Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, and Warrington Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment

Final Report

September 2026

RRR Consultancy Ltd

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Executive Summary

Introduction

S1. Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington Councils commissioned a joint Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) to establish permanent pitch, plot and transit requirements for 2026–2041. The assessment covers Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople, recognising cross-boundary travel patterns and the interlinked nature of provision across the sub-region. A mixed-method research design combined policy and data review, Caravan Count analysis, detailed local encampment records, and consultations with Travelling communities, neighbouring authorities, and local partners. This evidence base supports local plan preparation, planning decisions and coordinated strategic planning.

Policy context

S2. Recent national policy changes have substantially affected how accommodation needs must be assessed. Accommodation assessments should remain sufficiently flexible and robust to respond to any future changes in national policy and guidance.

S3. The August 2026 NPPF brings Traveller planning policy into the Framework itself, replacing reliance on the separate PPTS and giving GTAAs a clearer role within mainstream plan-making. GTAAs should now explicitly assess both permanent and transit accommodation needs, inform pitch and plot requirements, support identification of a five-year supply of deliverable sites and longer-term provision, and consider cross-boundary needs and site delivery constraints, including Green Belt issues.

S4. These changes require a more inclusive approach to assessing need and affect how councils plan and deliver sites. Local planning policies across the four authorities already set out criteria for suitable locations, requirements for cross-boundary cooperation, and the protection of existing authorised sites. However, differences in local constraints, particularly Green Belt coverage and the availability of suitable land, continue to shape the feasibility of delivering new pitches and plots.

Population Trends

S5. Census 2021 recorded 905 Gypsies and Travellers living within the study area, although this is likely to be an underestimate given known challenges around Census completion. Just under two-fifths of households identified in the Census live in caravans or mobile homes, but the proportion varies considerably by authority, with Cheshire West and Chester having a larger share of caravan-based households than Cheshire East, Halton or Warrington.

S6. The January 2026 MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count shows 470 caravans across the study area, mostly on authorised private or public sites. Only a small number were on unauthorised land, indicating that although encampments occur frequently, sustained unauthorised occupation is rare.

S7. Analysis of 901 unauthorised encampments between 2021/22 and 2026/27 shows a consistent pattern: most encampments are small family groups, last less than a week, and peak in the summer months. Encampment activity is concentrated in specific wards – particularly in Warrington and parts of Crewe and Chester – and often involves a small number of recurring family groups. As of March 2026, the area contains 291 private permanent pitches, 83 public permanent pitches, 58 transit pitches, 28 authorised Travelling Showpeople plots, and 12 private pitches with temporary planning permission, with transit provision unevenly distributed across the four authorities.

Stakeholder Consultation

S8. Stakeholders consistently reported that demand for accommodation remains strong, driven mainly by household formation among younger family members and, in some cases, inward movement linked to kinship networks. Limited land availability, particularly in Green Belt areas, and the challenges of navigating the planning system were frequently cited as barriers to new provision.

S9. There was also concern that some planning processes are lengthy, costly and reliant on appeals, which can deter families from pursuing applications. Stakeholders described mixed experiences of multi-agency working. Some pointed to positive practice such as specialist liaison roles, structured sub-regional partnerships and Halton's approach to operational engagement. Others reported gaps in coordination or delays in progressing cases. Access to services—especially health, education and welfare – was felt to improve once families had a settled base, but remained difficult for those without an address or on the roadside.

S10. Stakeholders stated a strong preference for small, family-oriented sites, whether through extensions to existing sites or small new developments in accessible locations. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of keeping the GTANA updated, strengthening partnership working, ensuring culturally competent practice, and improving the integration of transit provision with operational management so that roadside households are consistently offered suitable alternatives.

Accommodation need

S11. Accommodation needs across the study area were assessed using primary and secondary data. The assessment considers the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026), which now incorporates national planning policy for traveller sites, and relevant Planning Practice Guidance. As current national policy does not prescribe a specific methodology for undertaking GTANAs, the accommodation needs calculations use a framework derived from the former 2007 DCLG guidance. Although that guidance was withdrawn in 2016, its seven-component model – five components assessing need and two assessing supply – provides a transparent basis for the calculations and is used as an analytical framework rather than as current policy. The components are applied separately to Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, using the available evidence, including primary survey data.

S12. Table ES.1 summarises permanent accommodation need over the period 2026-41. The figures in Table ES.1 include all need as of March 2026. The assessment uses a base date of 31 March 2026.

S13. Please note that the accommodation needs assessment was undertaken separately for each of the four local authorities using authority-specific evidence, including household survey findings, site information, local authority records, planning information and other relevant local data. Accommodation need was therefore calculated independently for Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, and Warrington, reflecting the specific circumstances within each authority. The study area figures presented below are the aggregate of these individual authority assessments.

S14. The table shows that 343 new permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches are needed over the plan period in the study area.

Table ES.1: Gypsy and Traveller permanent accommodation need (pitches)

Period	Need (pitches)
2026-31	188
2031-36	73
2036-41	82
Total 2026-41	343

Source: GTANA 2026

S15. Table ES2 indicates that an additional 47 permanent Travelling Showpeople plots are required over the same period.

Table ES.2: Travelling Showpeople permanent accommodation need (plots)

Period	Need (plots)
2026-31	32
2031-36	7
2036-41	8
Total 2026-41	47

Source: GTANA 2026

S16. Regarding transit provision, the GTANA recommends that local authorities adopt a negotiated stopping policy. It is noted, however, that Halton and Cheshire East provide and manage transit pitches. A negotiated stopping policy involves caravans being sited on suitable, specific ground for an agreed, limited period, with services such as water, waste disposal, and toilets provided. The advantages of this approach are detailed in Chapter 8.

Summary

S17. The results from this assessment supersede any previous GTANA (including any accommodation need calculated before this assessment) for the Cheshire local planning authorities. This assessment identifies an overall accommodation need over the plan period

for 343 additional pitches. There is also a need for 47 additional Travelling Showpeople plots during the same period.

S18. It is also recommended that the local planning authorities have regard, through a criteria-based policy, to any additional accommodation needs that might materialise over the plan period from households (Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople) after the publication of the assessment, and which are therefore not included within the identified need below. This could include new needs arising from in-migration, newly forming households, or changes in circumstances affecting households residing on unauthorised developments, unauthorised encampments, or in bricks-and-mortar accommodation. This accommodation need should be considered separately from the need identified below and could be met through windfall applications.

S19. In addition to the above, the report makes the following recommendations to address the specific accommodation needs of the different community groups:

Planning policy:

- Where it is not possible to identify sufficient specific sites to meet the full identified need within the plan period, a robust criteria-based policy should be relied upon to ensure that applications for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation can still come forward and be assessed positively.
- Implement a corporate policy to provide negotiated stopping arrangements to address unauthorised encampments for set periods of time at agreed locations (noting the existing public transit site provision in Cheshire East).
- To liaise with owners of the sites and yards to determine how they could expand the number of pitches and plots on existing sites/ yards or on other identified or owned land to meet the family's accommodation needs.
- The population size and demographics of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities can change rapidly. As such, their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.

Management:

- Housing organisations need to consider the type of housing allocated to Gypsies and Travellers residing in bricks and mortar in order to minimise the cultural implications and feelings of isolation.
- Develop a holistic vision for their work on Gypsies, Travellers, and Showpeople and embed it in Community and Homelessness Strategies, Local Plans and planning and reporting obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide training and workshop sessions with local authority and service provider employees (and elected members) to help them to further understand issues relating to the Gypsy and Traveller, and Showpeople communities.
- The local authorities should liaise with relevant enforcement agencies such as the police to develop a common approach to dealing with unauthorised encampments.

- Encourage local housing authorities to include Gypsy and Traveller categories on ethnic monitoring forms to improve data on population numbers, particularly in housing.
- Better sharing of information between local authority planning, housing, environmental health, education and social care services, Traveller liaison officers, health providers, the police, and relevant voluntary and community sector organisations in relation to Gypsy, Traveller, and Showpeople communities.

1. Introduction

Study context

1.1 The local authorities of Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire East Council, Halton Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council (referred to as the 'study area' throughout this document), commissioned *RRR Consultancy Ltd* to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) for the period 2026-2041. The results will provide an evidence base for policy development in housing and planning and inform resource allocation. The assessment uses a base date of 31 March 2026.

1.2 The requirement to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople, is established through national guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026), and for boat dwellers in the DCLG's (now MHCLG) Review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats: draft guidance (March 2016). This study focuses on the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Methodological context

1.3 To achieve the study aims, the research drew on a number of data sources, including:

- Review of secondary information and documentary evidence: a review of national and local planning policies and recently undertaken GTANAs, and analysis of secondary data. This included analysis of the most recently published (January 2026) MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count to determine trends in the population of Gypsies and Travellers.
- An online survey with stakeholders from the local authority and neighbouring authorities. This provided qualitative data regarding the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople.
- Consultation with Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople explored a wide range of issues relating to accommodation and service needs. This was a key component of the methodology and provided extensive data to inform the assessment of accommodation requirements.

Geographical context

1.4 The following is a map of the GTANA study area with the Cheshire local authority areas in dark green.

Figure 1.1: Map of the Cheshire local authority areas



Study area spatial characteristics

Cheshire East

1.5 Cheshire East is a unitary authority with borough status in the North West of England, created on 1 April 2009 through the merger of the former districts of Macclesfield, Congleton, and Crewe & Nantwich. It is the third-largest unitary authority in the region, covering just under 1,200 square kilometres, with an estimated population of around 421,000 people. The borough contains a mix of towns and villages and has a large rural area. Crewe and Macclesfield are the largest towns, followed by smaller towns including Congleton, Alsager, Middlewich, Nantwich and Sandbach. Around two-fifths of Cheshire East's residents live in rural areas outside of the borough's main towns.

1.6 The authority is bounded by Cheshire West and Chester to the west, Greater Manchester to the north, Derbyshire and Staffordshire to the east, and Shropshire to the south. Its landscape is dominated by the flat, fertile expanses of the Cheshire Plain, much of which is devoted to dairy farming and dotted with the black-and-white timber-framed farmhouses typical of the county. To the east, the land rises into the Pennine foothills, with parts of the Peak District National Park extending into the borough. The Mid-Cheshire (Sandstone) Ridge also cuts through the south-western part of the area, adding variety to the otherwise gently undulating

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terrain. The underlying geology is largely glacial clay, sand, and gravel, with pockets of sandstone contributing to the local building tradition.

1.7 Crewe is perhaps the most industrially significant town in Cheshire East, with a strong heritage in railway engineering and a continuing role as a key rail hub. Macclesfield, once a centre for silk production, now blends historic character with access to the upland landscapes of the east. Market towns such as Nantwich, Congleton, and Knutsford provide important service and employment centres for surrounding rural communities, each with its own historic and architectural character. Smaller settlements and villages contribute to a dispersed yet interconnected settlement pattern, historically shaped by agriculture, market trading, and later industrial growth.

1.8 The area is well connected to the rest of the country by major transport routes. The M6 motorway runs north to south through the borough, linking it with Greater Manchester, the West Midlands, and beyond. The M56 and A556 provide links to Chester, Warrington, and Manchester Airport. Rail connections are extensive, with Crewe serving as a major interchange on the West Coast Main Line and offering direct services to London, Manchester, Liverpool, and Scotland. The transport network supports both commuting and freight, underpinning Cheshire East's role as a link between the North West, the Midlands, and North Wales. The combination of strong transport infrastructure, varied landscapes, and a balance of rural and urban areas gives Cheshire East a distinctive identity that bridges industrial heritage, agricultural tradition, and modern connectivity.

Cheshire West and Chester

1.9 Cheshire West and Chester is a unitary authority with borough status located in the north-west of England. It was established in April 2009 following the reorganisation of local government in Cheshire, bringing together the former districts of Chester, Ellesmere Port and Neston, and Vale Royal. Covering around 917 square kilometres, it is the fourth-largest local authority in the North West region. The borough combines urban areas, market towns, villages, and extensive rural landscapes, giving it a diverse spatial character. The northern part of the borough lies predominantly within the Green Belt.

1.10 The administrative centre is the historic city of Chester, renowned for its Roman walls, medieval architecture, and distinctive Rows. Other significant settlements include Ellesmere Port, an industrial and port town on the southern bank of the Mersey; Northwich, with its strong heritage links to salt mining; and Winsford, a former salt town which is now a residential and commercial hub. The borough also contains smaller towns and villages such as Frodsham, Helsby, Tarporley, Neston, and Malpas, each contributing to the area's varied settlement pattern.

1.11 Geographically, Cheshire West and Chester is bounded by Cheshire East to the east, Halton and Warrington to the north, and Shropshire to the south-east. Its western boundary runs along the border with Wales and includes the Dee Estuary, while its north-western edge reaches into the Mersey Estuary. The landscape is largely part of the Cheshire Plain,

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characterised by flat to gently undulating farmland interspersed with woodlands, meres, mosses, and heathland. The Mid-Cheshire Ridge, composed of Triassic sandstone, runs through the eastern part of the borough, creating distinctive hills such as the Bickerton Hills and the Beeston Castle crag. This geology has shaped both the natural environment and the built heritage, with local sandstone widely used in historic buildings.

1.12 The borough is served by a strong transport network, with the M56 and M53 motorways providing links to Manchester, Liverpool, and North Wales, and major A-roads connecting rural areas to urban centres. Rail connections run along the West Coast Main Line and the North Wales Coast Line, while the Manchester Ship Canal and the Shropshire Union Canal add to its industrial and recreational waterways. This combination of historic urban cores, modern infrastructure, varied landscapes, and cross-border links gives Cheshire West and Chester a distinctive spatial identity that bridges the rural and urban, as well as the English and Welsh, character of the wider region.

Halton

1.13 Halton is a unitary authority and borough in the ceremonial county of Cheshire, located in North West England between the cities of Liverpool and Manchester. The borough was established in 1974 by amalgamating the towns of Runcorn and Widnes with several surrounding villages, and in 1998 it became administratively independent of Cheshire County Council. It formally became part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) when the Combined Authority was established on 1 April 2014. Covering an area of about 90 square kilometres, Halton is geographically compact but has a varied landscape that combines dense urban areas, suburban neighbourhoods, and open countryside.

1.14 The River Mersey runs through the centre of the borough, separating Runcorn on the south bank from Widnes on the north. This narrow crossing point, known historically as the Runcorn Gap, has shaped Halton's identity as a transport and industrial hub. The borough includes the smaller settlements of Daresbury, Hale, Moore, Preston Brook, and Sandymoor, many of which lie within designated Green Belt land. Approximately one-third of Halton is protected as Green Belt, helping to preserve open spaces and the rural setting of its villages. The Mersey Estuary within Halton's boundaries is of international ecological significance, designated as a Special Protection Area, a Ramsar site, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to its importance for wetland birds and other wildlife.

1.15 The two main towns have distinct histories and characters. Widnes, on the north bank, developed rapidly in the nineteenth century as a centre for the chemical industry, a legacy still visible in its industrial landscape. Runcorn, on the south bank, has a longer history as a port and shipbuilding centre and was designated as a New Town in the 1960s, which led to significant planned development and population growth. The towns are connected by the Silver Jubilee Bridge and the more recent Mersey Gateway Bridge, both of which form part of the borough's strategic transport network. Road and rail links connect Halton to the wider Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester, and Cheshire, reinforcing its role as a key link in the North West's infrastructure.

1.16 Halton's population was around 128,500 at the time of the 2021 Census, an increase of roughly two per cent over the previous decade. The borough is relatively densely populated, with a higher concentration of residents per square kilometre than many parts of England, and the median age has risen from 39 to 41 years over the same period. This demographic profile, combined with its mixture of industrial heritage, protected landscapes, and strategic location, gives Halton a distinctive identity that blends urban dynamism with rural and environmental assets.

Warrington

1.17 Warrington is a unitary authority and borough in the ceremonial county of Cheshire, located in North West England between the major cities of Liverpool and Manchester. It occupies a strategic position on the River Mersey, roughly equidistant from the two city centres, and forms part of the economically active corridor along the M6, M56, and M62 motorways. The borough covers about 176 square kilometres and has evolved from a historic market town into a major regional centre for logistics, manufacturing, and service industries. Its administrative headquarters are in Warrington town, which dominates the borough both in population and economic activity.

1.18 The borough's boundaries encompass a mix of urban, suburban, and rural landscapes. Warrington town has expanded significantly in recent decades, absorbing surrounding villages and suburban developments. However, all areas of the borough outside the main urban area of Warrington, together with a number of outlying settlements, are designated as Green Belt. This extensive Green Belt designation helps to control urban sprawl, safeguard open countryside, and maintain the separation between settlements. The River Mersey flows west to east through the borough, and its tributaries, together with the Manchester Ship Canal, form significant landscape features. The canal, constructed in the late nineteenth century, remains a major industrial and transport asset, with its adjacent land hosting a range of manufacturing and distribution uses.

1.19 Warrington's transport network is one of its defining spatial characteristics. The M6 motorway runs north to south through the eastern side of the borough, intersecting with the M62, which runs east to west, and the M56, which connects to Cheshire and North Wales. These routes, along with major A-roads, make Warrington one of the most accessible towns in the North West. Rail links are equally strong, with Bank Quay station on the West Coast Main Line offering direct services to London, Glasgow, and Birmingham, while Warrington Central connects to Liverpool and Manchester.

1.20 As of the 2021 Census, Warrington's population stood at around 210,000, making it one of the largest unitary authorities in the North West outside the metropolitan areas. The population is distributed between the dense urban core, post-war housing estates, modern suburban developments, and rural villages. The borough's spatial identity is defined by the interplay of its historic river crossing role, its twentieth-century industrial and logistical growth, its extensive transport infrastructure, and its protected rural hinterland. This combination

gives Warrington a dual character: a dynamic urban economy embedded within a landscape that retains strong links to its agricultural and market-town roots.

Summary

1.21 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 removed the previous statutory duty under the Housing Act 2004 to undertake a specific assessment of Gypsies and Travellers' accommodation needs. However, NPPF (August 2026) continues to require local planning authorities to identify and plan for the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople for planning purposes.

1.22 The purpose of this assessment is to quantify the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the study area between 2026 and 2041. This is in terms of permanent pitches and plots, and transit sites and/or negotiated stopping arrangements for Gypsies and Travellers. The results will be used to inform local plan preparation and planning application decision-making.

1.23 To achieve the study aims, the research drew on several data sources: a review of secondary information; consultation with organisations involved with Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople issues; and surveys of Gypsy and Traveller households. These provided an extensive range of quantitative and qualitative data, enabling a robust and reliable assessment of accommodation needs.

2. Policy context

Introduction

2.1 This section examines the current policy context for Gypsies and Travellers and relevant local policy approaches by the four councils. Understanding the current position is also important for informing future strategies to meet the accommodation and housing-related support needs of these groups.

National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in August 2026, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and replaces the previous NPPF published in December 2024. The August 2026 Framework represents an important change in relation to Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation, as national policy previously contained within the separate *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* (PPTS) has now been incorporated within the NPPF. Annex A confirms that the December 2024 *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* has either been fully or partially incorporated into the Framework or no longer represents up-to-date Government policy.

2.3 The revised Framework therefore places the assessment and provision of accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople more explicitly within the mainstream plan-making process. References within the NPPF to "Travellers" encompass both Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Definition of Gypsies and Travellers

2.4 The August 2026 NPPF defines Gypsies and Travellers as:

> *"Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan…"*

2.5 The definition excludes members of organised groups of Travelling Showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

2.6 Importantly, the definition continues to encompass those who have ceased travelling temporarily or permanently for specified reasons and also includes people with a cultural tradition of nomadism or living in a caravan. Consequently, the assessment of accommodation need should not be restricted only to households who are currently travelling.

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Definition of Travelling Showpeople

2.7 Travelling Showpeople are separately defined as members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows, whether or not they are travelling together. The definition also includes those who have ceased travelling temporarily or permanently because of their own, their family's, or their dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs, or old age.

2.8 The NPPF distinguishes between a Gypsy and Traveller pitch and a Travelling Showpeople plot, or yard. This reflects the mixed-use nature of many Showpeople yards, which may require enough space for both residential accommodation and equipment storage.

Assessing accommodation need

2.9 Policy HO1, *Assessing the need for homes*, provides the principal national policy basis for undertaking a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. It states that preparation of Spatial Development Strategies, and Local Plans where a Spatial Development Strategy is not in place, should be based upon an assessment of:

- the permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers over the plan period; and
- accommodation needs which cannot be met within neighbouring areas.

2.10 The Framework also requires development plans, at the most appropriate level, to take account of the size, type and tenure of housing or other accommodation required by different groups, expressly including Travellers.

2.11 This establishes a clear requirement for robust and sufficiently up-to-date evidence of permanent and transit accommodation needs and supports the preparation of GTAAs as part of the evidence base for development plans.

2.12 The wider requirements for plan-making evidence are set out in Policy PM8. Evidence should provide a baseline understanding of the area's needs, opportunities, constraints, and wider context, and should be relevant, proportionate, derived from suitable and reliable sources, and sufficiently up to date. Existing evidence should be drawn upon and updated where appropriate before wholly new evidence is commissioned, while joint evidence should be considered where this can assist with cross-boundary matters and avoid unnecessary duplication.

Setting pitch and plot requirements

2.13 Policy HO2 establishes how identified Traveller accommodation need should be translated into development plan requirements. Spatial Development Strategies should establish pitch and plot requirements for each local planning authority where a need has been identified. These requirements should not normally be retested by preparing an individual Local Plan unless there has been a significant change in circumstances affecting the overall requirement or its distribution.

2.14 Where no Spatial Development Strategy is in place, the Local Plan should establish the pitch and plot requirements for its area, taking account of any relevant emerging Spatial Development Strategy. Importantly, pitch and plot requirements should reflect the extent to which identified permanent and transit site accommodation needs can be accommodated over the plan period as fully as possible.

2.15 This places particular importance on GTAAs clearly identifying permanent residential need, Travelling Showpeople requirements and requirements arising from transient or travelling households, rather than presenting these as a single undifferentiated form of need.

Identification and supply of sites

2.16 Policy HO3 requires Local Plans to identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites to meet or exceed the pitch and plot requirements established for their areas. For Traveller sites, this should include:

- a supply of specific deliverable sites for the five years following the intended adoption of the plan;
- specific developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6–10; and
- where possible, provision for the remainder of the plan period where the plan extends beyond ten years.

2.17 The development plan should also include a trajectory showing the expected rate of pitch and plot delivery over the plan period.

2.18 For this purpose, the NPPF defines a deliverable site for housing or other pitches and plots as one which is available now, offers a suitable location for development now and is achievable with a realistic prospect that development will be delivered within five years.

2.19 The GTAA therefore has an important role not only in establishing the scale of accommodation need but also in informing consideration of whether sufficient existing, planned or potential provision is available to address that need.

Accommodation requirements of different groups

2.20 Policy HO5 requires development plans to identify sites capable of providing specific forms of accommodation where a need has been established. This expressly includes sites suitable for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and recognises that sites may be suitable for mixed residential and business uses.

2.21 For Travelling Showpeople in particular, the Framework states that identified sites should have regard to the requirement for mixed-use yards providing both residential accommodation and sufficient space for the storage of equipment.

2.22 This reinforces the importance of separately assessing the particular accommodation requirements of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople rather than assuming that the same type or form of site provision will meet the needs of both communities.

Traveller sites and the countryside

2.23 The NPPF recognises that Traveller accommodation can have particular locational characteristics. Policy HO12 states that Traveller sites should provide a settled base while recognising that traditional lifestyles, including living and working from the same location, can contribute to sustainability. The Framework expressly acknowledges that this may mean locations not well related to existing settlements can be appropriate.

2.24 Sites should nevertheless enable access to frequently used services, including education, welfare and health facilities, and should support regular school attendance by children.

2.25 When considering Traveller-site proposals, local planning authorities should take account of the existing level of provision, the need for additional sites and relevant personal circumstances. Applications should be considered from all Travellers and should not be restricted to those able to demonstrate a local connection.

2.26 Where an authorised Traveller site is to be permanently or temporarily relocated, an alternative site should be identified and provided. In determining whether an alternative is suitable, regard should be had to the views of existing residents and, where possible, existing family and community groupings.

Green Belt

2.27 The August 2026 NPPF contains specific provision for Traveller sites in the Green Belt. Policy GB3 states that Green Belt boundaries should normally be altered only through preparation or updating of Local Plans and where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified.

2.28 Where an authority wishes to make an exceptional and limited alteration to the Green Belt boundary in order to accommodate a specific identified need for a Traveller site, the site should be specifically allocated within the development plan for Traveller-site use only.

2.29 This means that where a GTAA identifies unmet need in an authority containing substantial areas of Green Belt, the assessment of available supply and the Council's subsequent site-identification work should consider the implications of Policy GB3.

Cross-boundary accommodation needs

2.30 The Framework also reinforces the importance of strategic and cross-boundary working. Policies PM10 and PM11 require plan-making authorities to engage proactively with neighbouring and other relevant authorities where strategic interdependencies exist, including where development needs cannot be met wholly within one plan area. Statements of Common Ground should demonstrate how relevant cross-boundary matters have been

addressed, including the distribution and provision of unmet needs between neighbouring or nearby areas.

2.31 For GTAAs, this supports engagement with neighbouring authorities and consideration of patterns of movement, cross-boundary site provision and opportunities for cooperation in meeting both permanent and transit accommodation requirements.

Future Planning Practice Guidance

2.32 The Government's response to the consultation on the revised NPPF confirms that it has incorporated the former Planning Policy for Traveller Sites into the Framework. The Government also acknowledges calls for greater guidance on assessing Traveller accommodation needs, establishing pitch and plot requirements, maintaining a five-year supply, and identifying appropriate sites.

2.33 The Government has therefore committed to publishing new Planning Practice Guidance on Traveller sites.

2.34 Until that guidance is published, GTAAs should continue to apply a robust, transparent and evidence-led methodology consistent with the requirements of the August 2026 NPPF. Any new guidance published during assessment preparation should be reviewed and, where necessary, reflected in the methodology and conclusions before the GTAA is finalised.

DCLG Review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats: draft guidance (March 2016)[1]

2.35 In March 2016 DCLG published its draft guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats. It states that when considering the need for caravans and houseboats local authorities will need to include the needs of a variety of residents in differing circumstances, for example:

- Caravan and houseboat dwelling households:
  - who have no authorised site anywhere on which to reside
  - whose existing site accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable, but who are unable to obtain larger or more suitable accommodation
  - who contain suppressed households who are unable to set up separate family units and
  - who are unable to access a place on an authorised site or obtain or afford land to develop on.

- Bricks and mortar dwelling households:

[1] See https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-housing-needs-for-caravans-and-houseboats-draft-guidance

- Whose existing accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable ('unsuitable' in this context can include unsuitability by virtue of a person's cultural preference not to live in bricks-and-mortar accommodation).

2.36 Importantly, in respect of this report, the draft guidance states that assessments should include, but are not limited to, Romany Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, New Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople.

2.37 The DCLG draft guidance (2016) recognises that the needs of those residing in caravans and houseboats may differ from the rest of the population because of:

- their nomadic or semi-nomadic pattern of life
- their preference for caravan and houseboat-dwelling
- movement between bricks-and-mortar housing and caravans or houseboats
- their presence on unauthorised encampments or developments.

2.38 Also, it suggests that as mobility between areas may have implications for carrying out an assessment local authorities will need to consider:

- co-operating across boundaries both in carrying out assessments and delivering solutions
- the timing of the accommodation needs assessment
- different data sources

2.39 Finally, the DCLG draft guidance (2016) states that in relation to Travelling Showpeople account should be taken of the need for storage and maintenance of equipment as well as accommodation, and that the transient nature of many Travelling Showpeople should be considered.

Housing and Planning Act 2016

2.40 The Housing and Planning Act, which gained Royal Assent on 12 May 2016, omits sections 225 and 226 of the Housing Act 2004, which previously identified 'Gypsies and Travellers' as requiring specific assessment for their accommodation needs when carrying out reviews of housing needs. Instead, the Act amends section 8 of the Housing Act 1985, which governs the assessment of accommodation needs, to include all people residing in or resorting to the District in caravans or houseboats. However, for planning purposes, the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) requires local planning authorities to assess the permanent and transit accommodation needs of Travellers and establish pitch and plot requirements through the plan-making process.

Local Planning Policies

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 July 2017

2.41 Policy SC7 ('Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople') of the Local Plan states that:

1. Sites will be allocated or approved to meet the needs set out in the most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA). Current evidence suggests there is a need within the borough for:

    i. A transit site of between 5 and 10 pitches for Gypsy and Travellers;
    ii. 69 additional permanent residential pitches for Gypsy and Travellers; and
    iii. 13 additional plots for Travelling Showpeople in the period 2013 to 2028.

2. To ensure that proposals for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson sites are sustainable and acceptable in terms of location and design, the following considerations will be taken into account:

    i. Proximity of the site to local services and facilities;
    ii. Access to public transport;
    iii. Safe pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access onto the site;
    iv. Appropriate pitch sizes;
    v. Adequate provision for parking, turning and servicing;
    vi. Adequate provision for storage and maintenance, particularly where needed for Travelling Showpeople;
    vii. Mix of accommodation types and tenures;
    viii. Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
    ix. Impact on the Green Belt;
    x. Impact on the historic environment.

3. There will be a presumption against the loss of existing permanent consented Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showperson's sites where this would exacerbate or result in an identified shortfall unless suitable replacement provision of equal or enhanced value is provided. (Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 July 2017 p.120)

Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (Adopted December 2022)

2.42 Policy HOU 5 of the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document ('Gypsy and Traveller site provision') states that[2]:

1 In line with LPS Policy SC 7 'Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople', Gypsy and Traveller sites will be allocated or approved to meet the needs set out in the

[2] Please note that the figures in HOU 5 supersede those in LPS Policy SC7.

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most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA). The GTANA (2018) identifies a need in the borough for the following provision over the remaining plan period (2017 to 2030):

i. 32 additional permanent residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers; and
ii. a transit site of between 5 and 10 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers.

2 The following sites as shown on the adopted policies map are allocated for Gypsy and Traveller sites to ensure a deliverable supply of pitches:

i. Site G&T 1 'Land east of Railway Cottages, Nantwich (Baddington Park)' (2 additional permanent pitches);
ii. Site G&T 2 'Land at Coppenhall Moss, Crewe' (7 permanent pitches);
iii. Site G&T 3 'New Start Park, Wettenhall Road, Nantwich' (8 permanent pitches);
iv. Site G&T 4 'Three Oakes Site, Booth Lane, Middlewich' (24 permanent pitches);
v. Site G&T 5 'Cledford Hall, Cledford Lane, Middlewich' (10 transit pitches); and
vi. Site G&T 6 'The Oakes, Mill Lane, Smallwood' (4 additional permanent pitches).

3 In the open countryside, outside the Green Belt, Gypsy and Traveller pitches, over and above those provided for on allocated sites, will only be permitted through the application of Criterion 3(i) of LPS Policy PG 6 'Open countryside' and Policy PG 10 'Infill villages' or where it is evidenced that the intended occupiers of a proposed pitch:

.

i. have a genuine need for culturally appropriate accommodation in Cheshire East; and
ii. cannot meet their accommodation needs by occupying an existing pitch within an established, authorised Gypsy and Traveller site or a new pitch on an allocated site.

4 Where these requirements are met, new pitches should be provided within an established Gypsy and Traveller site wherever possible, or, if not, as a small scale extension to it. A pitch on a new, stand-alone site will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that neither of these options are feasible.

Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (Adopted December 2022) p.95

2.43 Policy HOU 6 of the Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (‘Travelling Showperson site provision’) states that:

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1 In line with LPS Policy SC 7 ‘Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople’, Travelling Showperson sites will be allocated or approved to meet the needs set out in the most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA). The GTANA (2018) identifies a need in the borough for five additional plots for Travelling Showpeople over the remaining plan period (2017 to 2030).
2 The following sites are allocated for Travelling Showperson sites to ensure a deliverable supply of plots:

i. Site TS 1 'Lorry park, off Mobberley Road, Knutsford' (3 plots);
ii. Site TS 2 'Land at Fir Farm, Brereton' (10 plots); and
iii. Site TS 3 'Land at former brickworks, A50 Newcastle Road' (2 additional plots).

Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (Adopted December 2022) p.97

2.44 Policy HOU 7 of the Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (‘Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson site principles’) states that alongside the considerations set out in LPS Policy SC 7 'Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople', proposals for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson sites in the borough should make sure that they:

1 respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community where located in rural areas;
2 avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure and services;
3 clearly indicate the proposed number of pitches/plots intended for the site;
4 are well planned, including clearly marked site and pitch or plot boundaries and include soft landscaping, appropriate boundary treatments and play areas for children where needed;
5 provide a safe environment for intended occupants through layout, design and lighting;
6 provide for an appropriate level of essential services and utilities including mains electricity, a connection to a public sewer or provision of discharge to a septic tank, a mains water supply and a suitable surface water drainage system, prioritising the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in line with LPS Policy SE 13 'Flood risk and water management';
7 and make provision for waste to be stored appropriately for disposal and is able to be collected in an efficient manner.

Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (Adopted December 2022) p.98

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Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies January 2015

2.45 Policy SOC4 of the local authority's Local Plan ('Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson's accommodation') states that the Council will work with its partners to ensure appropriate provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showperson's accommodation need. Development proposals will be permitted for private and public Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson's accommodation provided that they meet the following criteria. Proposals should:

- not be affected by pollution, contamination, flooding or other environmental factors that would result in unacceptable living conditions
- not have unacceptable environmental effects
- be well located in relation to the highway network with adequate vehicular and pedestrian access, and have provision for parking and circulation
- be accessible to local services and facilities by walking and/or public transport
- be supplied with essential services such as water, sewerage, electricity, drainage and waste disposal
- be well related to existing settlements, and have regard to residential amenity
- not be disproportionate to the scale of the existing settlement whether singly or cumulatively with other sites in the area
- be located outside the Green Belt except in very special circumstances
- with regard to sites for Travelling Showpersons, the development should include appropriate provision for the safe storage and maintenance of equipment

2.46 The above criteria will be used to guide the site allocation process. There will be a presumption against the loss of existing permanent consented Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showperson's sites leading to, or exacerbating an identified shortfall unless suitable replacement provision of equal or enhanced value are provided.

Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies January 2015 p.73

Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan March 2022

2.47 Policy CS(R)14 of the Local Plan ('Gypsy & Travellers') states that:

1. Provision will be made for 10 additional pitches in Halton over the GTANA period 2017-2032, this will meet the require need for 4 additional pitches and provision for up to 6 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households that may not meet the planning definition
2. There is no identified need for plots for Travelling Showpeople.
3. In allocating sites and for the purposes of considering planning applications, all of the following criteria will need to be satisfied:

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a. The site is not affected by pollution, contamination, flooding or other environmental factors that would result in unacceptable living conditions.
b. The site is well designed and landscaped to give privacy between pitches/plots and, where appropriate, between the site and adjacent uses.
c. The site is well located in relation to the highway network with adequate vehicular and pedestrian access, and provision for parking and circulation.
d. The site is accessible to local services and facilities by walking and/or public transport.
e. The site can be supplied with essential services such as water, sewerage, drainage, and waste disposal.
f. With particular regard to sites for Travelling Showpeople, the development includes appropriate provision for the storage, maintenance and testing of equipment, where required, without creating unacceptable nuisance, or presenting a risk to the health and safety of those living on or near the site.
g. The proposal is not unacceptably detrimental to the amenity or character of the surrounding area
h. Proposals would conserve and enhance affected heritage assets and maintain the enjoyment of the historic environment.
i. The site would not lead to adverse effects on the integrity of the Mersey Estuary SPA and/or Ramsar site.
j. The site is preferably on brownfield land.
k. The occupants are recognised as gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople.
l. The proposal helps meet the identified need within the GTANA.

4. The Council will continue to work with its partners to ensure appropriate provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople's accommodation needs.

Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan March 2022 p.53

Warrington Local Plan December 2023

2.48 Policy DEV3 ('Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Show People Provision') of the Local Plan states that:

Meeting Identified Need

1. The Council and its partners will work together to provide an adequate supply of sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople to meet identified needs.
2. Provision will be made between 2021 and 2032 for a minimum of an additional:

a. 2 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers;
b. 5 permanent plots for Travelling Showpeople; and
c. 5-10 transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers.

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3. The need for Gypsy & Traveller's and Travelling Showpeople for the remainder of the Plan period beyond 2032 will be assessed in a future review of the Local Plan.
4. Identification of sites to meet needs up to 2038 and any unmet need up to 2032 will be confirmed through a future review of the Local Plan.

Proposals for new sites

5. Where there is an identified need or a demand for the provision of transit and permanent pitches for Gypsy or Traveller use or plots for Travelling Showpeople, proposals will be favourably considered where they satisfy other relevant policies of the Plan and meet the following criteria:

    a. The proposed site is suitable for use as a Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showperson's site and can provide an acceptable living environment for future occupiers;
    b. The site is not subject to physical constraints or other environmental issues that cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level, or that would impact upon the health, safety or general wellbeing of residents on the site;
    c. The site is or can be well integrated within the local townscape in a manner in-keeping with the local character, using boundary treatments and screening materials which are sympathetic to the existing urban/rural form;
    d. Be compatible with surrounding land uses particularly with regards to residential amenity;
    e. The site has good access to the highway network and adequate provision is made for the parking, manoeuvring and storage of all vehicles associated with the use of the site;
    f. The site is served, or could readily be provided with, electricity, mains water, drainage, sewage and waste disposal facilities; and for permanent sites
    g. The proposed site is or can be made accessible to key local services such as primary schools, GPs, shops and other community facilities.

6. Planning permission for sites granted specifically for Gypsy & Traveller or Travelling Showpeople use, will be subject to conditions restricting occupancy to Gypsies & Travellers or Travelling Showpeople who practice a travelling lifestyle.

Protection of Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showperson's Facilities

7. The Council will not permit development likely to result in the loss of existing permanent consented Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showperson's sites unless it can be demonstrated:

    a. that the development would not lead to, or exacerbate an identified shortfall in provision; or

b. that replacement provision of at least equal or enhanced value can be provided in a suitable location.

Warrington Local Plan December 2023 pp.50-51

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (GTANAs)

2.49 Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs also need to be understood in a wider context, reflecting the fact that these communities may have patterns of movement and social networks that extend beyond individual local authority boundaries. While GTANAs undertaken by neighbouring authorities[3] provide helpful contextual evidence, cross-boundary movement does not, by itself, equate to an identified local accommodation need.

2.50 In line with NPPF (August 2026) and established GTANA practice, this study identifies need based on households with a demonstrable intention to reside in the area on a permanent basis, informed by household surveys, stakeholder engagement and local authority records. This approach ensures that identified need is robust, proportionate and capable of being planned for through the Local Plan, while allowing flexibility to respond to changing circumstances through monitoring and review.

Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington GTANA 2018

2.51 The 2018 GTANA – now superseded by this 2026 assessment – covered Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington, and set needs for 2017-2032. It identified 74 additional pitches for households meeting the PPTS definition, a further 0-96 pitches for households of unknown status, and 74 pitches for households not meeting the PPTS definition. It also identified a need for six plots for Travelling Showpeople. At the time, there was one operational public transit site in Halton (12 pitches) and an unimplemented planning consent for a public transit site in Cheshire East (nine pitches plus a warden's pitch). Because each former Cheshire council is a unitary authority, the Halton site cannot be used to relocate households from encampments in Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, or Warrington. The GTANA therefore recommended a new public transit site of 5–10 pitches in each of those three authorities. Since the 2018 GTANA was completed, a new 10-pitch transit site has been developed at Cledford Lane, Middlewich, in Cheshire East.

Derby, Derbyshire, Peak District National Park Authority and East Staffordshire GTANA 2022

2.52 The Derby, Derbyshire, Peak District National Park Authority and East Staffordshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment included Amber Valley Borough Council, Bolsover District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, Derby City Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council, High Peak Borough Council, North East Derbyshire District Council,

[3] The local authorities within the study area predominantly border other English local authorities; however, Cheshire West and Chester also shares a boundary with a Welsh local authority. Cross-border movement may therefore occur across both English and Welsh administrative boundaries.

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the Peak District National Park Authority, and South Derbyshire District Council, as well as neighbouring East Staffordshire Borough Council. For the period 2020 to 2040, the GTANA identifies a need for 148 additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 27 additional Travelling Showpeople plots. It also identified a need for 53 additional boat dweller moorings and 77 additional residential caravan pitches over the same period. Regarding transit provision, while recognising 21 transit pitches within the study area, the GTANA recommends adopting a negotiated stopping policy.

Flintshire GTANA 2022

2.53 The Flintshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTANA) 2022 identified a total of 18 residential sites across the county, providing 82 pitches and accommodating around 78 households. Fieldwork achieved a strong response rate of approximately 72%, with information gathered from 56 households. The assessment identified a five-year residential pitch need (2022–2026) of 23 additional pitches before, and 2 after, the potential regularisation of temporary or unauthorised sites. Over the full plan period to 2030, the corresponding need was 27 pitches before, and 6 after, regularisation. The modelling applied an annual household growth rate of around 1.25%, equating to six additional pitches in the first five years and four more by 2030. Evidence from unauthorised encampments also supported the need for a small transit site of around five pitches (up to 10 caravans).

Greater Manchester GTANA 2024

2.54 The Greater Manchester GTANA included Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan. It incorporates findings from the Manchester City 2022 GTANA and the needs of Travelling Showpeople presented in the 2018 GTANA. It states that there is a minimum need for 106 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Greater Manchester over the period 2023/24 to 2040/41. It recommends that councils consider developing a flexible approach to unauthorised encampment activity using negotiated stopping arrangements. The GTANA 2018 evidenced a need for 148 additional Travelling Showperson plots in the Greater Manchester area during the next five years (2017/18 to 2021/22) and a further 56 plots over the remainder of the Plan Period, resulting in a total plot need of 204 additional plots over the Plan Period.

Merseyside and West Lancashire 2014 (and 2015 update)

2.55 Merseyside and West Lancashire GTANA (including Knowsley Council, Liverpool Council, Sefton Council, St Helens Council, West Lancashire Council, and Wirral Council) identified a need of 42 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers over the period 2013 to 2033. The report states that an overall five-year requirement (2013/14 to 2017/18) of 30 permanent Traveller pitches and a further 17 pitches to 2027/28 (excluding the oversupply identified for Liverpool) or a further requirement for nine pitches if the oversupply identified in Liverpool is included. In relation to Travelling Showperson, there is a need for one yard to be provided in West Lancashire in the first five years (2013/14 to 2017/18), with continued engagement with the

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Travelling Showpeople community to establish any further needs over the period 2018/19 to 2027/28. It also recommends the need for 22 transit pitches.

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent GTANA 2020

2.56 The Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent 2020 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTANA over the period 2020 to 2037 identifies a need of 14 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 4 plots for Travelling Showpeople. It recommended a combination of transit sites and a negotiated stopping approach.

Shropshire GTANA 2019 (and 2020 update)

2.57 The GTANA 2019 and 2020 update both identified an overall cultural need for 113 additional pitches over the plan period to 2037/38, and as a subset of this number, a PPTS need for 43 pitches. However, there is evidence of high turnover on existing pitches, which offsets the identified need. Detailed site management data reports an annual average of 11 pitches becoming available for occupancy over the past 5.5 years. If turnover from households moving between pitches within the County is excluded, the annual average turnover is 9.3 or 205 over the plan period, exceeding the level of identified need. The report recommended that the Local Plan acknowledge the overall need (excluding turnover) for 113 additional pitches based on a cultural interpretation of need and 43 based on a PPTS interpretation of need. For the purposes of planning policy, it concluded that turnover on local authority pitches is expected to address this need, and that there is no current requirement for site allocations or the identification of sites for longer-term provision. Although there is no overall shortfall in pitches once turnover is considered, the Council should continue to consider planning applications through its criteria-based policy for appropriate small sites to address any arising needs of Gypsy and Traveller families, should they be forthcoming over the plan period. There is currently one temporary Travelling Showperson's yard in Shropshire. The 2017 GTANA did not find any evidence of a need for additional plots to be provided over the plan period, other than a suitable permanent site for the existing residents at the temporary site. This was unchanged by the 2019 update.

Staffordshire Moorlands GTANA 2014

2.58 Staffordshire Moorlands formed part of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent 2015 GTANA. The GTANA identified the need for 8 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and no identified need for Travelling Showpeople or transit provision for the period 2014 to 2034.

Wirral GTANA 2019

2.59 Overall, the additional housing needs for Gypsies and Travellers for the period 2019-34 was 10 Gypsy or Traveller households identified in Wirral that met the planning definition; no undetermined households that may meet the planning definition and 3 households that did not meet the planning definition, resulting in a need of 13 based on the new PPTS (2024). All were living in bricks and mortar in Wirral; in bricks and mortar outside of Wirral but with

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strong links to the area; or on the roadside outside Wirral with strong links to the area. There are no known Travelling Showpeople and no identified need

Summary

2.60 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026), which replaces and incorporates the former *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* (December 2024), emphasises the need for plan-making to be informed by robust evidence and to provide positively for identified accommodation needs. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 amended section 8 of the Housing Act 1985, extending the statutory duty to assess accommodation needs to include all people residing in or resorting to the district in caravans or houseboats. For planning purposes, Policy HO1 of the August 2026 NPPF requires an assessment of the permanent and transit-site accommodation needs of Travellers over the plan period. The NPPF defines “Travellers” as encompassing Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Local authorities must therefore continue to identify these communities' accommodation needs and establish appropriate pitch and plot requirements through the plan-making process.

2.61 The local planning policies of the study area local authorities outline the criteria by which the location of new Gypsy and Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople accommodation should be determined. Given the cross-boundary characteristic of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues, it is important to consider the findings of GTANAs produced by neighbouring local authorities. Recent GTANAs undertaken by neighbouring local authorities indicate that Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs persist across the wider area.

3. Methodology

Introduction

3.1 This chapter sets out the methodology used to prepare the Cheshire Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTANA). The approach has been designed to ensure the study provides a robust, transparent and policy-compliant evidence base to inform plan-making and decision-taking across the Cheshire sub-regional partnership area, comprising Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington.

3.2 The methodology closely aligns with national policy and guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026). It has been tailored to reflect the Cheshire context, the requirements of the partnership authorities, and the findings of earlier GTANAs, while ensuring consistency with current best practice.

Overall Approach

3.3 The GTANA employs a multi-method, iterative approach combining quantitative and qualitative evidence. Primary data collection is central to the assessment and is complemented by detailed analysis of secondary datasets. This ensures that the assessment reflects current household circumstances and aspirations, while also being grounded in longer-term trends and contextual evidence.

3.4 The methodology comprises five interrelated strands:

- a review of relevant national and local policy, guidance and previous GTANAs;
- analysis of secondary data sources to establish the scale, distribution and characteristics of the Traveller population;
- primary fieldwork with Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households;
- consultation with a wide range of stakeholders; and
- the application of a transparent needs-assessment model to calculate accommodation requirements.

3.5 The approach is deliberately iterative, with emerging findings from one strand used to inform and refine others (for example, using secondary data to shape the household survey sample, and using stakeholder feedback to contextualise survey findings).

Assessment base date

3.6 This GTANA adopts 31 March 2026 as its assessment base date. Accommodation need and supply are assessed as they existed at that date using the most recent information available from local authority records, household surveys, site visits, planning records and the January 2026 MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count. Although some supporting datasets relate to different collection periods, they have been reconciled to provide the most accurate assessment of circumstances at the base date. Any changes occurring after 31 March 2026 are not reflected

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in the identified need and should instead be addressed through monitoring, future updates to the evidence base, or planning applications arising after publication.

NPPF Definition and Policy Compliance

3.7 The GTANA assesses the accommodation needs of households who meet the definition of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople set out in NPPF (August 2026), namely persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan. The methodology has been designed to ensure that needs identified are policy-compliant and capable of informing local plan pitch and plot targets.

Review of Secondary Data

3.8 A comprehensive review of secondary information underpins the assessment and provides the baseline against which accommodation needs are assessed. This includes:

- national planning policy and guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026);
- analysis of previous Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments undertaken across Cheshire (including 2007, 2014 and 2018 studies) and relevant neighbouring authorities;
- local authority data on authorised and unauthorised sites, yards, pitches and plots, including their planning status, size, tenure and occupancy;
- Traveller Caravan Count data (January and July counts) to identify trends in caravan numbers and authorised and unauthorised provision;
- Census data (2011 and 2021) relating to households identifying as Gypsy or Irish Traveller, used as a contextual indicator rather than a definitive population count; and
- information on unauthorised encampments, unauthorised developments, waiting lists, pitch turnover and management records, where available.

3.9 These data are used to establish baseline estimates of the existing accommodation supply, inform the household survey sample framework, and provide contextual evidence to support the interpretation of primary survey findings. The analysis acknowledges limitations in individual datasets, and no single source is relied upon in isolation.

Stakeholder Consultation

3.10 Stakeholder consultation provided an important qualitative evidence strand that complements household survey data and secondary analysis. Engagement is undertaken primarily through a structured online stakeholder survey, designed to maximise participation while recognising that stakeholders' time is often limited.

3.11 The survey was distributed to a comprehensive list of consultees, including:

- planning policy, development management, housing, environmental health and enforcement officers within the partnership authorities;
- officers from neighbouring local authorities to capture cross-boundary dynamics;

- Traveller liaison services, site managers and relevant third-sector organisations;
- service providers and representative bodies with experience of working with Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities.

3.12 The stakeholder survey included both closed and open-ended questions, enabling respondents to provide quantitative indications (for example, on the scale or location of need) alongside more detailed qualitative commentary. Responses were analysed thematically, identifying recurring issues, areas of agreement, and points of divergence. Stakeholder evidence contextualised survey findings, corroborated trends identified in secondary data, and highlighted practical barriers to delivery.

Primary Fieldwork with Households

3.13 Primary fieldwork with Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households is central to the GTANA, providing first-hand evidence on accommodation circumstances, aspirations and needs. All sites were visited. Not all households were present at the time of visits, but occupancy and levels of need were nevertheless confirmed through triangulation of available evidence. Contact details are held for some households to support ongoing engagement.

3.14 Where direct consultation with each individual pitch or plot was not feasible, this reflected the established familial structure of the sites and yards, which were predominantly occupied by extended family groups. In practice, this meant that a significant proportion of pitches/plots formed part of cohesive family networks, often with shared decision-making and a high degree of internal knowledge regarding household circumstances. As such, engaging separately with each pitch/plot would not necessarily have produced a more complete or materially different evidence base and, in some cases, may have duplicated information.

3.15 A pragmatic and proportionate approach was therefore adopted. The team gathered detailed information by engaging key representatives of the extended family networks on each site/plot. These individuals, typically senior or long-standing family members, provided comprehensive and reliable information on pitch occupancy, household composition, overcrowding, concealed and newly forming households, and future accommodation intentions. Their role within the family structure meant they were well placed to speak not only to current circumstances but also to anticipated changes over the plan period. To ensure robustness, we verified and triangulated the information obtained this way. This included cross-checking against observations from site/plot visits (including pitch/plot occupation and site/plot layout), available local authority records, and, where relevant, supplementary information from other residents or stakeholders (including site owners and management teams). This process helped to minimise the risk of bias or omission and ensured that the data captured accurately reflected site-level dynamics.

3.16 This methodology aligns with established good practice in Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments and reflects the practical realities of undertaking fieldwork within closely connected family sites and yards. It ensures that, even where direct engagement with every individual household is not achievable, a comprehensive and reliable

understanding of need can still be derived. Overall, the approach provides a sound, transparent and proportionate evidence base for identifying both current and future accommodation requirements at the site/yard and wider authority level, consistent with the expectations of MHCLG guidance.

3.17 The household consultation is structured to collect consistent information across all pitches/plots and includes sections on:

- current accommodation type, tenure and length of stay;
- household size, age structure and generational composition;
- concealed or emerging households within the pitch or plot;
- experiences of overcrowding or site/plot constraints;
- access to key services such as health and education; and
- future accommodation intentions, including preferences for type of provision.

3.18 Consultation was conducted on the basis that responses reflect the needs of the household as a whole.

Promoting and Conducting Surveys

3.19 Work was undertaken to maximise survey participation and ensure findings are robust. This included:

- liaison with local authority officers and site managers to confirm site details and access arrangements;
- engagement with Traveller representative organisations to promote the study;
- multiple visits to sites and yards, where necessary, to maximise response rates.

3.20 The approach reflects good practice in minimising survey fatigue while ensuring sufficient coverage to support reliable analysis.

Determining potential for site intensification/expansion

3.21 Site visits undertaken as part of the household survey programme were used to supplement questionnaire responses with an on-the-ground assessment of existing provision. Each site was inspected to understand its physical capacity and operational characteristics, including plot layout, spacing between caravans and amenity blocks, access arrangements, servicing, topography, boundary treatments and the presence of any physical or environmental constraints.

3.22 Observations were used to form a high-level appraisal of whether there may be realistic potential for expansion and/or intensification to accommodate additional pitches, without compromising site functionality, safety, residential amenity or compliance with relevant planning and design considerations. Site visits were also used to establish, where appropriate, whether current occupants own land or are actively seeking to purchase land

that could reasonably be brought forward to meet their household or wider family accommodation needs.

3.23 This evidence provides important contextual input to the assessment of future need and potential supply opportunities, while recognising that any potential expansion or intensification would remain subject to detailed feasibility testing and the planning process.

Defining ‘pitches’ and ‘plots’

3.24 For the purposes of this assessment, terminology is applied consistently with NPPF (August 2026). A Gypsy and Traveller pitch refers to an individual residential space on a gypsy and traveller site designed to accommodate a single household, typically providing space for a caravan or mobile home, associated parking and amenity facilities. A pitch represents the lawful residential base from which a household lives on a permanent or semi-permanent basis and forms the unit of measurement for assessing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need and supply.

3.25 A Travelling Showpeople plot (often referred to as a yard) refers to a pitch on a Travelling Showpeople site that accommodates both the residential and business needs of a Showperson household. In addition to space for caravans and amenity buildings, a plot includes land for storing, maintaining, and parking fairground/circus equipment, vehicles, and plant. Plots therefore differ from Gypsy and Traveller pitches in scale and function and are assessed separately within the methodology to reflect their mixed residential and operational requirements.

Sample Frameworks and Robustness

3.26 Sample sizes for household surveys are informed by local authority records of pitches and plots. The aim was to achieve as high a response rate as practicable, particularly for households living on sites and yards, where smaller populations mean that robust findings depend on strong coverage.

3.27 While there is no formal national guidance on minimum response rates, the household survey was designed to provide a robust and proportionate evidence base to inform the assessment of accommodation need, consistent with the requirements of NPPF (August 2026). As a benchmark, the study seeks to achieve a high level of coverage, with an aspirational target of responses from approximately 80% of identified households, reflecting good practice in GTANA methodology.

Calculating Accommodation Need

3.28 Accommodation needs are calculated using a detailed, step-by-step model derived from the former DCLG (2007) guidance and refined through subsequent practice, appeal decisions and examinations. The model is designed to be transparent and replicable, enabling assumptions to be clearly understood and tested.

3.29 The assessment of need follows a sequential process:

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- **Step 1:** Establishing the baseline supply – identifying the current stock of authorised permanent and temporary pitches and plots, including their planning status, tenure and occupancy.
- **Step 2:** Identifying current unmet need – quantifying households currently living on unauthorised sites or developments, households experiencing overcrowding, and concealed households living with others who require their own pitch or plot.
- **Step 3:** Assessing households in bricks and mortar accommodation – identifying Gypsy and Traveller households living in conventional housing who express a cultural preference and intention to move to a pitch.
- **Step 4:** Projecting future household formation – estimating the number of new households expected to form over the plan period from existing households, informed by household survey data on age structure, household composition and expectations.
- **Step 5:** Accounting for supply-side changes – factoring in known or anticipated changes to supply, including new pitches or plots with planning permission, site extensions, and any losses of existing provision.
- **Step 6:** Netting supply against need – comparing total need with total supply to identify net accommodation requirements.

3.30 Separate calculations are undertaken for Gypsies and Travellers (pitches), Travelling Showpeople (plots), and Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation. Results are presented for the first five years, the subsequent five years, and the full 15-year plan period to align with plan-making requirements and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Summary

3.31 This methodology provides a robust, transparent and proportionate framework for assessing Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs across Cheshire. By combining primary fieldwork, stakeholder engagement and detailed secondary data analysis, the study provides a sound evidence base capable of withstanding scrutiny at examination and appeal.

4. Trends in the population levels

Introduction

4.1 This section examines population levels and trends in the GTANA study area. The primary source of information for Gypsies and Travellers (including Travelling Showpeople) in England is the Government's National Traveller Caravan Count. This was introduced in 1979 and places a duty on local authorities in England to undertake a twice-yearly count for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in their area. The count was intended to estimate the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population for whom provision was to be made and to monitor progress in meeting accommodation need.

4.2 Although the duty to provide sites was removed in 1994[4], the need for local authorities to conduct the count has remained. However, the data's reliability has several weaknesses. For example, across the country counting practices vary between local authorities, and the practice of carrying out the count on a single day ignores the fluctuating number and distribution of unauthorised encampments. Some authorities include Travelling Showpeople in the same figures as Gypsies and Travellers, whilst others distinguish between the different groups and do not include Travelling Showpeople or boat dwellers/travellers. Also, where authorities have not submitted a count, figures are estimated, which may result in inaccuracies.

4.3 Significantly, the count is only of caravans (tourer and static caravans) and so Gypsies and Travellers residing in bricks and mortar accommodation are excluded. It should also be noted that pitches / households often contain more than one caravan, typically two or three.

4.4 Despite concerns about accuracy, the count is a useful indicator because it provides the only national source of information about numbers and distribution of Gypsy and Traveller caravans. As such, it is useful for identifying trends in the Gypsy and Traveller population, if not determining absolute numbers.

4.5 The MHCLG Count includes data concerning Gypsy and Traveller sites[5]. It distinguishes between caravans on socially rented authorised, private authorised, and unauthorised pitches. Unauthorised sites and pitches are broken down as to whether they are tolerated or not tolerated. The analysis in this Chapter includes data from the last six counts from July 2023 to January 2026.

[4] The Caravan Sites Act 1968 placed a duty on councils and districts to provide accommodation for Gypsies residing in and resorting to their areas but was repealed by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

[5] Data regarding Travelling Showpeople are published separately by the DLUHC as 'experimental statistics'.

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Population of Gypsies and Travellers

4.6 The total Gypsy and Traveller population residing in the UK is unknown, although the government estimate there to be between 100,000 and 300,000 Gypsy and Traveller people[6]. There are uncertainties partly because of the number of different definitions that exist, but mainly because of an almost total lack of information about the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers now residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. Estimates produced for [the then] DLUHC suggest that at least 50% of the overall Gypsy and Traveller population are now residing in permanent housing.

4.7 Local authorities in England provide a count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in January and July each year for MHCLG. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Count did not take place in July 2020 or January 2021. The January 2026 Count (the most recent figures available) indicates a total of 29,402 caravans. Applying an assumed three person per caravan[7] multiplier would give a population of 88,206 persons residing in caravans[8]. Doubling this to allow for the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in housing,[9] gives a total population of 176,412 persons for England. However, given the limitations of the data this figure can only be very approximate and may be a significant underestimate.

4.8 According to Niner[10], there are three broad groupings of Gypsies and Travellers in England: traditional English (Romany) Gypsies, traditional Irish Travellers, and New Travellers. There are smaller numbers of other types of Gypsies and Travellers including Welsh Gypsies and Scottish Travellers. Romany Gypsies were first recorded in Britain around the year 1500, having migrated across Europe from an initial point of origin in Northern India. Also, in the early 1990s Roma started to arrive from the new EU countries, particularly the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

4.9 Importantly, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers have been recognised by the courts to be two distinct ethnic groups, so have the full protection of the Equality Act 2010. This means that they have the right to be free from racial harassment and discrimination. All public sector organisations have a positive duty under the law to eliminate racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity, which includes Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

4.10 The 2021 national Census included the category of 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' in the question on ethnic identity. Table 4.1 below shows the total population and the Gypsy and Traveller population in the study area. However, it is recognised that Census figures may underestimate the actual size of the Gypsy and Traveller population, as the survey took place during the COVID-19 pandemic when community engagement and support for completing

[6] House of Commons 'Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' April 2019 located at: www.parluament.uk

[7] Niner, Pat (2003), Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England, ODPM.

[8] A commonly applied multiplier in national-level modelling.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Pat Niner Counting Gypsies & Travellers: *A Review of the Gypsy Caravan Count System,* ODPM, February 2004 located at http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/158004.pdf

Census forms were limited, resulting in lower participation among some groups[11]. It shows that at the time of the 2021 Census, there were 905 people recorded as Gypsies and Travellers residing in the study area, representing around 0.08% of the usual resident population. This matches the proportion in the North West (0.08%) but is below the England average (0.11%). However, the proportion of the population recorded as Gypsies and Travellers varied in each local authority area with the highest proportion recorded in Cheshire West and Chester (0.10%), followed by Cheshire East (0.09%), Halton (0.07%), and Warrington (0.05%).

Table 4.1 Gypsy and Traveller Population

	Population (no.)	G&T Pop (no.)	G&T Pop (%)
Cheshire East	398,772	345	0.09%
Cheshire West and Chester	357,149	354	0.10%
Halton	128,478	91	0.07%
Warrington	210,973	115	0.05%
Study area	1,095,372	905	0.08%
North West	7,417,398	5,741	0.08%
England	56,490,048	64,218	0.11%

Source: ONS 2025

4.11 It is also possible to determine the Gypsy and Traveller population within the study area by tenure; however, it should be noted that the figures shown in the table only relate to those households who completed the 2021 Census. Table 4.2 shows the housing type of 280 Gypsy and Traveller households residing in the study area. Please note that Table 4.2 is based on the number of households that completed the 2021 Census rather than the number of Gypsy and Traveller households living in the local authority area. Just under two-fifths (39%) of Gypsy and Traveller households who completed the 2021 Census reside in a caravan or mobile home, with the remaining households (61%) residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. This compares to an average of 18% of Gypsy and Traveller households living in a caravan or mobile home in the North West region and 20% in England. However, the proportion of households recorded by the 2021 Census living in a caravan or mobile home varied by local authority area with almost three-fifths (58%) in Cheshire West and Chester compared with Cheshire East (24%) and Warrington (22%).

[11] House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Number 08083, 'Gypsies and Travellers' 9 May 2019.

