

**EAST SUSSEX &
BRIGHTON & HOVE**

**GYPSY & TRAVELLER
STUDY**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2005**



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Aims & Objectives

- 1.1.1 Brighton & Hove City Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council formally commissioned DCA in October 2004 to carry out a Sub-Regional study of the accommodation needs and aspirations of Gypsies and Travellers who are housed or living on authorised or unauthorised sites as part of a Sub-Regional housing needs assessment.
- 1.1.2 The purpose of the study was to examine the accommodation requirements, needs, aspirations and demands of Gypsies and Travellers. In order to obtain statistically reliable data at sub-regional level, the aim of the project was to achieve 120 interviews throughout the six authority areas.
- 1.1.3 The key aims of the project were to:-
- Assess need for sites, taking account of turnover rates and waiting lists;
 - Identify the scale and locational factors to address additional site requirements
 - Provide recommendations on:-
 - ◆ scale and type of need for sites / permanent accommodation;
 - ◆ locational demand / supply;
 - ◆ strategic and policy implications for planning and housing departments.

1.2 Methodology

- 1.2.1 The methodology developed for this study was developed in line with emerging Government Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs assessment. The latest Guidance was issued in February 2006.
- 1.2.2 The July 2005 Caravan Count identified 159 caravans in the Sub-Region, accounting for around 122 households and East Sussex County Council advised there were 142 settled households with children living in the Sub-region.
- 1.2.3 From this information the aim was to conduct 120 interviews in order to achieve statistical validity for the sub-region. The guideline quota was split between 70 interviews with the settled community and 50 Interviews with Gypsy and Travellers on sites.
- 1.2.4 The fieldwork for the study took place from Wednesday 31st August to Saturday 17th September 2005. 128 face to face interviews, 63 in permanent housing, 39 on authorised and 26 on un-authorised sites were achieved with Gypsies and Traveller households throughout the six local authority areas across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove providing a confidence interval of 95% \pm 8.84% for the Sub-region.
- 1.2.5 The response rate on authorised sites was 64% and 43% on unauthorised sites, a very high rate overall even for households living in general housing, where 65% would be an average and 50% in London.

1.3 Key Findings of the Survey

- There is a need for a continued supply of 9 pitches per year, arising from vacancies and new planning approvals, and an additional supply of 80 pitches over 5 years (16 per year) to meet the backlog of demand from unauthorised encampments, and concealed households, and newly arising need from new family formation and newly created encampments over the next 5 years. In addition, the data suggests a need for transit pitches across the study area.
- The Gypsy and Traveller survey for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove found that the majority of respondents were Romany Gypsy or English Travellers (78.9%). 59.4% of the Romany Gypsy / English traveller community are living in permanent accommodation.
- The survey identified some key issues facing the Gypsy and Traveller communities in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, with problems focused on those living on sites:
 - In terms of the lack of access to basic facilities, 15.9% of households living on sites have sole access to a water supply and 74.2% have shared access. 31.7% have sole access to a WC and 53.2% have shared access;
 - Concerns over health and safety on sites, 56.9% of respondents living on sites had worries about health and safety on their site, with proximity to roads being the main problem; the level of concern was broadly similar for authorised and unauthorised sites.
 - Lower levels of access to schools and health facilities amongst households living on sites.
 - Higher than expected levels of disability and illness (31.7%), and a lower than expected level of adaptations provided across the sample as a whole. Households living on sites were less likely to have adaptations or to be registered with a doctor than those in permanent accommodation.
 - 63% of all respondents in the survey were either unemployed, retired or a housewife. 30% of all respondents were self employed, and just 6.7% were in general employment. Levels of general employment were especially low amongst households living on sites, just 4.4% although levels of general employment amongst those living in permanent housing were also low (8.6%).
 - Eviction is a recurrent problem, 77.3% of households living on a site had been evicted in the last 12 months, 88.2% of whom had been evicted 5 or more times. Of those planning to move from a site 76.5% gave eviction as a reason.
 - High levels of harassment, 34.4% of households living on a site and 42.9% of those in permanent accommodation had experienced harassment.
 - There is instability of housing circumstances, as would be expected within the Gypsy and Traveller community. This is exacerbated by the high level of eviction and lack of suitable sites. 19.2% of all movers intend to move on to a roadside camp / car park, a further 17.3% to a transit site. 64% of all movers intend to stay at their next location until they are evicted.
 - Over two thirds of households on sites and in housing have a preference for sites of 10 pitches or less. Of those currently living on a site 50.0% would prefer to live on a site owned by themselves or their family, with planning permission. 46.9% would prefer a Council owned site. Among households currently living in permanent housing 51.9% prefer a site owned by themselves or their family with planning permission, 34.6% would prefer a site owned by the Council.

