



BASSETLAW
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Bassetlaw District Council

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment

December 2005



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Executive summary

Context of the Study

In September 2005 Fordham Research was commissioned to carry out a study of Gypsies and Travellers' housing needs for Bassetlaw District Council. The study was designed to assess the level of accommodation provision of Gypsies and Travellers in the District, estimate the extent of housing need and also make recommendations for extending assistance. This is in the context of the Housing Act 2004 which requires local authorities to include Gypsy and Travellers in their local housing needs assessments.

Beyond assessing current provision and potential need, the study also aims to give the Council a wider understanding of issues facing Gypsies and Travellers on official and unauthorised sites, and examine the strategic implications of the research findings.

To achieve these aims the study drew on a number of data sources including:

1. **Review of secondary information**, including government policy and existing research on Gypsies and Travellers, the Caravan Count figures and regional housing strategies
2. **Stakeholder consultation** with local and national organisations involved with Gypsy and Traveller affairs
3. **Authorised and unauthorised site survey** to examine the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers

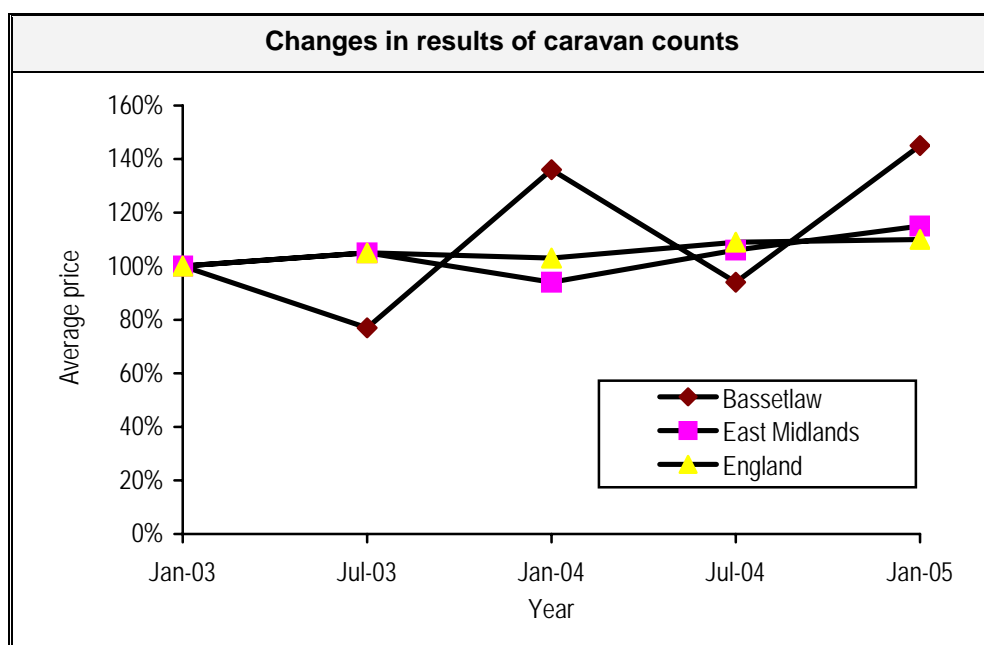
Review of secondary information

It is recognised that there are insufficient numbers of pitches on authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites to accommodate all those who would like a permanent place to stop. As well as the Housing Act 2004, local authorities also need to have regard of their statutory duties, including those in respect of homelessness under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 and to their obligations under the Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000. However the effectiveness of existing legislation has been limited by the extent of its requirements and a general failure to implement it. As a result local authorities have often failed to deliver adequate sites for Gypsies and Travellers.

In the East Midlands region, consideration has been given to how the needs of Gypsies and Travellers might be met. However in the light of recent guidance from the ODPM there remains room for improvement. At the district level more needs to be done to develop a joined up strategic approach to the issue. Evidence suggests that at present the approach of Bassetlaw District Council

is not as well defined or developed as neighbouring areas. As part of this consideration should be given to working jointly with neighbouring authorities as a combined approach to meeting housing need is likely to be more successful given that Gypsy and Traveller issues are rarely confined to a particular area.

The main source of data on population numbers is the ODPM Gypsy Caravan Count. In both the East Midlands and Nottinghamshire there is a growing Gypsy and Traveller population, although it is smaller compared to regional and county neighbours. Similarly within Bassetlaw, the Gypsy and Traveller population is relatively small when compared to neighbouring areas although it has seen a 60% growth in the past two years. Bassetlaw District Council figures also point to a rise in unauthorised encampments, perhaps indicating there is need to increase the level of authorised provisions for Gypsies and Travellers.



Stakeholder consultation

Stakeholders reported that the main issues facing Gypsies and Travellers relates to the shortage of accommodation and appropriate facilities on sites. All respondents agreed that more sites are needed although there was no overall consensus about the type of sites that need to be delivered. More assistance also needs to be provided to Gypsies and Travellers wanting to buy their own land. Other issues that pose problems for Gypsy and Traveller communities include relations with the settled community, their ability to travel and maintain a traditional lifestyle and accessing services such as health and education. While there is a need to improve awareness of these issues among the settled community, Gypsies and Travellers need to be encouraged to engage more in society,

particularly with regards to accessing services. To help with this it was argued that there is a case for creating a dedicated Gypsies and Traveller service in the County.

Site survey

Thirty-six interviews were conducted with Gypsy and Travellers at the six known authorised and unauthorised sites in Bassetlaw. The main issue was the lack of capacity on authorised sites and the shortage of available pitches. This had prompted unauthorised encampments in the area and reported problems with security at an authorised site. There were also problems with the facilities and safety at the County Council site.

Residents were assessed for accommodation need using indicators of overcrowding, concealed housing, new household formation and housing intentions. Overall Bassetlaw's Gypsy and Traveller population do not present much unmet housing need and were generally settled in their accommodation.

There is evidence that the capacity of authorised sites should be increased to meet existing accommodation needs. Nine residential pitches and between eleven and fifteen transit sites are required to meet the shortfall on authorised sites and provide accommodation for families currently on unauthorised sites. Based on the survey sample the number of Gypsy and Traveller households can be expected to increase by 4%-8% over the next five years. Site capacity should be capable of meeting the predicted additional accommodation requirements.

As well as housing requirements, the survey findings also point to a low take-up of some health and council services among Gypsy and Travellers, although awareness of most services was fairly high. Many respondents were suspicious of service providers' motives, or believed services were not appropriate to their needs or lifestyle.

Conclusions

The overall finding of our research is that while Bassetlaw does not have a large Gypsy and Traveller population in relation to other districts in the East Midlands region, its numbers are increasing and its unauthorised sites appear to be increasing more than in neighbouring areas. Most in unauthorised sites would prefer to be in a residential authorised accommodation and current sites are full to capacity and some suffer overcrowding.

Recommendations

- Site capacity

A new residential site of at least nine pitches would eliminate overcrowding and provide accommodation for families currently on unauthorised sites. A site containing between eleven and fifteen transit pitches should also be provided or, at the very least, expand capacity at other sites to meet this need. The Council should consult with its Gypsies and Travellers population on the location, design and facilities of any new sites. We also recommend that site capacity should be reviewed every three to five years, to take into account the relatively young age at which new family units form in Gypsy and Traveller communities.

- Facilities, access and service provision

The research found barriers to accessing service existed among Gypsy and Traveller groups, partly caused by suspicion about motives and the belief that services were not appropriate or relevant. Good practice elsewhere in Nottinghamshire has shown that proactive outreach to Gypsies and Travellers can produce results and we recommend these schemes are extended to Bassetlaw. Poor literacy levels are also barriers to accessing services. Providing onsite adult literacy schemes to Gypsy and Travellers should be considered, as should providing information on Council services in different media, including audio-visual and diagrammatic. Impartial information was particularly required on buying suitable land.

- Recording and monitoring processes

To improve the strategic planning of Gypsy and Traveller services, we recommend two measures. Firstly, the Council should consider identifying a position in either the Housing or Planning departments to take or coordinate responsibility for monitoring Gypsy and Traveller sites. Secondly we recommend that the Council work with other Nottinghamshire councils and service providers by being represented on the Nottinghamshire Gypsy Liaison Group.

SECTION A: CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This report is the result of a Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment undertaken by *Fordham Research* on behalf of Bassetlaw District Council. It provides an overview of the accommodation situation for NHS staff in Essex, estimates the extent of need and also makes recommendations for improving the provision of accommodation and services to Gypsies and Travellers in Bassetlaw.

The report is divided into two sections. The first sets the scene for Bassetlaw, pinpointing key issues relating to Gypsies and Travellers, before analysing secondary data. The second section contains results from a stakeholder consultation, site survey and an estimate of accommodation need among Gypsies and Travellers. It also contains a concluding chapter bringing together the main points from the research and making recommendations for Bassetlaw District Council on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and service provision.

1. Introduction

1.1 Study context

In September 2005 Bassetlaw District Council commissioned Fordham Research to conduct an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. This report is the result of the needs assessment. It provides an overview of the accommodation situation for Gypsies and Travellers in the District, estimates the extent of accommodation need and also makes recommendations for extending assistance and improving service provision.

Data collection and analysis for the assessment has been implemented in line with draft guidance set out by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in *'Local Housing Assessment: A Practice Guide'* (March 2005), obliging local authorities to assess the level of need for Gypsy and Traveller sites. These assessments are a key piece of research for Local Authorities, informing the the Local Development Framework process.

1.2 Aims and objectives of the research

The Council's brief states the study should include:

- An assessment of current provision
- An assessment of potential need
- Liaison with the travelling community

The aim of the study then is to examine accommodation need amongst Gypsies and Travellers, and in view of this a number of additional objectives have been defined:

- To obtain a wider understanding of issues facing Gypsies and Travellers
- To examine the use of official sites and the problems encountered
- To understand the issues posed by unauthorised sites
- To examine the strategic implications of the research findings

The overall aim of the study is to assess whether there is a need to provide further sites within the District, and if so where these would best be located to meet the Travelling community's needs.

A map of the study area is presented below.

1.3 Background

The government is committed to ensuring that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities should have the same access to decent and appropriate accommodation as every other citizen and that there are sufficient resources available to meet their needs.

It is recognised that there are insufficient numbers of pitches on authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites to accommodate all those who would like a permanent place to stop. Public sites provided under the Caravan Site Act 1960 have reduced the shortfall, but the effectiveness of subsequent legislative changes has been limited both by the nature of the legislation and a failure to implement it.

Getting planning permission has also been identified as one of the major obstacles to further site provision. Gypsies and Travellers attempting to buy their own site frequently fall foul of the planning system whereby they buy land, try to develop it without planning permission, and subsequently find themselves facing enforcement action.

Under provisions introduced by the Housing Act 2004 local authorities are required to include Gypsies and Travellers in their local housing needs assessments and to take a strategic approach, including drawing up a strategy demonstrating how their accommodation needs will be met, as part of their wider housing strategies.

One of the tests of soundness of a Development Plan will be whether it is founded on robust and credible evidence, and data from these assessments are an important part of the evidence base for Regional Housing and Spatial strategies.

Local authorities will also need to have regard to their statutory duties, including those in respect of homelessness under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 and to their obligations under the Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000 which prohibits racial discrimination by planning authorities in carrying out their planning functions.

1.4 Methodology

Our research design contains three core components involving a combination of primary and secondary data:

- **Review of secondary information**, including government policy and existing research on Gypsies and Travellers, the Caravan Count figures and regional housing strategies
- **Stakeholder consultation** with representatives involved with local and national organisations involved with Gypsy and Traveller affairs
- **Authorised and unauthorised site survey** to examine the housing need that exists among Gypsies and Travellers

1.5 Report Format

Chapter 2 clarifies the Gypsy and Traveller definitions that were used in this study. Chapter 3 outlines the Gypsy and Traveller policy debate and particular attention is paid to assessing housing need and the strategic policy implications of this before Chapter 4 then examines current regional strategies. Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the ODPM Caravan Count and gives an indication of the study's regional context. There then follows a chapter summarising the stakeholder consultation which precedes an analysis of the results from household survey in Chapter 7. The level of accommodation need is assessed in Chapter 8, before a final chapter containing overall conclusions and policy recommendations for Bassetlaw District Council to consider.

2. Definitions and terminology

2.1 Introduction

Any discussion of Gypsies and Travellers must first address the question of definition. That is, to whom does the term '*Gypsy and Traveller*' actually refer, and therefore who is being considered in the context of this study? This is an important point to raise and subject to considerable debate because, to date, no universally accepted definition exists.

2.2 Definition of a Gypsy or Traveller

The definition of a Gypsy or Traveller is far from clear cut. Though they make up a small proportion of the British population, their distinctive cultures, characteristics and accommodation needs present significant and complex issues. It is important therefore to attempt to describe some of the characteristics of Gypsies and Travellers as a context to the central and local government policies which follow.

The legal definition of a Gypsy was first set out in the 1968 Caravan Sites Act and stated that the term meant '*persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, but does not include members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or persons engaged in travelling circuses travelling together as such*'. However this definition was deemed unsatisfactory and was clarified by the Court of Appeal in 1994 as '*persons who wander or travel for the purpose of making or seeking their livelihood (not persons who move from place to place without any connection between their movements and their livelihood)*'.

Through focusing on their way of life, the definition was seen as a way of defining Gypsies without reference to their ethnicity. However, concentrating on lifestyle and nomadism leads to a possible distinction between 'born' Gypsies and Travellers, and members of the settled community who have adopted a travelling lifestyle by choice. This raises questions about the length of time or the number of generations required to establish a 'nomadic habit of life' by people taking to travelling and, conversely, the period of 'settlement' which would break a 'nomadic habit of life'.

Alongside the legal definition, there is an important ethnic dimension to the definition of a Gypsy or Traveller. Ethnic Gypsies are first recorded in Britain around the year 1500. It is widely believed that they crossed from continental Europe as part of a major migration west and north from India. Subsequent migrations reached Britain in the late nineteenth century from Romania and other countries of Eastern Europe, in the 1950s from Hungary, and more recently as Roma refugees and asylum seekers from Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

One other common characteristic amongst Gypsies and Travellers in Britain is a social structure based on the extended family, but with little apparent structured organisation at a higher level. Thus for example there are several 'representative' Gypsy and Traveller bodies, but none that represents all their interests. Subsequently their society can often appear factional rather than cohesive.

