

FINAL

**LEICESTERSHIRE, LEICESTER & RUTLAND
GYPSIES' AND TRAVELLERS'
ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT
(2006-16)**

ANNEX OF DISTRICT SUMMARIES

PREPARED FOR

**Blaby District Council
Charnwood Borough Council
Harborough District Council
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Melton Borough Council
North West Leicestershire District Council
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
Leicester City Council
Rutland County Council
Leicestershire County Council**

BY

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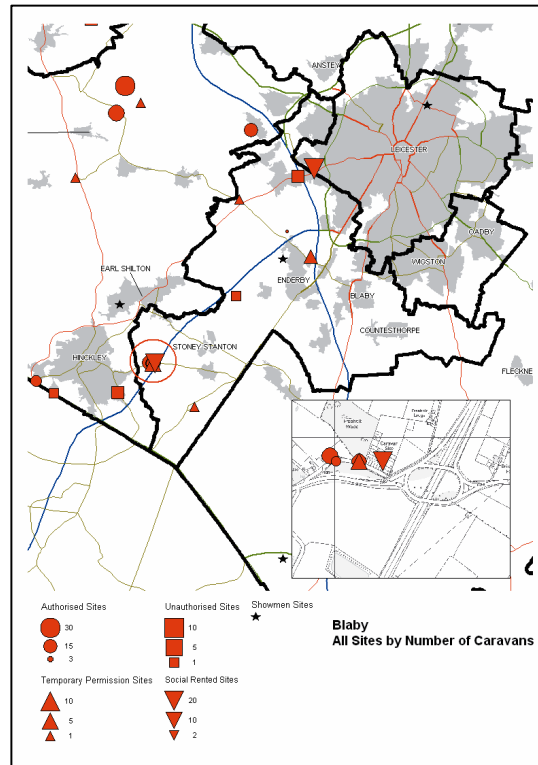
ANNEX : DISTRICT SUMMARIES

This annex includes summaries for the 7 district local authorities in Leicestershire, the City of Leicester, Rutland County Council, and Leicestershire County Council.

The front sheet for each authority contains a map showing site provision (where there is current provision), and a summary table of provision and of estimates of additional requirements for residential pitches and transit site caravan capacity for Gypsies and Travellers, and pitches for Travelling Showpeople families. How these requirement figures have been derived is described in Chapters 11, 12 and 14 of the main report.

The following pages summarise for each district further basic information about the area and site provision, unauthorised encampments, and planning and housing policies related to Gypsies and Travellers.

BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL



SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/families
Socially rented	1	20
Private, full planning consent	5	45
Private, temporary consent	4	11
Unauthorised developments	2	3
Av. annual encampments 2001-2006 (all land ownership)	6	NA
Showpeople sites	2	10+
Housing	NA	5

Accommodation	Estimated requirements	
	2006-2011	2011-2016
Residential pitches	13	13
Transit caravan capacity	Up to 10	-
Showpeople families	1	2

Blaby District
<p>The area</p> <p>The District of Blaby has a population of 91,600 (2004) and covers an area of 50 square miles in the South West part of Leicestershire. The main urban area, Blaby, is only a few miles south of the City of Leicester. The District is divided by the M1 and the M69 and contains areas in the north and centre which are largely urban and parts in the south-west and east which are more rural. The economic development of the District is closely linked to that of Leicester. Blaby is characterised by a healthy property market with active private developers and very strong demand. The average house price in the District was £156,796 (Average House Price Index from CACI Street Value Database, March 2006).</p>
<p>Characteristics of Gypsies and Travellers in the area</p> <p>There are at least 79 Gypsy and Traveller families and at least 10 Showpeople families. The Gypsy and Traveller population is reported to be composed largely of English Gypsies, with a smaller Irish Traveller population and some New Travellers passing through the area. The survey showed average household size of 3.7 persons; 83% Romany/Gypsy, 10% English Traveller; 7% Irish Traveller.</p>
<p>DCLG Count data</p> <p>The July 2006 Caravan Count reported that there were 89 Gypsy caravans (not including Showpeople) made up of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council sites – 38 caravans • Private authorised sites – 40 caravans • Unauthorised sites – 11 caravans
<p>Authorised sites</p> <p>See summary table on previous page</p>
<p>Unauthorised development</p> <p>The District Council has recorded 11 instances of unauthorised development 1997-2006 and took action in 7 cases, including Stop Notices, Injunctions and Enforcement Notices. Of the 11 cases, only 2 were eventually refused consent, with 3 being granted by the District and a further 6 being granted on appeal.</p>
<p>Unauthorised encampment</p> <p>Leicestershire County Council records 57 instances of unauthorised encampment 1997-2006 consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council land – 29 encampments • District Council and Highways Agency land – 1 encampment • Private Land – 27 encampments <p>Average duration 2.3 weeks; average size 5 caravans. The ethnic profile of groups included English Gypsies, Irish Travellers and others, but no New Travellers.</p> <p>The District Council is party to the <i>Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland</i>.</p>

Planning policy

The District Council adopted a criteria-based approach in 1999 (Policy R7) to grant applications for Gypsy or Travelling Showpeople's sites only if the proposed site:

1. Is situated on the outskirts of an existing settlement;
2. Avoids visual encroachment into the countryside;
3. Is not located in a Green Wedge or an Area of Separation;
4. Is already naturally screened by existing trees and/or hedgerow;
5. Has acceptable vehicular access and provision for parking, turning and servicing;
6. Would not conflict Local Plan Policy R1, covering residential development; and
7. For sites to be used on a long-term basis would be within reasonable distance of existing community services and facilities.

The District Council adopted an interim position in 2006 that it would have regard to Circular 01/2006 and County Structure Plan 1996-2006 Policy 6, which would take precedence over the District Plan Policy. Pending the GTAA, it has resolved to have regard to incidents of unauthorised encampments, the numbers and outcomes of planning applications and appeals; levels of occupancy, plot turnover and waiting lists for public authorised sites; and the Caravan Count. It has also stated that it will consider granting temporary permission where there is unmet need and there is a reasonable expectation that new sites are likely to become available subsequently.

The Draft Core Strategy (Preferred Options), April 2006, contains Policy CS2 (iii) as follows: *Sites will be identified for G&T accommodation where necessary. Robust assessments will be used to determine the need for such accommodation (including the size, tenure and broad location requirement of sites). Planning permission will be granted for new Gypsy and Traveller sites where the following criteria are met:*

- a) *There is a demonstrable need for new sites and accommodation requirements cannot be met on existing sites;*
- b) *The site would be capable of being accessed without detriment to highway safety and adequate parking, turning and servicing space is provided;*
- c) *The development does not have an adverse visual impact on the built environment, countryside, green wedges or Areas of separation by reason of its scale, prominence and layout;*
- d) *The development provides well designed and sensitive landscaping and screening to ameliorate any adverse visual impacts; and*

The size of the site is commensurate with the scale of the settlement to which it relates.

Planning Applications since 2001

Since 2001 there have been 13 approved planning applications concerning Gypsy and Traveller sites (including 7 refused by BDC and subsequently granted on appeal) and 3 refusals (plus 7 refusals by the District Council that were approved on appeal). As at January 2007 there was 1 application awaiting determination by the District Council.

Housing Policy

The Blaby Homelessness Strategy 2003/08 states *'More analysis is required with regard to the supply of temporary stopping places for Travellers and Gypsies. This could be addressed in the strategy review for the County Council owned site at Aston Firs'*.

The District Housing Strategy does not contain any coverage in relation to Gypsies and Travellers. It is reported that a review of the Housing Strategy will take into consideration results of the GTAA.

Housing Services

The District does not monitor the Gypsies and Travellers amongst applicants for housing. The last instance of a Traveller seeking assistance as a homeless person related to domestic violence. The District reports that in recent years the trend in the number of Travellers applying for housing has been stable and the trend in the numbers of Travellers applying as homeless has been downwards.