1.4 Ethnicity

- 1.4.1 The survey found that although 78.9% of all respondents in the survey as a whole were Romany Gypsy or English Travellers, only 40.6% (41) of this group were living on sites. Of the Irish Travellers and New Travellers interviewed more were living on sites (14) than in permanent housing (3).

Table 1-1 Type Of Gypsy / Traveller

| Type of Gypsy / Traveller | Housed / Settled Population | Authorised Sites | Unauthorised Sites | All Respondents |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Romany Gypsy or English Traveller | 95.2 | 76.9 | 42.3 | 78.9 |
| Irish Gypsy or Traveller | 0.0 | 15.4 | 42.3 | 13.2 |
| New Traveller | 1.6 | 5.1 | 15.4 | 5.5 |
| Van Dweller | 0.0 | 2.6 | 0.0 | 0.8 |
| None | 1.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.8 |
| Other | 1.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.8 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

- 1.4.2 No data was available for Welsh, Scottish, Horse Drawn or Fairground Gypsy / Travellers.
- 1.4.3 Of the 65 households responding and living on sites 44.7% (29) were within Brighton & Hove, 27.7% (18) in Wealden, 16.9% in Lewes (11), 9.2% in Rother (6) and 1.5% (1) in Hastings. There were no site respondents from Eastbourne.
- 1.4.4 Housed respondents were well spread across the sub-regions with 34.9% (22) living in Wealden, 30.2% (19) in Eastbourne, 14.3% (9) in Hastings, 9.5% (6) in Rother, 9.5% (6) in Lewes and 1.6% (1) in Brighton & Hove.

1.5 Adequacy and Satisfaction

- 1.5.1 36.9% of the sample group (24 households) responded to the question asking if their site or pitch was adequate for their needs. All 24 households indicated that their site or pitch was adequate for their needs. 42 respondents living in permanent housing (66.6% of the group) responded to the question on adequacy, all of whom said their home was adequate.
- 1.5.2 Satisfaction rates varied, with households living on authorised sites showing a far higher level of satisfaction than those living on unauthorised sites, as can be seen in Table 1-2 below. Site satisfaction issues were not asked of those living in permanent housing.

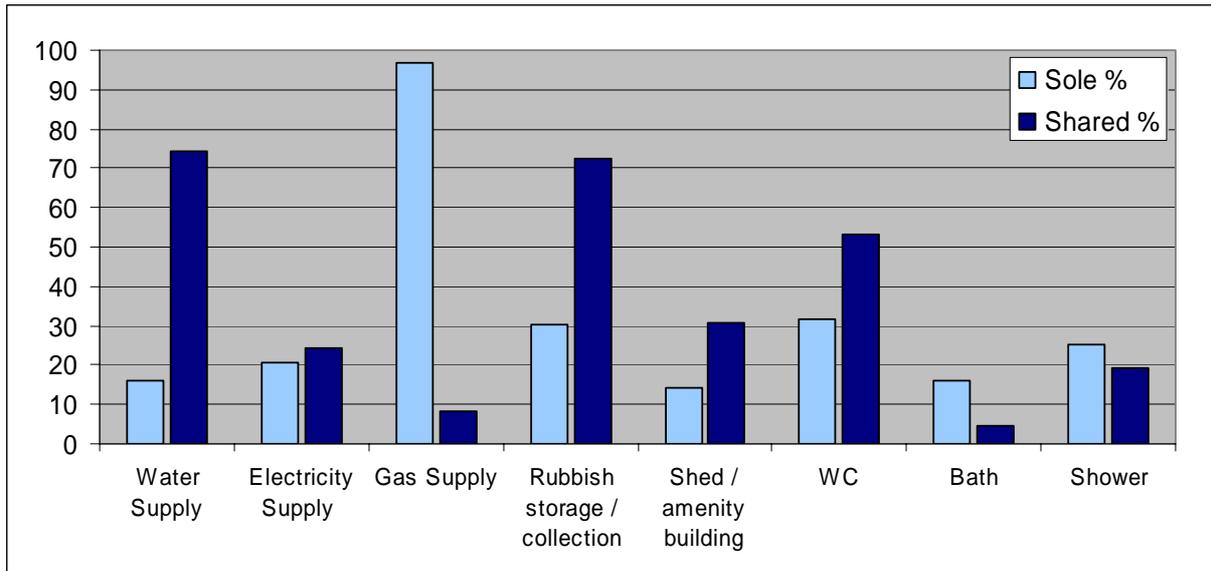
Table 1-2 Level Of Satisfaction with Site