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Table 4.2 Gypsy and Traveller households by accommodation type

	A caravan or other mobile home		Bricks and mortar accommodation		Total	
	No.	%	No	%	No	%
Cheshire East	27	24%	87	76%	114	100%
Cheshire West and Chester	75	58%	54	42%	129	100%
Halton[12]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Warrington	8	22%	29	78%	37	100%
Study area	110	39%	170	61%	280	100%
North West	368	18%	1,716	82%	2,084	100%
England	4,598	20%	17,868	80%	22,466	100%

Source: NOMIS 2025

4.12 The January 2026 Caravan Count records a total of 470 caravans across the four local authority areas. The overwhelming majority of caravans are located on authorised sites, with only very limited unauthorised provision identified (Figure 4.1).

4.13 Across the study area as a whole, 460 caravans (97.9%) are on authorised sites. Of these, the largest proportion is on authorised private permanent sites, accounting for 331 caravans and reflecting the continued dominance of privately provided permanent accommodation within the sub-region. A further 129 caravans are on authorised socially rented sites, indicating a smaller but still significant role for local authority or registered provider site provision. No caravans were recorded on authorised private sites with temporary planning permission, suggesting that temporary permissions form a relatively minor component of overall authorised provision.

4.14 Unauthorised provision is extremely limited. The count records 10 caravans on unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller-owned land, with 7 recorded in Cheshire West and Chester, and 3 within Cheshire East. No caravans were recorded on unauthorised privately owned land in any of the authorities. This indicates very low levels of unauthorised development at the time of the count.

4.15 At a local authority level:

- Cheshire East records 87 caravans, with provision split between authorised socially rented sites (25) and authorised private permanent sites (59). It also records 3 unauthorised caravans.
- Cheshire West and Chester has the highest total number of caravans (231), the majority of which (195) are on authorised private permanent sites. It also records 7 unauthorised caravans, though these account for a very small proportion of the total.

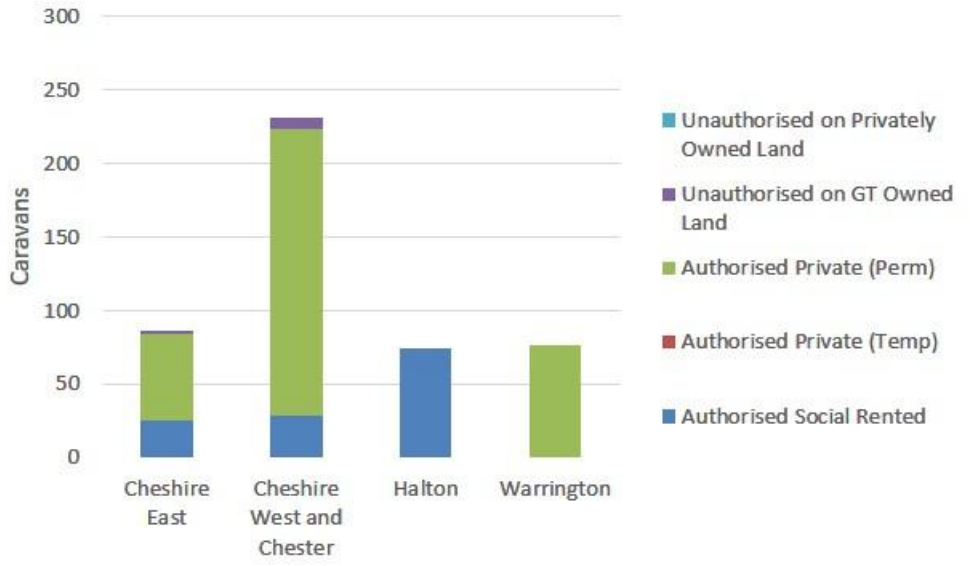
[12] To safeguard confidentiality, results for small groups – such as Gypsies and Travellers – in Halton are suppressed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) at the local authority level.

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- Halton has 75 caravans, all recorded as being on authorised socially rented sites (75), indicating a comparatively greater reliance on public sector provision than elsewhere in the study area.
- Warrington records 77 caravans, all of which are on authorised private permanent sites, with no socially rented, temporary, or unauthorised provision identified.

4.16 Overall, the January 2026 Caravan Count highlights a predominantly authorised and stable pattern of provision, with very limited unauthorised development[13] across the study area. While the count provides an important snapshot of provision at a single point in time, it should be considered alongside wider evidence, including household surveys, stakeholder consultation and local authority records, to fully understand accommodation needs and pressures over the plan period.

Figure 4.1 Traveller Caravan Count January 2026



Source: MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count, January 2026

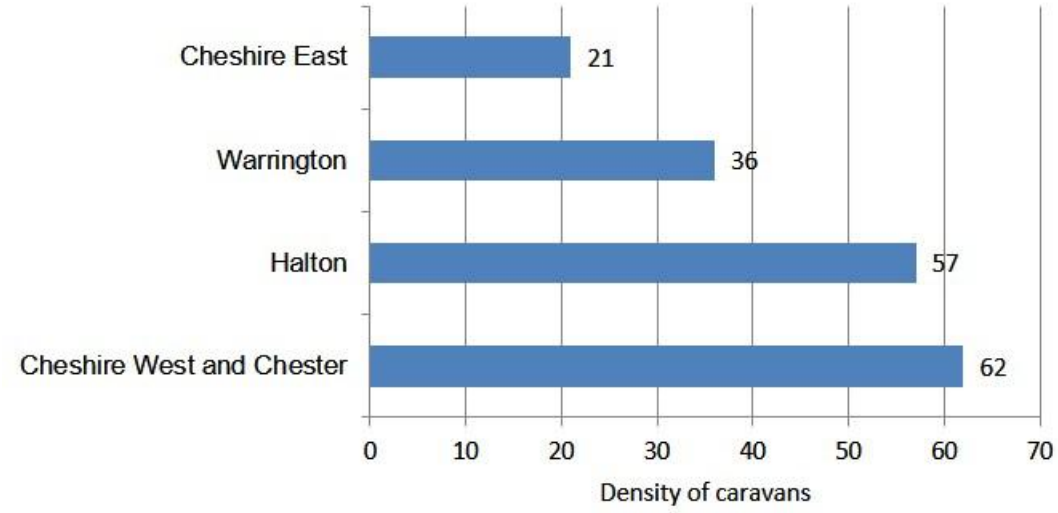
4.17 Figure 4.2 compares the level of authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision in each authority with its resident population. The analysis demonstrates considerable variation across the study area. Cheshire West and Chester has the highest level of provision relative to population, with 62 authorised pitches per 100,000 residents, followed by Halton with 57 pitches per 100,000. Warrington has a lower level of provision, at 36 pitches per 100,000 population, whilst Cheshire East records the lowest level, with 21 pitches per 100,000 residents.

[13] Please note that the Caravan Count provides a snapshot of provision at a specific point in time. It does not capture unauthorised encampments or developments that may have arisen after the date of the count and prior to publication of this study; such circumstances are reflected in other elements of the evidence base where relevant.

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4.18 Compared with wider benchmarks, both Cheshire West and Chester and Halton have substantially higher levels of provision than the national average of 47 pitches per 100,000 population and the North West average of 19 pitches per 100,000. Warrington also exceeds the regional average but remains below the national figure, whilst Cheshire East is only marginally above the regional average and less than half the national rate.

Figure 4.2 Caravans in the study area local authorities adjusted for population, Jan 2026



Source: MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count, January 2026

MHCLG data on caravans recorded on authorised sites

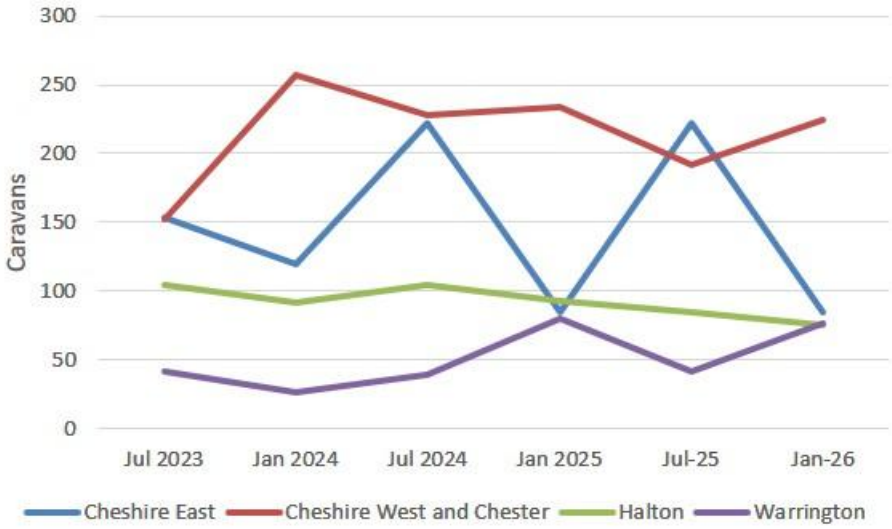
4.19 Figure 4.3 shows that the number of caravans on authorised pitches in the study area has fluctuated over the 2.5-year period from July 2023 to January 2026. Across the study area, the total number of caravans fluctuated from a low of 450 in July 2023 to a peak of 593 in July 2024, averaging 505 caravans over the monitoring period. This variation reflects the dynamic nature of caravan occupancy and seasonal travelling patterns, with the biannual Counts providing a snapshot of occupation at a particular point in time.

4.20 Cheshire West and Chester consistently recorded the highest number of caravans, averaging 215 across the six Counts and accounting for the largest share of authorised caravan provision within the study area. Cheshire East recorded an average of 148 caravans, although the figures varied considerably between Counts, ranging from 84 to 222 caravans. Halton recorded a relatively stable level of provision, averaging 92 caravans, while Warrington consistently recorded the lowest numbers, averaging 51 caravans despite an increase in the final two Counts.

4.21 The fluctuations observed across the monitoring period demonstrate that caravan numbers can vary significantly between successive Counts. Consequently, the Caravan Count should be regarded as a useful indicator of trends in authorised provision rather than a definitive measure of occupied pitches at any one time. For this assessment, the Count data has therefore been considered alongside household surveys, local authority records, and site visits to provide a comprehensive understanding of accommodation provision and need.

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Figure 4.3 MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count Jul 2023-Jan 2026



Source: MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count, January 2026

MHCLG data on caravans recorded on unauthorised pitches

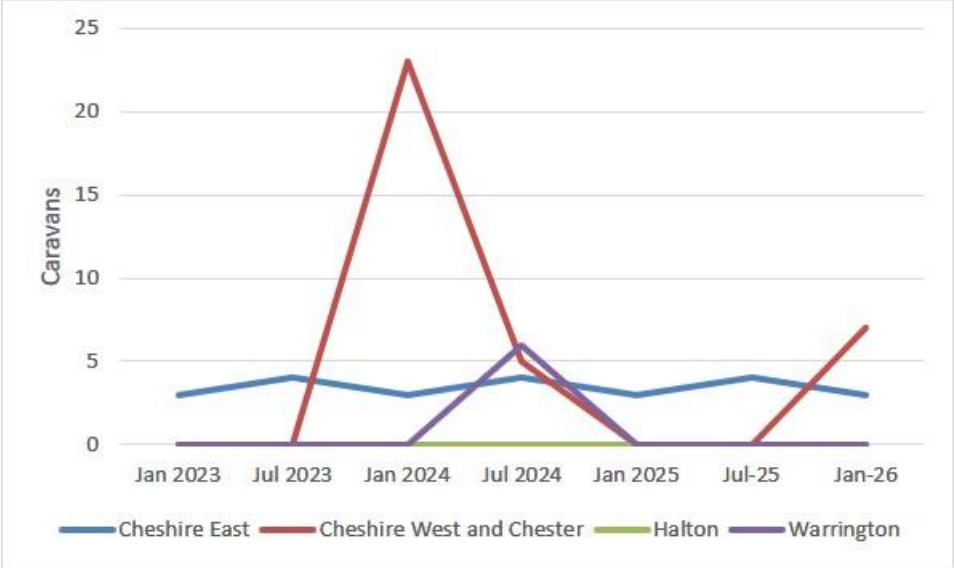
4.22 The MHCLG count records the number of caravans situated on unauthorised sites (i.e. sites without planning permission) within the study area. The MHCLG data on unauthorised encampments is of limited accuracy. For example, caravans on unauthorised sites may be more likely to be observed in more populated, urban areas compared with less populated rural areas. However, the data may indicate general trends (although it should be noted that the MHCLG counts caravans on unauthorised sites, whilst the study area local authority data records the number of encampments). The numbers below include unauthorised caravans on both Gypsy-owned and non-Gypsy land, and which are tolerated (meaning that no enforcement action is currently being taken) and not tolerated.

4.23 Figure 4.4 indicates the number of caravans on unauthorised pitches in the study area from July 2023 to January 2026. Unauthorised numbers across the study area are consistently very low, with a baseline of three to four caravans at most counts and an average of eight. Cheshire East shows a small but persistent presence of three to four caravans throughout, while Halton records none in every period. The only marked departures are short-lived spikes in January 2024 in Cheshire West and Chester (23 caravans) and in July 2024 in Warrington (six), both of which fall back to zero by January 2025.

4.24 Taken together, unauthorised caravans average around 1-2% of the authorised total (eight versus roughly 476 on authorised pitches over the same period), indicating limited sustained pressure from unauthorised occupation. The brief 2024 spikes suggest occasional short-term encampments rather than a structural shortfall; therefore, ongoing negotiated-stopping arrangements and rapid-response protocols are likely sufficient, with any case for additional transit provision depending on local operational evidence rather than these counts alone.

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Figure 4.4 Caravans on unauthorised pitches in the study area
Jul 2023-Jan 2026



Source: MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count, Jan 2026

Local authority data on unauthorised encampments

4.25 More detailed data on unauthorised encampments is collected by the study area local authorities14. Figure 4.5 demonstrates that encampments remain a regular feature across the study area, although the number recorded fluctuates from quarter to quarter. Between the fourth quarter of 2021/22 and the first quarter of 2026/27, a total of 901 unauthorised encampments were recorded. Quarterly totals ranged from a low of 15 encampments in Quarter 4 of 2025/26 to a high of 81 in Quarter 2 of 2022/23, illustrating the variable nature of unauthorised encampment activity.

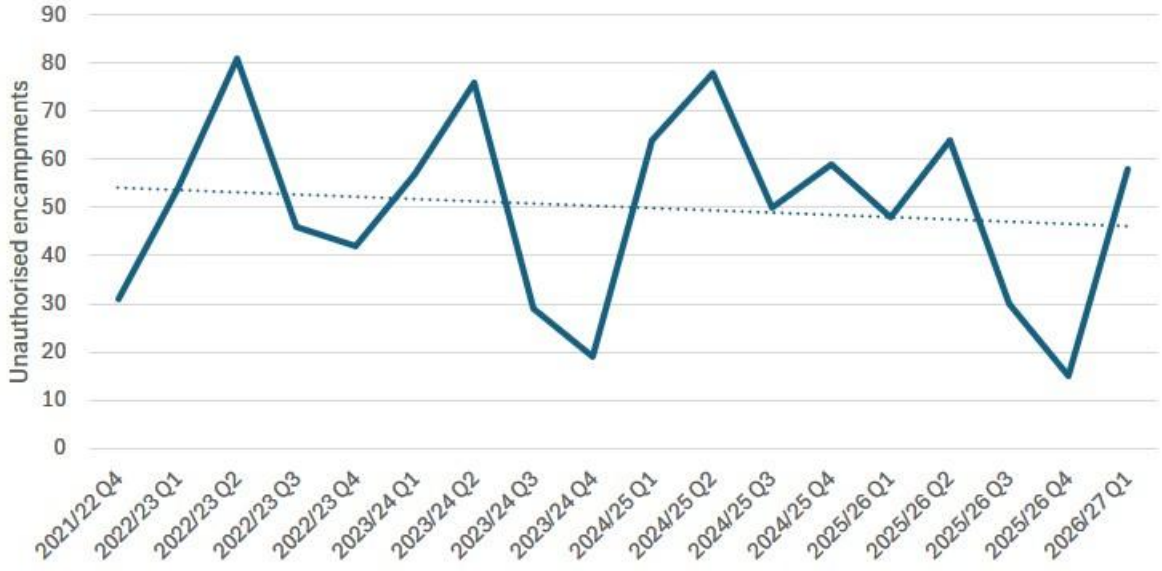
4.26 The data also indicates a degree of seasonality, with higher numbers generally occurring during the spring and summer months (Quarters 1 and 2) and lower levels typically recorded during the autumn and winter (Quarters 3 and 4). However, this pattern is not uniform across all years, reflecting the inherently unpredictable nature of travelling patterns and unauthorised encampments.

4.27 Overall, the evidence demonstrates that unauthorised encampments continue to occur on a regular basis throughout the study period. This supports the conclusion that there remains an ongoing need for appropriate transit provision and effective management arrangements, including negotiated stopping where appropriate, to provide a proportionate response to the accommodation needs of travelling households and reduce the impacts associated with unauthorised encampments.

[14] It should be noted that Unauthorised encampments involve the temporary stationing of caravans on land without the landowner's consent and without planning permission, whereas unauthorised developments arise where land is owned by Gypsies and Travellers but has been occupied or developed for residential use without the necessary planning permission.

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Figure 4.5 Unauthorised encampments in the study area 2021/22 and 2026/27



Source: Study area local authorities 2026

4.28 Table 4.3 shows the number of unauthorised encampments recorded in each study area local authority between 2021/22 and 2026/27. Warrington accounts for the largest share of cases at 336 (37%), followed by Cheshire West and Chester (292; 32%) and Cheshire East (248; 28%), which contribute similar proportions. Halton represents a very small share at 25 (3%). In summary, 97% of recorded cases fall in the three larger authorities, with activity most concentrated in Warrington.

Table 4.3 Number of unauthorised encampments 2021/22 to 2026/27

Local authority	No.	%
Warrington	336	37%
Cheshire West and Chester	292	32%
Cheshire East	248	28%
Halton	25	3%
Total	901	100%

Source: Study area local authorities 2026

4.29 Table 4.4 shows the duration of unauthorised encampments for which data were available. The distribution is heavily skewed to short stays. Over two in five encampments (43%) last two days or less, whilst a slightly smaller proportion (41%) last three to seven days, so about 84% are resolved within a week. Extending the window to 13 days captures over 93% of cases, leaving only 5% lasting 14-27 days and just 2% persisting 28 days or more. In practical terms, the median duration sits within the 3-7 day band, indicating that most episodes are brief and amenable to rapid response and negotiated management. Long-stay encampments are rare, so any case for additional transit provision should rest more on frequency and repeat locations than on duration alone.

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Table 4.4 Duration of unauthorised encampments
2021/22 to 2026/27

Duration (days)	No.	%
2 days or less	391	43%
3-7 days	365	41%
8-13 days	80	9%
14-27 days	46	5%
28+ days	15	2%
Total	897	100%

Source: Study area local authorities 2026

4.30 Table 4.5 shows the number of vehicles involved in each unauthorised encampment. Most unauthorised encampments are small. Over half involve up to four caravans (58%), and around three quarters have six or fewer (77%). Mid-sized groups of seven to nine caravans account for 11%, while larger encampments are uncommon: only 11% involve ten or more caravans, and just 4% involve 15 or more caravans. This size profile implies that day-to-day demand is driven by small family groups rather than large gatherings. Operationally, rapid response and a handful of small, well-located stopping options would address most cases, with occasional contingency needed for larger groups.

Table 4.5 Number of caravans in each unauthorised encampment
2021/22 to 2026/27

Caravan group size	No.	%
1-2 caravans	226	25%
3-4 caravans	301	33%
5-6 caravans	173	19%
7-9 caravans	101	11%
10-14 caravans	60	7%
15+ caravans	40	4%
Total	901	100%

Source: Study area local authorities 2026

4.31 Table 4.6 shows that, for which data were available, and across the study area, most unauthorised encampments occur on private land (60%), with the remainder on local authority (LA) land (40%). This overall picture is driven by Warrington and Cheshire East, where roughly seven in ten encampments are on private land (70% and 69% respectively). Halton shows a similar pattern (67% private), though the absolute number of cases there is small. In contrast, Cheshire West and Chester is the outlier, with a majority on LA land (62%), indicating a greater concentration on council-managed assets such as highways verges, car parks or public open spaces.

4.32 In volume terms Warrington has the largest caseload (301 encampments), followed by Cheshire West and Chester (265), Cheshire East (232) and with Halton contributing relatively few (21). The combination of high totals and a private-land majority in Warrington and Cheshire East suggests that effective management there depends heavily on liaison with private landowners and consistent use of appropriate legal and negotiated approaches.

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Conversely, the LA-land majority in Cheshire West and Chester points to a need for robust internal site management and rapid response on council assets. Overall, the distribution underscores that encampment management strategies should be tailored by authority, reflecting both the typical land type and the scale of local activity.

Table 4.6 Type of land occupied by unauthorised encampments 2021/22 to 2026/27

	LA		Private		Total	
Local authority	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cheshire East	73	31%	159	69%	232	100%
Cheshire West and Chester	164	62%	101	38%	265	100%
Halton	7	33%	14	67%	21	100%
Warrington	86	29%	215	71%	301	100%
Total	330	40%	489	60%	819	100%

Source: Study area local authorities 2026

4.33 Table 4.7 identifies the wards recording the highest numbers of unauthorised encampments during the study period. Crewe East (43 encampments) and Knutsford (41), both within Cheshire East, recorded the highest numbers, accounting for approximately 5% of all encampments each. Within Warrington, Birchwood (38), Orford (34), Westbrook (33), Latchford West (33) and Bewsey & Whitecross (30) all recorded relatively high levels of encampment activity. In Cheshire West and Chester, Whitby Groves (30) and Blacon (29) recorded the highest numbers, while Handforth (27) also featured amongst the ten highest-ranking wards.

4.34 Although the highest-ranking ward (Crewe East) accounted for only around 5% of all recorded encampments, the data demonstrates that encampments are not evenly distributed across the study area. Instead, they are concentrated in a relatively small number of wards, many of which are close to the strategic motorway network, principal A-roads, and major urban areas. This suggests that accessibility and the availability of stopping locations, rather than even distribution across the four authorities, shape travel patterns.

4.35 The distribution also reinforces the importance of considering transit provision and negotiated stopping arrangements at a strategic, cross-boundary level. While particular wards experience higher levels of encampment activity, travelling households frequently move between authorities; therefore, future transit provision should continue to be planned across the sub-region rather than on an individual ward basis.

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Table 4.7 Top 10 wards with unauthorised encampments 2021/22 to 2025/26

No.	Ward	No.	%
1	Crewe East (Cheshire East)	43	5%
2	Knutsford (Cheshire East)	41	5%
3	Birchwood (Warrington)	38	4%
4	Orford (Warrington)	34	4%
5	Westbrook (Warrington)	33	4%
6	Latchford West (Warrington)	33	4%
7	Bewsey & Whitecross (Warrington)	30	3%
8	Whitby Groves (Cheshire West and Chester)	30	3%
9	Blacon (Cheshire West and Chester)	29	3%
10	Handforth (Cheshire East)	27	3%

Source: Study area local authorities 2026

4.36 Table 4.8 shows a strong concentration among a small number of anonymised family groups (for which data were available). The top 15 families account for 237 encampments – about a third of all cases (34.3%) and 76.7% of those where a family name was recorded. One group, Family A, is particularly prominent, representing 35.7% of all named cases and roughly one in six of all encampments (15.9%). Together, Families A-C make up 55.5% of named cases (about 24.8% of all encampments), and the top 10 families account for around 72% of named cases.

4.37 Beyond the leading few, contributions drop quickly: from Family F onwards, each group contributes under 1% of all encampments, indicating a long tail of infrequent appearances. These figures reinforce that a small set of recurring family groups drives repeat activity. As noted previously, interpretation should allow for data completeness limits (family name recorded in only part of the dataset) and occasional composite entries, so the results are best used to guide engagement and operational planning rather than precise attribution.

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Table 4.8 Number of unauthorised encampments by family 2021/22 to 2025/26

Family	Encampments	Share of known %	Share of all %
Family A	110	35.7	15.9
Family B	35	11.4	5.1
Family C	26	8.4	3.8
Family D	15	4.9	2.2
Family E	10	3.2	1.4
Family F	6	1.9	0.9
Family G	6	1.9	0.9
Family H	5	1.6	0.7
Family I	5	1.6	0.7
Family J	5	1.6	0.7
Family K	4	1.3	0.6
Family L	3	1.0	0.4
Family M	3	1.0	0.4
Family N	2	0.6	0.3
Family O	2	0.6	0.3
Total	237	76.7	34.3

Source: Study area local authorities 2026

Pitches within the study area

4.38 Table 4.9 shows Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision of 374 permanent pitches in March 2026. The private sector dominates permanent provision: 291 private-permanent pitches versus 83 public-permanent (about 78% of all permanent stock). Transit capacity totals 58 pitches, split between Cheshire East (24), Cheshire West and Chester (20 (10 authorised and 10 unauthorised) and Halton (14 of which 2 are occupied by site wardens); Warrington has none. Cheshire West and Chester has 12 private pitches with temporary planning permission recorded. Overall authorised capacity (permanent) is highest in Cheshire West and Chester (137), and Cheshire East (123), followed by Warrington (59) and Halton (55).

4.39 Profiles differ sharply by authority. Cheshire East has the broadest mix (large private stock plus public and transit). Cheshire West and Chester combine substantial private provision with the area's largest public estate. Halton is public-led (35 of 55 permanent pitches are public) and also carries significant transit. Warrington relies entirely on private-permanent sites and lacks transit capacity.

4.40 The table records 89 unauthorised pitches, almost half in Cheshire West and Chester (38), followed by Cheshire East (26), Warrington (25) and Halton (0). While these numbers are not fixed "stock", they indicate where pressure and enforcement activity are concentrated.

4.41 Implications: keep strengthening liaison with private owners in Cheshire East and Warrington; maintain/expand transit capacity along key routes – especially given Warrington's gap; and in Cheshire West and Chester, consider targeted actions (e.g., facilitating the delivery of small-scale family sites and limited intensification or expansion of existing authorised sites where appropriate; identifying suitable locations for negotiated stopping and/or small transit provision; strengthening coordinated multi-agency site management and engagement arrangements; and proactively engaging with households experiencing accommodation

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pressures in order to reduce unauthorised development and improve access to culturally appropriate accommodation.

Table 4.9: Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the study area by type (March 2026)

Authority	Private (perm)	Private (temp)	Public (perm)	Transit	Unauth.
Cheshire East	105	0	18	24	26
Cheshire West and Chester	107	12	30	20*	38
Halton	20	0	35	14	0
Warrington	59	0	0	0	25
Total	291	12	83	58	89

Source: Study area local authorities 2026 (* including 10 unauthorised)

Travelling Showpeople

4.42 Data is also available in the study area from planning data showing provision for Travelling Showpeople. The cultural practice of Travelling Showpeople is to live on a plot in a yard in static caravans or mobile homes, along with smaller caravans used for travelling or inhabited by other family members (for example, adolescent children). They usually keep their equipment (including rides, kiosks and stalls) on the same plot.

4.43 It should consequently be borne in mind that the amount of land needed to live on is greater than for Gypsies and Travellers. For clarity, we refer to Travelling Showpeople 'plots' rather than 'pitches', and 'yards' rather than 'sites' to recognise the differences in design. As of March 2026, the study area had 28 authorised plots and 11 unauthorised plots.

Table 4.10: Travelling Showpeople plots in the study area by type (March 2026)

Authority	Private (perm)	Private (temp)	Public (perm)	Transit	Unauth.
Cheshire East	1	0	0	0	11
Cheshire West and Chester	13	0	0	0	0
Halton	0	0	0	0	0
Warrington	14	0	0	0	0
Total	28	0	0	0	11

Source: Study area local authorities 2026

Summary

4.44 The study area picture draws on two sources: the twice-yearly Traveller Caravan Count and local authority encampment records, with 2021 Census data used for added context. 2021 Census returns recorded 905 Gypsies and Travellers in the study area (0.08% of residents), with the highest shares in Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East. Among households that answered the Census, about 39% lived in a caravan/mobile home and 61% in bricks and mortar (the caravan share ranged from 58% in Cheshire West and Chester to 24% in Cheshire East and 22% in Warrington; Halton data were not available). These sources have known limitations (single-day counts; caravan-only measures), so they are best used to show trends.

4.45 The January 2026 Count shows reliance on permanent authorised sites: Cheshire West and Chester 192 caravans, Cheshire East 87, Warrington 77, and Halton 75, with very few unauthorised caravans in that snapshot. Adjusted for population within the study area, per-capita caravan levels rank highest in Halton, then Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire

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East, and Warrington. Over time, authorised numbers rose overall from 450 (July 2023) to 540 (July 2024), peaking at 593 (July 2024). Cheshire East shows the most volatility, with a sharp rise in July 2024, followed by a dip in January 2026 (460). In contrast, Cheshire West and Chester remained consistently high before declining slightly. Halton remained broadly stable in the low-90s, whereas Warrington experienced short-term fluctuations, including a temporary spike in January 2025.

4.46 Unauthorised caravans recorded by the Count remain very low, but local encampment data (2021/22–2026/27) show seasonal activity: peaks in Q2 (Jul–Sep) and lower levels in autumn/winter. There were 901 encampments over the period, concentrated in Warrington (37%), then Cheshire West and Chester (32%), Cheshire East (28%) and Halton (3%). Most were short (84% resolved within a week) and small (78% consisting of 6 or fewer vehicles). Around 60% occurred on private land (Cheshire West and Chester is the outlier with more on local-authority land), with hotspots in a handful of wards and a notable share linked to a small number of recurring family groups.

4.47 As of March 2026, pitch provision across the study area comprises 291 private permanent pitches, 12 private temporary pitches, 83 public permanent pitches and 58 transit pitches (including 10 unauthorised). Transit provision is available in Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Halton, while Warrington has no transit capacity. A total of 85 unauthorised pitches were recorded, with the largest number located in Cheshire West and Chester (38), followed by Cheshire East (26), Warrington (25), and Halton (0). For Travelling Showpeople, there are 28 authorised plots and 11 unauthorised plots across the study area (Warrington 14 authorised; Cheshire West and Chester 13 authorised; Cheshire East one authorised and 11 unauthorised). Overall, the evidence indicates a substantial authorised accommodation base across the sub-region, supplemented by transit provision in three of the four authorities. Although unauthorised development remains evident, it is geographically concentrated, particularly within Cheshire West and Chester, while unauthorised encampments are generally characterised by relatively small numbers of caravans and short duration.

5. Stakeholder consultation

Introduction

5.1 Consultations with a range of stakeholders using an online survey were conducted in April 2025 to provide qualitative evidence to inform the assessment of accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople. A total of 10 responses were received from 23 invited stakeholders, representing a response rate of approximately 43%. Respondents included a range of organisations and individuals, such as local authority officers, community members and planning agents. The consultation was intended to capture a breadth of perspectives and locally specific issues rather than to provide a statistically representative sample.

5.2 Themes raised through the consultations included: the need for additional provisions and facilities; travelling patterns; the availability of land; accessing services; and work taking place to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. This chapter presents brief summaries of the online consultation with stakeholders and highlights the main points that were raised. Where relevant, the points raised are considered further in relation to the analysis in Chapters 5 and 6. Please note that the following represents the views of stakeholders and not necessarily the views of the report authors.

Accommodation needs

5.3 Local authority respondents and planning consultants and agents consistently identify a shortage of suitable pitches and plots as the core problem. New household formation, especially adult children wanting to remain near relatives on established sites, outpaces available capacity. In several areas there are very few council-owned sites, so families are expected to find and promote their own land, which many see as unrealistic given planning risks and costs. Where transit provision is absent, pressure falls on temporary stopping places and unauthorised encampments.

