.11 The 2021 Census reports a total of 225 households of whom an estimated 66% live in bricks and mortar accommodation or around 148.

Weighting of data

- 6.12 Survey data has been weighted to take account of non-response households. For Gypsy and Traveller households the weighting is 157 (total households) divided by 131 (total household information) = 1.198 .

Table 6.1 Summary of demand and supply factors: Gypsies and Travellers – 2024/25 to 2028/29

| CULTURAL NEED | | | Ashford Borough |
|---|---|--|------------------------|
| 1 | Households living on pitches | 1a. On LA Site | 12 |
| | | 1b. On Private Site - Authorised | 135 |
| | | 1c. On Private Site - Unauthorised | 10 |
| | | 1f. Total (1a+1b+1c+1d+1e) | 157 |
| 2 | Estimate of households living in bricks and mortar accommodation | 2021 Census estimate | 148 |
| | | Weighting for non-response | 1.198 |
| 3 | Existing households planning to move in next 5 years or on unauthorised site | Currently on sites | |
| | | 3a. To another pitch/same site (no net impact) | 0 |
| | | 3b. To another site in district (no net impact) | 4 |
| | | 3c. From site to bricks and mortar (-) | 0 |
| | | 3d. To site/bricks and mortar outside district | 0 |
| | | Currently in Bricks and Mortar | |
| | | 3e. Planning to move to a site in LA (+) (see note 1) | 1 |
| | | 3f. Planning to move to another B&M property (no net impact) | 0 |
| | | In-migrant households | |
| | | 3g. Allowance for in-migration (+) | 5 |
| | 3h. TOTAL Net impact (-3c-3d+3e+3g) | 6 | |
| 4 | Emerging households (5 years) | 4a. Currently on site and planning to live on current site | 34 |
| | | 4b. Current on site and planning to live on another site in the district | 31 |
| | | 4c. Currently on site and planning to live outside the district | 0 |
| | | 4d. Currently in B&M planning to move to a site in LA (+) | 0 |
| | | 4e. Currently in B&M and moving to B&M (no net impact) | 0 |
| | | 4f. Currently on Site and moving to B&M (no net impact) | 0 |
| | | 4g. TOTAL (4a+4b+4d) | 65 |
| 5 | Total Need | 1f+3h+4g | 228 |
| SUPPLY | | | |
| 6 | Current supply of authorised pitches and households that are accommodated | 6a Occupied authorised pitches by Gypsies and Travellers | 138 |
| | | 6b. Multiple households adequately accommodated on authorised pitches | 13 |
| | | 6c. Occupied authorised pitches by non-Gypsy Traveller | 7 |
| | | 6d. Vacant pitches | 14 |
| | | 6e. Unimplemented pitches which have planning permission on authorised sites | 3 |
| | | 6e. Total current authorised supply (6a+6b+6c+6d) | 175 |
| RECONCILING NEED AND SUPPLY | | | |
| 7 | Total need for pitches | 5 years (from 5) | 228 |
| 8 | Total supply of authorised pitches | 5 years (from 6c) | 175 |
| 5-YEAR AUTHORISED PITCH SHORTFALL 2024/25 TO 2028/29 | | | 53 |

Existing households planning to move in the next five years (3)

- 6.13 This was derived from information from the 2024 household survey for respondents currently on pitches.
- 6.14 Evidence for existing households currently on sites indicates a net +5 (weighted) pitch need based on existing households planning to move. This includes an allowance for in-migration and out-migration based on trends over the past 5 years.
- 6.15 For households currently in bricks and mortar, based on national arc⁴ studies it is estimated that 5.3% of households living in bricks and mortar would prefer to live on a site which would equate to 8 households. As part of the household survey, one household who was currently in bricks and mortar and would like to move to a site was identified. There was little evidence of households moving from bricks and mortar accommodation in the past 5 years from household survey evidence. Modelling therefore considered there is a minimum need from 1 household wanting to move to a pitch.
- 6.16 The factors presented in Section 3 of the model result in an overall net requirement of +6.0 pitches (weighted) from existing households planning to move in the next 5 years.