As the discussion has highlighted attempts at summary and simplification can be potentially dangerous. It is therefore important to consider the consequences or policies that will result from a particular definition. For the purpose of this report, the definition of 'Gypsies and Travellers' has been taken to mean:

A person or persons who have a traditional cultural preference for living in caravans and who either pursue a nomadic habit of life or have pursued such a habit but have ceased travelling, whether permanently or temporarily, because of the educational needs of their dependent children, or ill-health, old age, or caring responsibilities (whether of themselves, their dependents living with them, or the widows and widowers of such dependents).

This has adapted from the ODPMs recent 2004 consultation paper, *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites* which feeds into the working draft of Local Housing Assessment Guide. The local housing assessment process will be the key source of information enabling local authorities to assess the level of provision that is required, particularly when preparing their local documents.

2.3 Definition of a traveller site

In addition to the need to have a clear definition of what constitutes a Gypsy or Traveller, it is also important to understand what is considered to be a traveller site. It is sometimes argued that 'Gypsy sites' are a construct of the settled community through planning and caravan sites legislation, which has been 'foisted' on the Gypsy and Traveller community in an attempt to enable continued caravan dwelling and mobility while conforming to settled community ideas of land ownership and authorised land use. None the less defining the term is an important part of outlining the study area considered in this report.

'Gypsy sites' as described in the 2003 ODPM publication *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England* are caravan sites provided explicitly for Gypsies and other Travellers. On local authority sites and some private ones the norm is for Gypsy and Traveller families to live in owner-occupied caravans or mobile homes on plots rented under licence from the site provider. Private sites are typically owned by the occupying family, although there are examples of commercially developed private sites. Very few publicly provided sites cater for transit need, and most are designed for

residential use with hard standing, water, electricity and standard amenities provided on an individual family basis.

At the other extreme, some Gypsies and other Travellers engaged in full-time travelling lack any form of authorised accommodation, living in caravans on unauthorised encampments on a variety of sites including the roadside, public open spaces, fields and woodlands, industrial estates, car parks and playing fields. Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised sites experience great uncertainty as to the permitted length of stay, and can be subject to rapid eviction for trespass. In addition, Gypsies and Travellers experience a lack of basic taken-for-granted services and facilities which is unique in the UK today.

A further complication is that all Gypsy sites, including those provided by local authorities, must have planning permission. Getting planning permission has been identified as one of the major obstacles to further site provision. Gypsies and Travellers seeking to provide sites for themselves frequently fall foul of the planning system when they buy land and move on without permission and are faced with enforcement action. In view of these pressures many Gypsies and Travellers now live in permanent dwellings. Although this has been the case for many years, very little is known about Gypsies and Travellers in housing.

2.4 Summary

There is currently no universally accepted definition of a Gypsy or Traveller and their cultural characteristics pose significant and complex issues. The current legal definition focuses on their way of life, without making reference to ethnicity, and this raises questions about distinction. For the purpose of this report the definition used comes from the ODPMs recent consultation paper, *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites* (2004), as this feeds into the Local Housing Assessment process. Traveller sites have also been defined and identified in line with other research published by the ODPM.

3. The policy context

3.1 Introduction

There is a serious shortage of sites for Gypsies and Travellers across the country and this has led to a growing tendency for Gypsies and Travellers to buy land and develop it without planning permission. In view of this the government has introduced a series of reforms, which have important implications for the provision of Traveller sites. Under new measures introduced in the Housing Act 2004, local authorities are required to include Gypsies and Travellers in their Local Housing Needs Assessment process, and to have a strategy in place which sets out how any identified need will be met as part of their wider housing strategies.

However, it is important to have a historical perspective since local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites are the product of past and not current legislation and funding regimes. The relevant policy context for Gypsy site provision and management includes legislation and guidance which is specific to site provision, unauthorised camping, land use planning, human rights and equal opportunities, social exclusion and housing. This chapter presents a summary of some of the main issues.

3.2 Legislation and guidance on authorised provisions

The starting point in modern legislation related to Gypsy accommodation was not actually specific to Gypsy sites. The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 aimed to regularise static caravan sites within the land use planning system and to raise standards for caravan dwellers. The 1960 Act required that land used as a caravan site have both planning permission for that use and a caravan site licence with conditions determining basic standards of amenity, spacing and safety. The effect of these controls, although not specifically directed against them, was that in large numbers of cases Gypsies were unable to find legitimate homes for themselves because local authorities were under no duty to provide sites.

Part II of the Caravan Sites Act 1968, which came into force in April 1970, imposed a duty on county councils and London boroughs to provide adequate accommodation for Gypsies residing in or resorting to their area. Councils were to determine what sites were to be provided and to acquire the necessary land. However they were only required to provide for 15 caravans to fulfil their duty. No time limit was set to fulfil the duty and initially no specific financial assistance was given. The government could, at any time, give directions to a local authority requiring it to provide additional sites for a specified number of caravans, but this was rarely used.

3.3 Legislation and guidance on unauthorised provisions

Designation also brought enhanced powers to tackle unauthorised camping by making it a criminal offence to park a caravan with the purpose of residing in it other than on an authorised site. While it seems to have been intended as an incentive to site provision, just 38% of English local authorities achieved designation while legislation was in place. For many its effectiveness was limited both by the nature of the legislation and a failure to implement it. Furthermore designation was heavily criticised as creating ‘no-go’ areas for Gypsies and for criminalising one minority group since the enhanced trespass powers applied only to Gypsies.

Under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, local authorities, as landowners, were given civil powers to recover land from trespassers, including unauthorised campers. The 1994 Act gave local authorities in England and Wales powers to make directions to leave the land being used by itinerant groups and it is an offence to fail to comply with such a direction. The 1994 Act also gave the police powers to direct trespassers to leave the land. Civil rights workers and Gypsy and Traveller bodies have argued that these powers were draconian and effectively criminalised unauthorised camping with disproportionate effect for a particular minority group. These effects were seen as particularly serious given the shortage of authorised sites.

Dealing with unauthorised camping by Gypsies and Travellers is currently high on the policy agenda, fuelled particularly by complaints about the disruption and nuisance caused to the settled community and businesses by troublesome encampments. Noise; aggressive, criminal and anti-social behaviour; rubbish and fly tipping; and damage to the land and buildings are common sources of complaint, although it is also true that many of the complaints stem from the mere presence of unauthorised campers regardless of their behaviour. There is a widespread dissatisfaction with the powers available to deal with unauthorised camping however, largely because anti-trespass powers allow campers to be moved on but offer no solution to the problem.

3.4 Land use planning legislation and guidance

All Gypsy sites, including those provided by local authorities, must have planning permission. However, getting planning permission has been identified as one of the major obstacles to further site provision. Gypsies and Travellers seeking to provide sites for themselves frequently find themselves falling foul of the planning system when they buy land and move on without permission and are faced with an enforcement action.

Department of the Environment, Circular 1/94, ‘Gypsies and Planning’, set out the current planning policy for Gypsy site provision. It was intended to reflect the Government’s shift in policy towards

self-provision by Gypsies and other Travellers, ensuring that *'the planning system recognises the need for accommodation consistent with gypsies' nomadic lifestyle'* (DoE, 1994).

Circular 1/94 drew attention to local planning authorities' continuing requirement to indicate in development plans the regard that they have had to meeting Gypsies' accommodation need. It noted that local and unitary development plans should, wherever possible, identify locations suitable for Gypsy sites, and where this is not possible, should set out clear, realistic criteria for suitable locations.

Despite this guidance, Gypsies continued to have great difficulty in gaining planning permission for sites. In view of this Circular 1/94 is currently being revised to help overcome some of the barriers to obtaining planning permission which in the past have proved difficult. The planning process looks to treat Gypsy site applications fairly and on the same footing as other applications, but this proves difficult, quite simply because Gypsy site applications are unique.

The Housing Act 2004 has also sought to address this and offers more specific guidance to local authorities' on the wider housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers and the planning response to them. These issues will be discussed later in the chapter.

3.5 Human Rights and equal opportunities

In addition to housing specific legislation and guidance there is a range of other policy strands which are particularly relevant to Gypsy and Accommodation matters, because they place duties on local authorities to recognise and meet the needs of minority and disadvantaged groups. It is important to note therefore that the Race Relations Act 1976 identifies Gypsies and Travellers as having a shared culture, language and beliefs and recognises them as an ethnic group.

The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates into UK law the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and public authorities – including local authorities – must act in a way that is compatible with this. In particular local planning authorities should consider the consequences of refusing or granting planning permission, or taking enforcement action, on the rights of the individuals concerned, and whether it is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances.

Linked to this the Race Relations Act 1976 (RRA 1976) prohibits racial discrimination by planning authorities in carrying out their planning functions. In addition, the majority of public authorities, including local authorities, have a general duty under the amended Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 to actively seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations in all they do.

Homelessness legislation also takes into account the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 provides that a person is homeless if he has accommodation but cannot secure entry to it, or it consists of a movable structure and there is no place where he is entitled or permitted both to place and to reside in it. Simply on this definition, it would be possible to regard all unauthorised campers without a legal base as homeless. If a duty to secure accommodation arises the housing authority are not required to make equivalent accommodation available, but should consider whether such options are reasonably available, particularly where this would provide the most suitable solution to the applicants accommodation needs.

Significantly however, while Circular 1/94 and government policy generally encourages local authorities to consider the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, a fundamental issue, apparent from appeal inquiry reports, judicial reviews and high profile cases before the European Court of Human Rights, is the balance to be struck between the accommodation needs of Gypsy families on the one hand, and on the other hand the need to maintain Green Belt and other countryside constraint policies for the good of the community as a whole.

3.6 Housing legislation and guidance

The Government is committed to ensuring that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities should have the same access to decent and appropriate accommodation as every other citizen and that there are sufficient sites available to meet their needs. However, in view of the issues discussed so far in this chapter, evidence shows that recent legislative changes have failed to deliver adequate sites for Gypsies and Travellers in many areas of England.

Under provisions introduced by the Housing Act 2004 when local housing authorities produce a local housing assessment they will have to take into account the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. This includes the need for legal sites to station their caravans, and to have a strategy in place which sets out how any identified need will be met as part of their wider housing strategies. The local housing assessment process will be the key source of information enabling local authorities to assess the level of provision that is required, particularly when preparing their local documents.

One of the tests of soundness of a Development Plan Document (DPD) will be whether it is founded on robust and credible evidence and data from these assessments are an important part of the evidence base for Regional Housing and Spatial Strategies. Local authorities will also need to have regard to their statutory duties, including those in respect of homelessness under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 and to their obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Local planning authorities should allocate sufficient sites in DPDs to ensure that the pitch requirements in the RSS can be met. These policies should be reviewed regularly to avoid any

potential for disagreements with the settled population that might otherwise arise because of inappropriate location, in land-use planning terms, or inadequate explanation of proposed development.

With such policies in place in local development frameworks there will be more certainty for all concerned when planning applications are determined by local planning authorities or appeals are considered by the Secretary of State. Better understanding of needs should ensure that provision meets the requirements of the Gypsy and Traveller community and that it is fully used. In turn it is intended that this will help to avoid future unauthorised camping and development.

3.7 Summary

The policy context for Gypsy site provision includes legislation and guidance that is specific to site provision, unauthorised camping, land use planning, human rights and housing. The effectiveness of this however has been limited both by the nature of the legislation and a general failure to implement it. As a result local authorities have also failed to deliver adequate sites for Gypsies and Travellers.

In view of this the Housing Act 2004 has placed a duty on local housing authorities to take into account the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, including the need for legal sites to station their caravans, when producing a housing assessment, and to have a strategy in place which sets out how any identified need will be met as part of their wider housing strategies. However there is the balance to be struck between the accommodation needs of Gypsy families and the good of the community as a whole.

4. Current regional strategies

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted the need for local authorities to give due attention to all the client groups they serve, and demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the impact their policies might be having. In the context of this report, the local housing assessment process will be the key source of information enabling local authorities to assess the level of provision that is required for Gypsies and Travellers, and as part of this it will be important for them to have strategies in place which outline how any identified need will be met as part of their wider housing strategies.

In view of this, existing documents at the regional and district level have been examined to see what reference is made to Gypsy and Traveller issues. The intention is to highlight areas of good and bad practice in Bassetlaw and the East Midlands region, and examine the extent to which authorities are currently addressing the issue. Furthermore, understanding the current position will be important in the development of future strategies intended to meet housing need among Gypsies and Travellers.

4.2 Regional strategies

- **East Midlands Draft Regional Housing Strategy 2004-2010**

The Draft Strategy recognises that *'Delivering decent homes particularly to the most vulnerable groups, will improve the regions health and well-being. This is dependent upon combining better knowledge of the most vulnerable people, with better knowledge of the most vulnerable housing and targeting interventions'*. However no specific reference is made to the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and most of the initiatives highlighted refer to the settled community.

- **Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (2005)**

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) was published in March 2005 and replaced the Regional Planning Guidance for the region that was published in January 2002. It provides a broad development strategy for the East Midlands up to 2021 but makes no reference to Gypsies and Travellers.

- **Nottinghamshire Structure Plan (1996)**

Nottinghamshire Structure Plan has a policy that: *'Local Plan policies and development proposals should make provision for people with special needs including (a) their housing and employment*

needs and requirements for community facilities...’ and identifies ethnic minority groups as among those who may have such needs. However no specific reference is made to Gypsies and Travellers.

- **Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Joint Structure Plan 2001-2021**

Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council have prepared proposals for the replacement of the Nottinghamshire Structure Plan which was adopted in November 1996. The Joint Structure Plan sets out the strategic land use policies to guide the scale and location of development in the Plan Area.

Gypsies and Travellers are highlighted as an area of importance for the whole of the County but have particular relevance to the East Nottinghamshire Sub-Area. The plan highlights that a lack of regional guidance adds weight to the need for a *‘strategic steer’* which will prompt local authorities to be pro-active in their consultation with Gypsies and Travellers in the preparation of forthcoming Local Development Frameworks (LDF). It is proposed that *‘in the preparation of Local Development Documents, districts should undertake an assessment of the needs of travellers, both permanent and transient populations. This assessment will be reflected in the proposals of the Local Development Documents.’*

- **East Midlands Regional Assembly**

Members of the Regional Planning Board commented that because of the difficulties local authorities experience with identifying specific sites they would prefer more specific guidance from the Government’s ongoing review of Gypsy and Traveller policy to allow for a more flexible approach.

- **Nottinghamshire County Council Race Equality Scheme**

Published in May 2002, this proposes to set up a Gypsy Liaison Group. This was subsequently done and the group first met in June 2003. The function of the group will be discussed in more detail later in Section 4.4.