Question 4 by Question 3

| Satisfaction Levels | Authorised Sites | Unauthorised Sites |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Very Satisfied | 31.0 | 0.0 |
| Satisfied | 31.0 | 30.8 |
| Neutral | 4.8 | 15.4 |
| Dissatisfied | 7.1 | 26.9 |
| Very Dissatisfied | 23.8 | 26.9 |
| Don't Know | 2.4 | 0.0 |

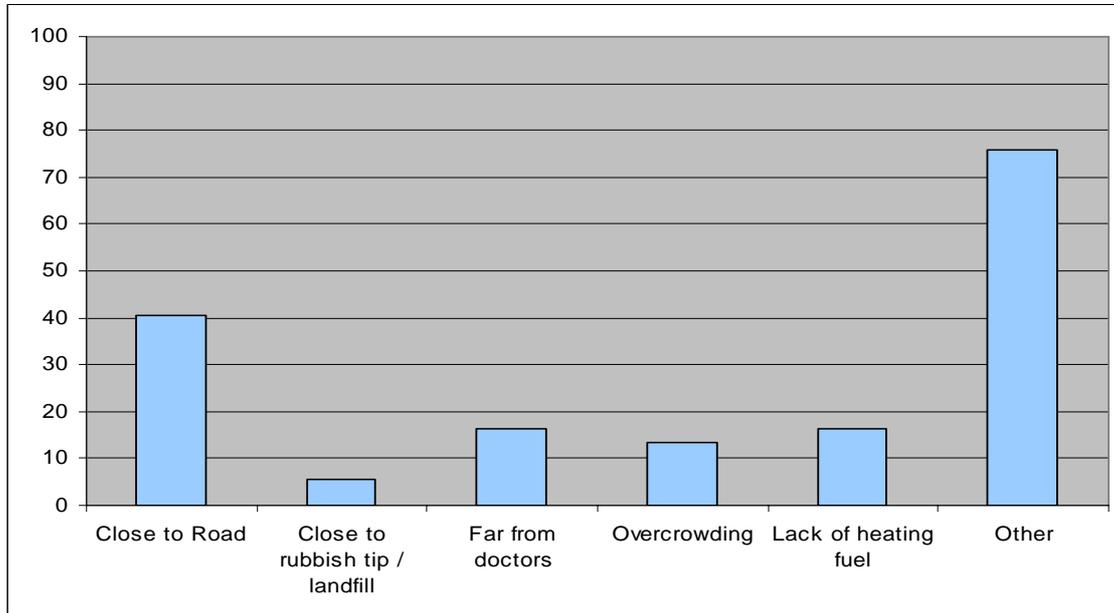
1.5.3 The facilities available to those living on sites were examined as seen in Figure 1-1.

Figure 1-1 Sole And Shared Amenities Available



1.5.4 The survey revealed that people living on sites had a low level of access to basic facilities. Only 74.2% (46) of respondents had shared access to a water supply. 53.2% (33) had shared access to a WC. 92.1% (58) had sole use of bottled gas and 42.8% (27) had sole access to an electricity supply and a further 48.4% (30) had shared access to electricity.

Figure 1-2 Site Health And Safety Concerns



1.5.5 Respondents were asked about the health and safety concerns that they had. The issue that the site was close to a road was a significant concern for respondents living on sites (40.5% 15 cases). 75.7% (28 cases) of respondents stated 'other' reasons. The majority of responses to the 'other' category were lack of amenities 42.9% (12 cases) and poor drainage / sewers smell (28.6%) 8 cases.

1.5.6 Overcrowding was an issue for 13.2% (5) of respondents living on sites.

1.6 Access to Healthcare and Education

- 1.6.1 31 households living on sites indicated that they had school aged children (47.6% of the site sample), compared to 40 households living in permanent housing (64.5% of the housed sample). 27.6% (18) of households living on sites had school age children in school and 20% had school age children who were not in school (13 households compared to only 4 in housing). The data suggested that households living on sites were more likely than those in permanent housing to have school age children who did not attend school.
- 1.6.2 9 (29% of those with school age children) households on sites reported difficulties with schooling because of their accommodation / site. Of those, 7 had disrupted schooling due to their mobility, 1 had experienced difficulties getting a school place and 1 was afraid to send their children due to local hostility. 10 families on sites had moved in the last 12 months in order to access schools (32.3% of those with school age children).
- 1.6.3 96.8% (61) of respondents currently living in permanent accommodation were registered with a doctor in the area. This compares to just 45.3% (29) of respondents living on a site.