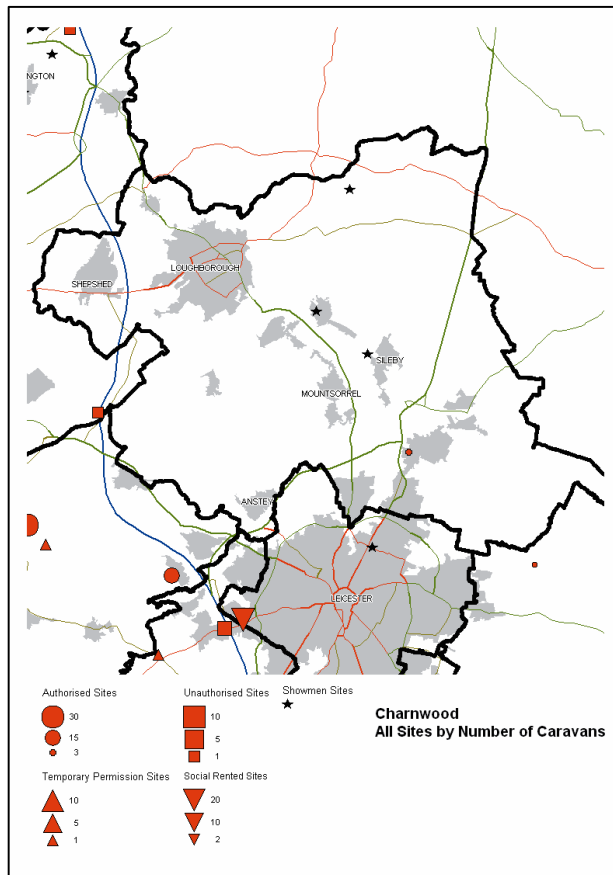
Local services reported to be accessible to Gypsies and Travellers include the District Council's Housing Options Service. The District reports that Gypsies and Travellers have sought assistance with regard to domestic violence, making a homelessness declaration, making a housing application, relationship breakdown and seeking bricks and mortar housing. Types of assistance given are reported to be temporary accommodation in 'bricks and mortar', acceptance of housing applications and a housing options service.

The families at the County Council's Aston Firs receive Supporting People funded housing-related support. There are no records of Travellers from Blaby becoming new Supporting People Clients in order to receive housing-related support since 2003 (other than at Aston Firs).

Additional issues

The County Council site at Aston Firs, which provides permanent residential accommodation for 20 families, was previously managed by the District Council but is now run directly by Leicestershire County Council.

CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL



SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/families
Socially rented	-	-
Private, full planning consent	-	-
Private, temporary consent	-	-
Unauthorised developments	1	3
Av. annual encampments 2001-2006 (all land ownership)	7	NA
Showpeople sites	3	23+
Housing	NA	5

Accommodation	Estimated requirements	
	2006-2011	2011-2016
Residential pitches	9	2
Transit caravan capacity	Up to 10	-
Showpeople families	4	5

Charnwood Borough
<p>The area</p> <p>Charnwood Borough has a population of 155,400 (2004) and covers an area of 107 square miles. It is situated directly north of Leicester. The bulk of the population in Charnwood lives in or close to the Soar Valley including the fringe of Leicester and Loughborough. There is a network of smaller settlements mainly focused on higher ground of Charnwood Forest and Wolds. Residential growth is focused on Loughborough and the Leicester fringe. Loughborough has a student population and some technology-based sectors linked to Loughborough University and a significant black and minority ethnic population. The average house price in the Borough was £154,271 (Average House Price Index from CACI Street Value Database, March 2006).</p>
<p>Characteristics of the Gypsies and Travellers in the area</p> <p>The Gypsy and Traveller population in the Borough consists of at least 8 families (see summary table). The population is reported to be ethnically mixed. There are 3 sites for Travelling Showpeople accommodating at least 22 (extended) families.</p>
<p>DCLG Count data</p> <p>The July 2006 Caravan Count reported that there were no Gypsy caravans (not including Showpeople).</p>
<p>Authorised sites</p> <p>See summary table on previous page</p>
<p>Unauthorised development</p> <p>See summary table on previous page</p>
<p>Unauthorised encampment</p> <p>Leicestershire County Council records 101 instances of unauthorised encampment 1997-2006 consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council land – 62 encampments • District Council and Highways Agency land – 15 encampments • Private Land – 24 encampments <p>Average duration 5.9 weeks; average size 6 caravans. The ethnic profile of encampments shows above average proportions of New Travellers and Scottish Travellers.</p> <p>The District Council is party to the <i>Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland</i></p>

Planning policy

The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 2004 contains a number of policies relevant to Gypsy and Travellers:

Policy H/8 Transit Site, Railway Terrace, Loughborough provides for a 10 pitch Transit Site on a former landfill site. The policy stipulates conditions including that *'a full assessment is undertaken to establish the extent of any site stability or landfill gas problems. Where problems are identified measures will need to be implemented to resolve them'*. The Borough Council report that it has not been possible to resolve methane gas problems and it intends to omit the policy when it produces the Development Document for its Local Development Framework.

Policy H/9 provides a criteria-based policy for the assessment of Gypsy Site Proposals

In the determination of planning applications for gypsy sites elsewhere in the plan area the Borough Council will take into account the following criteria:

- 1) a necessity is clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Borough Council for a specific scale and type of accommodation*
- 2) the proposed scheme is in a location and of a form sympathetic to the character and appearance of the surrounding area*
- 3) the site has safe and convenient access to the main road network*
- 4) adequate screening and landscaping can be provided to avoid visual intrusion*
- 5) the site is within reasonable distance of schools, shops and other community activities*
- 6) the proposed layout makes provision, where appropriate, for mixed residential and business uses.*

The Plan also has a separate criteria-based Policy H/10 relating to the assessment of Travelling Show People Site Proposals that: *In the determination of planning applications to provide sites for Travelling show people the Borough Council will take into account the following criteria:*

- 1) any storage, maintenance or other non-residential elements would not significantly harm the amenities enjoyed by neighbouring properties or other uses*
- 2) site must have safe and convenient access to the main road network*
- 3) adequate screening and landscaping must be provided to avoid visual intrusion*
- 4) the site must be readily accessible to schools, shops and other community facilities.*

Applications must also comply with other policies in particular Policy TR/18 on parking provision for new residential development.

No Local Development Framework material relevant to Gypsies and Travellers is currently available.

Planning applications since 2001

There have been no applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites since 2001. The most recent case has been the approved application in 1997 for the Showpeople's site at Wymeswold Road, Hoton.

Housing policy

The Housing Strategy 2005-10 states '*in Leicestershire the number of Gypsy caravans exceeds the number of authorised places where they can stop. The provision of suitable accommodation, therefore, is seen as a vital approach to deal with unauthorised camping*'. The Strategy refers to the Council's support for the Code of Practice for Travellers and joint working on the provision of transit and stopping places.

The Homelessness Strategy 2003 states that little is known about the numbers and needs of Travellers who stop temporarily in the Borough. The Homelessness Strategy Action Plan includes investigating these needs in conjunction with the County Travellers Sites and Liaison Officer.

The Borough has produced a Draft BME Housing Strategy 2007-10. It states that the data arising from the GTAA '*will inform the wider housing work of the Council and its partners, by providing a clearer understanding of the accommodation issues faced by Gypsies and Travellers, including support needs, homelessness prevention and how brick and mortar can be made to work better for Gypsies and Travellers who live there*'. Focus Group work feeding into the BME Housing Strategy has drawn out issues in relation to Gypsies and Travellers including new legislative requirements, site provision, attitudes and perceptions and integration with the settled community.

Housing services

The Borough does not monitor the Gypsies and Travellers amongst applicants for housing. It is aware of one instance in the last 2 years of a Traveller being housed as homeless. The Borough is not able to say what recent trends have been in Gypsy and Traveller applications for housing and homelessness assistance.

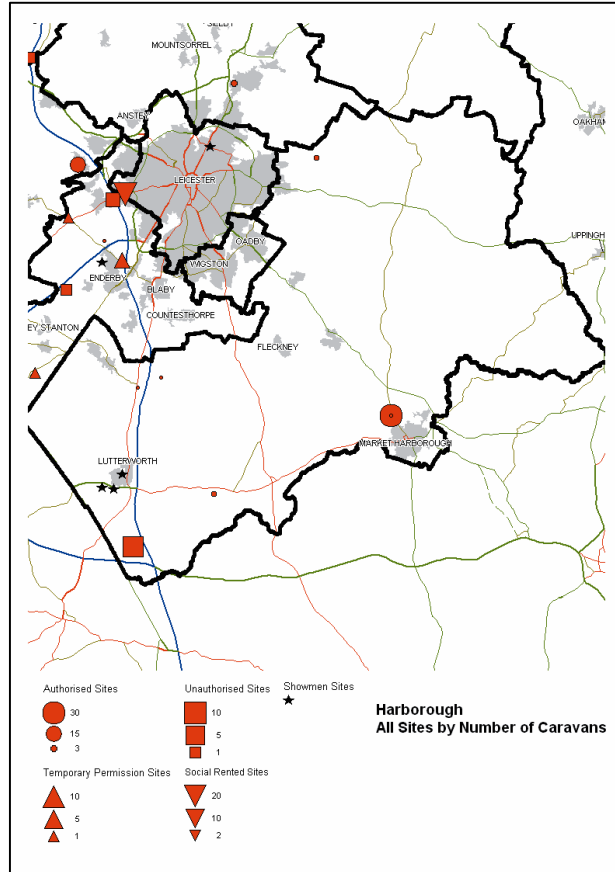
Local services reported to be accessible to Gypsies and Travellers include the range of Council services available to the general population, a Domestic Violence Outreach Worker based at Loughborough Women's Aid and a tenancy support service at The Bridge Project. The Borough reports that Gypsies and Travellers have sought assistance with regard to domestic violence and homelessness assistance and that it has housed such applicants.