Emerging households (4)

- 6.17 This is the number of households expected to emerge in the next 5 years based on 2024 household survey information and planning application data. The total number is +65 (weighted). If young people aged 18 and over were living with family and have not specified that they want to form a new household, this is assumed to be through choice and the model does not assume they want to form a new household. The model however does factor in need from 13 to 17 year-olds who are likely to emerge in the next 5 years but had not indicated this on the household survey. Modelling assumes that half of these people will form households.

Total need for pitches (5)

- 6.18 This is a total of current households on authorised pitches, households on pitches planning to move in the next five years and demand from emerging households currently living on pitches. This indicates a total need for 228 pitches (157 existing households on pitches, a net need for 6 (weighted) pitches from existing households planning to move including in-migration and a need for 65 (weighted) pitches from emerging households).

Supply

Current supply of authorised pitches (6)

- 6.19 Across all 57 authorised sites, there are 152 pitches available. Of these, 138 are occupied and 14 are vacant. Of the 138 occupied, 151 are occupied by Gypsy and Traveller households and 7 by non-Gypsy and Traveller households. There are 13 pitches which accommodate more than one household – which is mainly extended families who want to live together. Survey evidence indicates these tend to be part of extended household groups who want to live together. There are also 3 unimplemented planning permissions on three authorised sites: Priv 54 Planesfield (1 pitch) and Priv 57 Silver Birches (2 pitches)

Reconciling supply and need

- 6.20 There is a total need over the next five years (2024/25 to 2028/29) for 228 pitches in Ashford Borough (row 7) compared with a supply of authorised pitches which accommodate 175 households (row 8). The result is an overall need for 53 additional pitches.

Longer-term pitch requirement modelling

- 6.21 Longer-term pitch need modelling has been carried out using known household structure information from the household survey of households living on pitches. On the basis of the age of children in households, it is possible to determine the extent of 'likely emergence', which assumes that a child is likely to form a new household at the age of 18.
- 6.22 The year when a child reaches 18 has been calculated and it is possible to assess how many newly forming households may emerge over the period 2029/30 to 2041/42. A reasonable assumption is that half of these children will form new households, bearing in mind culturally women tend to move away on marriage and men tend to stay in close proximity to their families on marriage. The model therefore assumes that 50% of children will form households when they reach 18 and that these households remain in Ashford Borough. This approach has been tested at inquiry and the assumption has been corroborated by several Travelling interviewees. Analysis would suggest a total need for 62 additional pitches over the period 2029/30-2041/42 (Table 6.2). This should be considered as a minimum level of longer-term need as other factors such as net in-migration in the longer-term may have an impact on need, which could be considered in future GTAA updates.

Table 6.2 Future pitch requirements based on the assumption that 50% of children will require a pitch in Ashford Borough

| Time period | No. children | No. pitches (rounded) |
|--|--------------|-----------------------|
| 2029/30 to 2033/34 (5 years) | 34 | 17 |
| 2034/35 to 2038/39 (5 years) | 53 | 26 |
| 2039/40 to 2041/42 (3 years) | 38 | 19 |
| Total (2029/30 to 2041/42) (13 years) | 125 | 62 |

Overall plan period pitch need

- 6.23 Table 6.3 summarises the overall need for pitches across Ashford Borough for the period 2024/25 to 2041/42. The need in the first five year 2024/25 to 2028/29 is for 53 pitches and main drivers of need are new household formation and in-migration. In the longer-term 2029/30 to 2041/42 there is a need for 62 pitches based on the analysis of longer-term demographics.