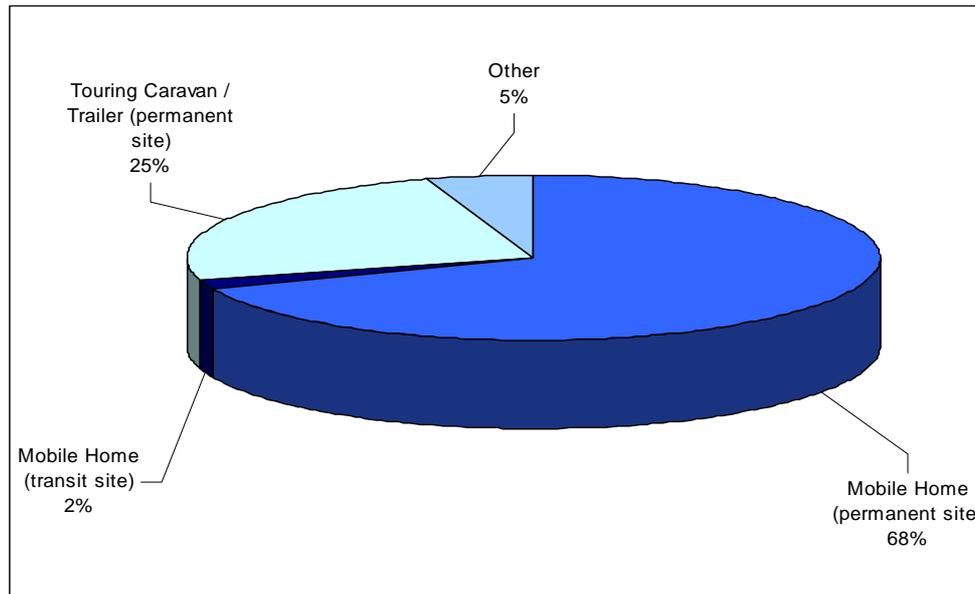
1.7 Harassment / Eviction

- 1.7.1 34.4% (22) of households currently living on a site had experienced harassment at their current site, compared to 42.3% (27) in housing. 52.4% (33) of those currently living on a site had left accommodation as a result of harassment, compared to 22.2% (14) of those in housing. In all the cases cited, the harassment had taken place at the site / home rather than at school or at work.
- 1.7.2 75% (48) of those currently living on a site and 71% (44) of those in housing said they would take harassment into consideration when deciding to move again.
- 1.7.3 77.3% (34) had been evicted from a site, compared to 17.6% in housing (3). 79.4% (27) had left the site voluntarily, compared to all of those in housing, and 20.6% (7) had been evicted from sites by the police or bailiffs. Of all those that had been evicted, 88.2% had been evicted five or more times in the last 12 months.

1.8 Ideal Accommodation

- 1.8.1 All households were asked for their views on what would make their ideal site. Generally at least two thirds of respondents preferred smaller sites, irrespective of their current accommodation type.
- 1.8.2 83% (52) of those currently on a site and 91% (43) of those currently in permanent housing would prefer permanent sites with 10 pitches or less. Among those currently living on a site 68.8% (33) of preference for transit sites was also for sites of 10 pitches or less, and for 66.7% (16) of respondents currently living in permanent housing.
- 1.8.3 68% (42) of those currently living on a site would prefer a mobile home on a permanent site. 25% (15) would prefer a touring caravan / trailer on a permanent site. Among those in permanent housing 81% (42) would prefer a mobile home on a permanent site.

Figure 1-3 Ideal Type Of Site (Respondents Currently Living On Site)