5.4 Planning consultants and agents most commonly described planning as the main bottleneck. People report difficulty finding land that satisfies criteria-based Local Plan policies; applications are often met with objections and prolonged scrutiny. Several respondents allege politically driven decisions, “institutional” bias against Gypsies and Travellers, and pressure on officers that departs from adopted policy. Several councils are criticised for failing to allocate sites, not updating or applying needs assessments, and disregarding appeal decisions that set out lessons for future cases. One example raised is the status of Rough Hill in the Cheshire West and Chester local authority area which remains unrecognised as a residential Traveller site[15].

5.5 Local authority respondents and community representatives highlighted that locational issues compound the problem. Because suitable land is scarce, proposals gravitate to sub-optimal

[15] Rough Hill is referenced in planning documents as a former holiday/touring site with subsequent Traveller occupation. An application for a certificate of lawfulness (see 25/01887/LDC) was refused on 10/4/25.

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or peripheral locations, sometimes outside main settlements. In Warrington, respondents note that national policy changes allowing redevelopment of previously developed land (PDL) in the Green Belts have unlocked a handful of low-value sites and helped supply "just about" keep pace with demand[16]. However, these sites are not always in the most sustainable places, even if distances to services are relatively short in a compact borough.

5.6 Local authority respondents and community representatives described community relations are a recurring theme. Respondents describe public opposition to new or extended sites and a perception of unfairness where Traveller schemes gain permission on Green Belt PDL while settled residents struggle to secure new dwellings. High land values in urban areas—where the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies—are also cited as a significant barrier, limiting affordability and practical availability. Taken together, these factors make many Gypsies and Travellers reluctant to pursue sites in urban locations, reinforcing a drift towards more marginal areas and contributing to protracted planning disputes.

5.7 Specialist officers and representative organisations reported parallel pressures for Travelling Showpeople, particularly a shortage of yards and plots where they can live, store equipment, carry out maintenance, and stay during transitional periods. They stressed that their space needs exceed standard residential pitches and that dedicated, well-designed yards are essential to safe operation.

5.8 Across stakeholder responses, particularly from community representatives and planning consultants, the preferred form of provision was identified as smaller, family-run private sites rather than large public schemes. Respondents want Local Plans and management processes that acknowledge the scale and pattern of need, provide transit options where gaps exist, and apply policy consistently and lawfully so that viable proposals in appropriate places can proceed without unnecessary delay.

5.9 Respondents say the single biggest driver is family formation. Adult children on established sites want to set up their own households close to parents and wider kin, often as small clusters on or beside existing sites. Many would prefer to own small family sites or live on official sites, but available pitches are quickly absorbed as families grow. Several respondents also note a gradual shift from more nomadic patterns to more settled living, including instances of Travellers living in caravans within the curtilage of houses, for example, in areas such as Elton and Middlewich, which further increases demand for permanent pitches.

5.10 A second, consistent driver is inward migration linked to family networks—particularly Irish Traveller households moving from Greater Manchester, Liverpool and Ireland to join relatives

[16] The extent and proportion of Green Belt land in each study area local authority is as follows: Cheshire West and Chester: 38,850 ha — about 42% of the borough; Cheshire East: 40,140 ha — about 34% of the borough; Halton: 2,080 ha — about 26% of the borough; Warrington: 10,990 ha — around 61% of the borough by area (source: MHCLG Green Belt statistics, October 2025).

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already in the study area. Chain migration creates bursts of need in specific places, especially where relatives can help with land searches or proposals.

5.11 Loss or non-delivery of supply adds pressure. According to a stakeholder, need rises when unauthorised sites are closed through enforcement or where existing sites change use (for example, to park homes or general housing)[17]. Even where plans identify land, not all allocations are taken up, and some permissions are not implemented; examples were cited in Middlewich and Smallwood—so paper supply does not become real, lived-in pitches.

5.12 Practical and economic factors also feature. Households report needing more space for work equipment and vehicles, which rules out many small or constrained parcels. Suitable land that satisfies Local Plan criteria is hard to find, and planning costs, delays and risk deter families from bringing sites forward. Where transit options are thin, short-term pressures can spill over into unauthorised encampments, which then cycle back into need when encampments are moved on.

5.13 According to stakeholders, the picture is of underlying demographic growth amplified by spatial and planning frictions: kin-based migration, site loss or non-delivery, and barriers to bringing forward small, family-run sites near existing communities. The result is demand that rises faster than supply, even in districts where some new sites have recently been approved.

Barriers to new provision

5.14 All stakeholder groups identified planning and land supply as the biggest barriers to new provision, though the emphasis differed between groups. Many areas have no or few site allocations in Local Plans, and “call for sites” exercises rarely attract willing landowners, highlighting the significant difficulties faced by local planning authorities in allocating land where suitable and available sites are not forthcoming. Where land is identified, Green Belt coverage is a major constraint; proposals there are usually classed as inappropriate development, so schemes tend to rely on previously developed land (PDL). Several note that some sites with allocations or permissions still don’t come forward, keeping the pipeline thin. A small number of stakeholders expect the December 2024 NPPF changes (including the introduction of “grey belt”) to assist delivery at the margins. A local authority stakeholder cited the Manor Park extension in Stretton, Warrington, as an example of this practice.

5.15 Planning consultants and agents, alongside community representatives, identified cost and viability as a second key barrier. High land values and the expense of securing permission—surveys, legal work, conditions, and, if needed, appeals, make family-led schemes risky. Even when approved, delivery costs (infrastructure, utilities, access works) can stall or shrink projects. Finding land that meets every criteria-based policy, for example tight distance-to-services rules or requirements for non-car access, further narrows options.

[17] For example, in August 2025, an unauthorised encampment at Coronation Recreation Ground, Hoole (Chester) was served with a Section 60C notice by Cheshire Police, and the occupants left the site as directed by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

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5.16 A small number of respondents, primarily planning consultants and agents, raised concerns about politics and public perception as barriers. Respondents describe local opposition to new or extended sites and say this creates reluctance to bring forward urban sites. Some report objections from officers, inconsistent application of policy, or limited training on recent national policy changes. A number perceive political pressure and even institutional bias against Gypsies, Travellers and Showpeople, which they feel leads authorities to look for reasons to refuse rather than plan positively.

5.17 Respondents from across stakeholder groups highlighted group-specific hurdles, particularly for Travelling Showpeople and extended family sites. Travelling Showpeople need larger plots/yards for equipment and maintenance, which are harder to accommodate on constrained sites. Families prefer small, extended-family sites, but suitable expansion land next to existing sites is scarce. Taken together, these factors, policy constraints, costs, opposition and delivery risks, combine to slow or block both new provision and sensible extensions.

5.18 Respondents favour locating new provision close to where demand is highest. Within the study area they highlight Warrington, Frodsham/Helsby, Winsford/Middlewich, Sandbach and Nantwich, arguing that sites near these centres give families access to schools, GPs, shops and public transport, and keep people close to work and kin networks. In Warrington, stakeholders referenced Local Plan policy (DEV3), which prioritises locations accessible to key services, directing provision towards the urban area and outlying settlements and, where policy tests are met, Green Belt locations close to these places.

5.19 Several respondents, particularly from the planning consultancy and local authority sectors, expressed support for delivering pitches within or alongside mainstream housing growth. As a result, respondents anticipate most deliverable opportunities will be on the edge of settlements or in the countryside, including Green Belt in northern Cheshire where Travellers have historically sought to live because of access to strategic roads and urban jobs. Some suggest previously developed land and suitable agricultural parcels as realistic sources of supply, provided they satisfy environmental, highway and design requirements.

5.20 Several respondents across stakeholder groups advocate a two-track approach: first, intensifying or modestly extending existing, well-located sites where impacts can be managed; second, bringing forward new small, family-run sites in sustainable locations and along key travelling routes to improve transit options. A few stress that provision has been concentrated in the north of one borough and should be spread more evenly. Finally, some contributors note that even where need is identified, delivery is constrained because Local Plan allocations rarely come forward: landowners are often unwilling to accept Gypsy and Traveller designations on promoted sites, and the Traveller community seldom submits sites through the call-for-sites process. As a result, meeting identified need through the Local Plan becomes difficult unless temporary sites can be allocated or opportunities arise within larger strategic allocations.

Transit provision and travelling patterns

5.21 Local authority respondents reported a range of travelling patterns among Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople in local areas. Community relationships. Many households are now more settled than in the past yet still make regular seasonal trips—most commonly in spring and summer, at weekends and during school holidays. Travel is often for cultural and social reasons (horse fairs, religious conventions, family gatherings) alongside short-term economic activity such as festival work, gardening, paving, seasonal trading and similar. Others report little need to travel for work once established on a permanent pitch and earning locally. Irish Travellers travel from Ireland to England between Easter and September for employment. These movements are typically linked to temporary or casual work opportunities. While many return to Ireland during the winter months, their presence during the summer period can place additional short-term pressure on local transit and temporary stopping provision.

5.22 Routes matter. Proximity to the strategic road network appears to shape both where people live and how they move. Corridors along the M6 and M56, and the A55 towards Holyhead, are repeatedly mentioned, reflecting connections to North Wales, Ireland and major urban labour markets. Encampments and short stays tend to cluster around well-connected towns – Nantwich, Knutsford, Crewe, Handforth, Congleton, Macclesfield and Sandbach – with junction areas (e.g., around J17 of the M6) acting as natural staging points. In Halton, the Runcorn transit site is a regular stopping place for through-travel.

5.23 Specialist officers and representative bodies noted that Travelling Showpeople follow the fair circuit, typically moving intensively from late spring through autumn and returning to winter quarters for equipment maintenance. Their movements are largely event-led and, in this area, not viewed as causing significant local impacts; however, their logistics require larger vehicles and space, which can influence route choice and preferred stopping locations near main roads.

5.24 Respondents across all stakeholder groups noted that travelling patterns are far from uniform across households. Some travel only for key cultural events or family reasons; others move frequently for work; a minority report very limited travel as they prioritise children's schooling or local employment. Information is also patchy, so findings should be read as indicative. Operationally, the evidence points to peak demand for transit and negotiated stopping in warmer months along motorway and trunk-road corridors, complemented by year-round provision that allows short family trips without losing access to schools, health care and local services.

5.25 Views among respondents were mixed regarding changes in the number of unauthorised encampments in recent years. Some respondents think unauthorised encampments have not changed much, while others report a gradual decline compared with 20–25 years ago as more private family sites exist and people can "double up" with relatives rather than stop roadside. A few, however, perceive local increases and attribute them to councils' failure to plan and allocate land. It was noted that police cannot move unauthorised encampments on

private land directly; initial responsibility rests with the landowner, and police powers to direct people to leave apply only in specific circumstances and require certain conditions to be met.

5.26 Some respondents, primarily local authority officers, reported that where change is seen it is geographic rather than purely numerical: historically higher levels in Cheshire East are said to be shifting toward Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington. One respondent cites 50–70 encampments a year focused on Ellesmere Port and Chester, with totals fairly stable year to year.

5.27 The reasons given for encampments are consistent: household growth and shortage of pitches; lack of allocations or deliverable sites; restrictive policies and distrust of public authorities. Several note a belief among some families that they must move onto land before applying for permission. For Travelling Showpeople, a shortfall of plots/yards is mentioned as a separate pressure.

5.28 Transit provision appears to shape both numbers and duration. Halton's managed Runcorn transit site is credited with stabilising local activity, and the new Middlewich transit site in Cheshire East is expected to reduce and shorten encampments by enabling stronger police-directed move-on where appropriate. Overall, the balance of comments suggests demand pressures persist, but targeted provision and more private capacity can temper roadside occurrence and length of stay.

5.29 Most respondents across stakeholder groups considered that there is a clear need for transit provision locally. Two concrete pieces of evidence recur: Halton's Runcorn transit site (≈14 pitches), which is an established stopping place on the network, and the new 10-pitch Middlewich transit site (opened Jan 2025). The Middlewich site is described as well-used and often full, indicating strong through-travel demand.

5.30 There are caveats. One contributor questions the Middlewich design (shared amenities are seen as unsuitable for families). Another notes that while the site is busy, those on roadside encampments don't always use it; some are moved on rather than diverted to transit.

5.31 On where new or additional transit should go, views cluster around the main movement corridors and hotspots: near motorway links (M6/M56) and the A55, with specific mentions of Ellesmere Port and Chester and broadly across Cheshire East and Cheshire West. The 2018 GTANA's guideline of 5–10 pitches for a transit site is cited as a reasonable scale, with sites best placed close to key routes so they function as genuine staging points. However, for any Council-managed transit site, suitable land availability will likely dictate location, as financial pressures may make purchasing new land challenging.

5.32 Overall, the evidence points to ongoing transit demand, anchored by Runcorn and Middlewich but with a case for additional, well-located capacity along the M56/A55 corridor. Any new provision should prioritise family-appropriate facilities and be supported by clear operational pathways so that roadside encampments are consistently offered transit

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alternatives. However, all roadside encampments are offered use of the transit site, and all have declined; those who do use the site generally pre-book in advance rather than arriving from roadside locations.

Access to services

5.33 Community and representative organisations, supported by local authority respondents, repeatedly identified the lack of a settled base as the main barrier to accessing services. Without an address, families struggle to register with GPs and dentists, receive correspondence, or maintain continuity of care and schooling. Several respondents therefore see the root solution as more authorised provision, both permanent and, where appropriate, transit – together with clearer recognition of need and timely site allocations.

5.34 Respondents, particularly community representatives, highlighted confidence and communication as secondary barriers to accessing services. Low literacy for some, limited awareness of what is available, and experiences of unconscious bias from some providers. These factors can deter contact even where services are technically open to everyone. One council notes that, in their area, agencies and schools are generally positive; however, others emphasise that frontline staff still need better understanding of Traveller cultures and work patterns.

5.35 Practical steps suggested include culturally competent training for service providers; simple, easy-read information; and named liaison officers who can help families navigate health, education and housing systems. Respondents also highlight using existing sites as gateways to support – e.g., the Middlewich transit site as a place to connect people quickly to health and education—and developing a cross-service engagement framework (an “operations group” model) so staff know how to respond consistently.

5.36 Travelling Showpeople are reported to face fewer access problems where they have established yards, but they still benefit from clear points of contact and flexible appointment systems. Overall, the message is that secure places to live plus informed, welcoming services remove most barriers; where that foundation is missing, ad-hoc solutions rarely provide stable access.

Cooperation and communication

5.37 Responses from different stakeholder groups were mixed and often polarised regarding cooperation and communication. While some contributors state that joint working—particularly around planning—is weak and that “most” permissions for new sites have been secured at appeal rather than through council approval, others contest this characterisation. Planning officers report that some agents are consistently slow to provide requested information or clarification during the application process. They note that several applications might have been approved, avoiding the need for appeal, had the necessary information been submitted in a timely manner.

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5.38 Local authority respondents and representative organisations highlighted pockets of good practice in multi-agency working. Halton is cited as proactive, with specialist officers and a positive approach to coordination. Respondents also highlight the value of a Gypsy and Traveller liaison officer role for day-to-day problem-solving and for linking planning, housing, education and enforcement. As an example of wider good practice, contributors highlight a sub-regional partnership involving Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire East Council, Warrington Borough Council, Halton Borough Council, the police, and voluntary and community sector organisations such as the Cheshire, Halton & Warrington Race and Equality Centre (CHAWREC) and Irish Community Care. This partnership, supported by an operational group and joint GTANA work, provides a strong platform for coordinated collaboration.

5.39 There is also the Cheshire & Warrington Traveller Team, a sub-regional service, hosted by Cheshire West and Chester Council, that brings together specialist local authority officers and police to manage Gypsy and Traveller issues consistently across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington. The team oversees unauthorised encampments, carries out welfare and impact assessments, supports management of authorised sites and temporary stopping places, and provides coordinated advice, enforcement and community liaison. It is widely viewed as an effective model of multi-agency working that promotes consistent practice and improves outcomes for both Traveller families and local communities.

5.40 Overall, the picture is of structures in place but uneven practice. Where a named liaison lead, clear protocols and a transit offer exist, relations with services work better; where these are absent, cases default to siloed planning disputes and, ultimately, to appeals.

5.41 Respondents across stakeholder groups suggested a range of practical improvements to strengthen cooperation and delivery, including resourcing and formalising the emerging multi-agency framework; keeping a single accountable lead officer and a “front door” for enquiries; routine pre-application case conferencing across planning, housing, education and health; learning loops from appeal decisions; and training for frontline teams on Traveller cultures and the current policy framework. Publishing simple joint key performance indicators (KPIs) and an annual summary of actions would help turn existing partnerships into consistently effective delivery. For example, multi-agency meeting KPIs could consist of a minimum number of partnership meetings per year; proportion of meetings attended by all core agencies (planning, housing, police, health, education); percentage of actions completed by the agreed deadline.

Good Practice

5.42 Respondents identified patchy but emerging examples of good practice across the study area. First, keep the GTANA current and robust. Respondents argue that an up-to-date assessment – using the latest definitions – forces more proactive delivery and prevents over-reliance on dated evidence when overcrowding and encampments indicate unmet need. However, it was noted that recent national policy changes – including multiple revisions to

the definition within a short period – have created delay and uncertainty, making it difficult for authorities to keep assessments fully up to date and complicating Local Plan preparation. Even so, an up-to-date assessment using the latest definitions is seen as essential to drive proactive delivery and reduce reliance on older evidence when overcrowding and encampments point to unmet need.

5.43 Local authority respondents and community representatives highlighted the value of provision that also acts as a gateway to services. Transit sites are cited as helpful not only for managing movement but also for connecting families quickly to health, education and welfare support (e.g., the new Middlewich site, and Halton's established provision). Where councils have secured external funding and delivered public pitches – such as the schemes at Winsford and Ellesmere Port – they're seen as positive exemplars.

5.44 Respondents emphasised the importance of organising effectively for delivery, including dedicated teams and joint working. Good practice includes: a dedicated Traveller team/liaison officer; a multi-agency framework spanning planning, housing, education, police and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) (with Cheshire authorities, CHAWREC and Irish Community Care named); and peer learning/benchmarking. Halton Borough Council reports that it often hosts other authorities to showcase how it works with Gypsy and Traveller communities, providing an opportunity to share its approaches and operational practice. Using council-owned land proactively has also helped bring forward sites in Cheshire East.

5.45 A small number of respondents noted that previous planning policy changes (December 2024) may create new opportunities (e.g., in constrained areas) if authorities apply them positively. Where these ingredients are missing, contributors could cite far more examples of bad practice than good – underscoring the value of a live GTANA, clear governance, and practical transit and permanent provision.

Summary

5.46 Consultations with councils and neighbouring authorities (April 2025) gathered qualitative evidence on Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople needs. Stakeholders highlighted recurring themes: an overall shortage of pitches/plots, difficulties accessing suitable land, patterns of travel and transit demand, access to services, and how agencies are (or are not) working together. Views inform the analysis that follows in the report.

5.47 Across responses from all stakeholder groups, the core pressure is new household formation – adult children wanting to live near family – now reinforced by some inward migration through kin networks. Where transit is limited, temporary stopping places and unmanaged encampments absorb demand. Travelling Showpeople face parallel shortages of yards that can also store and service equipment. Small, family-run private sites are the preferred form of provision; recent national policy changes and limited PDL in the Green Belt have unlocked some supply in places, but not always in the most sustainable locations.

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5.48 Delivery is hampered by thin land pipelines, Green Belt constraints, cost and risk (including appeals), public opposition, and, according to a planning agent, restrictive or inconsistently applied policies, i.e. planning rules are too tight or unevenly applied, making approvals harder. Also, the availability of suitable land is likely to dictate the location, as financial pressures may make purchasing new land challenging. Some allocations/permissions do not materialise, while suitable expansion land next to existing sites is scarce. Stakeholders therefore favour a two-track approach: modest intensification/extension of well-located sites, plus new small sites near services and along main corridors (M6/M56/A55); several suggest planning a margin above identified need to avoid persistent shortfalls.

5.49 Respondents consistently noted that access to services improves markedly where households have a settled base: without an address, families struggle with registration and continuity. Suggested fixes include culturally competent training, simple information, named liaison officers, and using transit/public sites as gateways to health and education. Joint working is uneven – some cite proactive practice (e.g., specialist liaison roles, sub-regional partnerships, Halton's approach), while others report reliance on appeals. Good practice centres on keeping the GTANA up to date, organising multi-agency delivery, securing/using council land where possible, and ensuring transit sites are family-appropriate and operationally integrated so roadside encampments are consistently offered alternatives.

6. Gypsies and Travellers consultation

Introduction

6.1 This chapter provides a snapshot of households residing in the study area at the time of the survey and an analysis of the need for current and future pitches across the study area. In doing so, it sets out the findings in relation to supply and need from consultation with Gypsies and Travellers and forms a core part of the evidence base underpinning the assessment of accommodation needs.

Methodology

6.2 Consultation focused on family composition per pitch, accommodation type and facilities, site condition, ownership and management arrangements, pitch occupancy, and current and future accommodation needs. The methodology adopted is described in earlier chapters and reflects established best practice. In summary, the authorities provided comprehensive data on the location, number, and planning status of known sites, which informed the consultation programme.

6.3 The location, status and occupancy of plots were verified through a combination of local authority records and site visits. All authorised sites, together with identified unauthorised developments, were visited between autumn 2025 and spring 2026. Sites where planning permission had lapsed, been refused or withdrawn, or where enforcement action had previously been undertaken, were also visited to confirm their current occupancy and use. In addition, sites identified by the local authorities as existing or proposed allocations within adopted and emerging Local Plans were inspected.

6.4 This approach ensured that the assessment of occupancy and accommodation need was informed by direct site evidence rather than relying solely on desk-based records. Wherever possible, consultation was undertaken directly with households. When this was not possible, information was obtained from neighbours, relatives, or site owners/managers. Where sufficient information could not be obtained during the initial visit, and contact details were unavailable to facilitate follow-up by telephone, up to two further visits were undertaken to maximise engagement.

6.5 Overall, this methodology provided sufficient information to assess the accommodation needs of 90% of pitches across the participating authorities, providing a robust evidence base for the assessment of current and future accommodation need.

6.6 Reasonable and proportionate efforts were made to engage Gypsy and Traveller households living in bricks-and-mortar accommodation. While some households were successfully consulted, the number of responses was not sufficient to support a statistically robust, interview-based calculation of need. In line with accepted practice, an alternative, transparent method was therefore used to assess the accommodation needs of households in bricks-and-mortar accommodation (see Step 14 below).

Existing Supply

6.7 Local authority-owned sites are located in three of the four authorities – Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Halton. However, most existing provision is privately owned. This includes a mix of small family sites and larger privately managed rental sites, reflecting the varied nature of supply across the study area.

6.8 Drawing on local authority data and site visits, the tables that follow set out the number of identified pitches in each authority by planning status. Across the four authorities, 374 pitches are located on authorised sites, with a further 12 pitches in Cheshire West and Chester with temporary planning permission. These figures represent the most up-to-date and verified position at the time of assessment.

6.9 Whilst this assessment acknowledges that the local authorities have actively sought, and continue to seek, to identify and allocate land through their Local Plans to meet identified need, it does not count such sites towards the supply available to meet that need where planning permission has not yet been granted. A Local Plan allocation establishes the principle of development but does not, in itself, provide certainty that a site will come forward, or that it will be delivered within the relevant plan period. Accordingly, until planning permission has been granted and there is sufficient evidence that a site is deliverable, it would not be appropriate to treat the proposed provision as contributing towards the identified supply. This approach avoids relying on potential or speculative future provision and ensures that the assessment is based on sites for which there is a reasonable degree of certainty of delivery.

6.10 Unauthorised pitches are not a homogeneous category. Some are currently, or have recently been, subject to planning enforcement action; others have pending or refused planning applications; and some are identified as allocations within adopted or emerging local plans. This distinction is important in interpreting existing supply and in understanding the extent to which unauthorised provision may transition into authorised supply over time.

6.11 Transit provision is available in three of the four authorities - Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Halton. In addition, land at Warrington, while not formally designated as a transit site, is used in practice to meet transit needs. This reflects how transit provision operates on the ground and has been considered in assessing the adequacy of current provision.

Table 6.1 Gypsy and Traveller pitches with permanent planning permission

Authority	Occupied	Vacant	Potential	Total
Cheshire East	107	6	10	123
Cheshire West and Chester	133	4	0	137
Halton	55	0	0	55
Warrington	55	0	4	59
Study Area Total	350	10	14	374

Source: GTANA 2026

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Table 6.2 Gypsy and Traveller pitches without permanent planning permission

Authority	Temporary	Unauthorised
Cheshire East	0	26
Cheshire West and Chester	12	38
Halton	0	0
Warrington	0	25
Study Area Total	12	89

Source: GTANA 2026

Table 6.3 Gypsy and Traveller transit pitches

Authority	Locations	Pitches
Cheshire East	3	24
Cheshire West and Chester	4	20*
Halton	1	14
Warrington	0	0
Study Area Total	8	58

Source: GTANA 2026 (*including 10 on unauthorised developments)

Consultation

6.12 Consultation was undertaken with Gypsy and Traveller households residing across Cheshire to establish current levels of accommodation provision and need, validate information relating to site occupancy, and gain a detailed understanding of households' experiences, aspirations and future accommodation requirements. The consultation forms a key part of the evidence base and provides important context on the resident population's characteristics, patterns of occupation, household formation, and factors influencing accommodation choices.

Current Occupancy and Demographic Characteristics

6.13 The consultation confirmed that the resident Gypsy and Traveller population across Cheshire is comprised predominantly of households identifying as Irish Travellers and Romany Gypsies. While each community has its own distinct history, traditions, and cultural practices, both groups emphasised the importance of family networks, maintaining cultural identity, and having access to accommodation that enables them to live in a manner consistent with their cultural preferences. Respondents consistently highlighted the importance of having a secure base from which to maintain family, social, educational and employment connections across Cheshire and the wider region.

6.14 The demographic profile of households reflects a well-established and largely settled population. Many households reported living in Cheshire for extended periods, with some families having longstanding connections to particular sites, settlements and local communities spanning several generations. A significant proportion of respondents indicated that they were either born in Cheshire or had close family members living elsewhere in the county. These findings suggest that accommodation needs are mainly driven by the existing resident population rather than by significant inward migration from outside the area.

6.15 Household structures varied considerably across the study area and included single-person households, couples, nuclear families and larger extended family groups. Multi-generational

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living arrangements were common, with many sites accommodating parents, children and grandchildren either on the same pitch or on neighbouring pitches. In some cases, sites accommodated four generations of the same family. These arrangements reflect the cultural importance placed upon family cohesion, mutual support and intergenerational living, and have important implications for future accommodation requirements, particularly in relation to household growth and the need for additional pitches arising from family formation.

6.16 The age profile of residents ranged from newborns to older persons aged over 80, demonstrating the diversity of the resident population. The substantial numbers of children and young people are particularly significant from a planning perspective, as they indicate an ongoing need for additional accommodation arising from household formation over the Local Plan period. Households consistently reported a desire for younger generations to remain within existing family networks, meaning future accommodation needs are likely to concentrate near existing sites and established communities.

6.17 The consultation identified a number of concealed or hidden households residing within larger family units. These typically comprised adult children, couples or families who would prefer to establish independent accommodation but remain living with relatives due to a lack of available pitches, affordability constraints or the absence of suitable alternative accommodation. In many cases, concealed households delayed forming independent households despite having reached an age when this would traditionally occur. The presence of concealed households is a significant indicator of unmet accommodation need and shows the pressure existing capacity constraints place on some families.

6.18 Overcrowding was identified on a number of sites and was frequently linked to concealed households and limited opportunities for site expansion. Households reported that while extended family living arrangements can provide important support networks, overcrowding can create practical difficulties relating to privacy, storage, parking, amenity space, and accommodating growing families. Several households indicated that they would need additional pitches within the next five years to accommodate adult children and newly forming households who wish to remain within existing family networks.

6.19 The evidence suggests that the Gypsy and Traveller population across Cheshire exhibits a high degree of residential stability. Most households expressed a strong preference to remain in the county and, where possible, on their existing site or close to family members. This preference was influenced by established family networks, access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities and long-standing social connections. Respondents frequently stated that remaining close to family was a higher priority than moving to alternative accommodation elsewhere, even where that accommodation may otherwise be suitable.

6.20 The findings also highlight the interconnected nature of Gypsy and Traveller communities across Cheshire. Many households reported family connections extending across multiple local authority areas within the county and, in some cases, into neighbouring authorities. Consequently, accommodation needs cannot always be viewed solely within individual

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administrative boundaries. Households frequently move short distances to remain close to relatives or to access accommodation opportunities within established family networks. This demonstrates the importance of considering accommodation needs and migration patterns at a wider sub-regional level, whilst recognising that most movement occurs within Cheshire rather than between Cheshire and more distant areas.

6.21 Overall, the consultation demonstrates that the Gypsy and Traveller population across Cheshire is characterised by strong family networks, long-standing local connections and a high degree of residential permanence. The principal demographic drivers of future accommodation need are the growth and changing circumstances of the existing resident population, particularly newly forming households, concealed households and households experiencing overcrowding. These findings reinforce the importance of ensuring future accommodation provision can meet locally arising needs and is delivered in locations that enable households to maintain established family, social and community connections.

Accommodation

6.22 The assessment found that not all Gypsy and Traveller households residing within the study area occupy their pitches throughout the year. While most households use their pitches as their main residence for most of the year, some continue to travel for employment, cultural, or family reasons and use their pitch as a permanent base to which they regularly return. Notwithstanding differing travel patterns, all households consulted identified access to a permanent pitch as fundamental to meeting their accommodation needs and maintaining their cultural identity and way of life.

6.23 The findings demonstrate a high degree of residential permanence and attachment to existing sites. Many households had occupied their pitches since the sites were first established, and in several cases, respondents had been born and raised there. Strong family and community networks were evident, with most households expressing a clear preference to remain living alongside, or in close proximity to, extended family members. Except for four households that expressed interest in moving into conventional housing, no households indicated a desire or intention to relocate. This reflects both the suitability of existing sites for meeting household needs and the importance placed on maintaining established family connections.

6.24 Household composition varied considerably across the study area. Household sizes ranged from single-person households to extended-family households comprising more than 10 individuals. Occupants included people of all ages, from newborns to older adults aged over 80. As a result, sites accommodated a diverse range of household structures, including single-generation households and family groups spanning three or four generations. This diversity has implications for future accommodation needs, particularly regarding household growth and the need for younger family members to access pitches within established family networks.

6.25 The size, layout and functionality of pitches varied significantly across the study area. At one end of the spectrum, some pitches provided space for only a caravan and vehicle, while others accommodated multiple caravans, parking areas, storage facilities, amenity buildings, and private garden space. Access to adequate space was consistently identified as an important component of suitable accommodation, enabling households to meet day-to-day living requirements and cultural preferences, including accommodating visiting family members, storing equipment, and maintaining a degree of self-sufficiency.

6.26 Site layouts also varied considerably. Some sites operated on an open-plan basis, with no clearly defined pitch boundaries, reflecting long-established family occupation and informal site arrangements. Others incorporated clearly demarcated pitches separated by fences, walls or gates. The assessment considered the extent to which sites provided an appropriate living environment, including pitch definition, circulation space, safety, and the maintenance of appropriate separation distances between caravans.