Table 6.3 Gypsy and Traveller pitch need 2024/25 to 2041/42

| Period | Pitch need |
|--|------------|
| 5yr Authorised Pitch Shortfall (2024/25 to 2028/29) (A) | 53 |
| Longer-term need | |
| Over period 2029/30 to 2033/34 (B) | 17 |
| Over period 2034/35 to 2038/39(C) | 26 |
| Over period 2039/40 to 2041/42 (D) | 19 |
| Longer-term need TOTAL to 2041/42 (13 years) E=(B+C+D) | 62 |
| F. NET SHORTFALL 2024/25 to 2041/42 (A+E) (18 years) | 115 |
| G. Annual net shortfall | 6.4 |

Potential capacity for Gypsy and Traveller pitches on existing sites

Turnover on sites

- 6.24 Turnover relates to the number of pitches that are expected to become available for occupancy. Analysis only includes expected turnover on public sites as this is referenced in (former) government guidance and more accurate data on changes in pitch occupancy is likely to be available. Although there is likely to be turnover on private sites, the ability of households to move onto private sites may be more restrictive (for instance the site may be restricted to a particular family) and less likely to be recorded.
- 6.25 Turnover on the public sites are very low, evidenced by the fact that all respondents living on public sites had lived on their pitch for at least 5 years. Therefore no turnover on sites is assumed in modelling.

Regularisation of existing sites

- 6.26 There are currently 10 pitches on 5 sites that are not permanently authorised:
- 10 pitches on 5 unauthorised sites (10 occupied by 10 households, 0 vacant)
- 6.27 It is recommended that the council considers assessing these pitches against an appropriate assessment criteria and/or policy guidance to consider if they can be regularised (permanently authorised).
- 6.28 It should also be noted that during the course of the GTAA, there were several change to the planning status of sites. Five sites were regularised: 3 temporary authorised to authorised and 2 unauthorised to authorised. There were also 2 sites that went from temporary authorised to unauthorised and one new unauthorised site was identified by the council.

Potential for additional pitches on existing sites

- 6.29 Survey respondents suggested potential for additional pitches on existing sites and potential sites (Table 6.4). Through discussions with residents on sites and private site owners, the GTAA identified a range of between 42 and 60 potential pitches. This was based on initial discussions with households interviewed. It is recommended that the council investigate the potential for additional pitches on sites as a way of helping to meet need. Through further investigation of these sites. It should be noted that the council have a policy which limits sites to a maximum of 5 pitches.

Table 6.4 Potential additional pitches on existing and potential sites to help meet Gypsy and Traveller need

| Site Reference | Site Name | Min | Max |
|----------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Priv 9 | Miller Farm | 10 | 20 |
| Priv 13 | Bargate Farm | 2 | 2 |
| Priv 20 | Pillreed Wood | 3 | 3 |
| Priv 23 | Acres Meadow (adjacent land) | 5 | 5 |
| Priv 44 | Jobens Farm | 4 | 4 |
| Priv 45 | Rosebud Farm | 6 | 6 |
| Priv 48 | Bridgewood Farm (adjacent land) | 4 | 4 |
| Priv 51 | Little Greenacres Meadow | 2 | 10 |
| Priv 52 | Herwish | 3 | 3 |
| Priv 54 | Planesfield | 2 | 2 |
| Potential site | Rose Cottage (next to Side View) | 1 | 1 |
| | TOTAL | 42 | 60 |

Vacant pitches on private sites

- 6.30 There were 14 vacant pitches on authorised sites which are included in the five-year needs model as an element of supply. There were no vacant pitches identified on sites that were not authorised.

Potential for additional pitches on existing sites through household dissolution

- 6.31 When considering the potential future supply of pitches, consideration should be given to the potential availability of pitches due to household dissolution. By considering the age profile and household structures of households, there is the potential for 21 (weighted) pitches to become available through household dissolution over the period to 2041/42. The potential from household dissolution over the plan period is assumed where there are singles or couples aged 65 and over, with no other people living on the pitch.

Impact of turnover, regularisation, additional pitches and household dissolution on overall need.