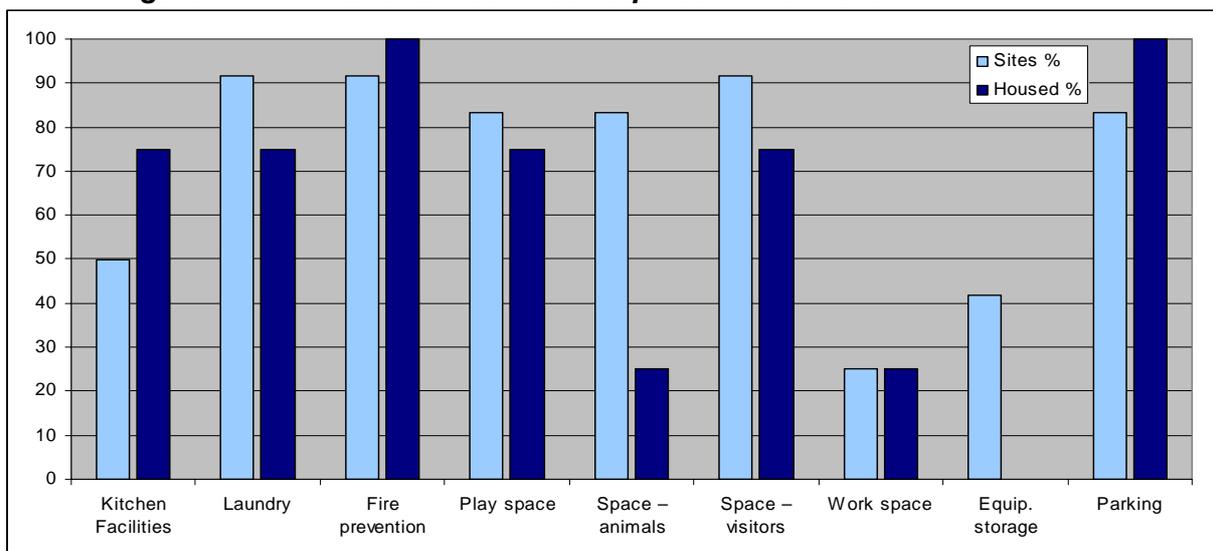


1.8.4 Of those currently living on a site 50.0% (32) would prefer to live on a site owned by themselves or their family, with planning permission. 46.9% (30) would prefer a Council owned site. Among households currently living in permanent housing 51.9% (27) prefer a site owned by themselves or their family, with planning permission, 34.6% (18) would prefer a site owned by the Council.

1.8.5 When considering their ideal location the majority of those currently living on sites wanted to stay in the same area, 94.4% (17) in the case of Wealden, 66.6% in the case of Brighton and Hove (18 cases). Overall the level of mobility is less than might be expected within the Gypsy and Traveller community, with most moves being relatively local.

1.8.6 Respondents living on sites, and those currently in housing who wish to return to sites, were asked what shared facilities would be required at the next site they moved to. Figure 1-4 shows the shared facilities required.

Figure 1-4 Shared Facilities Required At Next Site



1.9 Disability

- 1.9.1 22 households in permanent accommodation had a member with a disability or long term illness (35.5%). The incidence of disability was marginally lower amongst Gypsy and Traveller households on sites than it was amongst those living in permanent accommodation (28.1%). On sites, 13 cases needed regular medical treatment from a doctor or hospital, compared to all 12 households in permanent accommodation.
- 1.9.2 The adaptations required in both sites and housing included ramps outside, handrails, other alterations for access and bath / shower / toilet adaptations.

1.10 Concealed Households

- 1.10.1 6 households currently living on a site (9.2% of the group) indicated that they had a family member who would be looking for independent accommodation in the next 3 years compared to 2 households currently living in permanent housing (3.2% of the group).
- 1.10.2 Preference on the type of accommodation was predominantly for a site (6 cases). 2 new households wanted a house / flat / bungalow. In terms of location, 3 of the movers from sites were from Brighton and Hove, of whom 1 wanted to remain in Brighton and Hove, 1 wanted to move to Wealden and 1 to Crawley. 2 new households were from Lewes, both planned to move to Rother. There was no data for one household.

Table 1-5 Concealed Households

| No. of concealed households | Housed / Settled Population | Authorised Sites | Unauthorised Sites |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| One | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Two | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Three or more | 0 | 0 | 1 |

1.11 Recommendations

- 1.11.1 Both the current and future accommodation circumstances of Gypsy and Travellers need to be addressed across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. Strategies and plans need to be developed in consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community within the cross-district Forum.
- 1.11.2 Development of plans and strategies to meet the housing needs of Gypsy and Traveller households must be based on reliable and robust local data. Local Authorities should cooperate in developing common waiting lists, and consistent monitoring of site management information in order to provide comparable sub-regional data on housing needs.
- 1.11.3 There is a need to investigate further the use of unauthorised sites and the extent of homelessness within the Gypsy and Traveller communities. Where unauthorised sites are being regularly used there may be a case for developing them as authorised sites. Where this is not feasible site search criteria should be adopted to help identify alternative sites that can be developed and authorised for use by the Gypsy and Traveller community. Our survey invited respondents to identify such sites. Illegal sites are a symptom of the lack of legal places for Gypsies and Travellers to stop.