6.27 Overall, households reported high levels of satisfaction with both the location and condition of their accommodation. The ability to reside within established family networks, together with access to adequate space and appropriate facilities, was consistently identified as the key factor underpinning residential satisfaction. Most households regarded home ownership, particularly on family-owned sites, as the preferred accommodation option, providing security, independence, and the opportunity to live alongside relatives. Where ownership was not achievable, privately rented sites were generally viewed as the most desirable alternative. Households' principal concern was overcrowding and the resulting pressure on available space. Other concerns included the need for repairs, maintenance and infrastructure improvements, particularly on some local authority-managed sites.

6.28 Households residing on unauthorised developments reported that the absence of permanent planning permission created uncertainty and acted as a barrier to investment in site improvements. Respondents expressed concern that expenditure on facilities, landscaping, or infrastructure could be lost if planning permission were refused or enforcement action were taken. Some households on authorised sites raised similar issues, but in these cases, financial constraints and limited space were more commonly identified as barriers to improvement. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of secure tenure, planning certainty and adequate pitch provision in supporting the long-term sustainability of sites and enabling households to invest in accommodation that meets their current and future needs.

Use and Access of Services

6.29 Access to local services and facilities was identified as an important component of suitable accommodation. In addition to requiring sufficient space and appropriate on-site facilities, households consistently highlighted the importance of access to healthcare, education, shops, and other day-to-day services. The findings indicate that most households regularly use local services and facilities and are generally well integrated into the communities in which they reside. This was particularly evident in relation to primary healthcare and education, where households often had long-established relationships with local providers.

6.30 One family currently seeking accommodation within the study area emphasised the importance of remaining in the local area because of the support networks established through local schools, healthcare providers, and wider community services. Maintaining continuity of access to these services was regarded as essential for both adults and children within the household. The family indicated that relocation outside the area could result in the loss of important support mechanisms and potentially have a detrimental impact on well-being, educational continuity and access to healthcare.

6.31 The research found that households generally place a high value on access to healthcare services, particularly GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists and specialist services. Households with school-age children also considered access to education important, both for educational attainment and for children's opportunities to develop social networks within the local community. Retail facilities, including supermarkets and convenience stores, were regarded as important to daily life, although respondents generally considered these services to be sufficiently accessible, provided they could be reached by private vehicle.

6.32 Whilst access to services was viewed positively, attitudes towards proximity varied. Unlike the settled population, households generally did not consider walking-distance access to facilities a key requirement when assessing accommodation suitability. Instead, respondents placed greater emphasis on having access to a suitable pitch, adequate space and the ability to live alongside or close to family members. Most households indicated that they were willing to travel to access services, provided that journeys remained practical and affordable.

6.33 The assessment identified transport as the principal factor influencing accessibility. Most households rely on private vehicles to access healthcare, education, employment opportunities, shops and other services. Consequently, sites with good access to the local highway network were generally considered to offer satisfactory access to services, even when facilities were not nearby. This finding reflects the predominantly rural nature of some locations and the mobility patterns of many Gypsy and Traveller households.

6.34 The main barriers to accessing services are related to the availability of transport, age, disability, ill-health and financial constraints. Older persons, households with disabilities and those without access to a private vehicle reported experiencing greater difficulties in accessing healthcare appointments, shopping facilities and other essential services. In some cases, limited public transport provision, particularly in rural locations, compounded these difficulties. Households also highlighted that public transport services are not always well aligned with appointment times or the locations of specialist services.

6.35 Despite these barriers, the research found that family and community support networks play a significant role in facilitating access to services. Many households reported relying on relatives, neighbours and wider family networks for transport, childcare, assistance with appointments and support during periods of ill-health. These informal support arrangements were often viewed as more important than proximity to services themselves and were a key reason why households wished to remain within established family networks.

6.36 The findings suggest that barriers to service access can be mitigated through a combination of appropriate site location, improved transport connectivity and continued engagement between service providers and Gypsy and Traveller communities. Sites located within a reasonable travelling distance of key services, or with good access to the strategic and local road network, are likely to provide the greatest level of accessibility. In addition, outreach provision, mobile services, flexible appointment arrangements, and targeted engagement by healthcare, education, and support agencies can help overcome barriers experienced by more vulnerable households.

6.37 Overall, the evidence indicates that access to services and facilities is an important consideration when assessing site suitability and future provision. However, households consistently placed greater weight on access to secure accommodation within established family and community networks than on proximity to individual services. This reflects the central role that family support structures play in sustaining wellbeing, facilitating access to services and maintaining cultural identity. Consequently, future site provision should seek to balance the need for reasonable access to services with the equally important requirement to enable households to reside within, or close to, established family networks.

Education

6.38 Education was regarded as an important aspect of family life by the households consulted. Respondents frequently commented on the increasing value placed on education within Gypsy and Traveller communities, particularly in relation to literacy, numeracy, life skills, vocational training and the attainment of qualifications that may enhance future employment opportunities. At the same time, households emphasised the importance of ensuring that younger generations continue to learn and maintain the cultural traditions, values and practical skills associated with their heritage and way of life. The findings suggest that households generally view educational attainment and cultural identity as complementary rather than competing priorities. Households residing on sites without permanent planning permission also highlighted the importance of educational continuity, noting that access to secure accommodation on a permanent site would help minimise disruption to their children's education and support longer-term educational outcomes.

6.39 Households whose children did not attend school were asked about the factors influencing their decisions. The findings indicate that primary school attendance was common among the households consulted, reflecting a broad recognition of the importance of early years and primary education. Attitudes towards secondary education varied more. Some households commented that participation in secondary education is becoming increasingly common within Gypsy and Traveller communities, reflecting changing aspirations and the growing importance of formal qualifications. However, other households continued the traditional practice of withdrawing children from school around age 11. The principal reasons cited for non-attendance at school were experiences or concerns relating to bullying and discrimination, a preference for home education, and adherence to cultural traditions and family expectations. These findings highlight the need for education providers and support agencies to continue working with Gypsy and Traveller families to address barriers to

participation, promote inclusive educational environments and support positive educational outcomes whilst respecting cultural identity and individual household preferences.

Employment

6.40 Employment and economic participation were identified as important factors influencing both accommodation choices and travelling patterns. Households explained that access to employment opportunities is a key consideration when deciding where to reside and whether to travel. Whilst many households preferred to remain in the local area, respondents noted that they may travel for work when sufficient employment opportunities are not available locally or when particular types of work require a wider geographical catchment.

6.41 The findings indicate that self-employment remains an important characteristic of the local Gypsy and Traveller community. Many households reported operating their own businesses or working on a self-employed basis, reflecting long-established patterns of economic activity within Gypsy and Traveller communities. Traditional forms of employment included horse dealing and related activities, scrap metal and recycling work, tree surgery, gardening, landscaping, fencing, groundworks, building and construction trades, vehicle maintenance and market trading. However, respondents also highlighted the increasing diversification of employment activities, with some household members employed in a range of occupations within the mainstream labour market.

6.42 In addition to traditional occupations, household members were employed in sectors including construction, transport and logistics, manufacturing, retail, public services and administrative roles. The research suggests that younger generations are increasingly seeking formal qualifications and vocational training, enabling access to a broader range of employment opportunities than those traditionally associated with Gypsy and Traveller communities. Respondents frequently noted that educational attainment is becoming increasingly important for future employment prospects and economic resilience.

6.43 Employment status across the study area was mixed, with households comprising a combination of self-employed workers, employees, retired persons, carers and individuals not currently in employment. In many cases, economic activity was undertaken on a family basis, with several members of the same household or extended family contributing to family businesses and enterprises. This often reinforced the importance of living close to family members and maintaining access to sites with sufficient space for vehicles, equipment, materials, and business-related activities.

6.44 The location of employment varied considerably depending on the nature of the work undertaken. Some households worked predominantly within the local area, whilst others travelled throughout the wider sub-region, region or nationally. Households engaged in construction, landscaping, horse-related activities and other self-employed trades were particularly likely to travel for work, often following available contracts or seasonal demand. Consequently, good access to the strategic and local highway network was regarded as an important factor contributing to the suitability of accommodation.

6.45 Seasonal variations in employment were also evident. Households engaged in landscaping, gardening, agricultural activities, outdoor construction work and certain trading activities reported fluctuations in workload throughout the year, with higher levels of activity typically occurring during the spring and summer months. In response, some households worked across a wider geographical area during peak periods or supplemented their income through alternative activities during quieter periods.

6.46 Whilst travelling for work remains an important feature of economic activity for some households, respondents consistently reported that employment-related travel is generally less common than it was for previous generations. This was attributed to a range of factors, including changing labour market conditions, increased regulation, the availability of local employment opportunities, rising travel costs and a greater emphasis on ensuring continuity in children's education. As a result, many households now seek to balance the flexibility of self-employment and travel with the benefits of maintaining a stable residential base.

6.47 Overall, the findings indicate that secure accommodation plays an important role in supporting economic participation. Access to an authorised pitch provides households with a stable base from which to access employment opportunities, operate businesses, store equipment and vehicles, and respond flexibly to changing work patterns. Future site provision should therefore recognise the importance of supporting both traditional and contemporary forms of employment and should, where possible, be located in areas that provide reasonable access to employment opportunities and the wider transport network.

Travel

6.48 The research found that travelling remains an important component of Gypsy and Traveller culture and identity, although the extent and nature of travelling varies considerably between households. Respondents consistently emphasised that travelling should not be viewed as the sole defining characteristic of their way of life and that many households now spend most of the year residing on permanent or semi-permanent sites. They generally travelled for cultural, social, family and, to a lesser extent, economic reasons. Many households reported travelling less frequently and for shorter periods than previous generations, reflecting broader changes in employment patterns, educational participation and accommodation circumstances.

6.49 Households identified a range of factors that influence their ability and willingness to travel. The most commonly cited barriers included limited availability of authorised stopping places, difficulty securing temporary places to stay, the risk of being moved on from unauthorised locations, rising fuel and travel costs, and concerns about access to healthcare and education while away from their permanent base. Several households commented that these factors have made travelling increasingly difficult and have contributed to a reduction in the amount of travelling undertaken compared with previous generations.

6.50 Amongst households who continue to travel, the principal reasons cited were to maintain family and community connections, attend cultural and social events, take holidays and

continue traditions associated with their cultural heritage and way of life. These activities were generally undertaken temporarily, with households returning to their permanent pitch after periods of travel. The findings therefore indicate that travelling and having a permanent residential base are not mutually exclusive and are often complementary aspects of contemporary Gypsy and Traveller lifestyles.

6.51 Households residing on unauthorised developments identified additional factors influencing their travelling patterns. In particular, some households reported that travelling was not always a matter of choice, but was linked to a lack of suitable accommodation opportunities, the absence of available pitches and limited site provision within the area. As a result, some households had experienced periods of mobility or temporary residence while seeking a permanent and secure place to live.

6.52 Economic activity remains a factor influencing travel patterns, although its significance appears to have reduced over time. Households reported travelling for work associated with activities such as horse dealing, building and construction trades, landscaping, gardening and maintenance services. However, respondents consistently noted that fewer households now travel for employment purposes than in previous generations. This was attributed to changing employment patterns, greater opportunities for locally based work, increasing business regulation and a stronger emphasis on ensuring that children can access consistent educational provision.

6.53 Looking forward, most households indicated that they expected travelling to continue to form part of their way of life, albeit generally on a more limited and intermittent basis than in the past. Most anticipated retaining a permanent residential base while continuing to travel periodically for cultural, social, family and recreational purposes. The findings therefore suggest that future accommodation provision should recognise the continuing importance of travelling whilst also acknowledging the growing demand for secure, permanent pitches that provide a stable base from which households can travel when desired.

6.54 The assessment found strong connections between households and the local area. These connections primarily came from long-standing family networks, employment opportunities, children's education, access to healthcare, and established community relationships. Many households had lived in the area for extended periods, and in some cases for multiple generations. Respondents frequently stated that remaining close to family members was a key factor influencing their residential preferences and future accommodation requirements

6.55 Migration into and out of the study area was found to be relatively limited. Most households expressed a preference to remain within the area or nearby, reflecting the importance of maintaining established family and support networks. Where movement does occur, it is typically associated with household formation, marriage, the need for additional accommodation within family networks, employment opportunities or the search for suitable authorised pitches. The evidence therefore suggests that future accommodation needs are

likely to arise predominantly from the growth and changing circumstances of existing households rather than from substantial levels of in-migration from outside the sub-region.

Transit Provision

6.56 In relation to transit provision, households generally expressed support for a negotiated stopping approach as a practical and proportionate means of meeting the temporary accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers visiting the area, whilst helping to reduce the incidence and impact of unauthorised encampments. Respondents considered that a negotiated stopping arrangement, whereby households are permitted to stay at suitable locations for an agreed and limited period subject to appropriate management arrangements, could provide a more effective and constructive response than repeated enforcement action. Some households also suggested that, where appropriate, the provision of basic facilities would help ensure that such arrangements operate effectively. In addition, households residing on permanent sites highlighted the importance of being able to accommodate visiting family members and friends on a temporary basis, reflecting the significance of maintaining family and community networks within Gypsy and Traveller culture.

6.57 Households expressed significant concern regarding the implications of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, particularly in relation to the increased powers available to address unauthorised encampments and unauthorised developments. Many respondents felt that the legislation has increased the vulnerability of households who are unable to access authorised accommodation and has heightened the need for local authorities to ensure that sufficient authorised permanent and transit provision is available. Households argued that enforcement measures should be accompanied by the provision of appropriate accommodation alternatives and emphasised the importance of addressing the underlying causes of unauthorised encampments, including the shortage of permanent pitches and temporary stopping places. As part of the consultation, households were asked whether there was a need for additional transit provision within the study area, including dedicated transit sites and/or a negotiated stopping approach, in order to better meet the accommodation needs of travelling households and those visiting the area.

Accommodation Need

6.58 The assessment identified a range of current and future accommodation needs arising from the existing Gypsy and Traveller population residing within the study area. These needs arise from households residing on unauthorised developments (including tolerated sites without permanent planning permission), newly forming households requiring independent accommodation, concealed and overcrowded households residing on existing pitches, households requiring larger pitches to meet their accommodation needs, and households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation who wish to move to culturally appropriate site-based accommodation. Households and stakeholders consistently emphasised that accommodation needs exist across all sectors of the Gypsy and Traveller community and should not be limited solely to those currently residing on sites. Accordingly, this assessment seeks to identify objectively assessed accommodation needs based on household circumstances, cultural preferences and living arrangements, rather than expressions of demand alone.

6.59 The evidence indicates that residential mobility within the Gypsy and Traveller community is generally low and that there is a strong preference for residential stability. Most households expressed a desire to remain on their existing site or, where a move is necessary, to relocate within the local area and in close proximity to family members. The principal drivers of future accommodation need include household growth, marriage and family formation, overcrowding, concealed households, welfare and health considerations, the need for increased independence amongst adult children, and the desire to secure accommodation with permanent planning permission. Only a small number of households indicated a preference for conventional housing, with the overwhelming majority seeking site-based accommodation that enables them to maintain their cultural identity and family networks.

6.60 Family and community connections were found to be the dominant factor influencing accommodation preferences and residential mobility. Respondents consistently highlighted the importance of residing close to extended family members who provide practical assistance, childcare, transport, emotional support and care for older or vulnerable relatives. These support networks play a significant role in sustaining household wellbeing and reducing reliance on formal support services. As a consequence, households generally preferred accommodation within existing family networks rather than alternative provision elsewhere within the authority area or wider sub-region.

6.61 The assessment found that accommodation needs are closely linked to demographic change within the existing resident population. As children reach adulthood and form independent households, additional accommodation is required to allow younger generations to remain within established family networks. Households consistently reported that the inability to access additional pitches can result in concealed households, overcrowding and, in some cases, unauthorised development. The findings therefore indicate that future accommodation needs are likely to be driven predominantly by endogenous growth within the existing population rather than by substantial in-migration from outside the area.

6.62 Newly forming households identified through the assessment generally expressed a preference for site-based accommodation rather than conventional housing. Most indicated a desire to remain at their existing family site or at a nearby site in the local area. Owner-occupation was generally the preferred tenure where achievable, although respondents also recognised the important role of private rented and local authority-managed provision in meeting the needs of households unable to access private land. The majority of newly forming households requiring accommodation over the next five years identified a need for a single-family pitch capable of accommodating a mobile home, touring caravan, parking and associated amenity space.

6.63 A significant proportion of identified accommodation need is associated with households whose existing accommodation no longer adequately meets their requirements. This includes concealed households residing within larger family units, households experiencing overcrowding, and households residing on pitches that lack sufficient space to accommodate additional caravans, vehicles or family members. In many cases, households reported that

existing arrangements are sustainable only in the short term and that they will need additional accommodation within the next five years to prevent further overcrowding and potential unauthorised development.

6.64 The research identified strong support for the expansion of existing family sites where appropriate and achievable. Many households viewed extending established sites as the most sustainable way to meet future accommodation needs because it allows younger generations to remain within existing family networks while minimising disruption to education, employment and support arrangements. Several site owners indicated they have land that could accommodate additional pitches, while others reported exploring opportunities to acquire land for future development. However, households recognised that delivering such provision depends on planning, environmental, infrastructure, and financial considerations.

6.65 The availability and affordability of suitable land were identified as the principal barriers to meeting accommodation needs. Respondents frequently reported difficulty identifying land that is both available and likely to obtain planning permission. Concerns were also raised regarding land values, development costs, infrastructure requirements and the uncertainty associated with the planning process. Some households indicated that they would benefit from greater support in identifying suitable sites, understanding planning policy requirements and navigating the planning application process.

6.66 Affordability considerations varied according to tenure aspirations and household circumstances. Whilst owner-occupation was widely viewed as the preferred option, many households acknowledged that the costs of purchasing land, securing planning permission, and developing a site are beyond the reach of some families. Consequently, respondents highlighted the importance of maintaining a range of accommodation options, including local authority-managed pitches and private rented provision, to ensure that future accommodation needs can be met across different income groups and household types.

6.67 Overcrowding emerged as one of the most significant accommodation issues identified through the assessment. Overcrowding was typically associated with concealed households, growing families and the limited capacity of existing pitches to accommodate changing household circumstances. Households reported that overcrowding can adversely affect privacy, family relationships, wellbeing and living conditions. It can also contribute to unauthorised development where households seek to meet accommodation needs that cannot be met on existing sites. Conversely, there was little evidence of significant under-occupation, with most pitches being utilised efficiently and often operating close to their practical capacity.

6.68 The assessment also identified accommodation needs arising from households residing in bricks and mortar accommodation. Respondents highlighted a range of reasons for seeking to move to site-based accommodation, including cultural preference, a desire to live closer to family members, the wish to maintain a traditional way of life and dissatisfaction with

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housing environments that they felt did not adequately meet their cultural needs. Stakeholders similarly emphasised that accommodation needs arising from households residing in conventional housing should be recognised when planning for future provision.

6.69 Information relating to local authority waiting lists and housing registers was reviewed as part of the assessment. While such data can provide useful context on expressed interest in accommodation, it has not been used as a direct measure of need. Waiting list data can be affected by multiple registrations, households applying across several authorities, and delays in removing households whose circumstances have changed. Consequently, reliance on waiting list data alone risks both double-counting and overestimating accommodation requirements. The accommodation needs identified in this assessment are therefore derived from direct consultation with households and detailed analysis of their current and future accommodation circumstances.

6.70 Overall, the evidence demonstrates that future accommodation requirements are driven primarily by the needs of the existing resident population, particularly newly forming households, concealed households, overcrowded households, households residing on unauthorised developments and households seeking to move from bricks and mortar accommodation to culturally appropriate site-based provision. The findings highlight the importance of maintaining a deliverable supply of authorised pitches and ensuring that future provision is located in areas that enable households to sustain established family networks, access services and employment opportunities, and maintain their cultural identity. Failure to address these needs is likely to perpetuate overcrowding, increase pressure for unauthorised development and undermine the ability of the Local Plan to provide for the identified accommodation requirements of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

Accommodation Need 2026-2031[18]

6.71 The need for residential pitches in the study area is assessed according to a 14-step process, based on the model suggested in the former DCLG (2007) guidance and supplemented by data derived from the survey. Although originally set out in DCLG (2007), the 14-step model remains the most widely used and Inspector-tested framework for assessing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need and has been applied here using up-to-date survey, Census and administrative data to ensure a robust and transparent assessment.

6.72 The results of this are shown in Table 6.4 below, while the subsequent section contains explanations of the sourcing and calculation of figures for each step. The table focuses on the first five-year period, as this represents the core assessment timeframe set out in DCLG (2007) guidance, for which survey data and supply assumptions are most robust. Longer-term need is addressed separately through projections later in the report. Calculations for each individual authority are set out in the appendices.

[18] Please note that due to rounding column totals may differ slightly from row totals

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Table 6.4 Estimate of the need for permanent residential site pitches: 2026-2031

1) Current occupied permanent residential site pitches	350
Current residential supply	
2) Number of unused residential pitches available	10
3) Net number of households on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	8
4) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	7
5) Residential pitches planned to be built or to be brought back into use in next 5 years	14
Total Additional Supply	39
Current residential need	
6) Seeking permanent permission from temporary sites	12
7) Households (on pitches) seeking residential pitches in the area, excluding those counted as moving due to overcrowding in step 11	0
8) Households on transit pitches requiring residential pitches in the area	0
9) Households on unauthorised encampments requiring residential pitches	0
10) Households on unauthorised developments requiring residential pitches	89
11) Households currently overcrowded (or hidden family members) on pitches seeking residential pitches in the area.	46
12) Net new households expected to arrive from elsewhere	8
13) New family formations expected to arise from within existing households	47
14) Households in housing but with a need for a pitch	25
Total Identified Need	227
Balance of Need and Supply	
Total Additional Pitch Requirement	188

Source: GTANA 2026

Requirement for residential pitches 2026-2031: steps of the calculation

6.73 Information from the Councils and the 2021 Census, plus evidence from the survey, was used to inform the calculations, including:

- The number of Gypsies and Travellers housed in bricks and mortar accommodation
- The number of existing Gypsy and Traveller pitches
- The number of families residing on unauthorised encampments requiring accommodation (and surveyed during the survey period)
- The number of unauthorised developments (during the survey period)
- The number of temporary pitches
- The number of vacant pitches
- The number of planned or potential new pitches
- The number of transit pitches

6.74 The remainder of this chapter describes both the process and results of the Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs calculations.

Supply of pitches

Step 1: Current occupied permanent site pitches

6.75 The assessment identifies a total of 350 occupied permanent pitches within the study area. This figure is derived from information provided by the Council and has been verified through fieldwork and site visits undertaken as part of the assessment process. The total relates to authorised permanent residential pitches that were occupied at the time of the consultation work and serves as the baseline for assessing existing provision within the study area.

6.76 The identification of the current occupied pitch stock is an important component of the wider GTANA methodology, as it establishes the scale and distribution of existing authorised provision against which future accommodation needs and supply can be assessed. The assessment has sought to ensure that the figure is robust by triangulating multiple evidence sources, including local authority records, direct site observation, and engagement with households and site representatives where appropriate.

6.77 The occupied pitch total also provides an important contextual indicator regarding the scale of the resident Gypsy and Traveller population within the study area and assists in understanding issues such as household formation, overcrowding, turnover and future demand for pitches over the plan period. The figure, therefore, forms a key evidential component of the overall accommodation needs assessment.

Step 2: Number of unused residential pitches available

6.78 The assessment identifies 10 vacant residential pitches within the study area at the time of the fieldwork. These pitches are considered available for immediate or short-term occupation and therefore contribute to the existing supply of authorised pitches within the study area. The identification of vacant pitches was informed by site observations during fieldwork and, where necessary, corroborated through local authority records and discussions with site occupants or site managers.

6.79 Vacant pitches are treated as part of the available supply because they represent pitches that can accommodate households without the need for additional planning permissions or new site provision. Their inclusion within the supply calculation reflects standard GTANA practice and ensures that the assessment takes account of existing capacity within the authorised site network before identifying requirements for additional provision.

6.80 The assessment has adopted a cautious and evidence-led approach in identifying vacant pitches. Only pitches that were clearly unoccupied and considered available for residential use have been included within this category. Pitches that were derelict, unavailable, occupied for storage purposes or otherwise unsuitable for occupation were excluded unless there was clear evidence that they would be brought back into residential use during the assessment period.

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Step 3: Number of family units in site accommodation expressing a desire to leave the study area

6.81 The household consultation identified 8 households currently residing on authorised pitches within the study area who indicated that they expected to leave the area during the assessment period. Please note that the identified supply is based solely on households that completed the household survey and the information they provided. The departure of these households would be expected to release their existing pitches for occupation by other Gypsy and Traveller households. On this basis, the assessment identifies a resulting supply of 8 pitches arising from household out-migration from the study area.

6.82 This element of supply reflects anticipated turnover within the existing pitch stock and is based on directly evidenced household intentions identified through the consultation process, rather than assumptions regarding general mobility or vacancy rates. The approach therefore ensures that the supply calculation is grounded in identified household circumstances and intentions rather than speculative assumptions regarding future pitch availability.

6.83 The inclusion of pitches expected to become available through out-migration is consistent with established GTANA methodology and reflects the practical operation of authorised sites, whereby pitches vacated by departing households are typically reoccupied by other Gypsy and Traveller households. As such, these pitches are considered capable of contributing to the future supply of authorised accommodation within the study area over the assessment period.

Step 4: Number of family units in site accommodation expressing a desire to live in housing

6.84 This component of supply is informed directly by the findings of the household consultation and reflects anticipated household movements within the study area over the next five years. The assessment assumes that households currently residing on pitches who indicate an intention to relocate either to another site within the study area – including through the development of their own site – or into bricks-and-mortar accommodation (Step 4), together with households occupying overcrowded pitches who express a preference to move into conventional housing (Step 11), will be able to do so within the relevant time period. On this basis, the assessment identifies a potential supply of 7 pitches. Please note that the identified supply is based solely on households that completed the household survey and the information they provided.

6.85 The approach reflects standard GTANA practice and is based on the reasonable assumption that where a household vacates an existing pitch, that pitch is likely to become available for occupation by another Gypsy or Traveller household. Accordingly, the movement of households either into housing or onto alternative sites does not entirely remove need from the system; rather, it creates turnover within the existing stock of pitches. The resulting availability of pitches is therefore treated as an additional supply source in the assessment.

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6.86 This approach is considered proportionate and robust, as it is grounded in identified household intentions rather than theoretical assumptions regarding pitch turnover. It also reflects the practical operation of many authorised sites, where vacated pitches are commonly reoccupied by other households, including concealed or emerging households, households on waiting lists, or households seeking to move from less suitable accommodation. The calculation, therefore, is an important component of the overall assessment of future pitch availability and helps ensure that the identified level of need is not overstated by omitting likely pitch recycling within the existing site network.

Step 5: Residential pitches planned to be built or brought back into use

6.87 There are 14 pitches in the study area that are expected to be built or brought back into use during the first 5-year period. This component of supply is informed by a combination of local authority records and site assessments undertaken during fieldwork visits. The pitches identified within this category are classified as 'potential' pitches. These comprise pitches that have already been granted planning permission but which had not yet been fully developed or occupied at the time of the assessment. The category also includes pitches that are only partially developed, as well as pitches that were previously occupied but are currently vacant and require redevelopment or refurbishment before they can be brought back into active use.

6.88 The inclusion of these pitches within the supply calculation reflects the reasonable expectation that they will become available for occupation during the assessment period, particularly where planning consent is already in place and there is evidence of intended delivery or reoccupation. On this basis, the assessment identifies a total of 14 potential pitches within the study area that are expected to be developed, completed or brought back into use during the first five years of the plan period.

6.89 This approach is considered proportionate and robust within the context of the assessment, as it recognises committed sources of future supply while avoiding reliance on speculative or unidentified provision. It also reflects standard GTANA practice in distinguishing between pitches that are deliverable within the short term and those which remain uncertain or aspirational.

Need for pitches

Step 6: Seeking permanent permission from temporary sites

6.90 There are 12 pitches with temporary permission. This component of the assessment considers households residing on pitches with temporary planning permission that is due to expire between 2026 and 2031. The analysis is informed by local authority records relating to the planning status and duration of consent for authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches within the study area.

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6.91 The assessment is based on the reasonable assumption that households residing on pitches with temporary permission will continue to require accommodation within the study area following the expiry of that permission, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary. In circumstances where temporary permissions expire and are not renewed or regularised through permanent consent, the households concerned would continue to generate accommodation need requiring alternative authorised provision.

6.92 At the time of the assessment, however, there were no pitches within the study area with temporary planning permission due to expire during the 2026–2031 period. As such, this element does not contribute to the identified level of accommodation need within the study area.

6.93 This approach is consistent with established GTANA methodology and reflects the importance of considering the planning status and long-term security of existing pitches when assessing future accommodation requirements and the sustainability of authorised provision within the Local Plan area.

Step 7: Family units on pitches seeking residential pitches in the study area

6.94 This component of accommodation need is informed directly by the household consultation evidence and relates to family units who indicated that they either needed, or were likely, to move from their existing accommodation within the next five years. The assessment includes only those households who expressed a preference to continue living on an authorised Gypsy and Traveller site and who were either actively seeking alternative accommodation within the study area or anticipated doing so during the assessment period. This includes households intending to secure accommodation by developing their own site. The identified need, therefore, reflects a clearly evidenced requirement for alternative site-based accommodation arising from household circumstances and planned residential mobility, rather than a general aspiration to move.

6.95 The households identified within this category comprise 0 of the households originally identified at Step 4 as intending or likely to move within the next five years. However, the assessment recognises that some households seeking alternative accommodation are also experiencing overcrowding and may therefore already have been captured within the overcrowding-related need identified at Step 11. To ensure the assessment remains robust and does not overstate need, a detailed cross-checking exercise was undertaken across the relevant household categories. Any family units identified as both overcrowded and seeking alternative accommodation were counted only once within the overall needs calculation. Following the removal of these overlaps, the assessment identifies a net need for 0 additional pitches within the study area arising from households requiring alternative authorised site accommodation.

6.96 This approach reflects established GTANA methodology and ensures that each household contributes only once to the final assessment of need, regardless of the number of

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circumstances affecting their accommodation situation. It also ensures that the resulting pitch requirement is a realistic and policy-compliant estimate of need, consistent with national planning policy and guidance, which requires local authorities to maintain a clear and robust evidence base for plan-making and future site provision.

Step 8: Family units on transit pitches seeking residential pitches in the study area

6.97 There is a need for 0 pitches resulting from this source. This component of the assessment considers the extent to which households residing on transit pitches require access to permanent residential accommodation within the study area. The analysis is informed by the household consultation evidence and seeks to identify any family units currently occupying transit provision who reported a need for settled, permanent pitches within the next five years.

6.98 The purpose of this step is to distinguish between households with a short-term or travelling accommodation requirement and those whose circumstances indicate a need for permanent residential provision. Where households residing on transit sites express a requirement for long-term accommodation within the study area, this would contribute to the identified need for additional residential pitches.

6.99 This approach is consistent with established GTANA methodology and ensures that all potential sources of residential accommodation need are systematically considered, including any movement between transit and permanent forms of provision where relevant.

Step 9: Family units on unauthorised encampments seeking residential pitches in the study area

6.100 There were 0 households surveyed on unauthorised encampments within the study area with a need for a permanent pitch in the area during the survey period. This component of the assessment considers whether households residing on unauthorised encampments require permanent residential pitches within the study area. The approach reflects the principles set out within the former Department for Communities and Local Government guidance, Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy Reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by Regional Planning Bodies (DCLG, 2007), which recognises the importance of assessing whether households on unauthorised encampments have an unmet need for authorised residential accommodation.