Since 2003 one new Supporting People Client has received housing-related support services from Charnwood Shelter Project.

Additional issues

None identified

HARBOROUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL



SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/families
Socially rented	-	-
Private, full planning consent	7	38
Private, temporary consent	-	-
Unauthorised developments	1	7
Av. annual encampments 2001-2006 (all land ownership)	9	NA
Showpeople sites	3	62
Housing	NA	15

Accommodation	Estimated requirements	
	2006-2011	2011-2016
Residential pitches	19	11
Transit caravan capacity	Up to 10	-
Showpeople families	24	5

Harborough District
<p>The area</p> <p>Harborough District has a population of 76,560 (2004) and covers an area of 230 square miles. It is predominantly rural with Market Harborough and Lutterworth being the two larger market towns. The District also includes four larger settlements of Broughton Astley, Fleckney, Great Glen and Kibworth all with populations of over 3,000. In addition there are over 80 smaller villages with a population of less than 3,000, many of which have a population of less than 1,000. The majority of these smaller villages are located in the East of the district, which is much more rural than the west. Leicester City exerts an urban influence over the north. The average house price was £196,171 (Average House Price Index from CACI Street Value Database, March 2006).</p>
<p>Characteristics of Gypsies and Travellers in the area</p> <p>There are at least 60 Gypsy and Traveller families in the district in accommodation shown in the summary table on the previous page. The population is reported to consist of English Gypsies and Irish Travellers. The survey showed that average household size = 3.71 persons; 47% Romany/Gypsy, 20% Traveller, 7% English Traveller, 27% Irish Traveller. There are at least 62 Travelling Showpeople families, with a cluster of 3 sites at Lutterworth.</p>
<p>DCLG Count data</p> <p>The July 2006 Caravan Count reported that there were 64 Gypsy caravans (not including Showpeople) made up of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council sites – nil caravans • Private authorised sites – 47 caravans • Unauthorised sites – 17 caravans
<p>Authorised sites</p> <p>See summary table on previous page</p>
<p>Unauthorised development</p> <p>See summary table on previous page</p> <p>Unauthorised development notices have been served and upheld, although most have eventually been withdrawn. There has been 1 Court prosecution for non-compliance with a refusal of consent. There are 3 possible unauthorised occupations being investigated. There have been repeat planning applications from a Traveller with an extended period to get off the land. The Council encourages retrospective applications in respect of unauthorised developments.</p>
<p>Unauthorised encampment</p> <p>Leicestershire County Council records 67 instances of unauthorised encampment 1997-2006 consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council land – 20 encampments • District Council and Highways Agency land – 2 encampments • Private Land – 45 encampments <p>Average duration = 7 weeks; average size = 6 caravans. The ethnicity profile shows higher than average proportions of Irish Travellers on encampments. The District Council is party to the <i>Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland</i>.</p>

Planning policy

The Harborough District Local Plan 1991-2006 states that it had a small deficit in site provision for Gypsies and that, to remedy this, the District Council will encourage the provision of private Gypsy sites, provided that they comply with the criteria in Policy HS/20 as follows:

- 1. There is a proven need for the site in the area*
- 2. The site is accessible to local community services and facilities*
- 3. Adequate arrangements are made for the servicing of the site*
- 4. The proposal will not have a detrimental effect on the local environment and amenities.*

The Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, 2006, states that, should the GTAA identify a need for sites, they will be allocated in the Allocations Development Plan Document. The Core Strategy Preferred Options Policy 7 states:

The provision and type of accommodation needs will be met for transit and static sites for Gypsies and Travellers within the District. This will be informed by the identified type of need from the Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment. The choice of sites to be allocated will be based on the following criteria:

- In locations which meet the current working patterns of Gypsies and Travellers*
- Is in an accessible and sustainable location in terms of its proximity to schools, shops and healthcare*
- Does not lie within a conservation area*
- Satisfactory amenity is retained for nearby residents*
- Does not occupy a prominent location, and the proposal will not have an adverse visual impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape*
- Does not lie within or adjacent to any other cultural or environmental asset that would be harmed by the site or activities related to it*
- Does not have an unacceptable impact upon highway safety.*

Planning applications since 2001

There have been 10 applications approved since 2001, 6 refused and 5 withdrawn. 12 appeals have been made against planning application decisions and enforcement notices. 7 of these were dismissed (4 of which were made by a Travelling Showpeople); 4 allowed with conditions restricting consent to named people (1 of whom was a Travelling Showperson) and 1 was withdrawn.

Housing policy

There is no coverage of Gypsy and Traveller issues in the District's Housing Strategy or its Homelessness Strategy. There is an intention to include Gypsies and Travellers in the new version of the Homelessness Strategy and the Housing Strategy. Harborough commissioned BME Housing Needs Research, 2004, which reviewed national policy and good practice in respect of Gypsies and Travellers, recommended Gypsy/Traveller issues be included in its housing strategy and that this be linked to the Government guidance which it characterised as likely to involve local authority site provision.

Housing services

The District does not monitor the Gypsies and Travellers amongst applicants for housing. It is, however, aware that it has housed 6 Traveller families in Market Harborough, where it has identified a small cluster of mainly inter-related Irish Travellers. 2 Gypsy households were assisted as homeless in 2006. There are 6 or more Gypsy and Traveller applicants on the housing register at any time. The District reports that the trend in recent years has been for both housing applications and requests for homelessness assistance from Gypsies and Travellers to fall.

Local District Council services reported to be accessible to Gypsies and Travellers include help to complete housing benefit forms, homelessness and housing applications, responding to relationship breakdown and domestic violence and support to settle into new tenancies. The Council employs a generic Tenure Sustainment Officer and a Floating Support Officer and supports out-reach work relating to domestic violence provided by Women's Aid and independent housing advice at the Citizens Advice Bureau.

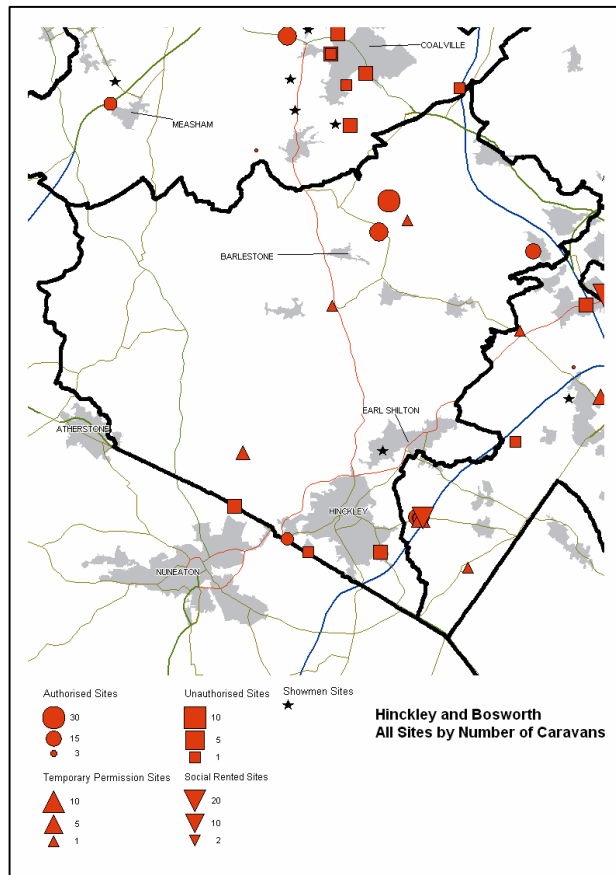
The District reports that Gypsies and Travellers have sought assistance with regard to benefits advice, domestic violence, making a homelessness declaration, making a housing application, relationship breakdown, seeking bricks and mortar housing and settling into new accommodation. Types of assistance given are reported to be homelessness assistance and permanent housing.

There have been no instances since 2003 of Travellers from Harborough becoming new Supporting People Clients in order to receive housing-related support.

Additional issues

A large private authorised site, Justin Park, is located immediately south of Market Harborough, off the Northampton Road within the neighbouring Daventry District. Its residents use local private and public services in Market Harborough and it is clear from the survey that there is movement from Justin Park into the Study Area.