- 6.32 The overall pitch need over the next 5 years (2024/25 to 2028/29) is 63. There is a further need from 2029/30 to 2041/42 for 62 pitches, resulting in an overall need for 115 pitches.
- 6.33 There is a potential supply of additional pitches through:
- Regularisation (10 pitches)
 - Potential expansion/intensification (42 to 60 pitches)
 - Household dissolution over the plan period (21 pitches)
- 6.34 This potential supply could provide **between 73 and 91 pitches**. This has the potential to meet five-year need and make a contribution to meeting longer-term needs.
- 6.35 Further work is recommended to review the potential for additional pitch development on existing sites and the occupancy of permanent pitches.
- 6.36 Notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance households moving into Ashford Borough. It is therefore recommended the council has criteria-based policies to inform future planning applications for private sites should they arise.
- 6.37 It is implicit in this study that the needs arising from the private family sites will be met either through the use of vacant pitches on those sites or through new site provision. No turnover is assumed on private sites but over the plan period this may help provide pitches for occupation by Gypsies and Travellers in housing need.

Tenure preferences

- 6.38 Households were asked about tenure preferences for new sites and some responded (base=54). 3 stated a preference for a public pitch and 51 (94.4%) stated a preference for private sites.

Transit requirements

- 6.39 There are a number of ways to deliver temporary places where Travellers can stop whilst passing through a local authority area. These include transit sites, stop over areas and negotiated stopping.
- 6.40 An indicator of transit need is unauthorised encampment activity and data for Ashford are now presented.
- 6.41 Over the period 2018 to January 2024, there were 32 recorded instances of unauthorised encampment activity (Table 6.5). Over this period:
- The number of caravans on unauthorised encampments has ranged between 1 and 15.
 - The median number of caravans on an encampment has been 3.
 - The modal number (the most frequently recorded number of caravans) was 3.
 - The median number of days the encampment took place was 1

Table 6.5 Unauthorised encampment activity in Ashford Borough 2018 to 2024

| | | |
|---|---|---------|
| Number of <u>encampments</u> reported | 32 encampments (2018=7, 2019=6, 2020=6, 2021=3, 2022=1, 2023=8 and 2024=1 to January) | |
| Number of <u>caravans</u> on encampments reported | Average | 4.1 |
| | Median | 3 |
| | Mode (most frequent number) | 2 |
| | Range | 1 to 15 |

Source: Council data

- 6.42 When considering transit need, the council needs to be mindful of new legislation through the Police, Crime, Courts and Sentencing Act (Part 4). This will make using land for stopping without permission a criminal offence rather than a civil offence. The Act gives police increased powers to act and introduces significant penalties (fines up to £2,500, impounding vehicles and prison sentences).

- 6.43 Based on evidence of unauthorised encampment activity, there is a clear evidence of a need to provide land to address the need for temporary places to stop. There are several ways to deliver temporary places where Travellers can stop whilst passing through a local authority area and in general, councils are moving towards providing temporary stop over areas and negotiated stopping to help meet short-term transit need rather than develop transit sites.
- 6.44 A temporary stop over area is land which can be used on a temporary basis if unauthorised encampments occur or are likely to occur. They can be fields, areas of hardstanding or a mixture of both. Temporary facilities can be provided when the temporary stop over is in use, for instance portable toilets and rubbish collection.
- 6.45 Negotiated stopping involves councils making an agreement with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments. The terms of the agreement can vary but usually include the provision of portaloos, waste disposal, water; the length of the agreement can vary but tends to be around 28 days; and users agree to comply with rules for behaviour and use of the site (see <https://www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk/> for more information).
- 6.46 Based on emerging good practice nationally, it is recommended that the council considers developing a flexible approach to unauthorised encampment activity using negotiated stopping arrangements. It is recommended the council should consider identifying areas of land that can be used for smaller encampments (up to 5 caravans), encampments of between 5 and up to 10 caravans and for larger encampments at least 10 caravans to accommodate Travellers passing through Ashford. This approach could be part of a Kent wide response to unauthorised encampment activity.