6.101 The assessment uses household consultation evidence to identify the extent to which families residing on unauthorised encampments were seeking permanent residential pitches within the study area. In undertaking this analysis, a clear distinction has been made between households requiring long-term residential accommodation and those travelling through the area temporarily. Only those households requiring permanent accommodation within the study area would contribute to the residential pitch need identified through this step. Households engaged in transit movements or short-term encampment activity are considered separately within the assessment of transit accommodation requirements.

6.102 At the time of the fieldwork period, no households were identified as residing on unauthorised encampments within the study area. Consequently, no residential pitch need arises from this source within the assessment period.

6.103 This approach ensures that the assessment systematically considers all potential sources of residential accommodation need, including households who may be residing outside the authorised site network, while maintaining a clear distinction between permanent residential need and transit-related accommodation requirements.

Step 10: Family units on unauthorised developments seeking residential pitches in the study area

6.104 This results in the need for 89 pitches. This component considers the accommodation needs of households residing in unauthorised developments within the study area. Unauthorised developments comprise sites where Gypsies and Travellers are residing on land that they own or control, but where the required planning permission for residential use has not been granted. The assessment draws on consultation with the Council, local authority records, and evidence gathered through the fieldwork process to identify the scale and nature of such provision within the study area.

6.105 The evidence identified a number of unauthorised development sites occupied by Gypsies and Travellers, equating to a total of 89 pitches confirmed as occupied at the time of the assessment. In addition, other sites without planning permission were identified; however, these were excluded from the calculation where they were found to comprise either non-Gypsy and Traveller residential uses or mixed-use sites that were not considered to represent Gypsy and Traveller pitch need for the purposes of the assessment.

6.106 The households residing on the identified unauthorised developments are treated as generating accommodation need within the study area because, notwithstanding their current occupation of land, the pitches do not benefit from authorised permanent planning status. Without planning permission, these households lack secure, authorised accommodation and therefore continue to contribute to the identified need for permanent residential pitches.

6.107 On this basis, the assessment identifies a need for 89 residential pitches arising from households residing on unauthorised developments within the study area. This approach is consistent with established GTANA methodology and national planning policy, which recognises the importance of assessing the accommodation needs of households residing on unauthorised sites to maintain a comprehensive and robust evidence base for Local Plan preparation and future site provision.

Step 11: Family units on overcrowded pitches seeking residential pitches in the area

6.108 The assessment identifies a need for 46 pitches due to overcrowding. This need has been identified through the household consultation and site assessment process, which identified

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households living in accommodation where the existing pitch was insufficient to meet the needs of the resident family unit or units.

6.109 For the purposes of the assessment, overcrowding relates to circumstances where the number of households or family members residing on a pitch exceeds the level that can reasonably be accommodated, having regard to factors such as the number of caravans, available living space, household composition, privacy, and the ability of family members to live independently and safely. In many cases, overcrowding reflects the inability of younger or newly forming households to access separate authorised accommodation within the study area. This step identifies current unmet accommodation needs at the time of the assessment, whereas Step 13 addresses future accommodation needs arising from new household formation expected during the assessment period.

6.110 The identified need, therefore, represents households requiring access to additional residential pitches in order to resolve existing overcrowded living conditions and to enable households to occupy accommodation that is appropriate to their needs. On this basis, the assessment identifies a requirement for 46 additional pitches arising directly from overcrowding within the existing site-based population.

6.111 This element of need forms an important component of the overall accommodation assessment, as overcrowding can give rise to a range of social, health and welfare impacts and may contribute to concealed households, tensions within family groups and pressure for unauthorised development. Its inclusion in the assessment ensures that the evidence base reflects not only emerging needs but also existing unmet housing needs within the current authorised site network.

Step 12: New family units expected to arrive from elsewhere

6.112 In the absence of any data derivable from primary or secondary sources (beyond anecdotal evidence) on the moving intentions of those outside the study area moving into the area, as in the case of those moving out of the area, it is assumed that the inflow of Gypsies and Travellers into the area will be equivalent to the outflow.

6.113 Accordingly, the assessment assumes that the level of in-migration into the study area will broadly correspond with the level of out-migration identified through the household consultation at Step 3. As set out in Step 3, the consultation identified 8 households currently residing on authorised pitches who indicated that they expected to leave the study area during the assessment period. To maintain a neutral, evidence-led position, the assessment therefore assumes a corresponding inflow of 8 pitches.

6.114 This approach avoids either overstating or understating accommodation need in circumstances where reliable migration data is unavailable and reflects standard practice within Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments. The resulting position is therefore treated as a net inflow of 8 pitches within the study area over the assessment period, ensuring

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that the assessment appropriately accounts for likely migration dynamics while remaining methodologically cautious and proportionate.

Step 13: New family formations expected to arise from within existing family units on sites

6.115 This component of need relates to the anticipated formation of new households arising from existing family units currently residing on pitches within the study area. The estimate is informed directly by the household consultation and reflects the number of young people aged 16 years or over who stated they would require a separate pitch within the next five years to establish an independent household.

6.116 The calculation is therefore based on the expressed accommodation intentions of households and takes account of whether young people currently living within existing family units are expected to form their own households during the five-year period following the assessment. This approach provides a locally derived estimate of household growth based on information obtained directly from the Gypsy and Traveller community. This step identifies future accommodation need expected to arise during the assessment period, whereas Step 11 relates to current unmet accommodation need arising from existing overcrowded living conditions at the time of the assessment.

6.117 The resulting figure represents the estimated level of additional pitch need arising from endogenous household growth within the existing site-based population, rather than from in-migration or concealed need. On this basis, the assessment identifies a requirement for 47 pitches arising from new family formation over the assessment period.

6.118 This approach is consistent with established GTANA methodology and reflects the recognition within national planning policy and guidance that future household formation within the existing Gypsy and Traveller community is a key driver of long-term accommodation need. By identifying young people aged 16 or over who have indicated they will require their own pitch within the next five years, the assessment ensures that the future accommodation needs of younger generations are appropriately recognised in the evidence base supporting the Local Plan.

Step 14: Family units in housing with a cultural preference need for a pitch

6.119 This was determined firstly by estimating the number of households living in bricks and mortar, which was calculated using data from the 2021 Census, which provides the number of Gypsy and Traveller households in such housing within the study area (refer to Table 3.2). A 15% factor was then applied to estimate the number of households requiring a pitch due to cultural preference. This equates to 15% of 170, which is 24 additional pitches, plus 1 for Halton.

6.120 Although 2021 Census data for Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks-and-mortar accommodation in Halton is suppressed due to small numbers, evidence from neighbouring

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authorities and the wider study area indicates that a substantial proportion of Gypsy and Traveller households typically reside in bricks-and-mortar accommodation. Across the study area, around 61% of households are in bricks and mortar, with comparable or higher proportions observed in the North West and at the national level. This strongly suggests that a bricks-and-mortar cohort likely exists in Halton, even if Census data cannot quantify it directly.

6.121 In the absence of a reliable local denominator, the assessment does not derive a numerical estimate of need from bricks-and-mortar households but identifies a minimum indicative requirement of 1 pitch over the plan period, to be kept under review through ongoing monitoring.

6.122 The 15% factor is applied as a pragmatic and proportionate proxy to estimate potential pitch need arising from Gypsy and Traveller households living in bricks-and-mortar accommodation who may have a cultural preference to return to site-based living. This reflects established GTANA practice and evidence from previous surveys showing that only a minority of bricks-and-mortar households express such a preference where suitable provision is available. The percentage is applied solely to the estimated bricks-and-mortar population, ensuring this element of need is not double-counted and that it is the only method used to capture culturally preference-based pitch need. The resulting need is assumed to arise within the first five years as it reflects existing, unmet demand, rather than longer-term demographic change.

6.123 The approach reflects the practical difficulties associated with identifying this population directly. Many Gypsy and Traveller households living in conventional housing are not known to local authorities, are difficult to identify through administrative datasets, and may be reluctant to participate in surveys because of concerns regarding discrimination or privacy. Consequently, no comprehensive national dataset exists from which a precise locally-derived figure can be established.

6.124 Overall, the approach represents a balanced and proportionate methodology. It recognises the limitations of the available evidence, avoids assuming that all households living in conventional housing require a pitch, and provides a transparent and consistent basis for estimating potential need in accordance with national guidance and established GTAA practice.

Total additional pitch requirement

6.125 The Total Additional Pitch Requirement is derived by deducting the total additional supply (steps 2–5 combined) from the identified need above the existing occupied pitches (steps 6–14 combined). This reflects the assumption that the additional supply is expected to generate vacant pitches during the first five-year period, which will contribute towards meeting the identified need. Accordingly, these vacant pitches are taken into account when calculating the residual requirement for additional pitch provision.

Table 6.5: Summary of Gypsy and Traveller pitch needs 2026-31

Total Additional Supply	39
Total Identified Need	227
Difference: Total Additional Pitch Requirement	188

Source: GTANA 2026

Requirement for residential pitches 2031-2041

6.126 In considering accommodation need beyond 2031, the assessment assumes that the current identified need for the first five years (2026-2031) will already have been addressed through existing authorised supply, new pitch delivery and any planned allocations. The starting point for the 2031-2041 calculation, therefore, assumes that households identified as needing accommodation during the first five years have already been accommodated.

6.127 Unlike the detailed assessment undertaken for 2026–2031, which is based on household-specific evidence collected through the household survey (including overcrowding, concealed households, households on unauthorised developments, households residing in bricks-and-mortar accommodation, and other current sources of need), it is not possible to predict individual household circumstances with the same degree of certainty over the longer term. The assessment therefore adopts a demographic projection approach for the period 2031–2041, based principally on expected household growth within the existing resident Gypsy and Traveller population.

6.128 As a result, future needs from 2031 onwards are based primarily on natural population growth (for example, newly forming households) together with any expected movement of households into or out of the study area. If any of the identified needs from 2026-2031 remain unmet by 2031, they would need to be added (‘rolled over’) to the later period, as they would continue to represent an outstanding accommodation requirement.

6.129 In relation to this accommodation assessment, analysis of the current population and household survey results indicates that an annual household growth rate of 2.43% per annum (compound), equating to a 5-year rate of 12.8%, is more appropriate than applying a generic annual rate of, for example, 3.00%. This estimate is derived from primary survey data collected as part of the assessment and reflects the demographic characteristics of the existing Gypsy and Traveller population within the study area, including the existing population, the number of families with children, the average number of children per family, and the marriage rate. In particular, the calculation accounts for the population's relatively young age profile, the number of children and young people currently living in households, the likely formation of new households as these individuals reach adulthood, and survey evidence on family formation patterns and accommodation intentions.

6.130 The household growth rate has been applied to the estimated occupied authorised pitch stock at the start of each five-year period to estimate the number of additional households likely to form during the remainder of the plan period. The resulting figures therefore represent

endogenous household growth arising from the existing resident population rather than additional need generated through current overcrowding, concealed households or other existing unmet needs, all of which have already been assessed separately within the 2026–2031 calculation.

6.131 The long-term projections also assume that there will be no significant changes in the demographic characteristics of the existing Gypsy and Traveller population or in established patterns of household formation over the remainder of the plan period. While future demographic trends cannot be predicted with complete certainty, using a locally derived household growth rate based on primary survey evidence provides a more robust, evidence-based estimate than applying a generic national assumption. It therefore represents a proportionate and transparent methodology for estimating longer-term accommodation need beyond the initial five-year assessment period.

6.132 The resulting growth rate reflects endogenous household growth within the existing population rather than in-migration from outside the study area. It is intended to provide a realistic estimate of future accommodation need arising from younger generations forming independent households over time. The rate is consistent with the evidence gathered through the household survey and is considered more appropriate than applying a generic national assumption, as it reflects the specific characteristics of the local Gypsy and Traveller community.

6.133 In the absence of evidence to suggest a significant change in demographic trends, it is assumed that this rate of household growth will continue throughout the remainder of the assessment period, including the period 2036-2041.

Table 6.6: Summary of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs

Period	Need
2026-2031	188
2031-2036	73
2036-2041	82
Total 2026-2041	343

Source: GTANA 2026

Requirements for transit pitches / negotiated stopping arrangements

6.134 In addition to existing and any potential further transit pitches, it is recommended that the local authorities, adopt a negotiated stopping policy. This involves caravans being sited at a suitable location for an agreed, limited period, and, if necessary, with the provision of services such as waste disposal and toilets.

6.135 The term ‘negotiated stopping’ is used to describe agreed short-term provision for transient Gypsies and Travellers. Caravans at negotiated stopping places may stay for an agreed amount of time. This could be on private or public land, provided the encampment does not pose any danger, cause problems, or create a nuisance for its occupants or the local

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community. The arrangement is between the local authority, police, the transient households (and the landowner if situated on privately owned land).

6.136 The location of a negotiated stopping place could be where the transient household is located at the time they are identified. If not appropriate, the household could be moved on to an appropriate alternative location. It is important for the local authority to respond to the temporary accommodation needs of transiting households within the area rather than simply directing them to neighbouring authorities.

Summary

6.137 This chapter has provided both quantitative and qualitative data regarding key characteristics of respondent households residing on Gypsy and Traveller sites. It indicates a need for 327 pitches over the period 2026-2041. Regarding transit provision, in addition to existing transit sites and potential new private transit services, this report recommends adopting a negotiated stopping policy.

6.138 The accommodation need calculations for each local authority, including the results for each step of the assessment, are presented in the Appendices. Table 6.8 summarises the aggregated study area totals derived from these individual authority assessments.

6.139 Please note that the accommodation needs assessment was undertaken separately for each of the four local authorities using authority-specific evidence, including household survey findings, site information, local authority records, planning information and other relevant local data. Accommodation need was therefore calculated independently for Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, and Warrington, reflecting the specific circumstances within each authority. The study area figures presented below are the aggregate of these individual authority assessments and have not been derived by apportioning a single study area-wide figure between authorities.

Table 6.7: Additional need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches

Authority	Need 2026-2031	Need 2031-2036	Need 2036-2041	Total Need 2026-2041
Cheshire East	53	23	26	102
Cheshire West and Chester	85	29	32	146
Halton	7	8	9	24
Warrington	43	13	15	71
Study Area Total	188	73	82	343

Source: GTANA 2026

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7. Travelling Showpeople consultation

Introduction

7.1 As described in Chapter 1, this GTANA considers the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople. Unlike Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople are not recognised as a distinct ethnic group for the purposes of the race provisions of the Equality Act 2010, although individual members may possess other protected characteristics under the Act. Nonetheless, NPPF (2026) indicates that local authorities should consider the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople families. As such, they have been included in this report.

Methodology

7.2 This section sets out the findings in relation to supply and need from consultation with Travelling Showpeople and forms a core part of the evidence base underpinning the assessment of accommodation needs. Consultation focused on family composition per plot, accommodation type and facilities, site condition, ownership and management arrangements, plot occupancy, and current and future accommodation needs. The methodology adopted is described in earlier chapters and reflects established best practice. In summary, the four authorities provided comprehensive data on the location, number, and planning status of known yards, which informed the consultation programme.

7.3 This section sets out the findings in relation to supply and need from consultation with Travelling Showpeople and forms a core part of the evidence base underpinning the assessment of accommodation needs. Consultation focused on family composition per plot, accommodation type and facilities, site condition, ownership and management arrangements, plot occupancy, and current and future accommodation needs. The methodology adopted is described in earlier chapters and reflects established best practice. In summary, the four authorities provided comprehensive data on the location, number, and planning status of known yards, which informed the consultation programme.

7.4 The location, status and occupancy of plots were verified through a combination of local authority records and yard visits. All authorised yards, together with identified unauthorised developments, were visited between Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026. Yards where planning permission had lapsed, been refused or withdrawn, or where enforcement action had previously been undertaken, were also visited to confirm their current occupancy and use. In addition, yards identified by the local authorities as existing or proposed allocations within adopted and emerging Local Plans were inspected.

7.5 This approach ensured that the assessment of occupancy and accommodation need was informed by direct site evidence rather than relying solely on desk-based records. Wherever possible, consultation was undertaken directly with households. When this was not possible, information was obtained from neighbours, relatives, or yard owners/managers. Where sufficient information could not be obtained during the initial visit, and contact details were unavailable to facilitate follow-up by telephone, up to two further visits were undertaken to maximise engagement.

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7.6 Overall, this methodology provided sufficient information to assess the accommodation needs of 90% of plots across the participating authorities, providing a robust evidence base for the assessment of current and future accommodation need.

Existing Supply

7.7 Table 7.1 below lists the number of authorised plots, unauthorised development (UD) plots, and yards and plots with temporary planning permission within the local authority area (primarily based on data provided by the local authority). All yards are private and primarily family yards, occupied by family members of households associated with the respective fair or circus business.

Table 7.1 Travelling Showpeople yards and plots

Authority	Yards	Plots	UD yards	UD plots	Temp yards	Temp plots
Cheshire East	1	1	2	11	0	0
Cheshire West and Chester	1	13	0	0	0	0
Halton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warrington	3	14	0	0	0	0
Study Area	5	28	2	11	0	0

Source: GTANA 2026

Consultation

7.8 Consultation was undertaken with Travelling Showpeople households residing across Cheshire to establish current levels of accommodation provision and need, validate information relating to plot occupancy, and gain a detailed understanding of households' experiences, aspirations and future accommodation requirements. The consultation forms an important component of the evidence base and provides insight into the characteristics of the resident Showpeople population, patterns of occupation and household formation, and the relationship between accommodation and business activities.

Current Occupancy and Demographic Characteristics

7.9 The consultation confirmed that the resident Travelling Showpeople population within Cheshire is characterised by strong family networks, long-established business interests and a high degree of attachment to existing yards and winter quarters. Households consistently emphasised the importance of secure accommodation that meets both their housing needs and the operational needs of their businesses. Unlike conventional housing, Showpeople accommodation must accommodate both residential living and the storage, maintenance, and management of fairground/circus rides, vehicles, equipment, and associated business assets.

7.10 The demographic profile of households reflects a well-established and predominantly settled population. Many households reported long-standing connections to Cheshire, with some families having occupied the same yards for several generations. A significant proportion of respondents indicated that they were born and raised within the county or had close family members residing elsewhere on Showpeople yards across Cheshire and neighbouring

authorities. The evidence suggests that future accommodation requirements arise primarily from the existing resident population rather than substantial inward migration.

7.11 Household structures varied across the study area and included single-person households, couples, nuclear families and larger extended family groups. Multi-generational occupation was common, with parents, adult children and grandchildren frequently residing on the same yard or on adjacent plots. These arrangements support both family life and the operation of family-run businesses, and reflect the strong interdependence among accommodation, employment, and family networks within the Showpeople community.

7.12 The age profile of residents ranged from young children to older persons aged over 80. The presence of younger generations approaching adulthood has important implications for future accommodation provision, as many households expressed a desire for children and grandchildren to remain within established family yards when forming independent households. Consequently, future accommodation requirements are likely to arise from household growth and family succession rather than significant levels of migration into the area.

7.13 The consultation identified a number of concealed and emerging households residing within existing family units. In many cases, adult children and their families remained living with parents or relatives because of a lack of available plots, limited opportunities for yard expansion, or difficulties in securing alternative accommodation. These concealed households represent an important source of future accommodation need and show the pressure capacity constraints place on existing yards.

7.14 Overcrowding was identified on several yards and was typically associated with the accommodation of newly forming households, limited plot availability and insufficient space to accommodate both residential and business requirements. Households reported that overcrowding can create operational difficulties, reduce privacy and limit the ability to store equipment safely and effectively. Respondents frequently identified the need for additional plots to accommodate younger generations and ensure the continued viability of family businesses.

7.15 The evidence demonstrates a high degree of residential stability amongst Travelling Showpeople households. Most respondents expressed a strong preference to remain on their existing yard or near family members. This preference reflects the importance of established business locations, family support networks, access to schools and healthcare, and the substantial investment that many households have made in their yards and business operations.

7.16 The findings also highlight the interconnected nature of Travelling Showpeople communities across Cheshire and the wider region. Households frequently reported family, social and business connections extending beyond individual local authority boundaries. However, movements generally occurred over relatively short distances and were typically associated

with family succession, household formation, business expansion or the need for larger plots rather than long-distance migration.

7.17 Overall, the consultation demonstrates that the Travelling Showpeople population across Cheshire is characterised by long-established family networks, strong business connections and a high degree of residential permanence. The principal demographic drivers of future accommodation needs are newly forming households, concealed households, overcrowding, and the need to accommodate future generations within existing family and business networks. These findings reinforce the importance of ensuring that future plot provision can meet locally arising needs and that suitable land is available to support both the residential and business requirements of the Travelling Showpeople community.

Accommodation

7.18 The assessment found that accommodation for Travelling Showpeople differs fundamentally from that required by the settled population, as well as from that required by Gypsies and Travellers. For Travelling Showpeople, accommodation and employment requirements are intrinsically linked, with plots serving both as a permanent residential base and as a centre for business operations. Households emphasised that access to an appropriately sized and secure plot is essential not only to meet housing needs but also to maintain established businesses, store equipment, support employment, and facilitate succession within family enterprises. Consequently, accommodation requirements cannot be considered in isolation from the operational needs of Showpeople businesses.

7.19 Whilst many households travel extensively during the fairground/circus season, their plots remain their permanent home and business base throughout the year. Respondents consistently highlighted the importance of having a secure location to which they can return between fairs and events, where equipment can be safely stored, maintained and prepared for future engagements. The availability of a permanent plot was regarded as fundamental to maintaining both family life and business viability.

7.20 The consultation demonstrated a very high degree of residential permanence and attachment to existing yards. Many households had occupied their plots for considerable periods and, in some instances, families had resided on the same yard for several generations. Several respondents described their yards as long-established family bases that have evolved incrementally over time to accommodate changing family circumstances and business requirements. As a result, households expressed a strong preference to remain on their existing yards wherever possible and to accommodate future generations within established family sites.

7.21 Strong family and business networks were evident throughout the consultation. Households consistently reported that living alongside, or close to, extended family members provides important social, practical and economic benefits. Family members often work together within the same business, share vehicles and equipment, provide childcare and support older relatives. Consequently, residential and business considerations are frequently inseparable,

with accommodation decisions strongly influenced by the need to maintain family-based business operations and support networks.

7.22 Household composition varied considerably across Cheshire, ranging from single-person households to large extended families occupying multiple plots within the same yard. Multi-generational occupation was common, with parents, adult children and grandchildren often residing on adjacent plots. The consultation identified a substantial number of younger family members who are expected to form independent households during the plan period. Most expressed a desire to remain within established family yards or in nearby locations, reflecting the importance of family continuity and business succession.

7.23 The assessment identified a number of concealed and emerging households whose accommodation needs are not currently being met. In many cases, adult children remain living with their parents longer than expected because of limited plot availability and few opportunities to expand existing yards. Households reported that this can place pressure on existing accommodation, reduce privacy and create difficulties in accommodating future family growth. These concealed households represent an important component of identified accommodation need and demonstrate the limitations of the current supply of plots.

7.24 Plot size, layout and functionality varied considerably across the study area. Some plots provided sufficient space only for residential accommodation and a limited amount of equipment storage, whilst others accommodated substantial operational areas, workshops, maintenance facilities, storage compounds and parking for transporters and specialist vehicles. Households consistently emphasised that the suitability of accommodation is determined not simply by the presence of a residential unit, but by the ability of a plot to accommodate the full range of residential and operational requirements associated with running a Showpeople business.

7.25 Access to operational space was identified as one of the most important factors influencing accommodation satisfaction. Respondents explained that modern fairground/circus businesses often require significant amounts of land for the storage, assembly, maintenance and testing of rides and equipment. Several households reported that operational requirements have increased over time due to larger rides, more complex equipment and enhanced health and safety requirements. Consequently, some households considered their existing plots to be operating at or near capacity.

7.26 The consultation also highlighted the importance of flexibility within yards. Households noted that accommodation and operational requirements change over time as businesses expand, children form households, older family members retire and equipment requirements evolve. As a result, respondents frequently identified the ability to expand existing yards as the most sustainable means of meeting future accommodation needs, particularly where expansion would allow younger generations to remain within established family and business networks.

7.27 Overall satisfaction with accommodation was generally high. Households particularly valued the ability to live and work from the same location, maintain family support networks, and

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operate businesses without separating residential and commercial activities. However, concerns were raised regarding overcrowding, limited opportunities for expansion, ageing infrastructure and the shortage of available plots for younger generations. Several households expressed concern that, without additional provision, future generations may be forced to leave established family yards, potentially undermining the continuity of family businesses.

7.28 Households consistently identified owner-occupation as the preferred form of provision. Ownership was regarded as providing long-term security for both residential and business purposes and enabling investment in accommodation, infrastructure and equipment. However, respondents acknowledged that rising land values, development costs and planning requirements can make it increasingly difficult for younger generations to establish their own plots. Consequently, respondents identified the affordability and availability of suitable land as significant barriers to meeting future accommodation needs.

7.29 The assessment found that planning certainty is particularly important for Travelling Showpeople households. Respondents explained that uncertainty regarding planning status can inhibit investment in residential accommodation, business infrastructure and equipment storage. Households residing on plots without permanent planning permission expressed concern that they are unable to make long-term decisions regarding their homes or businesses. Similar concerns were raised by households seeking to expand existing yards, who identified planning constraints as one of the principal barriers to delivering additional accommodation.

7.30 The evidence indicates that future accommodation needs are likely to arise predominantly from endogenous growth within the existing Showpeople community. Newly forming households, concealed households, overcrowding and the succession requirements of family businesses were identified as the principal drivers of need. Unlike conventional housing markets, where mobility can help meet demand, accommodation requirements within the Showpeople community are strongly influenced by the need to remain within established family and business networks. Consequently, accommodation needs are often highly location-specific and cannot readily be met elsewhere without potentially undermining established family enterprises.

7.31 Overall, the findings demonstrate that the provision of suitable plots is essential not only for meeting residential accommodation needs but also for supporting the continued operation of established Showpeople businesses across Cheshire. Future provision should therefore recognise the unique relationship between accommodation and employment within the Showpeople community and seek to ensure that plots can accommodate both residential and operational requirements. Failure to provide sufficient opportunities for plot expansion and new plot delivery is likely to place increasing pressure on existing yards, constrain business succession and limit the ability of future generations to remain within the Travelling Showpeople community.

Use and Access of Services and Facilities

7.32 Access to local services and facilities was identified as an important component of suitable accommodation for Travelling Showpeople households. Whilst the operational requirements of Showpeople businesses are a primary consideration when assessing the suitability of yards and plots, households also emphasised the importance of access to healthcare, education, retail facilities, and other day-to-day services. The findings indicate that households make regular use of a wide range of local services and are generally well integrated into the communities where their yards are located. This was particularly evident in relation to healthcare provision, education and local retail services, where many households reported long-established relationships with local providers.

7.33 Several households highlighted the importance of remaining within locations where established support networks and service relationships have developed over many years. Respondents explained that continuity of access to schools, healthcare providers and wider community services contributes significantly to household wellbeing and quality of life. In particular, households with children emphasised the importance of minimising disruption to education, whilst older households highlighted the value of maintaining access to established healthcare services and support networks. These considerations were identified as important factors influencing preferences to remain on existing yards or within the local area.

7.34 Access to healthcare services was consistently identified as a priority. Households reported regular use of GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists and specialist healthcare providers, with particular importance attached to maintaining continuity of care for older persons and those with ongoing health conditions. Access to education was similarly regarded as important, particularly given the increasing emphasis placed on educational attainment, vocational training and skills development within the Travelling Showpeople community. Households recognised that educational opportunities are becoming increasingly important in supporting future employment prospects, both within traditional Showpeople businesses and the wider economy.

7.35 Retail facilities, including supermarkets, local shops and service centres, were also regarded as important components of day-to-day living. However, households generally viewed accessibility rather than proximity as the key consideration. Respondents typically considered services to be accessible, provided they could be reached conveniently by private vehicle. Consequently, access to the highway network influenced accommodation suitability more strongly than walking-distance proximity to individual services or facilities.

7.36 Unlike many conventional residential developments, the suitability of Travelling Showpeople accommodation is determined by a combination of residential, operational and locational factors. While access to services was important, households generally placed greater emphasis on maintaining established family and business networks, securing access to suitable operational space, and continuing to operate from existing yards. Respondents indicated that they would generally be prepared to travel reasonable distances to access services, provided that such journeys remained practical and affordable.

7.37 Transport was identified as the principal factor influencing accessibility. Most households rely heavily on private vehicles for both residential and business purposes, including access to healthcare, education, employment, shops and fairground/circus engagements. Consequently, yards with good access to the strategic and local highway network were generally regarded as providing satisfactory access to services, even where facilities were not located nearby. This reflects both the mobility requirements of Showpeople businesses and the community's predominantly vehicle-based travel patterns.

7.38 The principal barriers to accessing services were identified as age, ill-health, disability, financial pressures and, in some cases, limited public transport provision. Older residents and those with mobility issues reported greater difficulty accessing healthcare appointments and other essential services, particularly when specialist facilities were located some distance away. Households also noted that public transport services do not always suit their needs, particularly where services are infrequent or travel patterns are linked to seasonal employment activities.

7.39 Family support networks were found to play an important role in overcoming many of these barriers. Households frequently reported relying on relatives and neighbouring households for transport, childcare, assistance with appointments and support during periods of illness. These informal support arrangements were often considered as important as the services themselves and reinforced many households' desire to remain within established family yards and communities.

7.40 The findings suggest that barriers to service access can be mitigated through a combination of appropriate yard locations, good transport connectivity and continued engagement between service providers and the Travelling Showpeople community. Yards with convenient access to the strategic road network, nearby service centres, and public services are likely to provide the greatest accessibility. Continued engagement by healthcare providers, education services, and local authorities can also help ensure services remain responsive to the community's needs.

7.41 Overall, the evidence indicates that access to services and facilities is an important consideration when assessing the suitability of existing and future Travelling Showpeople accommodation. However, households consistently placed greater weight on the ability to remain within established family and business networks and to access suitable operational space than on proximity to individual services. This reflects the unique relationship between accommodation, employment and family life within the Travelling Showpeople community. Consequently, future provision should seek to balance the need for reasonable access to services with the equally important requirement to support the long-term sustainability of family-run businesses and established Showpeople yards across Cheshire.

Education

7.42 Education was regarded as an important aspect of family life by the Travelling Showpeople households consulted. Respondents frequently commented on the increasing importance of educational attainment, vocational training and professional qualifications in supporting future employment opportunities, both within the fairground/circus industry and the wider economy. Households recognised that the Showpeople industry is becoming increasingly complex and regulated, requiring skills in areas such as business management, engineering, health and safety, administration, finance and technology. As a result, many respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring that younger generations have access to high-quality education and training opportunities that enable them to succeed in an evolving economic environment.

7.43 At the same time, households highlighted the importance of younger generations acquiring the practical knowledge, technical skills and business experience associated with the Showpeople way of life. Many family businesses are passed from one generation to the next, and respondents stressed the importance of children and young adults gaining experience in the operation, maintenance and management of rides, attractions and associated business activities. The findings suggest that households generally view educational achievement and participation in family businesses as complementary rather than competing priorities.

7.44 The availability of secure and permanent accommodation was also identified as an important factor supporting educational continuity. Households noted that stable residential arrangements enable children and young people to maintain consistent attendance at schools and colleges, develop social networks and access wider educational opportunities. Respondents highlighted that planning uncertainty and limitations on plot provision can create challenges for younger households and, in some cases, may affect longer-term educational stability.