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL



SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/families
Socially rented	-	-
Private, full planning consent	4	77
Private, temporary consent	3	4
Unauthorised developments	4	6
Av. annual encampments 2001-2006 (all land ownership)	10	NA
Showpeople sites	1	9
Housing	NA	15

Accommodation	Estimated requirements	
	2006-2011	2011-2016
Residential pitches	26	16
Transit caravan capacity	Up to 10	-
Showpeople families	2	1

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough
<p>The area</p> <p>The Borough has a population of 102,800 and covers an area of 114 square miles. It is situated midway between Leicester and Coventry on the edge of the East and West Midlands. The main centre, Hinckley, has a close relationship with centres in the West Midlands while the rural eastern part of the Borough maintains strong links with Leicester. The M1, M6, M42 and M69 are all within easy access. The Borough remains dependent upon traditional industries such as manufacturing and engineering. Main areas of residential growth are Hinckley, Burbage, Earl Shilton, Barwell and Groby. The average house price was £156,209 (Average House Price Index from CACI Street Value Database, March 2006).</p>
<p>Characteristics of Gypsies and Travellers in the area</p> <p>There are at least 102 Gypsy and Traveller families in the district (see summary table on previous page). The population is said to comprise English Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Travellers passing through the area. There has been one known instance of Romanian Gypsies visiting the area. The survey shows average household size = 3.93 persons; Romany/Gypsy 63%, Traveller 5%, English Traveller 18%, Irish Traveller 13%, New Traveller 3%. There are at least 9 Showpeople families on one site.</p>
<p>DCLG Caravan Count data</p> <p>The July 2006 Caravan Count reported that there were 91 Gypsy caravans (not including Showpeople) made up of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council sites – nil caravans • Private authorised sites – 78 caravans • Unauthorised sites – 13 caravans
<p>Authorised sites</p> <p>See summary table on previous page</p>
<p>Unauthorised development</p> <p>See summary table on previous page</p> <p>The largest site in the Borough, Costalot (Bagworth), was established in the early 1980s arising originally from unauthorised development. It now comprises 29 individually owned plots (and a transit area). Its residents include established and settled Gypsies and Travellers from whom there is continued pressure to expand existing plots and to build more modern and permanent accommodation.</p>
<p>Unauthorised encampments</p> <p>Leicestershire County Council records 79 instances of unauthorised encampment 1997-2006 consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council land – 41 encampments • District Council and Highways Agency land – 8 encampments • Private Land – 30 encampments <p>Average duration = 4.4 weeks; average size 7 caravans. The ethnic profile of encampments shows above average proportions of English Gypsies.</p> <p>The District Council is party to the <i>Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland</i>.</p>

Planning policy

The Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan 2001 states that, at the time of its adoption, the Borough Council had recently reviewed the level of provision for Gypsies in the area and considered that there was adequate provision in place for the Borough as a whole. It stated moreover that in the parishes of Bagworth, Barlestone and Ratby, any further increase in provision would lead to an over-concentration of Gypsy accommodation and that proposals for Gypsy development will be discouraged in these parishes (Paragraph 2.28.3). The Local Plan Policy RES13 states that, as an exception to Policy NE5 (development in Open Countryside), planning permission will be granted for a Gypsy caravan site where the proposal satisfies all the following criteria:

- a) it is located within a reasonable distance of local services and facilities e.g. shops, hospitals and schools
- b) it would not have an adverse effect on the amenities of neighbours
- c) it would not have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the countryside
- d) it has acceptable vehicular access and provision for parking and services
- e) it incorporates substantial peripheral landscaping
- f) it does not conflict with any other policies of the Local Plan.

The Local Plan also states that the Borough Council will consult with representative bodies on the accommodation needs of the Gypsies in the Borough and continue to biennially review the results of the district-wide count of encampments.

The draft Core Strategy Preferred Options sets out the overarching policies for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Borough. The Preferred Options report is being redrafted and will be available for public comment in September – October 2007. In the previously published draft under Spatial Objective 9 'Housing for Everyone's Needs', the document (LCP 9.5) states '*The Leicestershire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment will inform the type of provision required in the Borough to meet the housing needs for this group. The criteria for determining the location of permanent or temporary sites for Travellers and Gypsies will include the following:*

- *A sequential approach to identifying sites*
- *Sites that are placed in suitable locations that are well managed, properly resourced and on a par with other housing requirements*
- *Sites that are appropriately landscaped and accessed*
- *Sites that enhance the quality of the natural or built environment and do not impact adversely on these*
- *Early consultation with the permanent community and Traveller/Gypsy communities to identify key constraints, barriers and ways to overcome these*
- *Partnership working with agencies such as the County Education Unit, to build complementary programmes aimed at improving community cohesion between the Traveller and Gypsy community and the residents of nearby settlements.'*

The Borough Council intends to consider the GTAA with a view to sites being included in an Allocations Document in 2007.

Planning applications

There have been 7 planning applications related to Gypsy and Traveller sites since 2001. Of these 4 have been approved (2 on a temporary basis), 3 refused (of which 1 was withdrawn on appeal by the appellant), another dismissed on appeal in August 2006 (the Inspector did not find gypsy status for the appellants) and a third is pending decision from the Planning Inspectorate. A temporary consent relates to land off Heath Road, Bagworth; this was the subject of a refused application in 2004, which was dismissed on appeal in 2005 but was then subject to a fresh application in 2006 which was granted temporary consent. Temporary consent was also granted for 2 caravans at land off Basin Bridge, Higham-on-the-Hill for agricultural workers who claimed gypsy status.

Housing policy

The Borough's Housing Strategy 2005-08 states that the Borough will contribute to the development of a countywide strategy for sites for Gypsies and Travellers. It refers to local plan policy as being where there is an identified need, in areas frequented by Gypsies, reasonably accessible to community services and facilities, and capable of assimilation into their surroundings (p. 18). It refers to participation in a county-wide partnership to identify Travellers' needs and sites with recommendations being brought forward in due course (p. 42). The Housing Strategy Action Plan includes a commitment to contribute to countywide strategy for Travellers sites by 2007 with the outcome of there being adequate cross-boundary provision of Traveller sites (p.45). The Strategy also refers to this Study and the RSS interim pitch requirement. It states that pitches will be allocated in light of evidence from the Study and overarching policies included in the Core Strategy (p. 52 – 53).

Housing services

The Borough does not monitor Gypsies and Travellers amongst applicants for housing. It is aware of 5 instances in the last two and a half years of Travellers approaching the Borough Council for homelessness assistance, in cases due to the failure of tenancies in conventional housing. The Borough Council reports that there have been stable trends in recent years for Gypsies and Travellers making approaches for homelessness assistance and housing applications.

There are no specific services related to Gypsies and Travellers. There are reported to be instances of Travellers being assisted by services aimed at dealing with needs such as drug abuse or domestic violence. The Borough report that assistance has been sought with regard to domestic violence, harassment and neighbour problems, making a housing application, relationship breakdown and seeking bricks and mortar housing.

Since 2003 there have been no instances of any Travellers from Hinckley & Bosworth becoming new Supporting People Clients in order to receive housing-related support services.

Additional issues

In October 2006, the Borough Council considered its strategic approach to tackling site provision and enforcement. It stated that its strategic vision for Gypsy and Traveller issues is *'To position the Borough to adequately and effectively meet but contain the Traveller and Gypsy accommodation needs of Hinckley and Bosworth whilst promoting community cohesion and addressing the needs of existing communities'*. The Council, when agreeing this vision, also resolved to seek to bid to DCLG for funding for the provision and management of a Transit site within the Borough. At the time of writing this is matter is being considered by the Borough in light of discussions with other local authorities.

MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/families
Socially rented	-	-
Private, full planning consent	-	-
Private, temporary consent	-	-
Unauthorised developments	-	-
Av. annual encampments 2001-2006 (all land ownership)	8	NA
Showpeople sites	-	-
Housing	NA	5

Accommodation	Estimated requirements	
	2006-2011	2011-2016
Residential pitches	6	2
Transit caravan capacity	Up to 10	-
Showpeople families	-	-

Melton Borough
<p>The area Melton Borough has a population of 48,300 and covers an area of 185 square miles. The Borough covers the north east of Leicestershire with half its population living in Melton Mowbray (25,500). The rest of the population is spread over more than 70 villages in the surrounding rural area. This includes the larger settlements of Bottesford (3,290), Asfordby (2,640), Long Clawson (970) and Waltham (780). Between 1996 and 2006 around half of the housing completions have taken place in Melton Mowbray with the remainder spread amongst the villages. The Borough has a low population density with residents thinly spread on a large area and travelling unusually far to work. The Borough's average house price was £169,816 (Average House Price Index from CACI Street Value Database, March 2006).</p>
<p>Characteristics of Gypsies and Travellers in the area There are reported to be no Gypsy and Traveller communities in the Borough. Transient visitors tend to be English Gypsies, Irish Travellers and New Travellers encamped on highways land.</p>
<p>DCLG Count data The July 2006 Caravan Count reported that there were no Gypsy caravans (not including Showpeople).</p>
<p>Authorised sites There are no authorised sites of any kind in the Borough</p>
<p>Unauthorised development There are no known unauthorised developments of Gypsy and Traveller sites</p>
<p>Unauthorised encampment Leicestershire County Council records 74 instances of unauthorised encampment 1997 – 2006 consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council land – 60 encampments • District Council and Highways Agency land – 2 encampments • Private Land – 12 encampments <p>Average duration = 6.4 weeks; average size = 5 caravans. Records show above average proportions of New Travellers among groups involved in encampments.</p> <p>The District Council is party to the <i>Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland</i>.</p>

Planning policy

The Melton Local Plan 2005 contains a criteria-based Policy H21 that *Planning permission will be granted for Gypsy Caravan and Travelling Show People's Sites provided:*

- a) *there would be no loss of amenity in the locality*
- b) *satisfactory access can be provided, and*
- c) *any permanent Gypsy site would be well located to community services.*

The Borough has produced a Housing Opportunities and Choice Discussion Paper, 2005, which will inform the Local Development Framework. It states *There are no sites for Gypsies and Travellers. However, there are a number of places which have been used as stopping points for short periods and as long as there have been no problems have been tolerated. There have also been a few unauthorised camps. We intend to carry out a Gypsy and Traveller site needs assessment with other local authorities in Leicestershire. If that assessment shows that there is a need for Gypsy and Traveller sites in Melton, we will make provision in the Melton Local Development Framework.*

Housing policy

There is no coverage of Gypsy and Traveller issues in the Borough's Housing Strategy or its Homelessness Strategy. There is an intention to include Gypsies and Travellers in the new version of the Homelessness Strategy to be reviewed in 2007 and the Borough's Housing Strategy when this is next revised in discussion with vulnerable groups.