Travelling Showperson plot requirements

- 6.47 There is currently one Travelling Showperson's yard in Ashford and the owners want to increase the number of plots from 4 to 8 to help meet the shortfall of Showperson's plots for friends and family needing somewhere to live. It is also recommended that the council develop a criteria-based policy to consider any applications coming forward over the plan period.

7. Conclusion and response

- 7.1 This concluding chapter provides a brief summary of key findings and recommendations.

Current accommodation

- 7.2 There are well-established Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson communities living across Ashford Borough. The GTAA assumes a total of 62 Gypsy and Traveller sites with 162 pitches (148 occupied and 14 vacant, with a total of 161 Gypsy and Traveller households and 7 non-Traveller households living on pitches. There are some households occupying more than one pitch as extended family groups.
- 7.3 There is one Travelling Showperson yard with 4 plots with 3 currently occupied and one vacant.

Future Gypsy and Traveller residential need

- 7.4 There is an overall minimum need for 115 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Ashford Borough over the period 2024/25 to 2041/42. Of this need, 53 are needed in the first five years and 62 over the period 2029/30 to 2041/42. Needs analysis considers the needs arising from existing households, households on unauthorised sites, newly forming households, in-migrant households and current vacancies on existing public and private sites. The annual net shortfall need is 6.4 pitches.
- 7.5 In order to meet its need for pitches, the council is recommended to consider regularising unauthorised sites where possible; intensifying and expanding existing sites; and taking into account likely household dissolution which would result in pitches coming available.
- 7.6 This potential supply could provide between 73 and 91 pitches. This has the potential to meet the five-year need and make a significant contribution to meeting longer-term needs.
- 7.7 Further work is recommended to review the potential for additional pitch development on existing sites and the occupancy of permanent pitches.
- 7.8 Notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Ashford Borough than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.

Transit provision

- 7.9 The council should consider how land can be provided for short-term use and particularly in response to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act. Based on the evidence of unauthorised encampment activity, it is recommended that the council develops negotiated stopping policy to meet need as it arises, with at a borough level or as part of a Kent-wide response to meeting transit need.

Travelling Showperson need

- 7.10 There is currently one Travelling Showperson's yard in Ashford and the owners want to increase the number of plots from 4 to 8 to help meet the shortfall of Showperson's plots for friends and family needing somewhere to live. It is also recommended that the council develop a criteria-based policy to consider any applications coming forward over the plan period.

Future updating

- 7.11 The GTAA should be updated on a 5-yearly basis to ensure that the level of pitch and plot provision remains appropriate for the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population across Ashford Borough.