7.45 Attendance at primary and secondary education was common amongst the households consulted, reflecting the importance placed on formal education within the contemporary Showpeople community. Most respondents indicated that children attend local schools whilst residing on their home yard and that maintaining continuity of education is an important consideration when making accommodation decisions.

7.46 Households generally reported positive experiences of education provision, although some respondents identified challenges associated with balancing educational commitments and the seasonal nature of Showpeople businesses. In particular, older generations noted that children historically spent more time travelling with family businesses and less time in formal education than is typical today. Respondents noted that attitudes have evolved significantly, with younger generations increasingly encouraged to complete secondary education, pursue further and higher education opportunities and obtain qualifications that support both traditional Showpeople enterprises and alternative career paths.

7.47 Where barriers to participation were identified, these most commonly related to experiences of bullying or discrimination, difficulties associated with balancing education and seasonal employment commitments, and concerns regarding a lack of understanding of the Showpeople way of life amongst some education providers. Households emphasised the importance of schools and support services, recognising the distinctive characteristics of the Travelling Showpeople community and adopting flexible and inclusive approaches where appropriate.

7.48 Overall, the findings indicate that education is viewed as an increasingly important component of future prosperity and social mobility within the Travelling Showpeople community. Continued engagement between education providers, local authorities, and Showpeople families can help ensure that children and young people achieve positive educational outcomes while maintaining strong connections to their family businesses, cultural heritage, and community networks.

Employment and Economic Activity

7.49 Employment and economic activity were identified as fundamental factors influencing accommodation requirements and residential preferences amongst Travelling Showpeople households. Unlike many other communities, accommodation and employment needs are closely interconnected, with yards functioning not only as places of residence but also as operational bases for managing and maintaining businesses. Households consistently emphasised that access to suitably located and appropriately sized plots is essential to supporting both family life and commercial activities. Consequently, the availability of suitable accommodation has a direct bearing on business viability, employment opportunities and the long-term sustainability of the Showpeople community.

7.50 The findings indicate that family-owned and family-operated businesses remain the predominant form of economic activity within the Travelling Showpeople community. Most households were directly involved in the ownership, operation or management of travelling fairs, amusement rides, catering concessions, games, attractions and associated support services. Many businesses had been established for several generations and formed an integral part of both household income and cultural identity. Respondents frequently highlighted the importance of passing businesses, skills and knowledge between generations and maintaining the continuity of long-established family enterprises.

7.51 In addition to traditional fairground/circus activities, households reported involvement in a diverse range of complementary occupations and business activities. These included ride maintenance and engineering, transport and logistics, vehicle servicing, fabrication, electrical work, health and safety management, administration, catering, event management and other specialist services associated with the fairground/circus industry. Some household members were also employed outside the Showpeople sector in occupations such as construction, manufacturing, retail, public services, and professional roles. The findings suggest that employment patterns within the community have diversified over time, reflecting broader economic changes and rising educational attainment among younger generations.

7.52 Respondents frequently commented on the growing importance of formal qualifications, vocational training and professional skills. Many households noted that operating modern fairground/circus businesses requires expertise in areas such as engineering, business management, finance, information technology, health and safety compliance, licensing, and event management. As a result, younger generations are increasingly encouraged to pursue educational and training opportunities that support both the continuation of family businesses and access to wider employment opportunities.

7.53 Employment status across the study area was varied, comprising business owners, self-employed workers, employees, apprentices, retired persons and carers. Economic activity was often undertaken on a family basis, with multiple generations contributing to the operation of the same business. This reinforces the importance of maintaining accommodation within established family yards, as co-locating family members often facilitates sharing equipment, vehicles, operational responsibilities, and specialist skills.

7.54 The geographical pattern of employment reflects the travelling nature of the Showpeople industry. Whilst yards provide a permanent residential and operational base, business activities frequently take place across a much wider area. Households reported travelling throughout Cheshire, the wider North West, neighbouring regions and, in some cases, nationally in order to attend fairs, events and seasonal engagements. Consequently, access to the strategic highway network was regarded as a critical component of suitable accommodation, enabling businesses to transport rides, equipment and support vehicles efficiently and safely.

7.55 Significant seasonal variation in employment was evident across the community. Economic activity generally peaks during the spring and summer months, when travelling fairs, festivals and outdoor events are most active. During these periods, households may spend extended periods travelling as part of their business operations. In contrast, the winter period is typically characterised by reduced trading activity and a greater emphasis on equipment maintenance, repairs, refurbishment, storage and business planning. The availability of permanent yards capable of accommodating these activities was therefore regarded as essential to the effective operation of Showpeople businesses.

7.56 Respondents noted that the Showpeople industry has undergone significant change over recent decades. Increased regulatory requirements, rising transport and fuel costs, health and safety obligations, changing leisure patterns, and broader economic pressures have all influenced the way businesses operate. Nevertheless, households consistently emphasised that travelling remains an integral component of their economic activity and way of life. Unlike Gypsy and Traveller communities, where travelling patterns may have declined over time, employment-related travel remains fundamental to the operation of many Showpeople businesses.

7.57 Households highlighted that the viability of their businesses is directly influenced by the availability of suitable accommodation. They identified adequate plot sizes, operational

space, storage areas, workshops, and vehicle parking as essential requirements. Several respondents expressed concern that plot size limitations and limited opportunities for yard expansion could constrain business growth, reduce operational efficiency, and limit future generations' ability to participate in family enterprises.

7.58 The assessment found that secure accommodation provides households with a stable base from which to manage and develop their businesses. Planning certainty, adequate operational space and the ability to invest in infrastructure were regarded as important factors supporting long-term business sustainability. Conversely, uncertainty regarding planning status and restrictions on expansion were identified as barriers to investment and business development.

7.59 Overall, the evidence demonstrates that accommodation and employment requirements within the Travelling Showpeople community are inseparable. Future plot provision should therefore recognise not only households' residential needs but also the operational requirements of family businesses. Ensuring plots are sufficiently sized, appropriately located, and able to accommodate both residential and commercial activities will be essential to supporting the continued economic contribution, cultural heritage, and long-term sustainability of the Travelling Showpeople community across Cheshire.

Travel

7.60 The research found that travelling remains an important component of Travelling Showpeople culture and identity, although the extent and nature of travelling varies considerably between households. Respondents consistently emphasised that travelling should not be viewed as the sole defining characteristic of their way of life and that many households now spend most of the year residing on permanent or semi-permanent sites. They generally travelled for cultural, social, family and, to a lesser extent, economic reasons. Many households reported travelling less frequently and for shorter periods than previous generations, reflecting broader changes in employment patterns, educational participation and accommodation circumstances.

7.61 Households identified a range of factors that influence their ability and willingness to travel. The most commonly cited barriers included limited availability of authorised stopping places, difficulty securing temporary places to stay, the risk of being moved on from unauthorised locations, rising fuel and travel costs, and concerns about access to healthcare and education while away from their permanent base. Several households commented that these factors have made travelling increasingly difficult and have contributed to a reduction in the amount of travelling undertaken compared with previous generations.

7.62 Amongst households who continue to travel, the principal reasons cited were to maintain family and community connections, attend cultural and social events, take holidays and continue traditions associated with their cultural heritage and way of life. These activities were generally undertaken temporarily, with households returning to their permanent pitch after periods of travel. The findings therefore indicate that travelling and having a permanent

residential base are not mutually exclusive and are often complementary aspects of contemporary Gypsy and Traveller lifestyles.

Temporary Provision and Accommodation for Visiting Showpeople

7.63 Households residing on unauthorised developments identified additional factors influencing their travelling patterns. In particular, some households reported that travelling was not always a matter of choice but was linked to a lack of suitable accommodation opportunities, the absence of available pitches, and limited site provision in the area. As a result, some households had experienced periods of mobility or temporary residence while seeking a permanent and secure place to live.

7.64 Economic activity remains a factor influencing travel patterns, although its significance appears to have reduced over time. Households reported travelling for work associated with activities such as horse dealing, building and construction trades, landscaping, gardening and maintenance services. However, respondents consistently noted that fewer households now travel for employment purposes than in previous generations. This was attributed to changing employment patterns, greater opportunities for locally based work, increasing business regulation and a stronger emphasis on ensuring that children can access consistent educational provision.

7.65 Looking forward, most households indicated that they expected travelling to continue to form part of their way of life, albeit generally on a more limited and intermittent basis than in the past. Most anticipated retaining a permanent residential base while continuing to travel periodically for cultural, social, family and recreational purposes. The findings therefore suggest that future accommodation provision should recognise the continuing importance of travelling whilst also acknowledging the growing demand for secure, permanent pitches that provide a stable base from which households can travel when desired.

7.66 The assessment found strong connections between households and the local area. These connections primarily came from long-standing family networks, employment opportunities, children's education, access to healthcare, and established community relationships. Many households had lived in the area for extended periods, and in some cases for multiple generations. Respondents frequently stated that staying close to family members was a key factor shaping their residential preferences and future accommodation needs.

7.67 Migration into and out of the study area was found to be relatively limited. Most households expressed a preference to remain within the area or nearby, reflecting the importance of maintaining established family and support networks. Where movement does occur, it is typically associated with household formation, marriage, the need for additional accommodation within family networks, employment opportunities or the search for suitable authorised pitches. The evidence therefore suggests that future accommodation needs are likely to arise predominantly from the growth and changing circumstances of existing households rather than from substantial levels of in-migration from outside the sub-region.

7.68 The concept of transit provision has limited applicability to the Travelling Showpeople community when compared with Gypsies and Travellers. This is because Travelling Showpeople generally operate from permanent yards that function as both residential accommodation and business bases, rather than relying on temporary stopping places during periods of travel. Nevertheless, households highlighted the importance of ensuring sufficient flexibility within existing yards and the wider planning framework to accommodate the temporary needs of visiting family members, business partners, and employees, particularly during periods of business activity, seasonal events, or family gatherings.

7.69 Respondents indicated that the ability to accommodate visiting family members and associated business personnel on a temporary basis forms an important part of maintaining family relationships and supporting the operation of family-run businesses. In some cases, households reported that temporarily accommodating family members can provide a short-term solution while newly forming households seek permanent plots of their own. Consequently, households generally supported a pragmatic and flexible approach to the temporary use of existing yards where this can be achieved without creating unacceptable planning, operational or amenity impacts.

Accommodation Need

7.70 The assessment identified a range of current and future accommodation needs arising from the existing Travelling Showpeople population residing within Cheshire. These needs principally arise from newly forming households requiring independent plots; concealed households residing within existing family units; overcrowding on existing yards; households requiring larger plots to accommodate both residential and operational needs; and households seeking to regularise existing accommodation arrangements. In addition, the assessment identified needs associated with business succession, the expansion of family enterprises and the requirement for younger generations to access plots within established family yards. Accordingly, the assessment seeks to identify objectively assessed accommodation need based on household circumstances, business requirements and future demographic change rather than expressions of demand alone.

7.71 The evidence indicates that residential mobility within the Travelling Showpeople community is generally low and that there is a strong preference for long-term residential stability. Most households expressed a desire to remain on their existing yard or, where a move is necessary, to relocate within the local area and in close proximity to family members and established business operations. The principal drivers of future accommodation needs include household growth, marriage and family formation, business succession, overcrowding, concealed households, welfare and health considerations, and the need to secure plots capable of accommodating both residential and operational activities. Very few households expressed a desire to move into conventional housing, reflecting the importance of maintaining accommodation that supports both family life and the operation of Showpeople businesses.

7.72 Family and business networks were found to be the dominant factors influencing accommodation preferences and residential mobility. Respondents consistently highlighted the importance of residing close to extended family members who provide practical support, childcare, assistance with business operations and care for older relatives. Many households run family businesses across multiple generations, with responsibilities shared across family groups. Consequently, accommodation decisions are often influenced as much by business considerations as by residential requirements, and households generally prefer accommodation within established family yards rather than alternative provision elsewhere within Cheshire or the wider region.

7.73 The assessment found that accommodation needs are closely linked to demographic change and business succession within the existing resident population. As younger generations reach adulthood and form independent households, they need additional plots to remain within established family and business networks. Households consistently reported that the inability to access additional plots can result in concealed households, overcrowding and constraints on the continued operation and succession of family businesses. The findings therefore indicate that future accommodation needs are likely to arise mainly from endogenous growth within the existing community rather than significant inward migration.

7.74 Newly forming households identified through the assessment generally expressed a preference to remain within existing family yards or, where this is not possible, on nearby yards within the local area. Most respondents regarded owner-occupation as the preferred form of provision, reflecting the importance of long-term investment in both residential accommodation and business infrastructure. Newly forming households frequently identified a need for plots capable of accommodating residential accommodation, vehicle parking, storage areas and operational space associated with family businesses. These requirements are typically more extensive than those associated with conventional housing and highlight the unique nature of Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs.

7.75 A significant proportion of identified need is associated with households whose existing accommodation no longer adequately meets their residential and operational requirements. This includes concealed households residing within larger family units, households experiencing overcrowding and households occupying plots that lack sufficient space to accommodate additional residential units, vehicles, equipment or business activities. In many cases, respondents indicated that current arrangements are sustainable only in the short term and that additional provision will be required within the next five years to support both family growth and business continuity.

7.76 The research identified strong support for the expansion of existing authorised yards where appropriate and achievable. Many households regarded extending established family yards as the most sustainable way to meet future accommodation needs because it enables younger generations to remain within existing family and business networks while minimising disruption to education, employment, and community relationships. Several households indicated that they possess land that may accommodate additional plots, whilst others

reported aspirations to acquire land to support future family and business growth. However, respondents recognised that delivering such provision depends on planning, environmental, infrastructure, and financial considerations.

7.77 The availability of suitable land was identified as one of the principal barriers to meeting accommodation needs. Respondents frequently reported difficulties identifying sites that are both available and suitable for Travelling Showpeople use. In addition to residential requirements, potential sites must accommodate operational activities, storage, workshops, maintenance areas, and large vehicles associated with the fairground/circus industry. Households also expressed concerns about planning constraints, environmental designations, infrastructure requirements, and the uncertainty of securing planning permission for new plots or yard extensions.

7.78 Affordability was also identified as a significant issue. While owner-occupation was widely regarded as the preferred option, respondents noted that the costs of purchasing land, obtaining planning permission, providing infrastructure, and developing plots can be substantial. These challenges are often compounded by the need to provide operational space alongside residential accommodation. As a result, some younger households face considerable barriers to establishing independent plots despite having identified accommodation needs.

7.79 Overcrowding emerged as one of the most significant accommodation issues identified through the assessment. Overcrowding was commonly associated with concealed households, growing families and limited opportunities to expand existing yards. Unlike conventional residential overcrowding, pressures on Travelling Showpeople accommodation often relate to both residential and operational requirements. Respondents reported that insufficient space can affect privacy, family wellbeing, business efficiency, vehicle storage and the safe operation of equipment. In several cases, overcrowding was identified as a constraint on business succession and on younger generations' ability to remain in family enterprises.

7.80 The assessment also identified accommodation needs arising from households whose current plots are insufficiently sized or configured to meet their operational requirements. Respondents highlighted the importance of ensuring that future provision can accommodate not only residential accommodation but also storage, maintenance, vehicle parking, and other business-related activities. Several households reported that changing business practices, larger rides and increased regulatory requirements have increased the amount of operational space required compared with previous generations.

7.81 Information relating to waiting lists and expressions of interest in accommodation was reviewed as part of the assessment. However, such information has not been relied upon as a primary measure of need. This reflects the relatively small size of the Travelling Showpeople population, the highly specific nature of accommodation requirements and the importance of assessing individual household and business circumstances. Accommodation

needs have therefore been determined through direct engagement with households and detailed analysis of their current and future accommodation requirements.

7.82 Overall, the evidence demonstrates that future accommodation requirements are driven primarily by the needs of the existing resident Travelling Showpeople population, particularly newly forming households, concealed households, overcrowded households and households requiring additional operational space. The findings highlight the importance of maintaining a deliverable supply of authorised plots and ensuring future provision can accommodate both residential and business requirements. Failure to address these needs is likely to place increasing pressure on existing yards, constrain business succession, limit opportunities for younger generations and undermine the long-term sustainability of the Travelling Showpeople community within Cheshire.

Calculation of Accommodation Need

7.83 The need for permanent plots for Showpeople in the study area is based on the model suggested in DCLG (2007) guidance and supplemented by data provided by the local authorities. It calculates accommodation needs for the period of 2026-2041 in 5-year periods.

Requirement for residential plots 2026-2031

7.84 The need for residential plots in the area is assessed according to a 13-step process, based on the model suggested in DCLG (2007) guidance and supplemented by data derived from the survey. The results are shown in Table 7.2 below, and the subsequent section explains the sourcing and calculation of the figures for each step.

Table 7.2: Estimate of the need for permanent residential plots 2026-2031

1) Current occupied permanent residential site plots	28
Current residential supply	
2) Number of unused residential plots available	0
3) Net number of households on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	0
4) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	0
5) Residential plots planned to be built or to be brought back into use	0
Total Supply	0
Current residential need	
6) Seeking permanent permission from temporary plots	0
7) Households (on plots) seeking residential plots in the area, excluding those counted as moving due to overcrowding in step 12	6
8) Households on transit plots requiring residential plots in the area	0
9) Households on unauthorised encampments requiring residential plots in the area	0
10) Households on unauthorised developments requiring residential plots in the area	11
11) Households currently overcrowded (or hidden family members) on plots seeking residential plots in the area, excluding those containing an emerging household in step 8	8
12) Net new households expected to arrive from elsewhere	0
13) New family formations expected to arise from within existing households on yards	7
Total Need	32
Balance of Need and Supply	
Total Additional Plot Requirement	32

Source: GTANA 2026

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Requirement for residential plots: steps of the calculation

7.85 Information from local authorities and evidence from the survey were used to inform the calculations, including:

- The number of existing plots
- The number of families residing on unauthorised encampments requiring accommodation (and surveyed during the survey period)
- The number of unauthorised developments (during the survey period)
- The number of temporary plots
- The number of vacant plots
- The number of planned or potential new plots
- The number of transit plots

7.86 The remainder of this chapter describes both the process and results of the Travelling Showpeople's needs calculations.

Supply of plots

Step 1: Current occupied permanent plots

7.87 There are currently 28 authorised occupied plots. This figure is derived from information provided by the Council and has been verified through fieldwork and yard visits undertaken as part of the assessment process. The total relates to authorised permanent residential plots that were occupied at the time of the consultation work and serves as the baseline for assessing existing provision within the study area.

7.88 The identification of the current occupied plot stock is an important component of the wider GTANA methodology, as it establishes the scale and distribution of existing authorised provision against which future accommodation needs and supply can be assessed. The assessment has sought to ensure that the figure is robust by triangulating multiple evidence sources, including local authority records, direct site observation, and engagement with households and site representatives where appropriate.

7.89 The occupied plot total also provides an important contextual indicator regarding the scale of the resident Travelling Showpeople population within the study area and assists in understanding issues such as household formation, overcrowding, turnover and future demand for plots over the plan period. The figure, therefore, forms a key evidential component of the overall accommodation needs assessment.

Step 2: Number of unused residential plots available

7.90 The assessment identifies 0 vacant residential plots within the study area at the time of the fieldwork. Vacant plots are considered available for immediate or short-term occupation and

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therefore contribute to the existing supply of authorised plots within the study area. The identification of 0 vacant plots was informed by yard observations conducted during fieldwork and, where necessary, corroborated through local authority records and discussions with yard occupants or yard managers.

7.91 Vacant plots are treated as part of the available supply because they represent plots that are capable of accommodating households without the need for additional planning permissions or new plot provision. Their inclusion in the supply calculation reflects standard GTANA practice and ensures that the assessment accounts for existing capacity within the authorised yard network before identifying requirements for additional provision.

7.92 The assessment has adopted a cautious and evidence-led approach in identifying vacant plots. Only plots that were clearly unoccupied and considered available for residential use have been included within this category. Plots that were derelict, unavailable, occupied for storage purposes or otherwise unsuitable for occupation were excluded unless there was clear evidence that they would be brought back into residential use during the assessment period.

Step 3: Number of family units in plot accommodation expressing a desire to leave the study area

7.93 The household consultation identified 0 households currently residing on authorised plots within the study area who indicated that they expected to leave the area during the assessment period. The departure of these households would be expected to release their existing pitches for occupation by other Travelling Showpeople households. On this basis, the assessment identifies a resulting supply of 0 plots arising from household out-migration from the study area.

7.94 This element of supply reflects anticipated turnover within the existing plot stock and is based on directly evidenced household intentions identified through the consultation process, rather than assumptions regarding general mobility or vacancy rates. The approach therefore ensures that the supply calculation is grounded in identified household circumstances and intentions rather than speculative assumptions regarding future plot availability.

7.95 The inclusion of plots expected to become available through out-migration is consistent with established GTANA methodology and reflects the practical operation of authorised yards, whereby plots vacated by departing households are typically reoccupied by other Travelling Showpeople households. As such, these plots are considered capable of contributing to the future supply of authorised accommodation within the study area over the assessment period.

Step 4: Number of family units in plot accommodation expressing a desire to live in housing

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7.96 This component of supply is informed directly by the findings of the household consultation and reflects anticipated household movements within the study area over the next five years. The assessment assumes that households currently residing on plots who indicate an intention to relocate either to another yard within the study area – including through the development of their own yard – or into bricks-and-mortar accommodation (Step 4), together with households occupying overcrowded pitches who express a preference to move into conventional housing (Step 11), will be able to do so within the relevant time period. On this basis, the assessment identifies a potential supply of 0 plots.

7.97 The approach reflects standard GTANA practice and is based on the reasonable assumption that where a household vacates an existing plot, that plot is likely to become available for occupation by another Travelling Showpeople household. Accordingly, the movement of households either into housing or onto alternative yards does not remove need from the system entirely but instead creates turnover within the existing stock of plots. The resulting availability of plots is therefore treated as an additional source of supply within the assessment.

7.98 This approach is considered proportionate and robust, as it is grounded in identified household intentions rather than theoretical assumptions regarding plot turnover. It also reflects the practical operation of many authorised yards, where vacated plots are commonly reoccupied by other households, including concealed or emerging households, households on waiting lists, or households seeking to move from less suitable accommodation. The calculation, therefore, forms an important component of the overall assessment of future plots availability and contributes to ensuring that the identified level of need is not overstated through the omission of likely plot recycling within the existing yard network.

Step 5: Residential plots planned to be built or brought back into use

7.99 This component of supply is informed by a combination of local authority records and yard assessments undertaken during fieldwork visits. The plots identified within this category are classified as ‘potential’ pitches. These comprise plots that have already been granted planning permission but which had not yet been fully developed or occupied at the time of the assessment. The category also includes plots that are only partially developed, as well as plots that were previously occupied but are currently vacant and require redevelopment or refurbishment before they can be brought back into active use.

7.100 The inclusion of these plots within the supply calculation reflects the reasonable expectation that they will become available for occupation during the assessment period, particularly where planning consent is already in place, and there is evidence of intended delivery or reoccupation. On this basis, the assessment identifies a total of 0 potential plots within the study area that are expected to be developed, completed or brought back into use during the first five years of the plan period.

7.101 This approach is considered proportionate and robust within the context of the assessment, as it recognises committed sources of future supply while avoiding reliance on speculative or

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unidentified provision. It also reflects standard GTANA practice in distinguishing between pitches that are deliverable within the short term and those which remain uncertain or aspirational.

Need for plots

Step 6: Seeking permanent permission from temporary plots

7.102 This component of the assessment considers households residing on plots with temporary planning permission that is due to expire during the period 2026–2031. The analysis draws on local authority records on the planning status and consent duration of authorised Travelling Showpeople plots within the study area.

7.103 The assessment is based on the reasonable assumption that households residing on plots with temporary permission will continue to require accommodation within the study area following the expiry of that permission, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary. Where temporary permissions expire and are not renewed or regularised through permanent consent, the households concerned would continue to generate accommodation need requiring alternative authorised provision.

7.104 At the time of the assessment, however, there were no plots within the study area with temporary planning permission due to expire during the 2026–2031 period. As such, this element does not contribute to the identified level of accommodation need within the study area.

7.105 This approach is consistent with established GTANA methodology and reflects the importance of considering the planning status and long-term security of existing plots when assessing future accommodation requirements and the sustainability of authorised provision within the Local Plan area.

Step 7: Family units on plots seeking residential plots in the study area

7.106 This component of accommodation need is informed directly by the household consultation evidence and relates to family units who indicated that they either needed, or were likely, to move from their existing accommodation within the next five years. The assessment includes only households that expressed a preference to continue living on authorised Travelling Showpeople yards and were either actively seeking alternative accommodation within the study area or expected to do so during the assessment period. This includes households that intend to secure accommodation by developing their own yards. The identified need, therefore, reflects a clearly evidenced requirement for alternative yard-based accommodation arising from household circumstances and planned residential mobility, rather than a general aspiration to move.

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7.107 The households identified within this category comprise households originally identified at Step 4 as intending or likely to move within the next five years. However, the assessment recognises that some households seeking alternative accommodation are also experiencing overcrowding and may therefore already have been captured within the overcrowding-related need identified at Step 11. To keep the assessment robust and avoid overstating need, we undertook a detailed cross-checking exercise across the relevant household categories. Any family units identified as both overcrowded and seeking alternative accommodation were counted only once within the overall needs calculation. After removing these overlaps, the assessment identifies a net need for 6 additional plots within the study area arising from households requiring alternative authorised site accommodation.

7.108 This approach reflects established GTANA methodology and ensures that each household contributes only once to the final assessment of need, regardless of the number of circumstances affecting their accommodation situation. It also ensures the resulting plot requirement represents a realistic, policy-compliant estimate of need, consistent with national planning policy and guidance requiring local authorities to maintain a clear, robust evidence base for plan-making and future yard provision.

Step 8: Family units on transit plots seeking residential plots in the study area

7.109 This component of the assessment considers the extent to which households residing on transit plots require access to permanent residential accommodation within the study area. The analysis draws on evidence from household consultations and seeks to identify family units currently occupying transit provision who report needing settled, permanent pitches within the next five years.

7.110 The purpose of this step is to distinguish between households with a short-term or travelling accommodation requirement and those whose circumstances indicate a need for permanent residential provision. Where households residing on transit yards express a requirement for long-term accommodation within the study area, this would contribute to the identified need for additional residential plots.

7.111 However, at the time of the assessment, no households were identified through the consultation process as residing on transit accommodation and seeking permanent residential plots within the area. On this basis, this source does not generate any additional residential plot needs within the assessment.

7.112 This approach is consistent with established GTANA methodology and ensures that all potential sources of residential accommodation need are systematically considered, including any movement between transit and permanent forms of provision where relevant.

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Step 9: Family units on unauthorised encampments seeking residential plots in the study area

7.113 This component of the assessment considers whether households residing on unauthorised encampments require permanent residential plots within the study area. The approach reflects the principles set out within the former Department for Communities and Local Government guidance, Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy Reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by Regional Planning Bodies (DCLG, 2007), which recognises the importance of assessing whether households on unauthorised encampments have an unmet need for authorised residential accommodation.

7.114 The assessment uses household consultation evidence to identify the extent to which families residing on unauthorised encampments were seeking permanent residential plots within the study area. In undertaking this analysis, a clear distinction has been made between households requiring long-term residential accommodation and households who were travelling through the area on a temporary basis. Only households requiring permanent accommodation within the study area contribute to the residential plot need identified in this step. Households engaged in transit movements or short-term encampment activity are assessed separately for transit accommodation requirements.

7.115 At the time of the fieldwork and consultation period, no households were identified as residing on unauthorised encampments within the study area. Consequently, no residential plot need arises from this source within the assessment period.

7.116 This approach ensures that the assessment systematically considers all potential sources of residential accommodation need, including households who may be residing outside the authorised site network, while maintaining a clear distinction between permanent residential need and transit-related accommodation requirements.

Step 10: Family units on unauthorised developments seeking residential plots in the study area

7.117 This component of the assessment considers the accommodation needs arising from households residing on unauthorised developments within the study area. Unauthorised developments comprise yards where Travelling Showpeople are residing on land that they own or control, but where the required planning permission for residential use has not been granted. The assessment draws on consultation with the Council, local authority records, and evidence gathered through the fieldwork process to identify the scale and nature of such provision within the study area.

7.118 The evidence identified 11 unauthorised plots in the study area. As these households require authorised accommodation, there is an identified need for 11 plots.

7.119 Households residing on unauthorised developments are treated as generating accommodation need within the study area because, notwithstanding their current

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occupation of land, the plots do not benefit from authorised permanent planning status. Without planning permission, these households do not have secure, authorised accommodation and therefore continue to contribute to the identified need for permanent residential plots.

7.120 On this basis, the assessment identifies a need for 11 residential plots arising from households residing on unauthorised developments within the study area. This approach is consistent with established GTANA methodology and national planning policy, which recognises the importance of assessing the accommodation needs of households residing on unauthorised sites to maintain a comprehensive and robust evidence base for Local Plan preparation and future site provision.

Step 11: Family units on overcrowded plots seeking residential plots in the study area

7.121 The assessment identifies a need for additional plots arising from households currently residing on overcrowded plots within the study area. This need has been identified through the household consultation and yard assessment process, which found households living in accommodation where the existing plot was insufficient to meet the needs of the resident family. This results in a total need for 8 plots in the study area.

7.122 For the purposes of the assessment, overcrowding relates to circumstances where the number of households or family members residing on a plot exceeds the level that can reasonably be accommodated, having regard to factors such as the number of caravans, available living space, household composition, privacy, and the ability of family members to live independently and safely. In many cases, overcrowding reflects the inability of younger or newly forming households to access separate authorised accommodation within the study area. This may include separate family units or adult children who are already of an age where they require, or wish to establish, independent accommodation but are unable to do so because suitable authorised accommodation is unavailable.

7.123 The identified need, therefore, represents households requiring access to additional residential plots in order to resolve existing overcrowded living conditions and to enable households to occupy accommodation that is appropriate to their needs. On this basis, the assessment identifies a requirement for 8 additional plots arising directly from overcrowding within the existing yard-based population.

7.124 This element of need forms an important component of the overall accommodation assessment, as overcrowding can give rise to a range of social, health and welfare impacts and may contribute to concealed households, tensions within family groups and pressure for unauthorised development. Its inclusion within the assessment ensures that the evidence base reflects not only newly arising need, but also existing unmet housing need within the current authorised yard network.

Step 12: New family units expected to arrive from elsewhere

7.125 In the absence of robust primary or secondary data regarding the number of Travelling Showpeople households likely to move into the study area from elsewhere, the assessment adopts a balanced and proportionate approach consistent with established GTANA practice. While anecdotal evidence suggests some movement into the area, reliable evidence to quantify likely levels of in-migration with precision is insufficient.

7.126 Accordingly, the assessment assumes that the level of in-migration into the study area will broadly correspond with the level of out-migration identified through the household consultation at Step 3. As set out in Step 3, the consultation identified 0 households currently residing on authorised plots who indicated that they expected to leave the study area during the assessment period. To maintain a neutral, evidence-led position, the assessment therefore assumes a corresponding inflow of 0 plots in the study area.

7.127 This approach avoids either overstating or understating accommodation need in circumstances where reliable migration data is unavailable and reflects standard practice within Travelling Showpeople accommodation assessments. The resulting position is therefore treated as a net inflow of 0 plots within the study area over the assessment period, ensuring that the assessment appropriately accounts for likely migration dynamics while remaining methodologically cautious and proportionate.