Housing services

The Borough does not monitor the Gypsies and Travellers amongst applicants for housing. It is aware of 1 instance in the last 2 years of a Traveller being made an offer of housing which was refused. The Borough reports that there has been a stable trend in recent years in Gypsies and Travellers making housing applications.

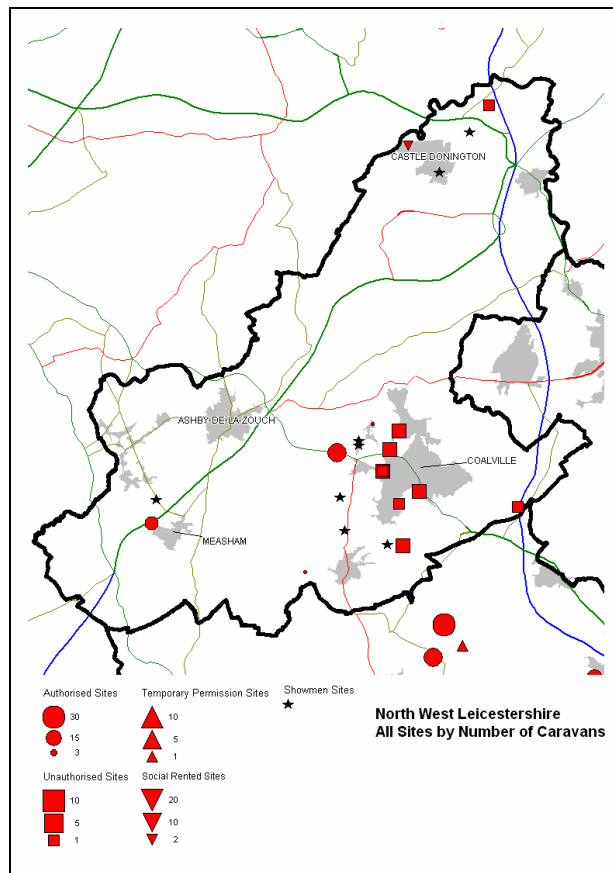
Local generic housing services are reported to be accessible to Gypsies and Travellers but have not been taken up due to lack of demand.

There has been 1 instance since 2003 of a Traveller from Melton Borough becoming a new Supporting People Client when accessing supported housing provided by East Midlands Housing Association.

Additional issues

None identified

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/families
Socially rented	1	1
Private, full planning consent	4	35
Private, temporary consent	-	-
Unauthorised developments	8	13
Av. annual encampments 2001-2006 (all land ownership)	21	NA
Showpeople sites	9	??
Housing		15

Accommodation	Estimated requirements	
	2006-2011	2011-2016
Residential pitches	32	11
Transit caravan capacity	Up to 20	-
Showpeople families	8	2

North West Leicestershire
<p>The area</p> <p>North West Leicestershire has a population of 88,300 (2004) and covers an area of 107 square miles. The main settlements are in the south of the District, Coalville and Ashby de la Zouch, and in the north of the District, Castle Donington. The District is a former coalmining area which is now relatively prosperous. Manufacturing, distribution and transport and communications are key sectors of employment with growth being linked to the availability of greenfield sites next to the strategic road network and proximity to East Midlands Airport. The area incorporates part of The National Forest with areas being designated for afforestation. The average house price was £145,763 (Average House Price Index from CACI Street Value Database, March 2006).</p>
<p>Characteristics of Gypsy and Traveller population in the area</p> <p>There are at least 64 Gypsy and Traveller families in the district (see the summary table on the previous page). The population is reported to consist of English Gypsies and Irish Travellers. The survey showed average household size = 3.31 persons; Romany/Gypsy 83%, Traveller 11%, Irish Traveller 6%. There are a number of sites for Travelling Showpeople accommodating an unknown number of families.</p>
<p>DCLG Count data</p> <p>The July 2006 Caravan Count reported that there were 54 Gypsy caravans (not including Showpeople) made up of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council sites – 2 caravans • Private authorised sites – 43 caravans • Unauthorised sites – 9 caravans
<p>Authorised sites</p> <p>See summary table on previous page</p>
<p>Unauthorised development</p> <p>See summary table on previous page. Developments include one known tolerated site, and houses with caravans frequently present without planning permission</p> <p>There are 3 sites occupied by Travelling Showpeople without planning permission: 1 so long-established that action would not be possible; 1 refused planning permission and subject to appeal and a High Court hearing in January 2007 where the Council was successful; 1 subject to enforcement action where an appeal is scheduled for June 2007.</p> <p>The Measham Transit site, granted consent in July 2006, was initially subject to a Stop Notice and Injunction when Travellers moved onto the site. Authorised sites at Sinope and Heather were both granted planning permission on appeal.</p>

Unauthorised encampment

Leicestershire County Council records 198 instances of unauthorised encampment 1997-2006 consisting of:

- County Council land – 82 unauthorised encampments
- District Council and Highways Agency land – 35 unauthorised encampment
- Private Land – 81 unauthorised encampments.

Average duration = 5.2 weeks; average size = 7 caravans. The ethnic profile of encampments shows above average proportions of Irish Travellers and mixed groups of English Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

The District Council is party to the *Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland*.

Planning policy

The Local Plan for North West Leicestershire 1991-2006 contains Policy H14 stating that the use of land outside the Limits to Development for permanent or transit Gypsy caravan sites will only be permitted where:

- It can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Plan Authority that the proposal is to meet a genuine need that cannot be met either on an existing or proposed site or other site within the Limits to Development*
- It is not located in an Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside, or any other area afforded special protection in this Local Plan*
- It is well related to an existing settlement*
- It would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of either the countryside or the settlement concerned*
- It would not be detrimental to the amenities of nearby residential properties*
- It is well related to the existing and proposed road network*
- It incorporates a satisfactory means of vehicular access*
- It incorporates substantial peripheral landscaping.*

The Plan adds that conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, to regulate business activities on such sites.

The Local Plan has a specific Policy H15 stating that '*development for any other purpose will not be permitted on land at Ashby Road, Sinope, and former Station Yard, Castle Donington identified on the Proposals Map, which is reserved for a gypsy caravan site*'. The land at Sinope refers to Sinope Caravan Park which includes two long-established privately owned sites accommodating 41 caravans. The former Station Yard is land used as a site for Travellers since 1968, granted temporary consents in 1994 and permanent permission in 2002 and accommodating 2 caravans.

The Local Plan also includes a separate Policy H14 stating that the use of land outside the Limits to Development for Travelling Showpeople will only be permitted where:

- (a) *It can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Plan Authority that the proposal is to meet a genuine need that cannot be met either on an existing or proposed site or other site within the Limits to Development*
- (b) *It is not located in an Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside, or any other area afforded special protection in this Local Plan*
- (c) *It is well related to an existing settlement*
- (d) *It would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of either the countryside or the settlement concerned*
- (e) *It would not be detrimental to the amenities of nearby residential properties*
- (f) *It is well related to the existing and proposed road network*
- (g) *It incorporates a satisfactory means of vehicular access*
- (h) *It incorporates substantial peripheral landscaping, and*
- (i) *The occupation of the site is to be restricted to members of the Showman's Guild of Great Britain and their immediate relatives.*

Planning Applications since 2001

There have been 9 planning applications concerning a total of 6 Gypsy and Traveller sites since 2001. The private land at Measham given approval as a transit site in 2006 was subject to 2 previous applications, 1 of which was refused and 1 withdrawn. Permission for an existing private site was amended in 2004. 3 applications were sought for 2-3 caravans on 2 pieces of private land, all of which were refused. An application concerning the unauthorised Showpeople site at Hemington was subject to a High Court appeal. The County Council's Station Yard site was first used on a temporary basis in 1976 and was eventually granted permanent consent in 2002.