- **Nottinghamshire Police Race Equality Scheme 2005-08**

The scheme recognises that effective consultation with communities, partners and staff is a key element in assessing the impact of policies and in delivering their race equality duties. Groups that may be consulted with, where appropriate, include Gypsies and Travellers.

Special arrangements are also in place to ensure these communities have access to services from the police. For Travellers the police are represented on the City and County multi-agency forums addressing their needs and are working with Travellers to improve access to services and information

4.3 Bassetlaw District Council strategies

- **Local Development Framework**

Bassetlaw District Council is currently working on the development of new planning policies under the Local Development Framework. This work cannot be undertaken without the involvement of members of the public, and others directly involved in the future development of the District.

Under the new Local Development Framework, the District Council will be responsible for the production of a range of Development Plan Documents, which together, will promote development within the district. Before these are completed however there will be specific periods of public engagement, during which everyone will have an opportunity to influence policy development.

- **Bassetlaw Statement of Community Involvement**

Required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, it explains the consultation process that will take place during the development of new planning policies under the Local Development Framework. The Bassetlaw document recognises that it is vital ‘hard to reach’ groups are included in the decision making process. Travelling communities are identified as one such group and meetings and site visits are highlighted proposed techniques that will be used during engagement.

- **Community Strategy**

The Strategy aims to improve the quality of life of everyone in the District and states that: *‘By working with partners, linkages can be made with regional and national initiatives to ensure that the identified needs of the vulnerable members of Bassetlaw eg homeless, elderly, people with learning disabilities, accommodation for the mentally ill, support for drug users and lone parents under 18 years old are met’*. However the document makes no specific reference to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

4.4 Other examples of good practice

Currently there are no services specifically for this user group in Nottinghamshire either as a primary or secondary group. However, there are a range of good practice examples to be found in the East Midlands region at both the strategic level and through services working jointly with Gypsies and Travellers to tackle need.

At a strategic level the Bolsover District Local Plan comments that the frequency with which Gypsies are turned away from authorised sites is evidence of unmet demand. It accepts that sites in the countryside may be appropriate even where sites for residential caravans would not be normally permitted. Policy also allows for temporary, personal permissions where a proposal is potentially detrimental to nearby uses, but there is insufficient evidence.

Similarly the Charnwood Local Plan (Deposit Draft) proposes a specific site following a County Council study and a policy on determining applications for sites elsewhere that includes making provision, where appropriate, for mixed residential and business uses. Chesterfield Borough Council is currently considering sites for Gypsies and Travellers and works closely with the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group. Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan (Deposit Draft) states that the Council will review gypsy provision biennially.

The Homelessness Strategies of Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe, Broxtowe and Gedling all identify the need for an area wide policy around Gypsies and Travellers and their needs.

In addition to this there are a range of initiatives involving service providers working jointly with Gypsies and Travellers to meet identified need within the Travelling community. The Supporting People Partnership in Nottinghamshire has produced a Commissioning Strategy for Gypsies and Travellers which was developed as a result of links with the Traveller Education Service, East Nottinghamshire Traveller Association and the Nottinghamshire Gypsy Liaison Group. Furthermore, following a needs survey that was carried out in June 2004, the Supporting People Annual Plan 2004-05 included the establishment of a pilot service to evaluate how the needs of this service user group could best be met and the extent and geographical spread of such a service.

The Nottinghamshire Gypsy Liaison Group is the interagency forum for the service user group and investigates issues affecting Gypsies across Nottinghamshire in the future. The group first met in June 2003 and is still developing links with local agencies. As the largest Gypsy and Traveller population is located in Newark & Sherwood there is wider representation for this district though membership of this group includes local Gypsies, Nottinghamshire County Council, the Traveller Education service, Newark & Sherwood PCT, Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council, Newark and Sherwood District Council, Supporting People, Fire Service and the Police

The Travellers Health and Well-being Steering Group is a sub-group of the East Nottinghamshire Travellers Association and the Nottinghamshire Gypsy Liaison Group. This steering group works closely with the Health and Social Care subgroup of the Newark & Sherwood District Local Strategic Partnership and aims *'to improve the general health and well-being for Travellers of the Newark and Sherwood District with Travellers'*.

A similar initiative has been undertaken in the Nottingham Health Action Zone, which covers the City, Broxtowe and Hucknall, Gedling and Rushcliffe Primary Care Trusts. The initiative aims to work in partnership with Gypsies and Travellers, increase access to health and educational services and increase awareness among policy makers and the wider community about the needs of Traveller families.

4.5 Summary

At present there is a lack of regional strategic thinking around Gypsy and Travellers issues. Recent guidance issued by the ODPM in 2004 however has placed a new emphasis on regional and local authorities to rectify this situation and this is a point that is acknowledged in the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Joint Structure Plan. In view of this it is important that Bassetlaw District Council, in producing its Local Development Framework, takes advantage of the opportunity this presents to ensure that sufficient consideration and attention is given to developing a strategic response to meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

Although a range of joint working initiatives have been implemented effectively at the local level evidence suggests that at present the approach of Bassetlaw District Council is not as well defined or developed as neighbouring areas. In addition to the need to develop a strategic response to the meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, the evidence indicates consideration should be given to working jointly with neighbouring authorities in developing appropriate service provisions. Although this is an issue that will be examined in greater detail through the site survey, it is worth raising now as a regional approach to meeting accommodation need is likely to be more successful given that Gypsy and Traveller issues are rarely confined to a particular area, as well as fitting into current strategic thinking.

5. Population characteristics

5.1 Introduction

Having examined the strategic policy context surrounding Gypsy and Traveller issues it is now appropriate to examine some of their population characteristics. This chapter presents information from the ODPM Gypsy Caravan Count on the population in Bassetlaw and examines the situation in comparison with neighbouring authorities. Consideration is also given to the regional and national situation.

This information is important as it will establish a foundation for an assessment of housing need. Before an analysis of the ODPM Gypsy Caravan Count can go ahead however, it is perhaps first worth considering the adequacy and accuracy of the count and the overall usefulness of the data.

5.2 The Caravan Count

The Gypsy Caravan Count was introduced in 1979 and places a duty on local authorities in England to make twice yearly returns to the ODPM on the number of Gypsy caravans and families in their area. The count was intended to estimate the size of the Gypsy population for whom provision was to be made and to monitor progress in meeting need.

Although the duty to provide sites was removed in 1994, the need for local authorities to conduct the count has remained. Count practice varies between local authorities and subsequently concerns surround the accuracy of the figures.

Perceived inaccuracies include a lack of commitment on the part of local authorities, problems detecting mobile groups (particularly on unauthorised sites), poor counting practices, geography and the application of inconsistent definitions of 'Gypsies' and 'families'. It has also been suggested that some authorities deliberately under-count Gypsy caravans to minimise apparent need for sites and other services.

In general, information for authorised sites, and in particular local authority sites, is likely to be more accurate than for unauthorised sites. However, despite fears about accuracy, the count is thought valuable because it effectively provides the only source of information on numbers and distribution of Gypsy and Traveller caravans and families. The main use for the information is within the planning system, and as this chapter will demonstrate, it also contributes to assessments of need for Gypsy site provision.

5.3 Population changes

The total Gypsy and Traveller population living in the UK is unknown and estimates range from 90,000 to 120,000 by the ODPM (2003) up to between 200,000 and 300,000 by the Commission for Racial Equality (2005). There are uncertainties partly because of the number of different definitions that exist, but mainly because of an almost total lack of information about the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers now living in houses or flats. Estimates produced for the ODPM (2003) suggest that at least 50% of the overall Gypsy and Traveller population are now living in permanent housing.

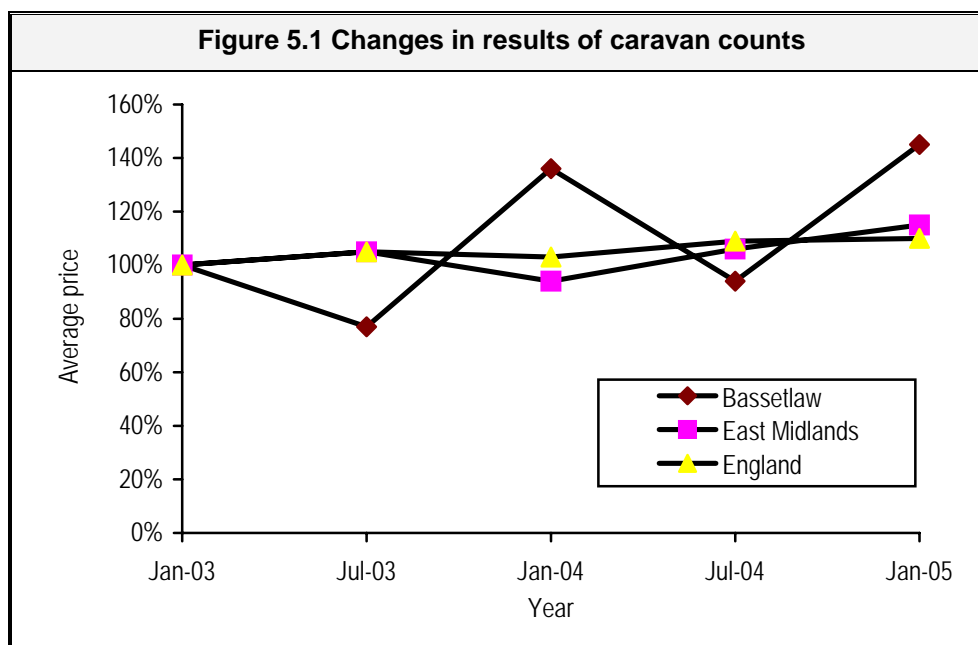
Local authorities in England provide a count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in January and June each year for the ODPM. The January 2005 count was 15,410 caravans. Applying an assumed three person per caravan multiplier would give a population of just over 42,000. Again applying an assumed multiplier and doubling this to allow for the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in housing, this gives a total population of around 84,000 for England. However this figure can only be very approximate given that caravan counts are known to be very approximate and probably under estimate the number of Gypsy caravans.

It is now worth considering this information in more detail and Table 5.1 examines the results of the five most recent caravan counts. The results show that there has been a 45% increase in the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population in Bassetlaw in the two years preceding January 2005. This compares with a 15% rise in the East Midlands region and a 10% increase nationally.

Table 5.1 Caravan Count results over past five surveys						
Area	Bassetlaw		East Midlands		England	
	Number	% of Jan '03	Number	% of Jan '03	Number	% of Jan '03
Jan-05	93	145%	1,365	115%	15,410	110%
Jul-04	60	94%	1,258	106%	15,171	109%
Jan-04	87	136%	1,118	94%	14,362	103%
Jul-03	49	77%	1,244	105%	14,700	105%
Jan-03	64	100%	1,185	100%	13,949	100%

Figure 5.1 presents this information graphically and shows that although the Gypsy and Traveller population in Bassetlaw has increased by 29 caravans between January 2003 and January 2005, this increase hides the fact the population fluctuates seasonally. Although there is an upward trend in population among Gypsies and Travellers in the Bassetlaw region, numbers are lower in June than January which suggests a proportion of the population travel outside the area during the summer and then return for the winter.

By comparison the population in the East Midlands declined between January 2003 and 2004 before then increasing again and nationally count figures show there has been a gradual rise in the overall population.



5.4 The national perspective

Having looked at some of the basic characteristics of the Gypsy and Traveller population it is now worth examining these features in slightly more detail. Given that one of the distinctive characteristics of the population is its mobility, it is first of all necessary to consider the national situation as this will help put the situation in Bassetlaw into context.

Figure 5.2 shows the average number of sites recorded in the caravan count between January 2003 and January 2005 in each region of England. Bassetlaw is in the East Midlands regions where an average of 1,234 caravans was recorded. This is a similar to the situation recorded in the neighbouring areas of the West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside, but 55% smaller than the population recorded in the South East and 67% smaller than the East of England where the largest Gypsy and Traveller population was recorded.

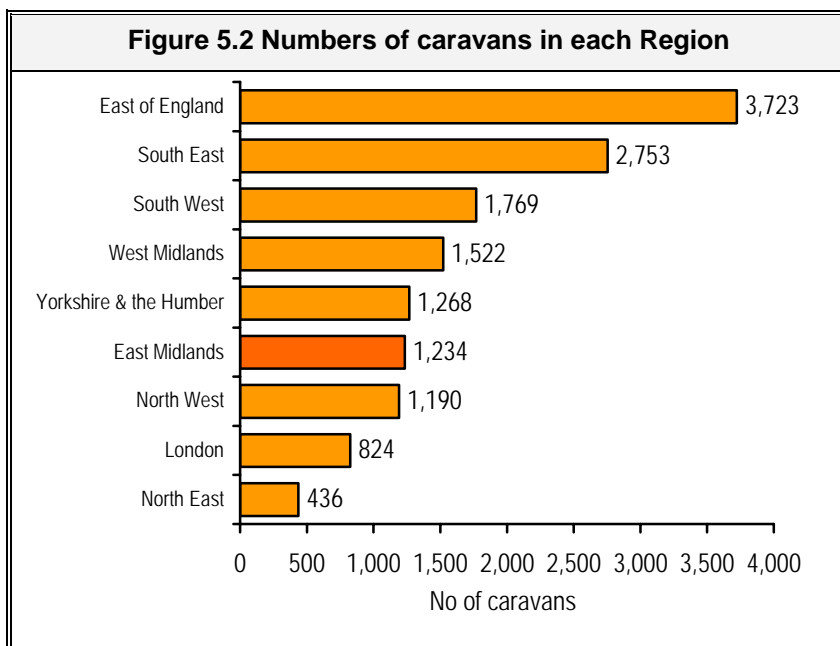


Table 5.2 presents the changes that have occurred between January 2003 and January 2005 at the regional level and shows the number of caravans the population has changed by and the size of the increase in percentage terms. Overall the Gypsy and Traveller population of the East Midlands has increased by 15% over this period. The use of unauthorised encampments increased by 28% and authorised council sites by 29% but there was no real increase in the use of private authorised sites. By comparison all of the East Midland’s neighbouring areas recorded smaller increases, and Yorkshire and Humberside is the only region where the overall population has actually declined.