Step 13: New family formations expected to arise from within existing family units on yards

7.128 This component of need relates to the anticipated formation of new households arising from existing family units currently residing on plots within the study area. The estimate is directly informed by the household consultation and reflects the number of individuals or households expected to require separate accommodation during the assessment period to establish independent family units.

7.129 The calculation takes account of a range of relevant demographic and household factors identified through the consultation process, including the age profile of household members, the likelihood of household formation over the plan period, and the extent to which younger household members are expected to remain within, or leave, the study area. Allowances have also been made for households intending to move away from the area, together with estimated patterns of marriage and partnership formation involving both Travelling Showpeople households and relationships with non-Travelling Showpeople households, where these are likely to influence future accommodation requirements within the study area.

7.130 The resulting figure represents the estimated level of additional plot need arising from endogenous household growth within the existing site-based population, rather than from in-migration or concealed need. On this basis, the assessment identifies a requirement for 7 additional plots arising from new family formation over the assessment period.

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Balance of Need and Supply

7.131 From the above, the net additional plot requirement is calculated by deducting the supply from the need.

Table 7.3: Summary of Travelling Showpeople plot needs 2026-31

Supply	0
Need	32
Difference	32

Source: GTANA 2026

Requirement for residential plots 2031-2041

7.132 In considering accommodation needs beyond the first five years of the assessment period, the calculation focuses on future household growth arising from natural population increase and the balance between households moving into and out of the study area. The need identified for the period 2031–2041 is therefore based on the existing authorised Travelling Showpeople population and the expected formation of new households from within that population. The 2026 base figures comprise all occupied authorised plots identified at the time of the assessment.

7.133 The 2031 base figures assume that any additional plots identified as deliverable during the first five years have been provided and that the accommodation needs identified for the period 2026–2031 have been met. Where any element of the identified need remains unmet at 2031, this would need to be carried forward and added to the requirement for subsequent periods. This approach avoids double-counting whilst ensuring that any shortfall in provision is not lost from the assessment and remains recognised through future plan-making and monitoring processes.

7.134 Considering future need, only natural population increase, and movement into and out of the area need be considered. Please note that the 2026 base figures include authorised occupied and the 2031 base figures include these figures and assume that any potential plots have been developed and the identified need for the first five years has been met (any unmet need will need to be rolled over).

7.135 Analysis of the current population and household survey results indicates that an annual household growth rate of 2.10% per annum (compound) equating to a 5-year rate of 12% is more appropriate. This rate was derived from analysis of primary survey data collected during the assessment and reflects the demographic characteristics of the Travelling Showpeople community within the study area. In particular, consideration was given to the current population profile, the average number of children residing within households, the proportion of younger people likely to form separate households in the future, and evidence regarding marriage and family formation patterns.

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7.136 These factors were assessed collectively to estimate the likely rate at which additional households will emerge from the existing population and require their own accommodation. The resulting growth rate provides a realistic, locally derived estimate of future household formation and is therefore more appropriate than applying a generic national growth assumption. It is assumed that these demographic trends will remain broadly unchanged throughout 2036–2041 and, consequently, the same annual compound growth rate has been applied when calculating future accommodation requirements.

Summary

7.137 This chapter has provided data regarding key characteristics of respondent households residing on Travelling Showpeople plots. Table 7.4 shows accommodation needs resulting from the calculations in the tables above. Please note that the accommodation needs assessment was undertaken separately for each of the four local authorities using authority-specific evidence, including household survey findings, site information, local authority records, planning information and other relevant local data. Accommodation need was therefore calculated independently for Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, and Warrington, reflecting the specific circumstances within each authority. The study area figures presented below are the aggregate of these individual authority assessments and have not been derived by apportioning a single study area-wide figure between authorities.

Table 7.4: Summary of accommodation needs (plots)

Authority	Need 2026-2031	Need 2031-2036	Need 2036-2041	Total Need 2026-2041
Cheshire East	17	2	2	21
Cheshire West and Chester	5	2	2	9
Halton	0	0	0	0
Warrington	10	3	4	17
Study Area Total	32	7	8	47

Source: GTANA 2026

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8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

8.1 This final chapter draws conclusions from the evidence. As previously discussed, this report focuses on the assessment of accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

8.2 The accommodation needs calculations undertaken as part of this GTANA were based on analysis of both secondary data and primary consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, Showpeople, and key stakeholders.

Permanent accommodation needs

8.3 The following tables outline the permanent accommodation need over the period of 2026 to 2041. Please note that the accommodation needs assessment was undertaken separately for each of the four local authorities using authority-specific evidence, including household survey findings, site information, local authority records, planning information and other relevant local data. Accommodation need was therefore calculated independently for Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, and Warrington, reflecting the specific circumstances within each authority. The study area figures presented below are the aggregate of these individual authority assessments and have not been derived by apportioning a single study area-wide figure between authorities:

Table 8.1: Gypsy and Traveller permanent accommodation needs

Period	Need (pitches)
2026-31	188
2031-36	73
2036-41	82
Total 2026-41	343

Source: GTANA 2026

Table 8.2: Travelling Showpeople permanent accommodation needs

Period	Need (plots)
2026-31	32
2031-36	7
2036-41	8
Total 2026-41	47

Source: GTANA 2026

Transit provision

8.4 While the study area contains a limited number of existing transit pitches — including provision at Cledford Lane in Cheshire East and a public transit site in Halton — evidence from encampment records, stakeholder consultation and site usage patterns indicates that

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transit need is episodic, geographically dispersed and often short-term in nature. Encampments are typically small, of short duration, and concentrated in specific locations rather than evenly distributed across the sub-region.

8.5 In this context, the development of additional permanent transit sites may not represent the most proportionate or effective response. National policy, including NPPF (August 2026), emphasises that local authorities should plan positively for transit provision but does not prescribe a single delivery model. A negotiated stopping approach — whereby temporary stopping is agreed for defined periods at suitable locations with basic services provided — offers a flexible and operationally responsive mechanism to manage short-term encampment activity.

8.6 This approach can complement existing transit sites by:

- responding to peaks in seasonal or short-duration movement,
- addressing demand in locations not well served by existing transit provision,
- reducing enforcement costs and repeated displacement, and
- improving outcomes in relation to welfare, waste management and community relations.

8.7 The recommendation for negotiated stopping is therefore not a substitute for existing transit provision, but a complementary tool that reflects the scale, distribution and character of encampment activity evidenced across the study area. The approach is consistent with recent GTANA practice in neighbouring authorities and provides a proportionate response aligned with national policy requirements.

8.8 As such, it is recommended that, in addition to the existing and potential local authority and private transit sites, the local authorities set up a negotiated stopping places policy. This is land temporarily used as authorised short-term (less than 28 days) stopping places. They may not require planning permission if they are in use for fewer than 28 days in a year. The requirements for emergency stopping places reflect that the site will be used only for a proportion of the year and that individual households will normally stay at the agreed location for only a few days. Amenities such as portaloos and showers (or access to nearby alternative facilities) and skips or wheelie bins should ideally be available for the duration of the agreed period.

8.9 The term ‘negotiated stopping’ is used to describe agreed short-term provision for transient Gypsies and Travellers. It was first developed by Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE) and involves local authority officers making an agreement with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments. The agreement allows Travellers to stay on the land where they are camped or to move to more suitable land (see Appendix 2 for an example of a negotiated stopping-place protocol).

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8.10 Caravans on negotiated stopping places are allowed to stay for an agreed amount of time. This could be on private or public land, provided the encampment does not pose any danger, cause problems, or create a nuisance for its occupants or the local community. The arrangement is between the local authority, police, the transient households (and the landowner if situated on privately owned land).

8.11 The length of the agreement can also vary from 2 weeks to several months but tends to be around 28 days. The agreement is local and will vary, but may include Travellers agreeing to leave sites clean and not make too much noise, with the local authority providing waste disposal and toilets, sometimes showers and water too. However, as Leeds GATE states, negotiated stopping is a locally agreed solution, so it may differ in different locations. For Negotiated Stopping to work it has to involve local authorities negotiating with roadside Travellers. This involves talking to and consulting roadside Travellers and working out solutions.

8.12 The location of a negotiated stopping place could be where the transient household is located at the time they are identified. If not appropriate, the household could be moved on to an appropriate alternative location. It is important for local authorities to respond to the temporary accommodation needs of transiting households within the local authority area rather than simply directing them to neighbouring authorities. Also, local authorities should consider allowing households visiting family or friends who reside on permanent sites in the local authority area to temporarily reside on the site for an agreed amount of time.

8.13 Agreements could be made with households residing on sites and allowing visiting family and friends to stay for agreed periods of time. This would lead to fewer unauthorised encampments which adversely impact on the local community and allow households with a stopover requirement to stay for an agreed period of time.

Gypsy and Traveller pitches

8.14 DCLG (2008)19 Guidance states that there is no one-size-fits-all measurement of a pitch, as, in the case of the settled community, this depends on the size of individual families and their particular needs. However, they do suggest that as a general guide, it is possible to specify that an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan (or two trailers, drying space for clothes, a lockable shed for bicycles, wheelchair storage, etc.), parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area.

8.15 Based on DCLG guidance, it can be determined that an indicative pitch of approximately 325 square metres would take into account all minimum separation distance guidance between caravans and pitch boundaries as stipulated in guidance and safety regulations for caravan development. An indicative pitch size of at least 500 square metres (0.05ha) would comfortably accommodate the following on-pitch facilities:

[19] Please note that this publication was withdrawn in September 2015.

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- Hard standing for a touring caravan (enabling households to travel)
- Hard standing for a static caravan (including double static trailers)
- 2 car parking spaces
- 1 amenity block
- Hard standing for storage shed and drying
- Garden/amenity area

8.16 Please note that the 325m² and 500m² sizes are examples drawn from good practice rather than standards, and that Travelling Showpeople plots are generally considerably larger because they must accommodate residential accommodation alongside the storage, maintenance and movement of fairground equipment.

8.17 If granting permission on an open-plan basis, permission should be given on a pitch-by-pitch equivalent basis to the above. For example, an existing pitch which has enough space to accommodate a chalet structure, 2 touring caravans and 1-2 static caravans, along with 4 parking spaces, 2 blocks, etc., could be counted as 2 pitches even if it is shown on plans as 1 pitch. However, this would need to be recorded for future monitoring.

Travelling Showpeople plots

8.18 In relation to Travelling Showpeople, new plots need not only to accommodate living space (similar to the above in relation to Gypsies and Travellers), but also space for work equipment. New plots need to accommodate structures and/or caravans designed as living quarters sufficient to house the household and meet their specific requirements, and space away from the living quarters for storage and maintenance of work equipment and vehicles, including domestic vehicles i.e., family car(s). Due to the need for both accommodation space and space for storage and maintenance of very large equipment, the size and space required for a Showpeople plot needs to be much larger than a standard Gypsy and Traveller pitch.

Number of pitches or plots per site or yard

8.19 The assessment does not recommend a prescribed number of pitches or plots per site or yard, as there is no national policy or guidance establishing an optimum size. However, the household and stakeholder consultation undertaken as part of this assessment indicates a clear preference for small, family-based developments, either through the extension of existing sites and yards or the provision of new family sites in appropriate locations. In general, sites comprising around 5–10 pitches are likely to represent an appropriate scale in many circumstances, although larger sites or extensions may also be suitable where they can be demonstrated to provide a good standard of residential amenity, effective management and integration with the surrounding area. For Travelling Showpeople, new provision is most likely to comprise small family yards or extensions to existing yards, reflecting the operational needs of individual family businesses. The assessment does not identify any significant differences between the four local authorities in terms of preferred site or yard size; rather, the appropriate scale of development should be determined through

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the Local Plan allocation process and subsequent planning applications, having regard to local circumstances and the needs of the intended occupiers.

Principles for Future Site Provision

8.20 The purpose of this assessment is not only to identify the level of accommodation need across the study area, but also to provide an evidence base to inform Local Plan preparation and future planning decisions. While the identification, allocation, and design of individual sites and yards are matters for the respective local planning authorities, the evidence gathered through household consultation, stakeholder engagement, and site assessments provides important principles to inform future provision.

8.21 The following principles are intended to support the delivery of sufficient, sustainable and culturally appropriate accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople throughout the plan period. They reflect the findings of this assessment, national planning policy, and established good practice, while recognising that the precise location, scale, and form of future provision will depend on local circumstances, site availability, environmental constraints, and the outcome of the Local Plan process.

Summary

8.22 The results from this assessment supersede any previous GTANA (including any accommodation need calculated before this assessment) for the local planning authorities. This assessment identifies an overall accommodation need over the plan period for 343 additional pitches. The assessment also identifies a need for 47 additional Travelling Showpeople plots during the same period.

8.23 The local planning authorities should also have regard, through a criteria-based policy, to any additional accommodation needs that arise after the base date of this assessment and are therefore not reflected in the identified need. This may include needs arising from new in-migration, newly forming households, changes in household circumstances, or households who were not present within the study area at the time of the fieldwork. Such needs should be considered separately from, and in addition to, the accommodation needs identified in this GTANA and may be met through appropriate windfall applications where justified.

8.24 In addition to the above, the report makes the following recommendations to address the specific accommodation needs of the different community groups:

Planning policy:

- Where it is not possible to identify sufficient specific sites to meet the full identified need within the plan period, a robust criteria-based policy should be relied upon to ensure that applications for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation can still come forward and be assessed positively.
- Implement a corporate policy to provide negotiated stopping arrangements to address unauthorised encampments for set periods of time at agreed locations.

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- To liaise with owners of the sites and yards to determine how they could expand the number of pitches and plots on existing sites/ yards or on other identified or owned land to meet the family's accommodation needs.
- The population size and demographics of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople communities can change rapidly. As such, their accommodation needs should be reviewed every 5 to 7 years.

Management:

- Housing organisations need to consider the type of housing allocated to Gypsies and Travellers residing in bricks and mortar in order to minimise the cultural implications and feelings of isolation.
- Develop a holistic vision for their work on Gypsies, Travellers, and Showpeople and embed it in Community and Homelessness Strategies, Local Plans and planning and reporting obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide training and workshop sessions with local authority and service provider employees (and elected members) to help them to further understand issues relating to the Gypsy and Traveller, and Showpeople communities.
- Liaise with relevant enforcement agencies such as the police to develop a common approach to dealing with unauthorised encampments.
- Encourage local housing authorities to include Gypsy and Traveller categories on ethnic monitoring forms to improve data on population numbers, particularly in housing.
- Better sharing of information between agencies in relation to Gypsy, Traveller, and Showpeople communities.

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Glossary

Amenity block
A small permanent building on a pitch with bath/shower, WC, sink and (in some larger ones) space to eat and relax. Also known as an amenity shed or amenity block.

Authorised site
A site with planning permission for use as a Gypsy and Traveller site. It can be privately owned (often by a Gypsy or Traveller), leased or socially rented (owned by a council or registered provider).

Average
The term 'average' when used in this report is taken to be a mean value unless otherwise stated.

Bedroom standard
The bedroom standard is based on what the General Household Survey used to determine the number of bedrooms required by families. For this study, a modified version of the bedroom standard was applied to Gypsies and Travellers living on sites to take into account that caravans or mobile homes may contain both bedroom and living spaces used for sleeping. The number of spaces for each accommodation unit is divided by two to provide an equivalent number of bedrooms. Accommodation needs were then determined by comparing the number (and age) of family members with the number of bedroom spaces available.

Bricks and mortar accommodation
Permanent housing of the settled community, as distinguished from sites.

Caravan
Defined by Section 29 (1) of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 a caravan as:

"... any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer) and any motor vehicle so designed or adapted."

Concealed household
A household or family unit that currently lives within another household or family unit but has a preference to live independently and is unable to access appropriate accommodation (on sites or in housing).

Cultural preference
The 'cultural preference' of Gypsies and Travellers to reside on sites, rather than in bricks and mortar accommodation, is rooted in their historical nomadic heritage; strong community and family ties; and the preservation of their unique cultural identity and way of life. Living on sites allows them to maintain flexibility and mobility, which are essential for their traditional occupations and lifestyles. Additionally, there is often resistance to living in bricks and mortar homes due to concerns about losing cultural identity, facing discrimination, and being isolated from their community.

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Doubling up
More than one family unit sharing a single pitch.

Emergency stopping places
Emergency stopping places are land used temporarily as authorised short-term (less than 28 days) stopping places for all travelling communities. They may not require planning permission if they are in use for fewer than 28 days in a year. The requirements for emergency stopping places reflect that the site will be used only for a proportion of the year and that individual households will normally stay on the site for only a few days.

Family Owner Occupied Gypsy Site
Family sites are seen as the ideal by many Gypsies and Travellers in England. They are also often seen as unattainable. Two major obstacles remain: money/affordability and getting the necessary planning permission and site licence. While the former is clearly a real barrier to many less well-off Gypsies and Travellers, getting planning permission for use of land as a Gypsy caravan site (and a 'site' in this context could be a single caravan) is currently a major constraint on realising aspirations among those who could afford to buy and develop a family site.

Family unit
The definition of 'family unit' is used flexibly. The survey assumes that a pitch is occupied by a single household or family unit, although it acknowledges that this may also include, e.g. extended family members or hidden households.

Gypsy
Member of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain. In this report it is used to describe English (Romany) Gypsies, Scottish Travellers and Welsh Travellers. English Gypsies were recognised as an ethnic group in 1988.

Gypsy and Traveller
As defined by NPPF (August 2026):

> *Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.*

Household
The definition of 'household' is used flexibly. The survey assumes that a pitch is occupied by a single household or family unit although it acknowledges that this may also include e.g. extended family members or hidden households.

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Irish Traveller
Member of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain. Distinct from Gypsies but sharing a nomadic tradition, Irish Travellers were recognised as an ethnic group in England in 2000.

Local Authority Sites
Most local authority sites are designed for permanent residential use. The latest published Traveller Caravan Count, undertaken in January 2026, suggests there are a total of 4,528 permanent local authority and private registered provider pitches capable of housing 7,001 caravans.

Local Development Documents (LDD)
Local Plans and other documents that contain planning policies and are subject to external examination by an Inspector. It is important to note that Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) contain guidance are not subject to Examination. Planning applications are determined against an adopted Development Plan, which contains documents found to be sound at an External Examination.

Negotiated Stopping
The term ‘negotiated stopping’ is used to describe agreed short-term provision for Gypsy and Traveller caravans. It does not describe permanent ‘built’ transit sites but negotiated arrangements which allow caravans to be sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. The arrangement is between the local authority and the (temporary) residents.

Net need
The difference between need and the expected supply of available pitches (e.g. from the re-letting of existing socially rented pitches or from new sites being built).

New Traveller (formerly ‘New Age Traveller’)
Members of the settled community who have chosen a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle. The first wave of New Travellers began in the 1970s and were associated with youth culture and ‘new age’ ideals. They now comprise a diverse range of people who seek an alternative lifestyle for differing reasons including personal or political convictions. Economic activities include making hand-made goods that are sold at fairs.

Newly forming families
Families living as part of another family unit of which they are neither the head nor the partner of the head and who need to live in their own separate accommodation, and/or are intending to move to separate accommodation, rather than continuing to live with their ‘host’ family unit.

Overcrowding
An overcrowded dwelling is one which is below the bedroom standard. (See 'Bedroom Standard' above).

Permanent residential site
A site intended for long-stay use by residents. They have no maximum length of stay but often constraints on travelling away from the site.

Pitch
A Gypsy and Traveller pitch refers to a space on a site that can accommodate one household and typically includes an area for one or more caravans (touring and/or static), parking, and associated amenities.

Plot
A Travelling Showpeople plot (sometimes referred to as a "yard") refers to an area of land occupied by one household and used for the stationing of living accommodation and storage or maintenance of equipment associated with their business (for example, fairground/circus rides and vehicles).

Primary data
Information that is collected from a bespoke data collection exercise (e.g. surveys, focus groups or interviews) and analysed to produce a new set of findings.

Private rented pitches
Pitches on sites which are rented on a commercial basis to other Gypsies and Travellers. The actual pitches tend to be less clearly defined than on socially rented sites.

Secondary data
Existing information that someone else has collected. Data from administrative systems and some research projects are made available for others to summarise and analyse for their own purposes (e.g. Traveller Caravan Count).

Settled community
Used to refer to non-Gypsies and Travellers who live in housing.

Site
An area of land laid out and/or used for Gypsy and Traveller caravans for residential occupation, which can be authorised (have planning permission) or unauthorised. Sites can be self-owned by a Gypsy and Traveller resident, or rented from a private or social landlord. Sites vary in type and size and can range from one-caravan private family sites on Gypsies' and Travellers' own land, through to large local authority sites. Authorised private sites (those with planning permission) can be small, family-run, or larger, privately-owned rented sites.

Socially rented site
A Gypsy and Traveller site owned by a council or private Registered Provider. Like social rented houses, rents are subsidised and offered below private market levels.

Tolerated
An unauthorised development or encampment may be tolerated by the local authority, meaning that no enforcement action is currently being taken.

Transit site/pitch
This is the authorised encampment option for Gypsies and Travellers travelling in their caravans and in need of temporary accommodation while away from 'home'. Transit sites are sometimes used on a more long-term basis by families unable to find suitable permanent accommodation

Travelling Showpeople
As defined by NPPF (August 2026):

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

Unauthorised development

Unauthorised developments include situations where the land is owned by the occupier, or the occupier has the consent of the owner (e.g. is tolerated /no trespass has occurred), but where relevant planning permission has not been granted.

Unauthorised encampment

Unauthorised encampments include situations where the land is not owned by the occupier, the land is being occupied without the owner's consent, and as such a trespass has occurred. An encampment can include one or more vehicles, caravans or trailers.

Unauthorised site
Land occupied by Gypsies and Travellers without the appropriate planning or other permissions. The term includes both unauthorised development and unauthorised encampment.

Appendices: Accommodation Need Per Authority

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Cheshire East

Gypsies and Travellers

Estimate of the need for permanent residential pitches: 2026-2031

1) Current occupied permanent residential site pitches	107
Current residential supply	
2) Number of unused residential pitches available	6
3) Net number of households on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	3
4) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	2
5) Residential pitches planned to be built or to be brought back into use in next 5 years	10
Total Additional Supply	21
Current residential need	
6) Seeking permanent permission from temporary sites	0
7) Households (on pitches) seeking residential pitches in the area, excluding those counted as moving due to overcrowding in step 11	0
8) Households on transit pitches requiring residential pitches in the area	0
9) Households on unauthorised encampments requiring residential pitches	0
10) Households on unauthorised developments requiring residential pitches	26
11) Households currently overcrowded (or hidden family members) on pitches seeking residential pitches in the area.	14
12) Net new households expected to arrive from elsewhere	3
13) New family formations expected to arise from within existing households	18
14) Households in housing but with a need for a pitch	13
Total Need	74
Balance of Need and Supply	
Total Additional Pitch Requirement	53

Source: GTANA 2026

Estimate of the need for permanent residential pitches: 2026-2041

Period	Need (pitches)
2026-31	53
2031-36	23
2036-41	26
Total 2026-41	102

Source: GTANA 2026

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Travelling Showpeople

Estimate of the need for permanent residential plots 2026-2031

1) Current occupied permanent residential site plots	1
Current residential supply	
2) Number of unused residential plots available	0
3) Net number of households on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	0
4) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	0
5) Residential plots planned to be built or to be brought back into use	0
Total Supply	0
Current residential need	
6) Seeking permanent permission from temporary plots	0
7) Households (on plots) seeking residential plots in the area, excluding those counted as moving due to overcrowding in step 12	0
8) Households on transit plots requiring residential plots in the area	0
9) Households on unauthorised encampments requiring residential plots in the area	0
10) Households on unauthorised developments requiring residential plots in the area	11
11) Households currently overcrowded (or hidden family members) on plots seeking residential plots in the area, excluding those containing an emerging household in step 8	4
12) Net new households expected to arrive from elsewhere	0
13) New family formations expected to arise from within existing households on yards	2
Total Need	17
Balance of Need and Supply	
Total Additional Plot Requirement	17

Source: GTANA 2026

Estimate of the need for permanent residential plots: 2026-2041

Period	Need (plots)
2026-31	17
2031-36	2
2036-41	2
Total 2026-41	21

Source: GTANA 2026

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Cheshire West and Chester

Gypsies and Travellers

Estimate of the need for permanent residential pitches: 2026-2031

1) Current occupied permanent residential site pitches	133
Current residential supply	
2) Number of unused residential pitches available	4
3) Net number of households on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	3
4) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	2
5) Residential pitches planned to be built or to be brought back into use in next 5 years	0
Total Additional Supply	9
Current residential need	
6) Seeking permanent permission from temporary sites	12
7) Households (on pitches) seeking residential pitches in the area, excluding those counted as moving due to overcrowding in step 11	0
8) Households on transit pitches requiring residential pitches in the area	0
9) Households on unauthorised encampments requiring residential pitches	0
10) Households on unauthorised developments requiring residential pitches	38
11) Households currently overcrowded (or hidden family members) on pitches seeking residential pitches in the area.	16
12) Net new households expected to arrive from elsewhere	3
13) New family formations expected to arise from within existing households	17
14) Households in housing but with a need for a pitch	8
Total Need	94
Balance of Need and Supply	
Total Additional Pitch Requirement	85

Source: GTANA 2026

Estimate of the need for permanent residential pitches: 2026-2041

Period	Need (pitches)
2026-31	85
2031-36	29
2036-41	32
Total 2026-41	146

Source: GTANA 2026

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Travelling Showpeople

Estimate of the need for permanent residential plots 2026-2031

1) Current occupied permanent residential site plots	13
Current residential supply	
2) Number of unused residential plots available	0
3) Net number of households on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	0
4) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	0
5) Residential plots planned to be built or to be brought back into use	0
Total Supply	0
Current residential need	
6) Seeking permanent permission from temporary plots	0
7) Households (on plots) seeking residential plots in the area, excluding those counted as moving due to overcrowding in step 12	3
8) Households on transit plots requiring residential plots in the area	0
9) Households on unauthorised encampments requiring residential plots in the area	0
10) Households on unauthorised developments requiring residential plots in the area	0
11) Households currently overcrowded (or hidden family members) on plots seeking residential plots in the area, excluding those containing an emerging household in step 8	0
12) Net new households expected to arrive from elsewhere	0
13) New family formations expected to arise from within existing households on yards	2
Total Need	5
Balance of Need and Supply	
Total Additional Plot Requirement	5

Source: GTANA 2026

Estimate of the need for permanent residential plots: 2026-2041

Period	Need (plots)
2026-31	5
2031-36	2
2036-41	2
Total 2026-41	9

Source: GTANA 2026

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Halton

Gypsies and Travellers

Estimate of the need for permanent residential pitches: 2026-2031

1) Current occupied permanent residential site pitches	55
Current residential supply	
2) Number of unused residential pitches available	0
3) Net number of households on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	1
4) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	2
5) Residential pitches planned to be built or to be brought back into use in next 5 years	0
Total Additional Supply	3
Current residential need	
6) Seeking permanent permission from temporary sites	0
7) Households (on pitches) seeking residential pitches in the area, excluding those counted as moving due to overcrowding in step 11	0
8) Households on transit pitches requiring residential pitches in the area	0
9) Households on unauthorised encampments requiring residential pitches	0
10) Households on unauthorised developments requiring residential pitches	0
11) Households currently overcrowded (or hidden family members) on pitches seeking residential pitches in the area.	4
12) Net new households expected to arrive from elsewhere	1
13) New family formations expected to arise from within existing households	4
14) Households in housing but with a need for a pitch	1
Total Need	10
Balance of Need and Supply	
Total Additional Pitch Requirement	7

Source: GTANA 2026

Estimate of the need for permanent residential pitches: 2026-2041

Period	Need (pitches)
2026-31	7
2031-36	8
2036-41	9
Total 2026-41	24

Source: GTANA 2026

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Travelling Showpeople

Estimate of the need for permanent residential plots 2026-2031

1) Current occupied permanent residential site plots	0
Current residential supply	
2) Number of unused residential plots available	0
3) Net number of households on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	0
4) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	0
5) Residential plots planned to be built or to be brought back into use	0
Total Supply	0
Current residential need	
6) Seeking permanent permission from temporary plots	0
7) Households (on plots) seeking residential plots in the area, excluding those counted as moving due to overcrowding in step 12	0
8) Households on transit plots requiring residential plots in the area	0
9) Households on unauthorised encampments requiring residential plots in the area	0
10) Households on unauthorised developments requiring residential plots in the area	0
11) Households currently overcrowded (or hidden family members) on plots seeking residential plots in the area, excluding those containing an emerging household in step 8	0
12) Net new households expected to arrive from elsewhere	0
13) New family formations expected to arise from within existing households on yards	0
Total Need	0
Balance of Need and Supply	
Total Additional Plot Requirement	0

Source: GTANA 2026

Estimate of the need for permanent residential plots: 2026-2041

Period	Need (plots)
2026-31	0
2031-36	0
2036-41	0
Total 2026-41	0

Source: GTANA 2026

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Warrington

Gypsies and Travellers

Estimate of the need for permanent residential pitches: 2026-2031

1) Current occupied permanent residential site pitches	55
Current residential supply	
2) Number of unused residential pitches available	0
3) Net number of households on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	1
4) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	1
5) Residential pitches planned to be built or to be brought back into use in next 5 years	4
Total Additional Supply	6
Current residential need	
6) Seeking permanent permission from temporary sites	0
7) Households (on pitches) seeking residential pitches in the area, excluding those counted as moving due to overcrowding in step 11	0
8) Households on transit pitches requiring residential pitches in the area	0
9) Households on unauthorised encampments requiring residential pitches	0
10) Households on unauthorised developments requiring residential pitches	25
11) Households currently overcrowded (or hidden family members) on pitches seeking residential pitches in the area.	12
12) Net new households expected to arrive from elsewhere	1
13) New family formations expected to arise from within existing households	8
14) Households in housing but with a need for a pitch	3
Total Need	49
Balance of Need and Supply	
Total Additional Pitch Requirement	43

Source: GTANA 2026

Estimate of the need for permanent residential pitches: 2026-2041

Period	Need (pitches)
2026-31	43
2031-36	13
2036-41	15
Total 2026-41	71

Source: GTANA 2026

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Travelling Showpeople

Estimate of the need for permanent residential plots 2026-2031

1) Current occupied permanent residential site plots	14
Current residential supply	
2) Number of unused residential plots available	0
3) Net number of households on sites expected to leave the area in next 5 years	0
4) Number of households on sites expected to move into housing in next 5 years	0
5) Residential plots planned to be built or to be brought back into use	0
Total Supply	0
Current residential need	
6) Seeking permanent permission from temporary plots	0
7) Households (on plots) seeking residential plots in the area, excluding those counted as moving due to overcrowding in step 12	3
8) Households on transit plots requiring residential plots in the area	0
9) Households on unauthorised encampments requiring residential plots in the area	0
10) Households on unauthorised developments requiring residential plots in the area	0
11) Households currently overcrowded (or hidden family members) on plots seeking residential plots in the area, excluding those containing an emerging household in step 8	4
12) Net new households expected to arrive from elsewhere	0
13) New family formations expected to arise from within existing households on yards	3
Total Need	10
Balance of Need and Supply	
Total Additional Plot Requirement	10

Source: GTANA 2026

Estimate of the need for permanent residential plots: 2026-2041

Period	Need (plots)
2026-31	10
2031-36	3
2036-41	4
Total 2026-41	17

Source: GTANA 2026

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