Appendix A: Gypsy and Traveller Fieldwork Questionnaire

| | | | | |
|----|---|--|------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Date and Time | | | |
| | Site Reference | | | |
| | Address | | | |
| | General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and Data Protection | This study is being done for your local council to identify if there is a need for more residential pitches and transit provision in the area. A report will be prepared based on the findings of these surveys. | | |
| | | The information you provide will not be used to identify you personally, will be kept strictly confidential. Anonymous survey data may be shared with the council. | | |
| | | Can you please say if you are happy to carry on with the questionnaire on this basis? | Yes | No |
| 1 | Pitch/Property Type (and tenure if B&M) | | | |
| 2 | No. Statics/mobiles/chalets or bricks and mortar | | | |
| 3 | No. tourers/caravans | | | |
| 4 | Description of pitch occupancy | | | |
| 5 | No. households | | | |
| 6 | No. concealed households | | | |
| 7 | No. doubled up households | | | |
| 8 | Does anyone else use this pitch as their home? If so, who | | | |
| 9 | Household characteristics | | | |
| | | Gender | Age | Relationship to respondent |
| | Respondent | | | |
| | Person 2 | | | |
| | Person 3 | | | |
| | Person 4 | | | |
| | Person 5 | | | |
| | Person 6 | | | |
| | Person 7 | | | |
| | Person 8 | | | |
| 10 | Ethnicity | | | |
| 11 | How many bedspaces are there on your pitch? | | | |
| 12 | Overcrowding of home | Y / N | | |
| 13 | Overcrowding of pitch | Y / N | | |
| 14 | Thinking back to when you were 15, were you living on a site, on the roadside or living in bricks and mortar housing? | S, R, B&M | | |
| 15 | Where were you living? Record district/settlement name | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| | Travelling questions | | | | |
| 16 | In the last year have you or someone in your household travelled? | Y / N | | | |
| 17 | If yes, reason(s) for travelling | | | | |
| 18 | If yes, Please describe when and where do you travel? (if relevant) | | | | |
| 19 | If no, what reasons do you or your household have for not travelling now or in the future? | | | | |
| | Where you plan to live in the future | | | | |
| 20 | Are you planning to move to another place to live in the next 5 years? | Y / N | | | |
| 21 | Why are you planning to move ? | | | | |
| 22 | Where are you planning to move to? (Same Site, Private Site in District, Council Site in District, Outside District (if so where), Bricks and Mortar housing) | | | | |
| 23 | What type of dwelling ? (caravan, trailer, chalet, house, flat bungalow) | | | | |
| 24 | If pitch, single (one static) or double pitch (for two statics) | | | | |
| | If in B&M housing | | | | |
| 25 | If you live in bricks and mortar housing, are you happy to live here or would you prefer to live on a pitch? | Happy Here / Prefer pitch | | | |
| 26 | If you would prefer to live on a pitch is this because you have a 'cultural aversion' to living in bricks and mortar (this means it affects your mental health and makes you unhappy/ depressed)? | Y / N | | | |
| | Emerging households | | | | |
| 27 | Emerging households: Are there any people in your household who want to move to their own pitch in the next 5 yrs? | Y / N | | | |
| | | HH1 | HH2 | HH3 | HH4 |
| 28 | Where are you planning to move to? (Same Site, Private Site in District, Council Site in District, Outside District (if so where), Bricks and Mortar housing) | | | | |
| 29 | What type of dwelling ? (caravan, trailer, chalet, house, flat bungalow) | | | | |
| 30 | If pitch, single (one static) or double pitch (for two statics) | | | | |
| 31 | If living in bricks and mortar do you have a 'cultural aversion' to living in bricks and mortar? (this means it affects your mental health and makes you unhappy/ depressed) | Y/N | Y/N | Y/N | Y/N |

Appendix B: Glossary of terms

Caravans: Mobile living vehicles used by Gypsies and Travellers; also referred to as trailers.

CJ&POA: Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994; includes powers for local authorities and police to act against unauthorised encampments.

CRE: Commission for Racial Equality.

Duty to cooperate: introduced in the Localism Act 2011 and is set out in section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It placed a legal duty on local planning authorities in England to engage constructive, actively and on an ongoing basis with prescribed bodies on the preparation of a Local Plan. The Duty, as a legal test, has now been rescinded by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, which received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023. This has replaced the legal test with a soundness test (in national policy). The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 will revoke the Duty to Cooperate in relation to the reformed plan making system. However, the Duty remains a legal requirement under the current local plans system and will continue to apply to local plans progressed within the current system.

Gypsies and Travellers: Defined in DCLG *Planning policy for traveller sites 2024* annex 1 as “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, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.”

Household: The Government definition is ‘one person or a group of people, not necessarily related, living at the same address with common housekeeping, that is sharing at least one meal a day or sharing a living or sitting room’. For Travelling groups this definition should consider the use of a pitch for a household group who use common spaces within the pitch, such as a day room or utility room

Irish Traveller: Member of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in England. Irish Travellers have a distinct indigenous origin in Ireland and have been in England since the mid nineteenth century. They have been recognised as an ethnic group since August 2000 in England and Wales (*O’Leary v Allied Domecq*).

MHCLG: Ministry of Communities, Housing and Local Government. Previously renamed DLUHC Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in 2021 from the MHCLG in 2018. The ministry has oversight of policies to meet the needs Gypsies and Travellers in England.

Mobile home: Legally a ‘caravan’ but not usually capable of being moved by towing.