Region	Unauthorised		Authorised Council		Authorised Private		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
South West	86	20%	32	5%	213	40%	331	20%
London	70	70%	31	6%	34	58%	135	19%
North East	28	280%	40	11%	5	16%	73	18%
East Midlands	89	28%	89	29%	2	0.4%	180	15%
East of England	234	25%	137	12%	132	10%	503	14%
South East	2	0.3%	31	3%	198	25%	231	9%
North West	57	45%	-25	-5%	37	6%	69	6%
West Midlands	-60	-19%	-18	-3%	49	10%	-29	2%
Yorkshire & Humberside	24	16%	-54	-7%	-2	-1%	-32	-2%
England	530	67%	263	9%	668	4%	1461	16%

5.5 The regional perspective

Having looked at issues nationally, it is now worth examining the situation within the East Midlands. Figure 5.3 looks at the average number of caravans recorded by the county councils and unitary authorities in the region between January 2003 and January 2005. Bassetlaw is in Nottinghamshire which has recorded the third largest Gypsy and Traveller population in the region. However, among the county councils in the region it has one of the smaller Gypsy and Traveller populations, and it is almost half the size of Northamptonshire. Although the unitary authorities in the East Midlands have all recorded smaller populations this is to be expected given that they are mainly urban areas.

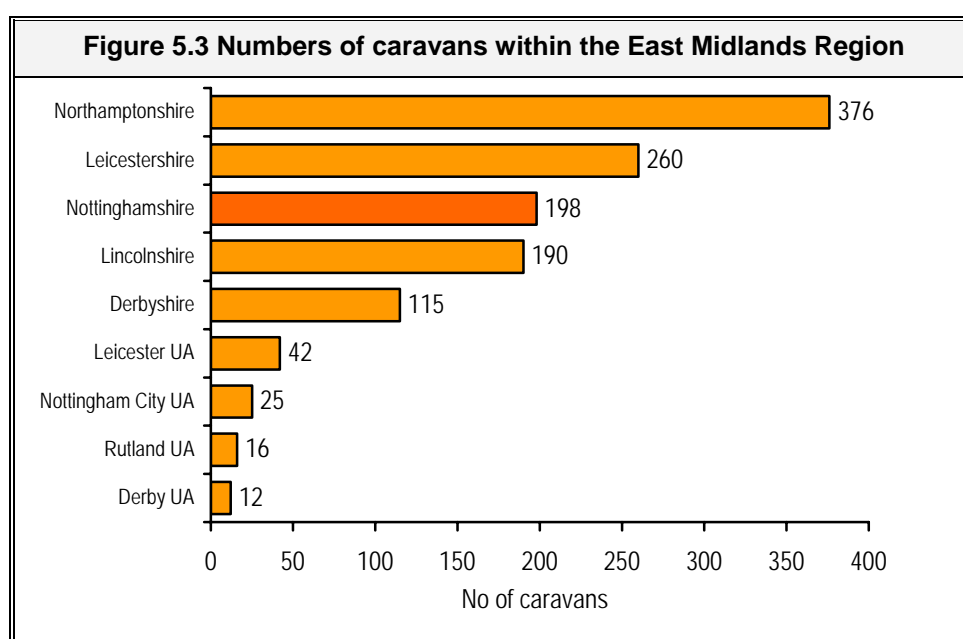
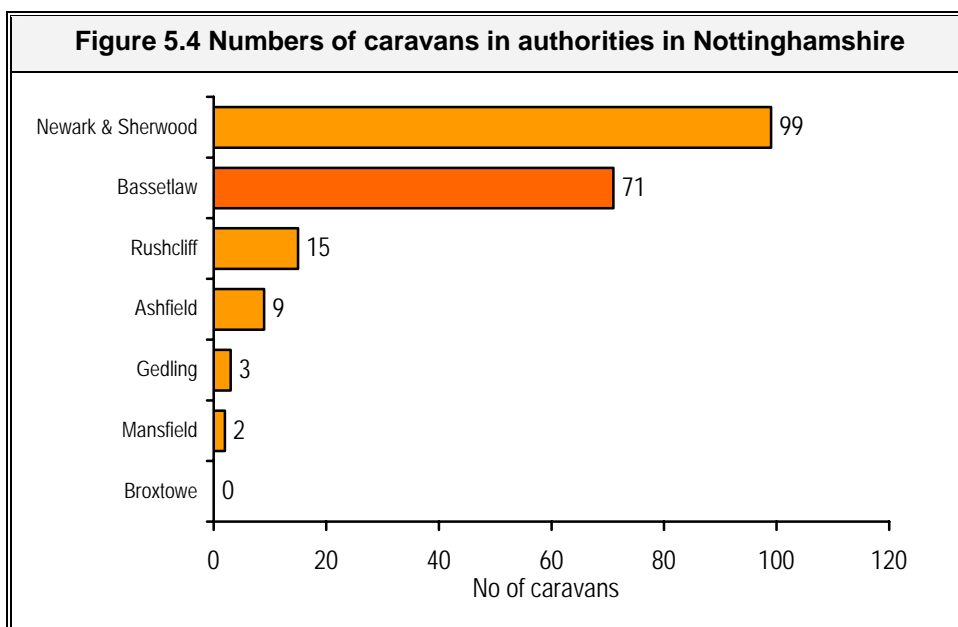


Table 5.3 presents the characteristics of these changes in more detail. This highlights that the Gypsy and Traveller population in Nottinghamshire has increased by 8% or 17 caravans between January 2003 and January 2005. This is the one of the smallest recorded increases of all the county councils in the region, and below the average rate of growth in the East Midlands. However, it is important to note that despite this relatively small increase, Nottinghamshire has seen the number of recorded illegal encampments grow by 151%. Although reference has already been made to the fact that figures will fluctuate and may be unreliable, it none the less indicates that there may be unmet housing need within the Gypsy and Traveller population in Nottinghamshire to be met.

Table 5.3 Changes in population in the East Midlands Region (Jan 03 – Jan 05)								
Region	Unauthorised		Authorised Council		Authorised Private		Total	
	Rutland UA	9	300%	0	-	0	-	9
Nottingham City UA	30	-	0	-	-5	-25%	25	125%
Lincolnshire	70	350%	6	5%	21	300%	97	69%
Leicester UA	6	100%	2	7%	0	-	8	22%
Derbyshire	4	16%	-6	-11%	20	83%	18	17%
Leicestershire	20	49%	9	29%	-8	-4%	21	8%
Nottinghamshire	53	151%	16	-	-52	-28%	17	8%
Northamptonshire	-123	-67%	62	79%	26	21%	-35	-9%
Derby UA	20	-	0	-	0	-	20	-
							18	
East Midlands	89	28%	89	29%	2	0.4%	0	15%

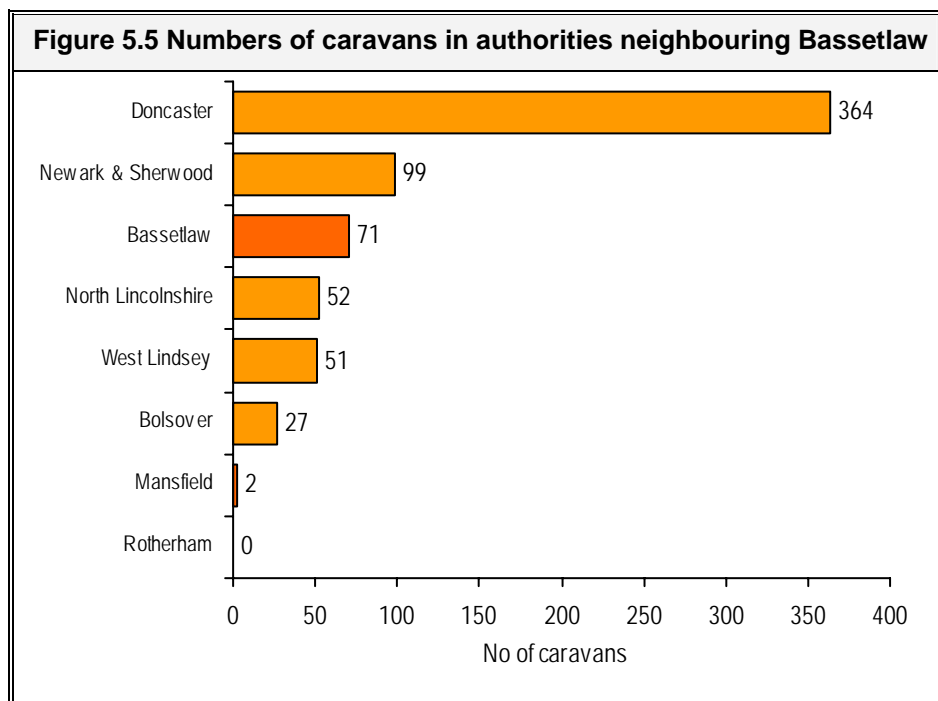
5.6 Bassetlaw and its neighbouring authorities

Finally we can look at caravan count data at to the district authority level. Figure 5.4 shows the average number of caravans recorded at the district level in Nottinghamshire between January 2003 and January 2005. This shows that within Nottinghamshire, Bassetlaw has the largest Gypsy and Traveller population after Newark and Sherwood. Between them, the two areas accommodated for 85% of all Gypsies and Travellers recorded in the area, and on its own Bassetlaw accounted for 36%.



The situation is less stark however when we consider the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans recorded in the local authority areas that border Bassetlaw. Figure 5.5 shows that in comparison

with its 7 neighbouring authorities, Bassetlaw recorded the third largest Gypsy and Traveller population. However, when compared with Doncaster, where the highest numbers of caravans were counted, Bassetlaw recorded 80% less Gypsies and Travellers.



5.7 Comparing numbers of caravans to numbers of households

As well as simply looking at the levels of caravans that are found in each authority, it is useful to have an awareness of the differences in relation to size between areas. Looking at the land area of each authority is problematic: an urban area such as Lincoln has over 1,000 times as many caravans per km² as the much more rural district of East Lindsey for example. A more relevant and more stable point of comparison then is the ratio of caravans to households. Table 5.4 compares the number of caravans per 100,000 households at the national, regional, county and district levels. Please note that these figures are indicative only: the household data is drawn from the 2001 Census, as opposed to the 2003-05 count average for the caravan data.

Table 4.4 Ratios of caravans to households			
Area	Average number of caravans, Jan '03 – Jan '05	Number of households, 2001 census	Caravans per 100,000 households
England	14,718	20,451,427	72
East Midlands	1234	1,732,482	71
Nottinghamshire	991	314,027	316
Bassetlaw	71	44,690	159

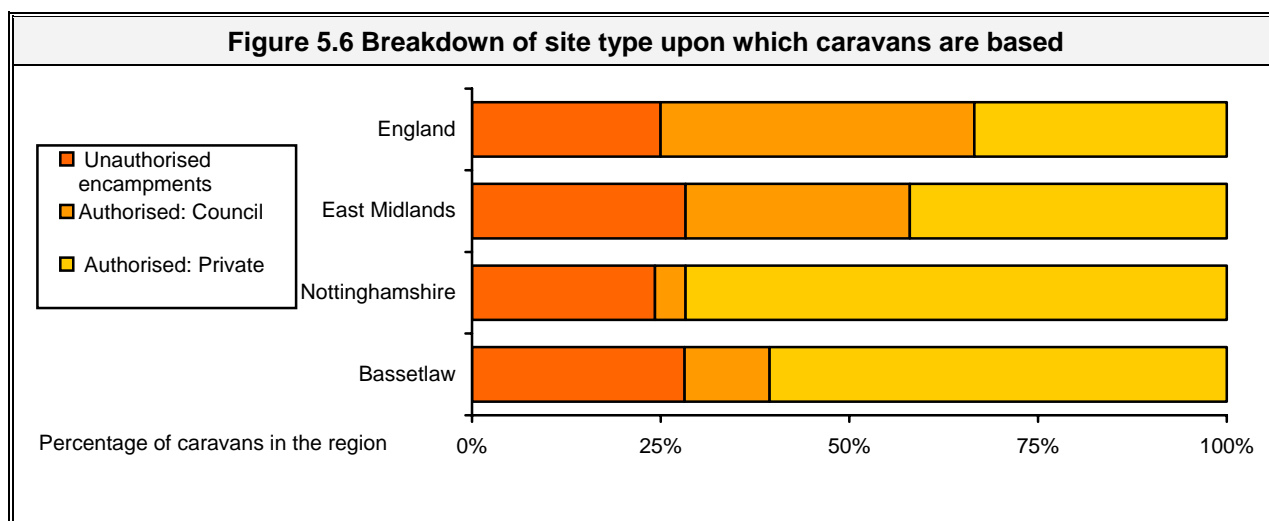
The results show that at the national and regional level the average number of caravans per 100,000 households is extremely similar. Nottinghamshire however, has more 4 times as many caravans per 100,000 households while Bassetlaw has more than twice as many. Although this calculation does not take into account the unauthorised encampments not recorded in the ODPM Caravan Count, it reflects previous observations that in comparison with neighbouring authorities Bassetlaw and Nottinghamshire has a larger Gypsy and Traveller population to manage than in other areas.

5.8 Site provision

Finally in this chapter it is worth considering the types of provision used by Gypsies and Travellers in Bassetlaw in comparison with regional and national provision. Having considered the size of the population, understanding the composition of provision will give an indication as to how Gypsies and Travellers in Bassetlaw meet their accommodation needs in comparison with other areas. It will also give an indication as to whether there may be a need for additional provision.

Figure 5.6 shows the average number of sites counted between January 2003 and January 2005 in percentage terms. What is immediately obvious is that the proportion of unauthorised sites across the 4 areas is similar at around 25%. The average number of unauthorised sites in Bassetlaw is similar to the average in the East Midlands but slightly more than the levels recorded in Nottinghamshire and nationally.

It is also noticeable that in Bassetlaw and Nottinghamshire the level of authorised council provision is much lower than in the East Midlands and nationally, while the number of authorised private sites is much higher. Although this indicates there may be a need to increase the level of authorised local authority provisions in Bassetlaw it is worth noting that until now there has been no attempt to consider the extent of unmet need in the area. It is also worth observing that Bassetlaw is the only district in Nottinghamshire where authorised council-owned provision is available.



5.9 Summary

In the East Midlands and nationally the Caravan Count data shows there is a growing Gypsy and Traveller population. In Bassetlaw the population is relatively large when compared to neighbouring areas and has increased by 45% since January, although numbers do show seasonal fluctuations. A lot of the growth experienced in Nottinghamshire in recent years has been in unauthorised encampments; the County has a lower proportion of authorised council sites compared to the East Midlands and nationally, as does Bassetlaw District. Although it is reasonable to assume, given problems with the Caravan Count figures, that numbers will fluctuate, this is a trend that needs to be accurately monitored because on-going growth in unauthorised encampments indicates there is need to increase the level of authorised provisions for Gypsies and Travellers.