Housing policy

There is no coverage of Gypsy and Traveller issues in the District's Housing Strategy 2002-07 or its Homelessness Strategy 2003. It is intended to include Gypsies and Travellers in the new version of the Homelessness Strategy to be reviewed in 2007.

Housing services

The District does not monitor the Gypsies and Travellers amongst applicants for housing. It is aware of instances in the last 2 years of Travellers making homelessness applications resulting in some being housed and suitable sites being sought by others. It reports that in recent years there has been a stable trend for both housing applications and requests for homelessness assistance from Gypsies and Travellers.

The District reports that it has received requests for assistance with benefit advice, domestic violence, enforcement action, harassment and neighbour problems, making a homelessness declaration, making a housing application, relationship breakdown, seeking bricks and mortar housing, seeking sites for a caravan and settling into new accommodation.

Local services reported to be accessible to Gypsies and Travellers from the District Council include assessment of housing and homelessness applications, assistance with form filling and completion of vulnerability assessments.

There have been no instances since 2003 of Travellers from North West Leicestershire becoming new Supporting People Clients in order to receive housing-related support.

Additional issues

There is a long term-unauthorised encampment located at Wood Road, Battram since 2004 with 12 caravans. This occupies District Council land and forms part of The National Forest.

OADBY AND WIGSTON DISTRICT COUNCIL

SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/families
Socially rented	-	-
Private, full planning consent	-	-
Private, temporary consent	-	-
Unauthorised developments	-	-
Av. annual encampments 2001-2006 (all land ownership)	1	NA
Showpeople sites	-	-
Housing	NA	-

Accommodation	Estimated requirements	
	2006-2011	2011-2016
Residential pitches	1	-
Transit caravan capacity	-	-
Showpeople families	-	-

Oadby and Wigston
<p>The area</p> <p>The Borough of Oadby and Wigston has a population of 56,100 (2004) and covers an area of nine square miles. The Borough is on the southern fringe of Leicester City and is mainly urban in nature. The built development is concentrated in the three towns of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston. There is also the area known as Kilby Bridge centred on the Grand Union Canal in the open countryside. The Borough is very close to Leicester and there are strong linkages between them. There are high travel to work movements from Oadby and Wigston into Leicester itself. Average house price was £161,033 (Average House Price Index from CACI Street Value Database, March 2006).</p>
<p>Characteristics of Gypsies and Travellers in the area</p> <p>The Borough report that they only have Travellers passing through the area and know of only 1 family who tend to stay, on Borough Council land, for 2 to 4 weeks every year or so. The City and County Council's Liaison Officers refer to a long term encampment which they have identified as being in the Borough but which is not known to the Borough Council.</p>
<p>DCLG Count data</p> <p>The July 2006 Caravan Count reported that there were no Gypsy caravans (not including Showpeople).</p>
<p>Authorised sites</p> <p>There are no authorised sites of any kind in the Borough. A former Showpeople site in Wigston was sold many years ago as it was no longer required by the then occupier.</p>
<p>Unauthorised development</p> <p>There are no known unauthorised developments of Gypsy and Traveller sites.</p>
<p>Unauthorised encampment</p> <p>Leicestershire County Council records 7 instances of unauthorised encampment 1997-2006 consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council land – 2 encampments • District Council and Highways Agency land – 2 encampments • Private Land – 3 encampments <p>Average duration = 3.9 weeks; average size = 5 caravans</p> <p>The District Council is party to the <i>Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland</i>.</p>

Planning policy

The Oadby & Wigston Adopted Local Plan contains Housing Proposal 15 stating that planning permission for a site for Gypsies and Travelling Showpeople will not be approved unless:

- 1) *it will have a suitable and safe access to the site and general accessibility to the main highway network;*
- 2) *it will have an adequate separation from existing houses;*
- 3) *it will be adequately landscaped through measures such as tree screening;*
- 4) *satisfactory facilities are provided for refuse collection and for foul and storm water collection and disposal.*

The pre-submission Core Strategy contains a draft Policy CV22 'Criteria for identifying sites for Gypsy & Traveller pitch development':

The need to provide transit and permanent sites for mobile populations, namely Gypsy, Traveller and Showman's Guild will be informed by the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. Where a specific need is identified within the Borough, this will be enabled through the Allocations Development Plan Document. In the interim, should unexpected demand for permanent or transit site development be experienced, the following criteria should be applied to the determination of proposals for development:

- a) *the proposal would meet an identified need and the applicants have established links with the locality;*
- b) *the site should be well related and within a reasonable distance to existing community, health, social, educational and other facilities;*
- c) *development of the site would not have an adverse impact on local topography, biodiversity, heritage or other environmental considerations such as designated areas of special protection;*
- d) *any ancillary employment function was acceptable in the location and the site would not be subject to unacceptable levels of noise disturbance, air pollution or smells;*
- e) *the proposal would not prejudice the amenities of neighbouring land uses;*
- f) *the proposal could be adequately screened and landscaped where necessary;*
- g) *that the site would include adequate and appropriate vehicular access and parking provision;*

In addition, sites for Gypsies and Travellers will not normally be acceptable in Green Wedges or the countryside if development of a site would result in significant built development or employment use unless applicants can demonstrate special circumstances for this location.

Planning Applications since 2001

There have been no applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites since 2001.

Housing policy

There is no coverage of Gypsy and Traveller issues in the Housing Strategy or Homelessness Strategy. It is reported that there will be coverage when these strategies are reviewed.

Housing services

The Borough does not monitor the Gypsies and Travellers amongst applicants for housing and is not aware of any recent housing and homelessness applications from Gypsies and Travellers or of any instances in the last 2 years of Travellers making homelessness applications.

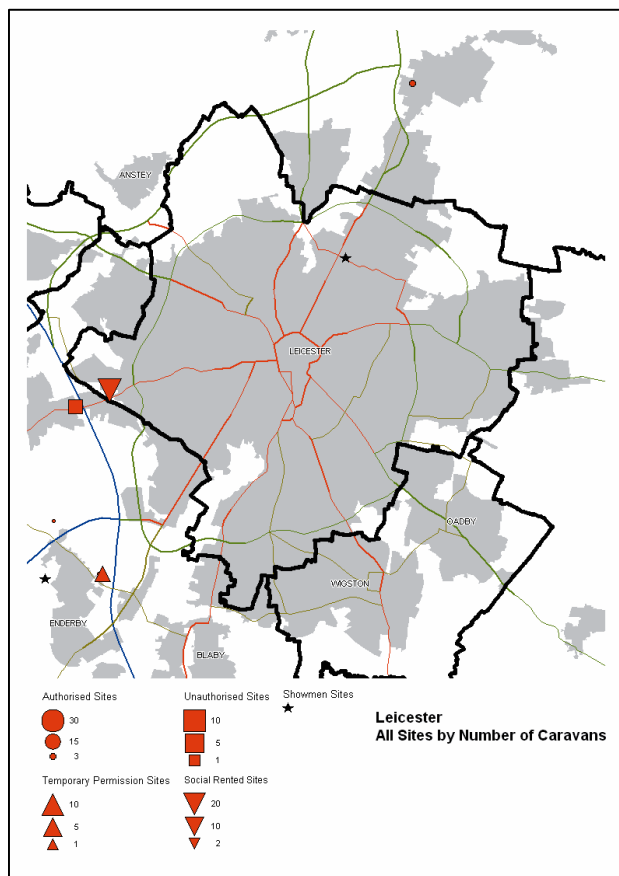
Local Borough Council services reported to be accessible to Gypsies and Travellers include housing advice. There was 1 occasion reported when a Traveller asked about the availability of sites in the City of Leicester (for a friend) and was sign-posted to a city advice service. There is a local charity 'Helping Hands', which runs a generic advice service, including housing advice.

There have been 2 instances since 2003 of a Traveller from Leicester becoming a new Supporting People Client in the Borough when accessing housing-related support provided at Kennedy House, which provides a hostel service managed by Shaw Homes.

Additional issues

The Borough Council has drawn attention to the fact that it was a Designated Area not required to provide a site under the 1968 Caravan Act as evidence did not show that the area was frequented by Gypsies.

LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL



SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/families
Socially rented	1	21
Private, full planning consent	-	-
Private, temporary consent	-	-
Unauthorised developments	-	-
Av. annual encampments 2001-2006 (all land ownership)	20	NA
Showpeople sites	1	15+
Housing	NA	120

Accommodation	Estimated requirements	
	2006-2011	2011-2016
Residential pitches	24	15
Transit caravan capacity	Up to 20	-
Showpeople families	3	2

Leicester City
<p>The area Leicester City has a population of 288,000 (2005) and covers an area of 28 square miles. It is located in the centre of Leicestershire, has access to the M1, is situated on the Midland Mainline and has road connections across the county. 36% of the City's population is black and ethnic minority. There is no major legacy of industrial dereliction in the City which would generate brownfield land. Growth areas include Hamilton (north east of the city) and Ashton Green (north west) but residential growth is constrained by insufficient development opportunities and land availability. Leicester has a higher than average level of pre-1919 terraced housing. The Land Registry House Price Index for the City as at December 2006 was £123,621.</p>
<p>Characteristics of Gypsies and Travellers in the area There are at least 120 Gypsy and Traveller families in the City, predominantly in housing. The population includes English Gypsies and Irish Travellers. There are at least 15 Showpeople families, including several older 'retired' households.</p>
<p>DCLG Caravan Count data The July 2006 Caravan Count reported that there were 40 Gypsy caravans (not including Showpeople) made up of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council sites – 26 caravans • Private authorised sites – nil caravans • Unauthorised sites – 14 caravans
<p>Authorised Sites See summary table on previous page The Showpeople site at Bath Street is leased and managed by the Showmen's Guild.</p>
<p>Unauthorised development There are no known instances of Gypsies acquiring and developing land in the city. This is attributed to the lack of suitable land and the price of that land which comes onto the market. Opportunities for Gypsies and Travellers to purchase land do not arise in the City due to the absence of agricultural land, general land scarcity and land values.</p>
<p>Unauthorised encampment Leicester City Council recorded 118 instances of unauthorised encampment 2001-2006 consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Council land – 113 encampments • Highways Agency land – nil • Private land – 5 encampments. <p>The 5 encampments on private land included 2 on land owned by English Partnerships. Average duration = 10 weeks (6 weeks excluding 3 exceptionally long encampments); average size = 5 caravans. The ethnic profile of encampments shows above average proportions of Irish Travellers and mixed English Gypsy and Irish Traveller groups. The City Council is party to the <i>Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland</i>.</p>

Planning policy

The Local Plan states that there is an inadequate provision for Gypsies and Travellers in Leicester and that the City Council has been involved in a long search for suitable sites in addition to the existing site at Meynells Gorse. Planning Policy H11 states that proposals for Gypsy and Travellers sites will be judged on the extent to which they meet the following criteria:

- a. Sites should be of an appropriate size to ensure adequate management
- b. There should be adequate separation from existing and proposed dwellings
- c. The site should be capable of being satisfactorily screened and physically contained
- d. There should be safe and easy access onto the highway network

Within the City boundary all potential sites are deemed to have adequate access to schools, shops and other local community uses. In September 1998 the City Council agreed a Code of Tolerance for the use of temporary stopping places. It also agreed, in principle, to provide a small number of temporary stopping places on Council-owned land to accommodate no more than 10 caravans.

Housing policy

Leicester's Homelessness Strategy 2003-08 reviewed the history of site provision at Meynells Gorse, set out its tolerance approach towards unauthorised camping and provided data on accommodation and support provided to Gypsies and Travellers. It stated that between 1993 and 2003, 86 Traveller families had been accommodated in hostels and 473 properties had been allocated (with many families having more than one house). As at 2003, the City Council reported that 69 Traveller families were living in housing with support from its Travellers and Gypsies Officer. The Homelessness Strategy refers to the need to develop a new site.

Leicester's Housing Strategy 2005-10 identifies Gypsies and Travellers as being at risk of homelessness because of the shortage of places to site their homes. It refers to development of an SP-funded floating support service for residents at Meynells Gorse, and those living and camping elsewhere (p.26). The Strategy Progress Report refers to action taken in 2003-05 to review support to Gypsies and Travellers, and to assess priorities for all client groups including Gypsies and Travellers with funding allocated accordingly (p. 64).

The Leicester Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy (2004) states that 'there is a clear need to increase the facilities available to transient and mobile households, as well as support Gypsies and Travellers settled in housing who require space for caravans or vehicles. The City Council has agreed in principle to the provision of a small number of temporary stopping places' (p. 12). The Strategy refers to work being undertaken to identify the housing-related support needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

Housing services

The City Council does not monitor the Gypsies and Travellers amongst applicants for housing. The City reports that there has been an upward trend in recent years in the number of Travellers seeking housing, due to population growth and the lack of new sites; numbers making homelessness declarations has reduced, due to general decline in access to housing through this route.

The City reports that Travellers have sought assistance with benefit advice, domestic violence, enforcement action, harassment and neighbour problems, making a homelessness declaration, making a housing application, relationship breakdown and seeking sites for caravans. The Council provides standard housing management services to housed Travellers and housing options advice/ assistance under Parts 6 and 7 of Housing Act 1996. It also employs a Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer who is aware of housed Travellers, assists them in making housing applications, helps with training the Traveller community in life skills to help maintain tenancies, and liaises with the community and service providers to prevent homelessness and raise awareness about the community. Housing providers in the City can make referrals direct to the Officer where support may be needed.

Gypsies and Travellers have been housed where family groupings are established. Historically this been on peripheral estates, as these were areas where there was available housing. Now that housing supply is reported to be tighter, Travellers have accepted tenancies elsewhere initially and then sought exchanges; corner plots on peripheral estates are preferred. The number of Travellers living in housing is reported to be rising as a result of young people growing up and facing the lack of any new sites in the City.

In addition to the work of the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer, a floating support service *Supporting Tenants and Residents* (STAR) provides housing-related support. Leicester carried out a review of floating support in 2006 and has resolved to reconfigure these services in order to create a specialist service for Travellers (see Chapter 15). This is listed as one of the priority areas for development by the Supporting People Commissioning Body.

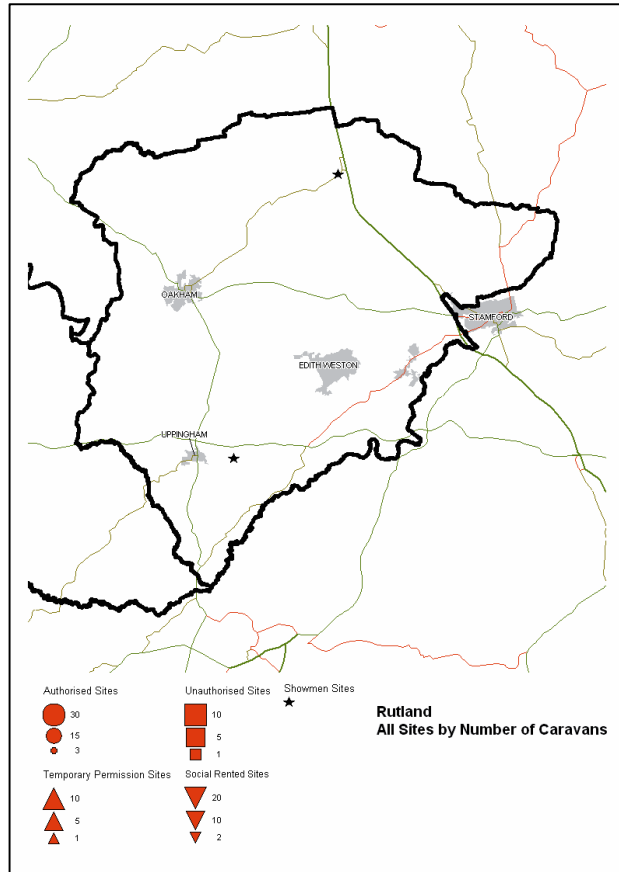
Up to September 2006, 84% of the new SP service users across the GTAA study area recorded as Travellers were provided with housing-related support by Leicester City Council. These clients mostly accessed floating support or direct access hostels. Sources of advice and assistance reported to be accessible to Gypsies and Travellers include the Housing Options Centres at New Walk Centre and Bishop Street, Shelter and Leicester Law Centre.

Domestic Violence has been identified as a 'hidden' area that Gypsies and Travellers rarely divulge. There is reported to have been an increase in assistance being sought in cases involving domestic violence, where work is being done with the Police and the Council's Domestic Violence Team and more referrals are being made to refuges.

Additional issues

A proposed transit site on Ratby Lane remains under discussion.

RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL



SUMMARY OF CURRENT PROVISION AND PITCH REQUIREMENTS

Accommodation	Number of sites	Estimated pitches/families
Socially rented	-	-
Private, full planning consent	-	-
Private, temporary consent	-	-
Unauthorised developments	-	-
Av. annual encampments 2001-2006 (all land ownership)	4	NA
Showpeople sites	2	16+
Housing	NA	5

Accommodation	Estimated requirements	
	2006-2011	2011-2016
Residential pitches	2	1
Transit caravan capacity	Up to 10	-
Showpeople families	3	3

Rutland County Council
<p>The area</p> <p>Rutland is a rural area (population c35,000) served by the market towns of Oakham (population c10,000) and Uppingham (population c4,000). 60% of the population lives in 50 villages and hamlets which vary in size from approximately 1,000 to under 100. The larger villages Cottesmore, Ketton, Ryhall, Whissendine and Langham act as local service centres. Recent residential development has been concentrated primarily in Oakham and also in Uppingham. Future residential and employment growth will continue to be concentrated in these locations. Local employment is primarily in the service sector and a significant number of people commute to Peterborough, Grantham, Corby and Melton to work. The Land Registry House Price Index for Rutland as at December 2006 was £225,936.</p>
<p>Characteristics of Gypsies and Travellers in the area</p> <p>The predominant Gypsy and Traveller communities in Rutland are said to be New Travellers and Showpeople.</p>
<p>DCLG Caravan Count data</p> <p>The July 2006 Caravan Count reported that there were 19 Gypsy caravans (not including Showpeople) made up of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council sites – nil caravans • Private authorised sites – nil caravans • Unauthorised sites – 19 caravans
<p>Authorised sites</p> <p>See summary table on previous page</p> <p>The site at Bisbrooke accommodates Circus People. It is a 0.5 hectare site given consent in 1980 for use seasonally from October – April each year</p>
<p>Unauthorised development</p> <p>There has been one recent attempt to establish a site just off the A47 at the Leicestershire – Rutland boundary. Land was purchased by Gypsies and Travellers in 2004 who subsequently attempted to develop a site. This work was terminated following injunctions secured by Rutland County Council. The site is stated to be unsuitable for a Gypsy and Traveller site due to poor highway access.</p>
<p>Unauthorised encampment</p> <p>Leicestershire County Council records 4 instances of unauthorised encampment 1997-2006 (of which they were aware) consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rutland County Council and Highways Agency land – 2 encampments • Private Land – 2 encampments <p>Average duration = 11 weeks; average size = 11 caravans. The Counts show longer-term encampments in addition.</p> <p>The County Council is party to the <i>Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland</i>.</p>

Planning policy

The Rutland Local Plan 2001 contains a criteria-based policy for the consideration of planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites. Policy HO14 is that *planning permission will be granted for sites to accommodate Gypsies or Travelling Show People where the local planning authority is satisfied of a need, subject to :*

- 1. The site being physically suited to the purpose*
 - 2. Community services, facilities and places of work being accessible*
 - 3. The site being capable of being provided with adequate services*
 - 4. Environmental, amenity and highway interests not being adversely affected.*
- In addition to meeting the above criteria, proposals for Transit Sites should be accessible to established Traveller's Routes.*

The Local Development Scheme First Revision (2006) noted the need for a revised approach to comply with Circular 01/2006. Existing Policy HO14 will remain in force until a Housing Development Scheme is adopted in or before July 2009.

Housing policy

The Housing Strategy 2005-10 (Section 7.7) refers to the need of Gypsies and Travellers. It states that 'regular counts of traditional stopping places within the County reveal almost no regular or traditional stopping places, for either gypsies or new age travelers'. The Strategy refers to the GTAA and states 'The Council will continue to review its provision for Travellers both in terms of site provision and in attempting to meet the needs of Travellers in settled housing'. There are no references to Gypsies and Travellers in the Homelessness Strategy (2003).

Rutland is a Supporting People Administering Authority responsible for commissioning housing-related support services. Its SP Strategy 2005-10 includes action through the GTAA to identify the needs of Travellers (see Chapter 15 for further information).

Housing services

Rutland does not monitor Gypsies and Travellers amongst applicants for housing and is not aware of any instances in the last 2 years of Travellers making homelessness applications. It reports that in recent years there has been a stable trend in housing and homelessness applications from Gypsies and Travellers.

Local services reported to be accessible to Gypsies and Travellers in Rutland include its housing registration and homelessness assistance services, together with independent housing advice available from the Citizens Advice Bureau.

There has been one instance since 2003 of a Traveller from Rutland becoming a new Supporting People Client in Rutland when accessing housing-related support provided by Spire Homes (RSL managing Rutland's housing stock).

Additional issues

Data from Leicestershire County Council on unauthorised encampments is likely to be incomplete. Since Rutland became a unitary authority, Leicestershire County Council may only be aware of those instances where it has been contracted to produce welfare assessments on behalf of Rutland. There are known to have been occasional long-term encampments by New Travellers.

Leicestershire County
<p>The area</p> <p>Leicestershire County covers seven district council areas in the East Midlands. The county has a population of 623,900 (2004) and covers 800 square miles. The main centres of population are market towns, but the population is split between a few geographically small urban areas, extensive suburban areas and a range of rural settlements. The county's five main towns are Coalville (32,000), Melton Mowbray (25,900), Loughborough (57,600), Hinckley (38,000) and Market Harborough (20,200). The draft Regional Plan proposes settlement growth to the west of Leicester in Blaby (between the A47 and the M69) and north of Leicester in Charnwood (east of Thurmaston). The Land Registry House Price Index for Leicestershire as at December 2006 was £161,963.</p>
<p>The Gypsy and Traveller population</p> <p>The Gypsy and Traveller population is said to usually consist of English Gypsies and Irish Travellers. New Travellers appear to have declined in number and are mainly in the rural north and east of the County. Other groups identified as visiting Leicestershire include Scottish Travellers, Circus People and Bargees. There are Travelling Showpeople sites in the County.</p>
<p>DCLG Caravan Count data</p> <p>The July 2006 Caravan Count reported that there were 272 Gypsy caravans (not including Showpeople) made up of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leicestershire County Council sites – 40 caravans • Private authorised sites – 188 caravans • Unauthorised sites – 44 caravans
<p>Authorised sites</p> <p>There are two Leicestershire County Council sites: Aston Firs (in Blaby District) consisting of 20 double pitches and Station Yard, Hemington (in North West Leicestershire) consisting of one double pitch. Authorised private sites are provided in all districts except Melton and Oadby & Wigston (in Charnwood for Showpeople only).</p>
<p>Unauthorised development</p> <p>The County Council reports that until the introduction of Temporary Stop Notices (in 2005 in relation to unauthorised developments), enforcement powers had been rather weak in securing the cessation and removal of unauthorised developments. It now perceives Injunctions as proving quite effective in securing removal of unauthorised activities. No use has been made of this to date by the County Council as it is normally the districts which control such development.</p>

Unauthorised encampment

Leicestershire County Council records 587 instances of unauthorised encampment 1997-2006 consisting of:

- County Council land – 321 encampments
- District Council and Highways Agency land – 67 encampments
- Private Land – 199 encampments

Average duration = 5.4 weeks; average size = 7 caravans

The County Council is party to the *Code of Practice for Travellers in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland*.

Planning policy

The Leicestershire Structure Plan adopted in 2005 contains Housing Policy 6 stating criteria for the consideration of applications for Gypsy Caravans sites. It states '*provision for both permanent and transit Gypsy caravan sites should be:*

- a) In areas where there is an identified need;*
- b) In areas frequented by Gypsies;*
- c) Reasonably accessible to community services and facilities; and*
- d) Capable of sympathetic assimilation into their surroundings.'*

The policy recognises the importance of providing adequate accommodation, through the development plan system, which it states should continue to set out more detailed policies and identify sites, where possible, in areas of need. The Structure Plan refers to the need carry out an accommodation assessment in accordance with Government advice which, it notes, would require a joint approach involving the region, county and districts.

The Structure Plan added that sites should be located in areas frequented by Gypsies and Travellers, have reasonable access to shops, schools and essential services and that any provision in Charnwood Forest, Green Wedges or Areas of Separation will need to be consistent with Structure Plan policies for these designations.

The Leicestershire County Council is consulted on applications which relate to its strategic planning interests. In addition, its Travellers Sites and Liaison Officer is invited to comment on other applications. The County Council will also be consulted on any proposed Gypsy and Traveller sites identified as part of the Districts Local Development Frameworks.

Housing policy

The County Council has strategic planning responsibilities as a result of which it has established Housing Policy 6 for Gypsy sites forming part of the Structure Plan. As a Supporting People Administering Authority the County Council is responsible for commissioning housing-related support services. Its SP Strategy 2005-10 includes action through the GTAA to identify the needs of Travellers (see Chapter 15 for further information).

Housing services

The County Council is a provider of housing-related support to 20 families living at its Aston Firs site. This support is funded by Supporting People. Although not a local housing authority the County Council's Traveller Sites and Liaison Officers report that they have received requests for assistance with benefit advice, domestic violence, enforcement action, harassment and neighbour problems, making a homelessness declaration, making a housing application, relationship breakdown, seeking bricks and mortar housing, seeking sites for caravans, settling into new accommodation and unauthorised encampments. In addition it reports receiving requests for assistance related to planning applications, liaison with District Councils, eviction notices, legal advice and land availability.

Additional issues

The County Council employs a Travellers Sites and Liaison Officer and an Assistant Travellers Sites and Liaison Officer. They visit unauthorised encampments and collate information for Social Assessment Surveys, as part of the decision-making process in respect of whether to instigate immediate possession proceedings or tolerate encampments in line with the County-wide Code of Practice. The Officers liaise with Travellers, settled communities and other agencies and bodies.

There is reported to be a highly effective working relationship between the County and City Liaison Officers, the Travelling Family Health Service and the Traveller Education Service.

The County Council has established a Joint Officer Working Party on Traveller Transit sites, which includes all the District Councils, Leicester City Council and Rutland Council and the Police.