

# **Cambridgeshire, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment July 2016**

## **Briefing Note and Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) provides an evidence base which is needed to aid the preparation of Development Plan policies for the provision of new Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots. This enables local authorities to comply with planning policy and legislation<sup>1</sup>. The GTANA covers the period between 2016 and 2036
- 1.2 The GTANA was produced by Opinion Research Services (ORS), a professional consultancy which undertakes this type of work for local authorities across England and Wales. The study was commissioned by a consortium of eight neighbouring local authorities, covering the administrative areas of Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Peterborough, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury. Work began in the winter of 2015 with the final report completed in October 2016.

### **2.0 Definitions**

- 2.1 The current “planning” definition of a Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showperson is set out in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), published by the government in August 2015. As the Planning and Housing Act 2016 repealed the previous statutory definition included in the Housing Act 2004, the PPTS is now the sole definition. The key change is that persons who have ceased to travel permanently will not now fall under the planning definition of a “Traveller”.

### **3.0 Methodology**

- 3.1 The GTANA has sought to establish the accommodation needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population in the study area through a combination of desk-based research, stakeholder interviews and engagement with members of the travelling community living on all known sites.
- 3.2 ORS used the results from the survey of travelling communities to identify current need by identifying households on unauthorised developments, those in concealed or overcrowded households, those wishing to move sites, or households on waiting lists for public sites.

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<sup>1</sup> Included in the Housing Act 1985, the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, Planning Practice Guidance 2014, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015, and the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

3.4 Future need to 2036 was established by identifying older children who will need a pitch of their own in coming years; households living on sites with temporary planning permissions; and future household formation and in-migration rates.

3.5 In response to the change in definition in national planning policy the GTANA sets out three sub-groups derived from the survey work:

1. Households who meet the “Traveller” definition;
2. “Unknown” households where an interview was not completed, either due to refusal or because the household was not present during the survey period (despite three attempts to establish contact in each case); and
3. Households which do not meet the definition.

## **Results**

- A total of 55 interviews were completed with Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople living on authorised and unauthorised sites and yards..
- A large majority of those who were interviewed did not meet the new planning definition. 2 households fall into the ‘meet the new definition’ category, 99 households that may meet the new definition (unknown) and 51 households that ‘do not meet the new definition’.
- There were no Travelling Showperson households identified in the borough that meet the new definition, 5 ‘unknown’ households that may meet the new definition and 5 households that ‘do not’ meet the new definition.
- Despite extensive efforts to identify them no interviews were completed with Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar.
- Key findings are shown in the tables below.

## **Gypsy & Traveller Households**

Figure 6 – Additional Need for Gypsy and Traveller Households in King’s Lynn & West Norfolk 2016-2036

Status	Total
Travelling	5
Unknown	0-35
Non-Travelling	40

Figure 7 – Additional Need for ‘Travelling’ Households in King’s Lynn and West Norfolk by 5 Year Periods

Years	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	Total
	2016-21	2021-26	2026-31	2031-36	
	4	0	0	1	5

The travelling section in Figure 6 above includes the level of need taking into account available supply, ie it is a net figure. Figures in the non-travelling sections (where interviews could not be established) are expressed as a band from 0 to the maximum level of possible need, as some or all of those households could qualify as need related to the new definition of Gypsies & Travellers. This is potential need in relation to the new definition, depending on whether it is subsequently demonstrated that individuals meet the new definition. Based on national average figures approximately 10% may meet the new definition which is consistent with the interviews undertaken for this study.

### Travelling Showpersons

Figure 17 – Additional Need for Travelling Showpeople Households in King’s Lynn & West Norfolk

Status	Total
Travelling	0
Unknown	0-2
Non-Travelling	4

### Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. Why is there a smaller amount of need identified for new pitches compared to previous accommodation needs assessments?**
- A.** Since the previous assessment in 2011 additional sites have gained planning permission, and this has been taken into account in the study. The change of definition introduced by the government in August 2015 has also had a significant impact. The survey work found that the majority of the existing Traveller population residing in the area is settled and has stopped travelling

in the terms included in the new definition. Consequently, these households do not meet the current definition of a “Traveller” for planning purposes. In addition, some authorities have existing supply of this type of accommodation within their area and this has been taken into account in providing a net need figure.

**Q. Why is there such a high level of unknown need?**

A. There are 188 Gypsy & Traveller and Traveller Showperson pitches or plots in the borough and over 1,000 in the entire study area (all eight Local Authorities) . The consultants sought to interview all households living in the area, but this was not possible as some people refused to be interviewed or were not available at the time the work was undertaken. Efforts were made on a number of occasions to contact these households but this did not prove possible in many instances. Therefore, the need categorised as “unknown” is those where an interview to understand their current status in terms of the government’s latest definition was not possible.

**Q. What happens to the accommodation needs of the “unknown” group if they are not to be planned for as a result of the GTANA?**

A. As it was not possible to undertake an interview with these households, it is unclear whether or not they meet the new planning definition of a “Traveller”. Therefore, there is no requirement in government policy on Gypsies & Travellers to plan specifically for their needs. However, anyone coming forward with a planning application for a new pitch or a site for use by Gypsies and Travellers, or a plot for Travelling Showpeople, would need to demonstrate that the intended occupants met the planning definition, ie they currently travel or have ceased travelling temporarily. This is important as it ensures that the local authority can control any future occupancy to meet the needs of travellers who comply with the national definition.

**Q. What will happen to the current and future accommodation needs of those who were previously defined as “Travellers” but no longer meet the new definition?**

A. The government has indicated that it wishes those who do not meet the current planning definition to be treated in the same way as any other part of the settled community. In terms of meeting any future housing needs in the form of static caravans or ‘park homes’, the local authorities will consider planning applications against their general housing and other relevant development plan policies as they currently do for this type of dwelling.

Non-travelling Romany Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers may also be able to demonstrate a right to culturally appropriate accommodation under the Equalities Act 2010.