SECTION B: PRIMARY DATA

This section describes the primary research elements of the study. This comprised a consultation with regional and national stakeholders and a survey of authorised and unauthorised sites in Bassetlaw.

Chapter 6 outlines the results from the stakeholder consultation. We then analyse in Chapter 7 the survey data. After explaining the methodology, we look at accommodation situation and provision, travelling patterns and use of services. This precedes an assessment of accommodation need in Chapter 8, outlining the level of provision needed to make up current shortfalls in need, and then estimating levels of need over the next five years.

The final chapter draws together the main findings from the research and makes a series of recommendations for Bassetlaw District Council to consider.

6 Stakeholder consultation

6.1 Introduction

To provide in-depth qualitative information about the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, a stakeholder consultation was conducted involving national organisations and local stakeholders. The aim was to obtain both an overall perspective of the national strategic and policy context and an understanding of issues more specific to Bassetlaw.

A total of six semi-structured interviews were conducted with the following organisations:

- Bassetlaw District Council Development Control

Development Control is part of the Planning Department for Bassetlaw District Council and deals with planning applications and appeals from Gypsies and Travellers, the investigation of unauthorised encampments and issuing enforcement notices.

- Nottinghamshire Rural County Council (NRCC)

The Council is involved with tackling rural issues across the whole of Nottinghamshire. The Gypsy and Traveller service is a pilot scheme funded through Supporting People which mainly deals with housing and accommodation needs, although this does cover a wide range of issues.

- Nottinghamshire Traveller Education Service (NTES)

The role of the service is to increase educational inclusion, access and achievement among Gypsies and Travellers by advising schools and working with families on sites and in permanent accommodation.

- East Nottinghamshire Travellers Association (ENTA)

The Association is a Gypsy and Traveller led voluntary support group for Gypsies and Travellers in Nottinghamshire and offers support with a range of issues including accessing health, education and accommodation services, illegal encampments, advocacy and general support needs.

- Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition (GTLRC)

The Coalition lobbies government, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Social Exclusion Unit and other national bodies to address accommodation needs and a range of issues relating to the social inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers.

- Friends Families and Travellers (FFT)

The organisation provides advice and information to Gypsy and Travellers, statutory organisations and local authorities, and is consulted by the ODPM on Gypsy and Traveller issues.

The interviews were structured around the project brief and sought respondents views on:

- The main issues facing Gypsies and Travellers
- Accommodation needs
- The use of official sites and the problems encountered
- Issues posed by unauthorised sites
- The strategic context

Themes covered in the interviews included: the need for additional provisions and facilities, travelling patterns, the availability of land, accessing services, and work taking place to tackle need among Gypsies and Travellers. This chapter presents summaries of the conducted interviews and highlights the main points that were raised.

6.2 Accommodation

Although the accommodation aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers vary, all respondents agreed that there is a lack of Traveller sites for the range of groups, both in Nottinghamshire and nationally. Friends Families and Travellers commented that ODPM research in 2002 identified the need for up to 4,500 additional pitches by 2007, but they were not aware of any additional pitches being provided since then and so could not envisage the target being met.

In Nottinghamshire there is only one authorised council site and this is located in Bassetlaw. Bassetlaw District Council Development Control also observed that there are very few authorised sites in the area and apart from the occasional vacancy these are usually full and there is no room for new families. The Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council also referred to this point and highlighted that overcrowding, particularly in trailers with young children, is a significant issue which highlighted a need for more pitches for Gypsies and Travellers.

However, although it was agreed there is a need to develop more sites for Gypsies and Travellers, there was no broad consensus on what form developments should take. FFT stated that in terms of local authority provisions, residential sites should be the main focus, and this point was echoed by the NRCC. However, there was also a consensus that more transit sites are needed and the NTES observed such provisions are required for highly mobile groups to avoid the need to camp illegally.

Linked to concerns about the need for more sites, were issues relating to the quality of facilities available on existing sites. According to the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition local authority sites are generally of a poor quality, located on marginal spaces with poor facilities and cheaply refurbished. Security of tenure is also a problem, as is the management process from which site residents are often excluded.

These comments were backed up by the East Nottinghamshire Travellers Association who stated that common problems on sites included a lack of toilet and bathing facilities, poor and unsafe water supplies (including a lack of hot water), poor and unsafe drainage facilities and electrical facilities which are often exposed and overloaded.

ENTA went on to state that on-site conditions, and the impact these have on the quality of life enjoyed by Gypsies and Travellers, is a significant issue. The implications the situation has for health was described as '*tremendous*' and the effect on the young and old is a particular concern, especially during winter.

All respondents commented that typically Gypsies and Travellers would prefer to live on their own private site that they can develop. In view of this it was noted that the marginalisation of Gypsies and Travellers is a significant issue. However it was also commented that although mainstream society was often guilty of this, the group often do not help themselves as a result of their accommodation demands.

Unauthorised sites were described by FFT as a last resort for Gypsies and Travellers that only existed because local authorities have failed to provide enough authorised provisions. It was also noted by the GTLRC that it has become harder to find unauthorised sites as traditional stopping areas have been closed off, forcing Gypsy and Travellers to move to higher profile sites, leading to increased public attention and, in some cases, hostility with the settled community.

The response of the local authority to illegal encampments is also important. The ENTA praised Newark & Sherwood District Council for their approach and highlighted their involvement on one site where they have made no attempt to evict people living on unauthorised pitches while the planning appeal is still being heard.

A small number of Gypsies and Travellers will aspire to move into permanent accommodation but these are typically a minority. The NRCC observed though that very few people want to move into permanent accommodation and this transition is generally necessitated by old age and illness.

6.3 Community

It was noted that there is a very strong sense of community among Gypsy and Traveller groups and their customs, culture and language are extremely important. This affects accommodation requirements as the first preference of Gypsies and Travellers is to live with members of their own community. However, although the sense of community within Traveller groups is strong the NRCC also noted that relations between different groups can cause problems. The GTLRC also stressed, that it is important and possible for Gypsies and Travellers to live in their own communities without resorting to 'ghettoisation'.

The NTES commented that the perception of Gypsy and Traveller issues is a significant issue which affects relations with the settled community. The ENTA felt that in Bassetlaw the settled community is used to Travellers. However although generally people appear sympathetic relations are often strained and racial hatred is an issue.

The NRCC said the relationship between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community was very poor, but stressed the nature of this relationship will often vary between sites. Linked to this the NTES commented that often when a site is first established it is often accompanied by huge protests within the settled community, but this will often die down once people come to terms with its presence. The GTLRC noted that this often disappears when planning permission for sites is granted, children enter schools and integration with the settled community takes place.

Harassment though is a significant issue and the NTES highlighted that the location of a site is particularly important. When a site is completely 'out of the way' this is a bad thing because often groups are isolated and disengaged from the settled community which subsequently can create tensions. The NRCC also felt that Gypsies and Travellers have been targeted and blamed for a lot of things they have had nothing to do with and this has contributed to community tensions.

Racist abuse is a major problem for Gypsy and Travellers living on sites and in housing, but is rarely dealt with properly by police. FFT stated that police rarely considered Gypsy and Travellers as an ethnic group, the crime was not treated as racist. Housing associations also frequently fail to deal with attacks properly. Similarly Gypsy and Travellers are often reluctant to report incidents of harassment or anti-social behaviour to the police because of cynicism over how seriously it will be treated. The ENTA are trying to liaise with the Police over this matter but reported that so far their response has been poor.

The ENTA also said that because of this Gypsies and Travellers tend to keep a low profile in the community. There is very little interaction and the ENTA acknowledged this was *'generally bad'* in terms of engagement, understanding and interaction, and also discourages Gypsies and Travellers from leading a traditional lifestyle. Such issues also impact on the housing requirements of Gypsies and Travellers. NRCC noted that because of the hostility Gypsies and Travellers face from the wider community, their own communities were *'all they have'* and so some kind of focal point or communal facility on site is often needed.

In response to these issues the NRCC stated that developing an interface and joint working practices between agencies and Gypsies and Travellers was an important part of tackling the problem. However, they also stressed that it is important for agencies and service providers to work with Gypsies and Travellers in identifying issues and solutions to these issues, and not go in and appear to take over.

In Bassetlaw the NTES reported there are a number of pro-active groups who are willing to consult with Gypsies and Travellers about their experiences and needs. At present however it is still unclear how successful their approaches have been. They also hoped that increased attendance in school will help encourage relations between different community groups. Schools also have a role to play in this through discouraging negative perceptions and working to overcome high exclusion levels among Gypsies and Travellers.

6.4 Travelling patterns

As a general observation the ENTA stated that English Roma Travellers will move ahead of themselves and find a place to stay, usually with friends or family, before the main group sets off. By comparison, Irish Travellers are often highly mobile and will just turn up in an area which often results in them camping illegally. NRCC said that one of the main reasons for travelling is to *'connect with the lifestyle'*, while the ENTA described it as *'being part of their blood'*.

The ENTA went on to say that traditionally Gypsies and Travellers will look to travel during the summer and pull in for winter. Although people do not intentionally camp illegally it is becoming harder for Travellers to find authorised pitches. The NTES echoed this comment and observed that attendance in school will often drop between Easter and October as families will travel over the summer period.

People typically travel for work reasons or to see family and friends. Another common pattern is for people to go away during the summer to traditional summer fairs. The ENTA said that increasingly a lot of Gypsies and Travellers will look to go abroad for work, partly because Government legislation is forcing them to and also because immigrant labourers will now do the job for lower

wages. However BDCDC also noted that some travel within the County for work purposes and operate on a year round basis. Common areas of work include road laying, fence building and construction although agriculture is not as popular as it used to be.

When asked if travelling patterns ever lead to an influx of Gypsies and Travellers, BDCDC noted that Newark and Sherwood on a number of occasions has had to manage large numbers coming through the District. It was suspected this was a consequence of the larger Traveller population in the District and to date it has not been something that Bassetlaw has had to contend with.

In view of this BDCDC felt the need for transit sites to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers passing through the region was more of a national issue and not something Bassetlaw has to contend with. Similarly the NTES stated that travelling patterns did not pose a big problem in Bassetlaw because most of the Gypsy and Traveller population is resident to the area. This point was countered however by the ENTA who felt there is a need for both permanent and short stay accommodation to tackle illegal encampments, and they felt that at present there is a shortage of both.

An additional point raised by BDCDC concerned educational needs. They felt that the traditional lifestyle of Gypsies and Travellers has '*fallen by the way side*' because educational needs are now greater so many people will look for a permanent site to ensure their children can be enrolled in school.

In view of the pressures faced by Gypsies and Travellers with finding employment, educational concerns and accessing an authorised pitch, the NRCC observed that generally people are not able to travel as freely as they would like. Similarly, the ENTA stated that travelling patterns have been compromised and there is a sense among travelling communities that they no longer have any '*freedom to move*'.

6.5 Availability of land

The problems Gypsies and Travellers experience buying land and obtaining planning permission is a national issue and the situation in Nottinghamshire was viewed by many of the stakeholders as no different then anywhere else in the country. NRCC described the situation as '*very poor*' and said the planning process poses significant problems. A lot of Gypsies and Travellers will buy land and then find they are unable to develop it because they have not been granted planning permission. According to the NRCC this is a wide scale problem that has been allowed to get out of control.

BDCDC pointed to the Local Plan which identifies land around the fringes of Worksop as a possible location for an additional site. So far however no Gypsies or Travellers have submitted a

planning application for land in this area or sought Council assistance. It was also acknowledged that although the Council would have to treat any such application according to policy, the '*fringes of Worksop*' is a relatively vague term and not as helpful as a specific allocation of land for such a use. Furthermore a successful outcome is not assured as other factors such as the sustainability of the site, access to facilities and highway safety would have to be considered.

A number of reasons explain this situation. Firstly a lot of Travellers seek planning permission for land located outside of strategic planning areas. Secondly finding suitable land that is available is often very difficult. They are able to afford the land in the first place because groups will often purchase agricultural land which they will then try to develop as residential land. BDCDC also expressed concerns about how '*safe*' such transactions are.

Another concern held by BDCDC was with the reliability of the advice and guidance given to Gypsies and Travellers. Although certain forums and planning consultants will get involved with applications, it was felt the general awareness of Gypsies and Travellers to these issues needs to be improved.

Several respondents commented there is a need to provide greater assistance to people wanting to buy their own private site and ENTA wanted to see councils working jointly with Travellers to identify appropriate sites. The NRCC observed that the process is very complicated and the fact that many do not have sufficient reading and writing skills poses additional problems. It is also common for Gypsies and Travellers to report feeling stigmatised where ever they go and often report that people seem, or are, unwilling to help.

The NRCC felt that to overcome these issues someone or something was needed to help '*demystify*' the process for Gypsies and Travellers. Many are not aware of their rights and it was felt this is often reflected in their relationship with local authorities. However this situation is complicated by the fact that relations between the two sides is often not good, especially given that the threat of eviction is likely to be an issue.

The NRCC also commented that because it is very difficult for Gypsies and Travellers to develop their own site many find themselves having to rent private pitches. This raises issues about their treatment by the landlord and their rights. Many Gypsies and Travellers will endure poor conditions but are reluctant to say anything because they are scared this will lead to eviction.

6.6 Access to services

Accessing health and education standards are very problematic for Gypsies and Travellers. The GTLRC noted this was directly attributed to the shortage of suitable accommodation while the

ENTA stated access was problematic because services are not geared to meet the needs of mobile groups. The NRCC said that generally Gypsies and Travellers are very resistant to the idea of accessing services because they are unsure about their role. Furthermore many find the process difficult because of their literacy and telephone skills and the fact they do not have a permanent address.

According to the ENTA Gypsies and Travellers are typically very ignorant about health. They will often ignore problems and are not regularly checked or screened. GP's are often very difficult to access because they will not accept registrations, and Gypsies and Travellers will often bypass direct access services and go straight to A&E or access private treatment. It is also common for Travellers to be registered in one area but live in another, which subsequently often means they have to travel across large areas if they need treatment.

The Travellers Health and Well-being Steering Group; which includes the ENTA, Newark and Sherwood District Council, Newark and Sherwood PCT and Nottinghamshire County Council; have tried to help Gypsies and Travellers overcome some of these issues and has recently introduced a '*Passport to Health*'. This is a set of health records that Gypsies and Travellers carry around with them. It makes it easier for them to access health services and can be easily updated.