- 1.11.4 There is a need to introduce a procedure for regular inspection of sites, covering the provision of basic facilities including water and sanitation, as well as health and safety. A local code of standards could build on the basic legal requirement for site licence conditions on private sites and health and safety law on public sites. The code of standards should be developed in consultation with local Gypsy and Traveller communities to ensure that sites meet not only the basic legal requirements but the needs of Gypsy and Traveller families.
- 1.11.5 The educational needs of children on sites need to be addressed through the education department. Children living on sites are more likely to be missing school or having problems accessing education. New sites should be developed with access to local facilities in mind. Adults also need access to literacy and numeracy courses to make up for missed education in childhood. Recommendations for improving access to education should be developed by the Education Department in consultation with the community.
- 1.11.6 Households living on sites need to be encouraged to access health facilities, the health authority needs to promote services to the travelling community and encourage Gypsy and Traveller households living on sites to register with a doctor. The health services could consider commissioning dedicated health care workers to provide an outreach service to Gypsy and Traveller communities, and improving the cultural competence of existing staff.
- 1.11.7 The needs of disabled members of the Gypsy and Traveller community need to be addressed through liaison with social services and local doctors. In particular there is a need for strategies to enable families living on sites to access adaptations. A local code of guidance should be developed by Occupational Therapy to enable Gypsy and Traveller families to gain equal access to adaptations compared to the settled community.
- 1.11.8 Allegations of harassment appear to be significant and need to be addressed in partnership with the settled community and the police. There may be a need to develop confidence in the police to tackle issues of harassment; lack of confidence in the police may be a particular problem because of the experience of eviction within the community.
- 1.11.9 The provision of more authorised sites across the sub-region is a priority. Smaller sites (10 or fewer pitches) are preferred for both permanent and transit sites, with most Gypsy and Traveller families preferring to live in the countryside on sites owned by the community or by the Council.
- 1.11.10 Our needs assessment model (see Section **Error! Reference source not found.** of this report) identifies a need for 80 additional authorised site pitches across the study area over the next 5 years to cope with both the backlog of existing need expressed through unauthorised encampments, and new family formation. In addition the model assumes a continued supply of 9 pitches a year as a result of vacancies and new pitch development, in line with existing supply in 2005.
- 1.11.11 Analysis of travel patterns and levels of eviction suggests a need for households to be accommodated on transit pitches across the study area.

- 1.11.12 There is a need to expand the supply of authorised sites across the study area (including Eastbourne and Hastings). Wealden is a popular location for Gypsies and Travellers, when asked about their ideal location 42.5% said they would prefer Wealden. Brighton and Hove has a high proportion of unauthorised sites, the reasons why these sites can not be authorised should be investigated. Eastbourne and Hastings currently have no authorised sites. Smaller sites (10 or fewer pitches) are preferred for both permanent and transit sites, although larger transit sites should be considered to enable flexibility of movement during the travelling season. Most Gypsy and Traveller families prefer to live in the countryside on private sites or sites owned by the Council.
- 1.11.13 A range of different types of sites is appropriate, although Gypsy and Traveller respondents in the survey favoured sites owned by the community, we suggest that a range of options including community owned and managed sites as well as private and local authority sites should be developed.
- 1.11.14 New sites should be located in areas considered appropriate for general residential use, and with access to local services and facilities, within existing communities. Planning applications should be considered on their merits in the context of site size and location, and the population density of the surrounding area. Permissions should be used to restrict the size of sites and where appropriate to recommend a “cap” on the number of people allowed to live on the site on a permanent basis and for transit / visiting.
- 1.11.15 The high level of refusal of planning applications made by the Gypsy and Traveller community needs further investigation. Gypsy and Traveller communities should be supported in their applications. Local authorities need to find a balance between the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities and the needs of the settled communities.
- 1.11.16 All sites should be effectively managed. There is a need for a senior manager to coordinate the work of local site managers and ensure that temporary and transit sites are well managed and illegal encampments are responded to appropriately and effectively.
- 1.11.17 The accommodation needs and preferences of the travelling community need to be clearly understood. This report provides an indication of the overall need for site accommodation across the study area. We also set out some recommendations for site search criteria, based on our findings and latest Government recommendations (ODPM Circular 01/2006 “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites”), to inform local debate on the exact location of new sites.