Negotiated Stopping: involves Local Authority officers making an agreement with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments. The agreement allows Travellers to stay either on the land they are camped on or move to a bit of land more suitable for all parties. The length of the agreement can also vary from 2 weeks to several months but tend to be around 28 days. The agreement is a local one and will vary but has so far included Travellers agreeing to leave sites clean and not make too much noise and the Local Authority providing waste disposal and toilets, sometimes showers and water too. See www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk for more information.

Pitch: Area of land on a Gypsy/Traveller site occupied by one resident family; sometimes referred to as a plot, especially when referring to Travelling Showpeople. MHCLG *Planning policy for traveller sites* (December 2024) states that *“For the purposes of this planning policy, “pitch” means a pitch on a “gypsy and traveller” site and “plot” means a pitch on a “travelling showpeople” site (often called a “yard”). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for “gypsies and travellers” and mixed-use plots for “travelling showpeople”, which may / will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment”*.

Plot: see pitch

PPTS: Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (DCLG, 2012 and 2015 editions, amended 2023 with latest edition published by MHCLG December 2024).

Roadside: Term used here to indicate families on unauthorised encampments, whether literally on the roadside or on other locations such as fields, car parks or other open spaces.

Roma: Migrant populations from Central and Eastern Europe that have arrived in the UK in the last half-century. It is an umbrella term used to describe sub-groups including Sinti, Lovari, Erlides and others.

Romany: Member of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in England. Romany Gypsies trace their ethnic origin back to migrations, probably from India, taking place at intervals since before 1500. Gypsies have been a recognised ethnic group for the purposes of British race relations legislation since 1988 (CRE V Dutton).

Sheds: On most residential Gypsy/Traveller sites 'shed' refers to a small basic building with plumbing amenities (bath/shower, WC, sink), which are provided at the rate of one per pitch/plot. Some contain a cooker and basic kitchen facilities.

Showpeople: Defined in MHCLG *Planning policy for traveller sites* (December 2024) as *“Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above”*.

Site (Gypsy and Traveller): An area of land laid out and used for Gypsy/Traveller caravans; often though not always comprising slabs and amenity blocks or ‘sheds’. An authorised site will have planning permission. An unauthorised development lacks planning permission.

Slab: An area of concrete or tarmac on sites allocated to a household for the parking of trailers (caravans)

Stopping places/stopover sites: A term used to denote an unauthorised temporary camping area tolerated by local authorities, used by Gypsies and Travellers for short-term encampments, and sometimes with the provision of temporary toilet facilities, water supplies and refuse collection services.

Tolerated site: An unauthorised encampment/site where a local authority has decided not to take enforcement action to seek its removal.

Trailers: Term used for mobile living vehicles used by Gypsies and Travellers; also referred to as caravans.

Transit site: A site intended for short-term use while in transit. The site is usually permanent and authorised, but there is a limit on the length of time residents can stay.

Unauthorised development: Establishment of Gypsy and Traveller sites without planning permission, usually on land owned by those establishing the site. Unauthorised development may involve ground works for roadways and hard standings. People parking caravans on their own land without planning permission are not Unauthorised Encampments in that they cannot trespass on their own land – they are therefore Unauthorised Developments and enforcement is always dealt with by local planning authorities enforcing planning legislation.

Unauthorised encampment: Land where Gypsies or Travellers reside in vehicles or tents without permission. Unauthorised encampments can occur in a variety of locations (roadside, car parks, parks, fields, etc.) and constitute trespass. The 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act made it a criminal offence to camp on land without the owner's consent. Unauthorised encampments fall into two main categories: those on land owned by local authorities and those on privately owned land. It is up to the landowner to take enforcement action in conjunction with the police.

Wagons: This is the preferred term for the vehicles used for accommodation by Showpeople.

Yards: Showpeople travel in connection with their work and therefore live, almost universally, in wagons. During the winter months these are parked up in what was traditionally known as 'winter quarters'. These 'yards' are now often occupied all year around by some family members.