Initial feedback from the NRCC is that Gypsies and Travellers and been very receptive to the passport. At the same time health workers have been visiting sites in the Newark and Sherwood area and are slowly helping break down some of the barriers that currently prevent many Gypsies and Travellers from accessing health services. The NTES reported the PCT in Bassetlaw was undertaking similar work and as a consequence of such initiatives people are becoming more receptive to the idea of accessing services because they have a better understanding of how they might benefit.

With regards to educational services the NTES noted that one of the main issues they have to contend with is attendance. Among settled Gypsy and Traveller families it was observed that the need for children to go to primary school has been accepted. The majority of settled children now attend primary school although attendance is still lower in comparison to other children. It was estimated that among Gypsy and Traveller children in school attendance levels are about 80% compared to about 90% among the settled community.

Among Gypsy and Traveller children of secondary school age the NTES estimated that attendance levels are about 65%. That said in Nottinghamshire only about 25% of Gypsy and Traveller children of secondary school age attend school, although the situation is slowly improving. This compares with a national average that in 1999 was estimated to be around 10-15%, but is now likely to be slightly more.

Settled children will not attend secondary school for a variety of reasons. The NTES observed that a common attitude the service comes up against is from the parents who do not expect or want their children to attend school '*because they have not done in the past and are happy and alright now*'. Other common issues relate to gender and concerns about sex education and mixed classes, as well as worries and fears about racial problems.

Another more general problem is with the curriculum as it is not currently structured to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers who want vocational training and not academic qualifications. Although vocational courses are available during Key Stage 4, a lot of Gypsy and Traveller children will have dropped out of school by this age.

A further problem the NTES has to contend with is highly mobile families where it is difficult for children in these circumstances to attend school. The service currently employs an Educational Welfare Officer and in the past has employed a Family Liaison Officer, to visit sites and encourage attendance in school.

The NTES is well linked up with other services in the area. However, generally services need to become better integrated, and as part of this it was felt there is scope for establishing a role that is dedicated to handling Gypsy and Traveller affairs. It was also suggested that the availability of pitches on local authority sites should be linked to the attendance of children in school.

In terms of accessing both health and educational services a big issue that needs to be overcome concerns the approach towards unauthorised encampments and the NTES commented that the system will often work against itself. On the one hand members of the local authority will be attempting to move people on from unauthorised sites, while at the same time workers will be going out and to try and tackle health and educational needs by encouraging people to engage and co-operate with them. This was described as a '*fundamental conflict*'.

6.7 General issues

The portrayal of Gypsies and Travellers in the media was highlighted as a big issue. The ENTA commented that three years ago in the local press the situation got so bad they had to contact the Press Complaints Commission. Although the situation calmed down after this the issue still comes up regularly and was described as causing '*significant problems*' for the Gypsy and Traveller community.

The ENTA went on to comment that the media are not interested in positive issues, only negative ones, and this point was echoed by BDCDC who observed the local reaction was often negative.

That said the ENTA have used the media positively to tackle a range of issues that affect Gypsies and Travellers and reported that when used properly it had the potential to 'open a lot of doors'.

In addition to general observations about the media it was recognised that Gypsy and Traveller issues have enjoyed a raised profile in the last few years and now attract an increasing amount of time and attention. In view of this FFT commented that local authorities need to display an increased awareness of Gypsy and Travellers' needs, especially within housing and planning departments, as they are most directly involved in accommodation provision. This point subsequently raised issues relating firstly to the availability of quantitative data for strategic planning and secondly around service provision.

The requirement placed on local authorities to identify land in their Local Development Framework was viewed as a necessary and good step forward. However, the GTLRC criticised the government for not providing guidance on accommodation needs assessments and not setting a deadline for completion as subsequently many have been delayed.

Criticisms were also levelled at inaccuracies with the Caravan Count Data by the NRCC who stressed it would be important to see accurate statistical data coming out of needs assessments that can be used to help Travellers meet identified need. This point was also raised by BDCDC who said accurate information showing whether there is a need for additional sites is required to help them with applications, appeals and enforcement actions.

With regards to service provision for Gypsies and Travellers the NRCC felt the situation is getting better although there remains room for improvement. Service providers are consulting more Gypsies and Travellers, but not in all areas. Health services were highlighted as being very good where as housing services are very poor.

The NRCC also stressed that when consulting with sites it is important that providers look at different areas of the site because often there is a real variation in the standard of living. It was also noted that although the level of consultation is increasing, often Gypsies and Travellers feel forced to accept the solutions available to them.

Generally respondents were positive about the Council's approach to Gypsy and Travellers. It was felt they seem to be aware of the issues faced by Gypsies and Travellers and appear willing to do something about the situation. However despite increased levels of involvement by service providers with Gypsies and Travellers, both the NTES and NRCC felt the area needs a dedicated role, possibly joint funded with health services, created to work solely in the interests of the group.

Issues about staffing also drew attention to current funding arrangements. The NRCC said that at present their Gypsy and Traveller scheme is only a pilot project with funding for a year. This limits the extent of the work that can be done, and the project also finds itself in competition with other services for funding. The NRCC stressed that long term funding is needed because at present it is very difficult for them to tackle the long term issues that exist and to date much of their work has centred on short-term interventions.

As a final note both the GTLRC and FFT, while praising the recent drive for empowerment among Gypsy and Traveller groups, noted that they are still discriminated against and there is still a long way to go until they are properly represented at regional and national levels.

6.8 Summary

The main issues facing Gypsies and Travellers relates to accommodation and the shortage of sites and appropriate facilities. The housing aspirations and intentions of Gypsies and Travellers was succinctly summed up by the NRCC who said Gypsies and Travellers want to live on a small site in a trailer, be able to access basic facilities and enjoy a better standard of living for themselves.

All respondents agreed that more sites are needed although there was no overall consensus about the type of sites that need to be delivered. Generally it was agreed that Gypsies and Travellers need permanent sites that are properly run as well as additional transit sites. At present however there is a lack of stopping or permanent sites which leaves many facing the constant threat of eviction. As part of this more assistance needs to be provided to Gypsies and Travellers wanting to buy their own land because at present many try to buy their own land and then develop it without permission.

Other issues that pose problems for Gypsy and Traveller communities include relations with the settled community, their ability to travel and maintain a traditional lifestyle and accessing services such as health and education. Traditional customs and culture are very important to Gypsies and Travellers and there is a need to improve awareness of these issues among the settled community. Linked to this however, Gypsies and Travellers need to be encouraged to engage more in society, particularly with regards to accessing services, and as part of this there is a case for creating a full-time position in the area and providing long-term funding for services.

7. Survey findings

7.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the results of a survey conducted among Gypsies and Travellers in Bassetlaw. After explaining the methodology used to conduct the interviews and outlining the profile of the respondents, the chapter looks at their accommodation circumstances, their use of local services, employment, travelling patterns and accommodation provision.

7.2 Methodology

Authorised and unauthorised sites were initially identified by Bassetlaw District Council in July 2005. The only local authority site in Nottinghamshire is located within Bassetlaw district at Daneshill Lakes (it is owned by the County Council). There are two other authorised private sites in the area at Markham Moor and Stubbing Lane. Two unauthorised sites were also identified, at Gamston Woods and Leverton Road. An additional unauthorised site was identified at Everton just before start of fieldwork in October 2005.

Using this list, two field interviewers with travelling backgrounds approached the sites directly and as many interviews as possible were conducted with site residents. The interviews involved a questionnaire containing a mixture of open and closed questions (see Appendix A1). All the fieldwork took place in November 2005, with one interview conducted per family unit¹. Gypsies and Travellers in the area were also asked if they knew of any other unauthorised encampments in the Bassetlaw area, however no further sites were identified.

The Council was unable to identify any Gypsies or Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation. The field interviewers asked Gypsies and Travellers who took part in the survey if they knew of any living in the settled community, however none were identified in this way.

7.3 Profile of respondents

In total thirty-six interviews were conducted. The table below shows the number of responses obtained for each site, together with the total number of family units living on the site at the time of fieldwork, and the response rates. As far as the Council was aware and our field interviewers could

¹ For the purpose of this study, 'family unit' is defined as the individuals identified by the respondent as comprising the family group (immediate and extended) they live and / or travel with.

ascertain, there were no other authorised or unauthorised sites in Bassetlaw at the time of the fieldwork.

Site name	Site type	Interviews completed	Number of family units on site	Response rate
Daneshill Lakes	LA owned	11	15	73.3%
Stubbing Lane	Private, authorised	18	25	72.0%
Markham Moor	Private, authorised	4	7	57.1%
Everton	Unauthorised	1	1	100%
Gamston Wood	Unauthorised	1	1	100%
Leverton Road	Unauthorised	1	1	100%
Total		36	50	72.0%

To simplify the analysis, at times in this chapter the two private authorised sites have been grouped together, as have the three unauthorised sites.

Of the respondents, 22 were male and 14 were female. The average size of the respondents' family group was 3.25 – higher than the Bassetlaw average of 2.35 (Census 2001), with the average caravan occupancy rate of 2.1. In terms of ethnic background, Stubbing Lane was the only site where different Gypsy and Traveller groups mixed. Respondents described their ethnic background as follows:

Site name	Romany	English Traveller	Gypsy	New Traveller
Daneshill Lakes	-	-	-	11
Stubbing Lane	7	11	-	-
Markham Moor	4	-	-	-
Everton	-	1	-	-
Gamston Wood	-	1	-	-
Leverton Road	-	-	1	-
Total	12	13	1	11

7.4 Accommodation circumstances

The following table identifies the number of pitches on each site, the number of caravans on the site and an estimate of the total number of caravans the site can take. The average number of caravans per pitch in Bassetlaw was 1.7, although this ranged from 1 (for the Everton site) to 2.6 at Markham Moor. All three authorised sites were full to capacity at the time of the fieldwork.

Site name	Number of caravans	Number of pitches	Caravan capacity	Average number caravans per pitch
Daneshill Lakes	29	15	29	1.9
Stubbing Lane	34	25	34	1.36
Markham Moor	13	5	13	2.6
Everton	2	2	3	1.0
Gamston Wood	1	N/A ¹	10	-
Leverton Road	2	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	-
Total	81	47	89	1.7

¹ Due to their temporary and improvised nature, for the unauthorised sites at Gamston Wood and Leverton Road it was not possible to estimate how many pitches the site could hold, or the total capacity.

Respondents were asked how long they had stayed at their current location, and how long they intended to remain there. The following table shows that, perhaps not surprisingly, those on the authorised sites were more settled at their current location than those on unauthorised sites. None on the unauthorised sites had been there for more than a year and none expect to remain there for more than a year. The family at one of the unauthorised sites (Everton) expected to leave within a month. This was also the only family in the sample who did not regard their current location as their main home, and stated that they did not have a main site of residence. The respondents living on the two private sites were the most settled, having lived there and intended to stay there longer than respondents on other sites.

How long have you lived at this current location?								
Site name	Less than 1 month	1-3 months	4-6 months	7-12 months	1-2 years	3-5 years	More than 5 years	Don't know
LA site	-	-	9%	18%	64%	9%	-	-
Private sites	-	-	14%	5%	41%	41%	-	-
Unauthorised sites	-	-	33%	67%	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	14%	14%	44%	28%	-	-
How long do you expect to remain living here?								
Site name	Less than 1 month	1-3 months	4-6 months	7-12 months	1-2 years	3-5 years	More than 5 years	Don't know
LA site	9%	-	9%	27%	27%	18%	-	9%
Private sites	-	-	14%	5%	14%	14%	50%	5%
Unauthorised sites	33%	-	-	67%	-	-	-	-
Total	6%	-	11%	17%	17%	14%	31%	6%

When asked how they had found the site, half had heard about it through a friend or relative, and the same amount through word of mouth. A quarter had previously used the site and had returned there. These comments from respondents at Stubbing Lane were typical: *'We heard from friends that it might be legal so we moved here'*; *'We stayed for a couple of weeks a few years ago and then decided to move here'*.

A third of respondents said the site was difficult to find, as the following table shows.

Site type	Very easy	Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Difficult	Very difficult
LA site	-	-	60%	40%	-
Private sites	-	24%	43%	33%	-
Unauth' sites	-	33%	67%	-	-
Total	-	18%	50%	32%	-

None of the respondents on unauthorised encampments had difficulties finding the site. In contrast 40% at Daneshill Lakes and 41% at Stubbing Hill reported difficulties. However it seems that most of the difficulties were due to accessing available pitches on the sites. These comments from respondents were illustrative: *'Finding it was easy but getting on is difficult – it's always full! We were lucky, someone pulled off just before we arrived'* [Stubbing Lane]; *'It's difficult as there are only a couple of sites in the county for New Age Travellers and waiting lists are hard to access'* [Daneshill Lakes].

Just 17% of respondents wanted help in finding suitable sites, however this ranged from 9% at the local authority site, to a third on the unauthorised sites. The most popular source of help would be from a council Gypsy and Traveller liaison officer.

Respondents were asked to consider services and facilities on their current site, how adequate they were and what else was needed. All respondents on the three authorised sites had access to water and electricity supply, and rubbish collection; those on unauthorised sites lacked these basic amenities. The most problematic absent facilities are shown in the table below.

Table 7.6 Main problems on current site and what else is needed				
Problems	Type of site			Total
	LA site	Private sites	Unauthorised sites	
Public toilet	73%	59%	67%	64%
Water supply	27%	55%	100%	50%
Public showers	100%	23%	33%	47%
Private toilet	9%	59%	67%	44%
Own washing machine	27%	46%	33%	39%
Facilities needed				
Private shower	55%	55%	67%	56%
Own washing machine	36%	46%	67%	44%
Public shower	18%	9%	33%	14%
Gas supply	18%	-	33%	8%
Rubbish collection / water / electricity	-	-	67%	6%

The main problems at Daneshill Lakes are with the public toilets and showers, explaining why over half of respondents there feel they need a private shower. Washing facilities were also needed by the families on two of the unauthorised sites, along with rubbish collection, water and electricity supply. All the sites received post, except for the unauthorised encampments at Gamston Wood and Everton.

The local authority site was the only one where problems with noisy or dangerous traffic were reported: 36% said this was a problem at Daneshill Lakes. The site also had problems reported with pests. 82% said it was infested with rats. As regards site security, most problems were reported at Stubbing Lane where 44% said it was an issue: *'Other travellers try to pull on and get aggressive when they can't'*; *'travellers who recently were unable to get on the site rammed the gates'*. The residents at the unauthorised sites at Gamston Wood and Leverton Road also said security was an issue as they were parked alone and did not feel it was safe to leave their caravans unattended.

Overall, almost half (47%) of all respondents were satisfied with where they were currently living. However levels of satisfaction varied between sites, as the following table shows.

Site name	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither / nor	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Daneshill Lakes	-	27%	55%	18%	-
Stubbing Lane	-	50%	50%	-	-
Markham Moor	25%	75%	-	-	-
Everton	-	100%	-	-	-
Gamston Wood	-	-	-	-	100%
Leverton Road	-	-	-	-	100%
Total	3%	44%	42%	6%	6%

Only around a quarter (27%) of residents at the Daneshill Lakes site was satisfied. The main suggested ways to improve the site were providing more toilets, shower blocks and washing machines on each site, and improving the reliability of the electricity supply. The showers and related plumbing were also the main problem at Daneshill Lakes. In contrast, all at the Markham Moor site and half of those at Stubbing Lane were satisfied. The two families on the unauthorised sites at Gamston Wood and Leverton Road were very dissatisfied with where they were staying.

Affordability was also a concern for residents at Daneshill Lakes: 92% said the rent of pitches, as opposed to 11% and 25% at Stubbing Lane and Markham Moor respectively. It was also mentioned by the two families at Gamston Wood and Leverton Road, suggesting that the price as well as available of authorised pitches affected where they currently live.

Just 8% knew of another site in Bassetlaw where they would like to live. Five respondents said they wanted to buy their own land to live on their own.

7.5 Local services

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their awareness and usage of local services, and how accessible they found them.

Service	Aware	Use
Shopping facilities	100%	97%
Post office	100%	97%
Banking facilities	100%	97%
Dentist	100%	78%
Health centre / GP	97%	92%
Public transport	97%	44%
Leisure facilities	94%	69%
Parks & children's play areas	89%	47%
Adult education courses	50%	3%

There was no significant difference between the type of site the respondent lived on and their awareness or usage of local services. While almost all used local shops, banks post offices and health centres, only around three-quarters used a dentist, two-thirds used leisure facilities, and less than half used public transport, despite very high awareness of these services' existence. Only half were aware of adult education courses, and just 3% had used one: *'I don't hear about any and without reading I can't find any other way [of finding out]'*.

Reasons for not using a particular service varied. The main reason for most respondents was that the service was not needed or wanted: *'I don't like GPs or dentists – so I do it myself or use A&E'*. For others, transport prevented them using services: *'Getting there is a problem. There's no bus stop here so without a car you're stuck.'* Others reported that the services were not tailored specifically to meet Gypsies and Travellers' needs: *'I'd feel embarrassed going to classes and would not feel comfortable unless it was with other travellers'; 'I don't like mixing with other settled people.'*

Respondents were asked directly whether accessibility was an issue. Accessing a dentist was a problem for 31% of respondents, play areas for 56%, public transport for 44%, and adult education courses for 28%. Dentists and GPs in particular were seen as *'not interested in taking on Travellers, because of the mobile lifestyle'*. The lack of public transport to the sites was also a major barrier in accessing other services: *'accessibility is often difficult without having a car'*.

In terms of improving access, some respondents suggested service providers should outreach to Gypsies and Travellers and *'bring the services onsite – there's definitely enough demand for this here [Daneshill Lakes]'; 'they would have to tell us how to access them as I don't really know where to begin'; 'there's a lack of information – an onsite notice board would be useful'*. Others felt services should be made more appropriate or specific to Gypsies and Travellers: *'I wouldn't know how to access adult education courses and wouldn't feel happy sat around with a bunch of strangers'*.

In terms of information and advice services, awareness was generally high however take-up was very low, as the following table shows.

Service	Aware	Use
Benefits Agency	72%	45%
Job Centre	72%	39%
Educations services	69%	39%
Traveller liaison officer	64%	11%
Citizens Advice Bureau	56%	22%
Voluntary organisations	53%	42%
Local housing department	50%	11%
Local planning department	50%	11%
Social Services	50%	-
Legal advice services	47%	33%
Housing associations	39%	3%
Homelessness organisations	33%	6%

None of the services had been used by a majority of respondents. After the Benefits Agency, voluntary organisations were the source most turned to for advice and information. The lack of a dedicated liaison officer in the area was also apparent, as just 11% had used this as a source for information and advice.

Again, many of these services were not felt to be needed or relevant to Gypsies and Travellers: *'we keep ourselves to ourselves and have no need for most of them'*. Others were unaware of how to contact them: *'I don't read so finding out about them is hard'*. However many felt that the services were either prejudiced against Gypsies and Travellers so there was little point in contacting them: *'We always receive a negative response'*; *'local housing and planning services provide no relevant information and no practical help, they're irrelevant'*.

In terms of accessibility, the major problem was reported with the local housing department – 86% found it difficult to access. These are two services that Gypsies and Travellers are most likely to have had dealings with. Being unable to obtain help from these sources may have been translated into problems of accessibility. This is borne out in some comments made during the interviews. Seven respondents said that they rarely see the liaison officer unless there is a problem; once commented that the local housing department *'just tells you what you can't do without telling what you can'*. Several respondents reported a lack of official advice about where to find land: *'the local planning department always refuse permission and no help is available from the Council to find the land'*. Again, literacy was a barrier for some respondents:

'Local planning and housing departments could have useful information but there is none. What they do have is printed and I can't read and it is hard to find anyone who knows about Gypsy issues and wants to help.'

Suggested improvements were for services to start proactively offering advice to Gypsies and Travellers via site visits, particularly with legal advice and costs: *'I'd like help with planning rules and law but I don't know any legal advice centre that does not cost silly money.'* Another suggestion was to provide contact information details for each council department in a readily available and accessible format.

7.6 Health, education and employment

Three quarters of respondents were registered with a GP surgery, with no significant difference in take-up between the site types. Two-thirds were registered to a surgery or health centre in the Bassetlaw area. Health issues were not prevalent in the sample's family units. One had health or mobility problems due to old age, and another reported a long-term illness. The rest reported no health issues.

In terms of education enrolment, only one child of school age in the sample was not in school or nursery. Living on a private site, the parents had not tried to enrol the child due to uncertainties about how long they would stay in the area.

When respondents were asked where they thought it was vital for Gypsy and Traveller children to attend school, 71% felt it was, with two broad reasons given as to why education was vital. Firstly, to improve opportunities: *'It gives you more possibilities in later life, it opens doors for them and it helps to have an easier life'*; *'I've seen children grow up with a limited education and they seem to experience more trouble later in life'*. Secondly, it would enable Gypsy and Traveller children have choices about how to live in future: *'It's important for the future – the old ways are gone and we have to mix more with settled people'*; *'it gives them the option of travelling or doing the 9 to 5 thing'*.

Around 15% of respondents thought education was not vital: *'It's not important because I never went to school'*; *'plenty get by without school'*. The same proportion was undecided: *'I've not decided yet – it never used to be important'*.

Respondents were asked if anything had prevented school attendance, either currently or in the past. Over a third (39%) said the lack of a permanent address was a problem. More than a quarter (28%) mentioned seasonal movement due to employment, and over a fifth (22%) said bullying was a barrier to school attendance.

As regards employment in the Bassetlaw area, the most popular form was labouring (including road maintenance, construction and land clearance), mentioned by 80% of respondents. A quarter mentioned tree surgery or gardening, and the same amount trading or hawking. A few responses were non-specific: *'anything to put food on the table'*; *'whatever's going'*.

Respondents were unanimous that Gypsy and Traveller employment in Bassetlaw was similar to other areas. Only a fifth (22%) of respondents said it was easy to find employment in Bassetlaw, as the following table shows.

Site type	Very easy	Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Difficult	Very difficult
LA site	-	-	56%	33%	11%
Private sites	-	24%	62%	14%	-
Unauth' sites	-	100%	-	-	-
Total	-	22%	56%	19%	3%

When asked if a lack of preferred work had led them to seek alternative forms of employment, 39% said it had. A small majority (52%) stated that employment opportunities affected their ability to maintain a travelling lifestyle. A third felt that training or employment would help in finding work, specifically with literacy, mechanics and plumbing.

Just over a quarter (26%) expected their children to continue doing the same type of work. The majority therefore either felt that their children would decide for themselves (*'it's fine if he wants to do it, but he can do something different if he likes'*), or hoped they would have a better paid job. The majority (58%) were unsure as to whether employment opportunities will affect the ability of their children to maintain the travelling lifestyle, although a fifth felt it would.

7.7 Travelling patterns

An examination of how many times the respondents had travelled in the past year shows that those on authorised sites were less likely to have travelled and made slightly fewer journeys when they did. Residents at Daneshill Lakes were the most settled – the majority (55%) had not travelled in the past year; 41% on the private sites had not; all three families on the unauthorised sites had travelled. Of those who had travelled, the average amount of times was twice in the past year for residents on the local authority site, three times on the private sites and four times on the unauthorised sites. Half of respondents travelled in Summer, a third in Spring and a quarter in Autumn; only two families travelled in Winter.

Almost half (44%) had stayed on an unauthorised site at some point in the past year, and all of these stays were for fewer than three months and ended when they were evicted. One respondent described the eviction:

‘We were woken up early and moved on by the police. They threatened to impound vehicles if we stayed. Generally made to feel like criminals... Our way of life seems to be against the law.’

Apart from eviction, the main reason for leaving the previous site was that employment had finished, or they were returning to “winter up” at the end of the travelling year.

Respondents were asked for the five areas in which they last travelled. None had previously stayed elsewhere in Nottinghamshire, perhaps reflecting the shortage of available pitches. Three broad travelling patterns can be detected. The main one is from the East of England, in particular Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex. A second is from the South-West, with Somerset, Cornwall and Devon being the main previous counties of residence. A final trajectory is from Wales through Shropshire, Herefordshire and Staffordshire.

When it came to the reasons for travelling, three main reasons were given. The most popular reason, given by 54% of respondents, was to seek employment: *‘to get out and about and earn money’*. Almost half (49%) mentioned social reasons, such as visiting friends or family, or attending fairs or other gatherings. Finally, 23% gave tradition or culture as the main reason: *‘it’s in the blood’*; *‘I want to carry on the traditions and show the children their culture’*.

Respondents were asked if they could foresee a time when they will stop travelling: 41% of those who still travelled could envisage stopping, almost all in over five years’ time. The following table shows the main reasons and demonstrates that age and health are prominent reasons.

Table 7.11 Reasons for stopping travelling	
Reason	%
Age	47%
Health and/or support needs	44%
Education	22%
Lack of transit sites	19%
Harassment	17%
Employment	6%
Safety	6%
Want to move to permanent housing	6%

7.8 Accommodation provision

When asked about housing provision for Gypsy and Travellers in Bassetlaw, no respondents felt the current level was sufficient and all felt that more sites were needed. However there was a diversity of opinion on the type of sites required. A third said the area needed more private family sites, and that these should be smaller than current sizes (between five and seven family plots): *'if they are small they cause less problems with the settled community'*. A quarter wanted more transit sites: *'they should be smaller and the pitches offered on a rotational basis so Travellers can move from one directly onto another somewhere else'*. The same amount wanted help identifying plots of land likely to obtain planning permission and advice with the planning process. Other suggestions included introducing a seasonal licence for winter, dual use residential and commercial sites, and improved design on sites.

Respondents were then asked what they felt acted as a barrier to accessing sites. The following table shows that the shortage of permanent residential sites was regarded as the main barrier.

Barrier	%
Accessibility to permanent sites	72%
Permission to reside on land	69%
Affordability	61%
Accessibility to land	58%
Limited size of sites	19%
Distance to schools	3%

Just two respondents had tried to purchase land in the Bassetlaw District and had had involvement with the Council's planning department. One had been refused permission and the Council was now *'trying to kick us off the field'*, while the other was waiting to hear the outcome of an application. Given the low level of interest in gaining planning permission, it is not surprising that only three respondents wanted assistance with the process.

In terms of housing preferences, the following table shows that the vast majority of respondents (86%) would like to purchase a plot of land with planning permission to build a semi-permanent structure. All respondents on private sites wanted to buy their own land. Less than a fifth (18%) on the County Council site would like to continue living there. Among the respondents on unauthorised site, two wanted to move to the local authority site, while one wanted to move to council rented housing. There was no demand for moving to a transit site.

Table 7.13 Housing preferences			
	Preferred type of housing		
Site type	Self owned with planning permission	County Council site	Council rented housing
LA site	73%	18%	-
Private sites	100%	-	-
Unauthorised sites	-	67%	33%
TOTAL	86%	11%	3%

Three respondents also stated they would like to live on a site which could be used for commercial and residential use. However, very few respondents expected their preferences to be realised. Only 7% (two respondents) who wanted to buy their own land expected to do so. Among respondents wanting to live on a site, a small majority (54%) expected to stay in Nottinghamshire, and 40% within Bassetlaw.

Respondents were asked about the facilities they would require on a site. There is a noticeable preference for private rather than shared washing facilities. It was also interesting that over a quarter (28%) would require internet access.

Table 7.14 Facilities required on sites	
Facility	%
Rubbish collection	97%
Water supply	97%
Electricity supply	97%
Hard standing for caravans	97%
Private showers	92%
Your own washing machine	83%
Public telephone	44%
Your own telephone	39%
Internet access	28%
Site management	17%
Gas supply	14%
Public showers	11%
Shared washing machine	3%

Finally respondents were asked if they had experienced any harassment in the last year. Just under a third (31%) said they had, all from local people. Those on the council site were the least likely to have received harassment – 18% against 30% and 33% on the private and unauthorised sites respectively.

7.9 Conclusion

Interviews were conducted at all known authorised and unauthorised sites in Bassetlaw, and a high response rate was achieved. The main issue for Gypsies and Travellers was the lack of capacity on authorised sites and the consequent difficulty in accessing available pitches. This had led to two unauthorised encampments in Bassetlaw, and reported problems with security at Stubbing Lane.

In terms of the sites themselves, several problems were reported by residents at the County Council site, Daneshill Lakes. These included noisy or dangerous traffic, plumbing and poor facilities and a reported vermin infestation. There were also problems with the affordability of pitches. Few respondents were satisfied with their accommodation and only a fifth wanted to remain there.

Education enrolment of Gypsy and Traveller children was high, although a third reported problems registering with a local school. Awareness of local services was very high, as was usage, with the notable exception of dentists and leisure / play facilities. Some respondents felt isolated from community services due to the lack of public transport; others said that they were not relevant or appropriate to Gypsies and Travellers. For example, while there was some interest in adult education classes (including literacy), there was reluctance to attend classes if mixed with the settled community, suggesting such services should be carefully targeted and made culturally appropriate. More outreach to Gypsy and Traveller groups was also suggested, including the provision of information in non-verbal forms. There was cynicism over information and advice services, especially council ones. Even when specific to Gypsies and Travellers – such as a liaison officer – there were seen as negative and prejudiced against the Gypsy and Traveller community.

Overall, the survey has found a need for greater site capacity in the Bassetlaw area. These include smaller sites designed specifically for families and transit sites, as well as help identifying and buying suitable plots. The preference was for privately run sites, partly due to the poor opinion of the site owned by the County Council, and for individual, rather than shared, facilities.

8. Accommodation needs

8.1 Introduction

Many of the assumptions made on housing need among the settled community are not applicable to Gypsy and Traveller groups. For example, the Bedroom Standard used in Housing Needs Survey to estimate overcrowding is not relevant to the layout of caravans or Gypsy and Traveller cultural preferences. We have therefore followed the assumptions made in the research by Niner and ODPM², and applied our survey findings accordingly. In broad terms, this approach estimates the level of shortfall (based on overcrowding, unauthorised sites and transfers from bricks and mortar accommodation), and removes from this figure any supply from new site provision or vacant pitches. The final figure provides an indication of the extent and nature of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs in Bassetlaw.

This chapter outlines the levels of need for residential and transit accommodation, before the requirement for additional pitches over the next five years.

8.2 Residential sites

(i) Shortfall

There are three elements to estimating accommodation shortfalls: overcrowding; the needs of Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised sites; and Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation who wish to transfer to a site. Each is discussed in turn.

- Overcrowding

Niner's ODPM research assumes 10% of council sites are overcrowded. In the case of Daneshill Lakes, our survey analysis (including of caravan occupancy rates and respondents' views on whether they had enough space) suggests 10% is a fair assumption. Overcrowding is not severe on this site – partly due to the smaller families of the New Travellers who live on the site – and **two more pitches** would meet the need.

On the private sites there was no evidence of overcrowding at Markham Moor. However a higher figure has been reached for Stubbing Lane. The site has higher caravan occupancy rates and larger

² Pat Niner, *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, ODPM 2003, pp189-190.

families than Daneshill Lakes, as well as two concealed households (defined as an individual or group of individuals subsumed into a larger family unit, but who currently require separate accommodation). Both the concealed households intend to live on a site in the Bassetlaw area, with one requires one caravan to meet their needs, the other needs two caravans. The overcrowding estimate for Stubbing Lane is 15%: an additional **five pitches** will meet the residents' needs.

- Families on unauthorised sites

The survey identified three unauthorised encampments in the Bassetlaw area. The survey data suggests they would need total space for four caravans. Using the average caravan to pitch occupancy rate for Bassetlaw of 1.9, **three additional pitches** on authorised sites would meet their needs.

We have made no assumption for an estimate of those expected to arrive from elsewhere, as Bassetlaw has already experienced increasing levels of Gypsies and Travellers in recent years. Instead, we have included rates of newly forming households across all sites.

- Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation

In Niner's model it is assumed that between 1% and 5% of Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation would prefer to be living on a site. However no Gypsies and Travellers living outside encampments were identified in Bassetlaw and no figures on how many there might be are available. Consequently we have assumed that Bassetlaw has no Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation who would prefer to be living on a site.

(ii) Supply

The total current need is therefore for **ten additional pitches**. From this figure must be subtracted the current supply and spare capacity on local authority and private authorised accommodation. We are not aware of any plans to introduce new sites in Bassetlaw or increase capacity on existing sites so we have assumed the supply of new provision is zero. While the Niner model includes an estimate for unused and vacant pitches, this is not applicable for Bassetlaw as our survey recorded full occupancy on the three authorised sites. Therefore there is zero supply from vacant pitches.

However one family – on an unauthorised site – expressed a wish to live in social rented accommodation in Bassetlaw. Assuming that such housing is available, the total level of current additional need on residential sites is therefore reduced to **nine pitches**.

8.2 Transit sites

Although the Gypsies and Travellers in our sample did not present any need for transit sites, the stakeholder consultation and site survey strongly suggest there is a demand. Due to the time of fieldwork – November, when most Gypsies and Travellers are finishing travelling and are ‘wintered up’ – those interviewed were largely settled and wanted either residential accommodation or to buy their own land and obtain planning permission. However they did report a need for transit sites for Gypsies and Travellers passing through Nottinghamshire. It was even suggested that the security at existing sites was threatened by the lack of transit pitches.

Consequently we have based our estimate on Niner’s assumptions on the level of need for transit sites. The first element of the demand estimate is that 50% to 70% of families on unauthorised sites require a transit pitch or other provision for mobility. We have taken an average of the number of unauthorised encampments in the ODPM Count (January and July figures) over the past three years, which produces seventeen sites. Assumed that each is occupied by one family unit (as the unauthorised sites in our survey were), this produces a need for transit sites of **between 9 and 12 pitches**. Niner also makes a vacancy allowance, based on the assumption that 25% of pitches will be empty at any one time to allow for mobility. The total requirement for transit accommodation is therefore **between 11 and 15 pitches**.

8.3 Newly forming need

By analysing the age composition of the families in the sample, it is possible to make indications of how many new family units are likely to be formed. Data is also collected on whether they would need to live in separate accommodation, where this would be and the accommodation type. It is estimated that there are 23 newly forming family units in our sample. From this total must be subtracted the 13 family units who do not expect to live in Bassetlaw or expect to move to bricks and mortar accommodation, leaving eleven. The following table shows when the newly forming need will arise over the next five years, together with the number of pitches the families will require.

Table 8.1 Newly forming need and pitch requirements			
Pitches required	When need will arise		
	Within a year	1 – 2 years	3 -5 years
1	2		4
2	-	1	4
total pitches required	2	2	12

Across the next five years a total of 16 additional pitches will be required on sites to meet newly forming need, the vast majority after three years. This is perhaps a reflection of parents' expectation that their teenage children will move into separate accommodation in the next five years and maintain a travelling lifestyle in the local area.

By grossing up the results to match the total Gypsy and Traveller population in Bassetlaw, this gives a total of **23 additional pitches** required after five years (of these, three are required in the next year, and a further three at two years). This is equivalent to a growth rate of 4% for the next two years, and 8% for years three to five. We have followed Niner's cautious assumption that 70% will want provision on a residential site, with the remainder on transit sites. The breakdown is therefore **16 additional pitches** on a residential site over the next five years, and an extra **seven pitches** as transit accommodation.

8.4 Conclusion

Using the site survey data and assumptions from Niner and ODPM research, we have produced estimates for accommodation need in Bassetlaw. To make up the shortfall in current provision, nine additional pitches are required on authorised residential sites. There is also a need for transit accommodation, providing between 11 and 15 pitches. Finally, provision should be indexed to newly forming need, and rise by between 4% and 8% over the next five years. This is equivalent to 23 additional pitches over the next five years, with 16 of these on residential sites. How Bassetlaw District Council can provide the additional accommodation and improve its service provision to Gypsy and Travellers is discussed in the final chapter.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

9.1 Introduction

The research on which this report is based comprised multiple components, including a review of secondary data, stakeholder consultation with national, regional and local organisations, and a survey of Gypsies and Travellers in authorised and unauthorised accommodation in Bassetlaw. This final chapter brings together the key findings from the research under a series of recommendations for policies Bassetlaw District Council could pursue to meet Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs. In total we make fourteen recommendations, grouped into three sub-categories: site capacity; facilities, access and service provision; and recording and monitoring processes.

9.2 Site capacity

There is a shortage of residential accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers in Bassetlaw. There are three authorised sites – one run by the County Council (the only one in Nottinghamshire) and two privately owned. There is evidence of overcrowding at Daneshill Lakes and, especially, Stubbing Lane.

However there is also a need for transit accommodation. The lack of transit sites has increased pressure for pitches on residential sites, reduced security of tenure for these residents and has had a detrimental affect on the relationship between Bassetlaw's Gypsies and Travellers and those travelling through the District. The lack of transit sites has forced Gypsies and Travellers to take up unauthorised stopover sites, with negative effects on these families' welfare and exacerbating relations with the settled community.

Our first five recommendations therefore concern increasing site capacity in Bassetlaw.

1. An extra nine pitches in Bassetlaw would help meet current accommodation need at the residential sites, and provide for families forced to live on unauthorised sites who would prefer residential accommodation. The extra pitches could be split between the three sites depending on capacity, however site respondents expressed a preference for smaller sites, particularly when privately run and designed for families. Moreover, given the reluctance of Gypsies and Travellers from different ethnic groups to live together, this suggests that a new small site in Bassetlaw would be the ideal solution to the current shortfall.
2. Future pitches on the residential sites should be of sufficient size to accommodate at least two caravans. However, to improve future planning it may be advisable to provide pitches

for three caravans, including one mobile home. This would reduce pressures of overcrowding and allow space for visitors, and so reducing pressure for short-term pitches. Ultimately, the flexibility of larger pitches will prolong the usefulness of the new provisions.

3. Between 11 and 15 transit pitches should be provided to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers travelling through Bassetlaw. These can either be provided on existing residential sites, however given the popularity for smaller sites, it may be advisable to create a new, dedicated transit site. What is crucial is that the transit accommodation is designed with vacancy capacity, on the basis that the sites are unlikely to be fully occupied. If there is always some capacity on the site, this will drastically reduce the need for Gypsies and Travellers passing through Bassetlaw to use unauthorised stopover sites – a major cause of concern among the settled community.
4. Suitable sites to take the extra capacity should be identified in the Local Development Framework process. The LDF should identify a specific allocation of land for the development of at least one additional site. In terms of location, new sites should be near existing facilities, services and employment, which indicates a proximity to Worksop and / or Retford. The survey found that detachment from wider society can be compounded by a lack of adequate public transport links. These should be considered and planned for when allocating new land.
5. The location, design and facilities on the new sites should be drawn up in consultation with Gypsies and Travellers to ensure the extra capacity meets their needs. The health and safety implications of a new site's location should be considered in finding a balance between offering sites in good locations and the additional land costs this would entail. The settled community neighbouring the sites should also be involved in the consultation from an early stage.
6. Site capacity on all sites should be increased to take account of newly arising need among Gypsy and Traveller families in Bassetlaw. Over the next five years we estimate an extra 16 pitches will be required on residential sites and seven additional pitches on transit sites. However we also recommend the Council review the situation every three to five years, to take into account the relatively young age at which new households forms in Gypsy and Traveller communities, and the preference of many young families to live on their own pitch on the same site as their wider family.

9.3 Facilities, access and service provision

As well as site capacity, a series of recommendations can be made to improve current facilities available to Gypsies and Travellers, and their access to services and the wider community.

7. Several problems were reported for the site at Daneshill Lakes, owned by Nottinghamshire County Council. These include problems with vermin, as well as problems with drainage and washing facilities, with a clear detrimental effect on the residents' quality of life. We urge Bassetlaw District Council to work with the County Council and site residents to investigate the situation and rectify these basic problems.

The stakeholder consultation and site survey highlight barriers to accessing health and education services among Gypsy and Traveller groups. One reason for this is a suspicion about service providers' motives and the belief that existing services are not appropriate to Gypsies and Travellers.

8. Service providers should proactively outreach to Gypsy and Traveller groups in Bassetlaw. Examples of good practice from elsewhere in the County, such as the Passport to Health scheme, show that with patience barriers can be broken down.
9. Poor literacy levels also act as barriers to service uptake and employment prospects. The survey found reluctance among adults to attend literacy classes if mixed with the settled community. Providing onsite adult literacy schemes to Gypsies and Travellers should be considered, and on a one-to-one basis if embarrassment affects attendance levels at classes.
10. The Council should provide information on Council services in different media, including non-verbal forms such as audio-visual and diagrammatic. This should be made available to all site residents, possibly through a site notice board.
11. The survey revealed interest in buying land likely to obtain planning permission, but a need for help and guidance with the process. Currently the Council's planning department is viewed as a negative obstacle to buying land, rather than having an enabling role. If the Council were able to offer impartial, clear information on buying land and identify suitable sites, this would reduce the occurrence of Gypsies and Travellers buying land and retrospectively seeking planning permission.
12. Elsewhere in the country, council Gypsy and Traveller services can prove a useful bridge between Gypsy and Travellers and local councils, police and service providers. As well as improving service uptake and providing advice on buying land and obtaining planning

permission, a liaison officer can play a crucial role in defusing tensions with the wider community. Currently no dedicated position exists in Nottinghamshire. While the County Council has a pilot Gypsy and Traveller service through the Supporting People scheme, it does not have much involvement with Bassetlaw. We recommend Bassetlaw Council co-ordinate with other Nottinghamshire districts to have the scheme extended and to establish a single countywide figure responsible for liaising with Gypsy and Traveller groups. Alternatively, consideration should be given to creating a post at district level.

9.4 Recording and monitoring processes

The population level and accommodation situation of Gypsies and Travellers is not static and is liable to change over time. An analysis of the ODPM Caravan Count shows that levels have fluctuated over the past three years, with implications for the strategic planning of accommodation and services for Gypsies and Travellers.

13. The Council to consider identifying a position in either the Housing or Planning departments to take or coordinate responsibility for monitoring Gypsy and Traveller sites. Mechanisms should be put into place for other Council departments – for example, legal and environmental health – to contribute to this.
14. Our final recommendation is for Bassetlaw District Council to work in partnership with the County Council and other service providers by joining the Nottinghamshire Gypsy Liaison Group. This would help ensure that needs of Bassetlaw’s Gypsies and Travellers are included in countywide strategic planning.

9.5 Summary

The overall finding of our research is that while Bassetlaw does not have a large Gypsy and Traveller population in relation to other districts in the East Midlands region, the current amount of authorised accommodation is not sufficient to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the area. There is some overcrowding on the authorised sites and most on unauthorised sites would prefer to be in authorised residential accommodation. The number of authorised pitches should accordingly be increased, ideally by establishing a new residential site.

However there is also a demand for temporary transit accommodation in Bassetlaw. A transit site should also be established, or at the very least the capacity of residential sites should be increased to account for the needs of Gypsies and Travellers staying for a short time in Bassetlaw. Consulting with Gypsies and Travellers will help ensure new accommodation provision meets their needs and provides an adequate standard of living.

Service providers should proactively outreach to Gypsies and Travellers and examples of good practice elsewhere in Nottinghamshire should be extended to Bassetlaw. This would be helped by establishing a dedicated position for liaising with Gypsies and Travellers, ideally at county, if not at district level.