Introduction

The previous Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment covered the period 2006 to 2011; it is therefore in need of a refresh. The update of the GTANA has been led by the Doncaster Strategic Housing Team, working together with the planning department and the officers from Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield authorities.

This new report provides an update to the 2006/07 assessment and covers the accommodation needs for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople for the period 2011 – 2016.

Background

Gypsies and Travellers face serious disadvantages compared to all other ethnic minority groups, they have a much shorter life expectancy, low income and poor access to finance. Their children have high mortality rates and the lowest educational attainment. Legislation on Gypsy and Traveller issues aims to address inequality, provide a framework for dealing with unauthorised encampments and guidance on providing adequate levels of site provision.

It is a statutory requirement for local authorities, under section 225 of the Housing Act 2004, to carry out an assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs when carrying out a periodical review of housing needs.

An understanding of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues is essential to make properly planned provision and avoid the problems associated with ad-hoc or unauthorised provision. A comprehensive accommodation needs assessment and
strategy to meet the need, which is identified will greatly strengthen the ability of local authorities to respond swiftly and positively to inappropriate unauthorised developments and encampments.

The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) for South Yorkshire commenced at the end of 2006 and reported in June 2007. It estimated a need for 207 pitches across the four South Yorkshire districts over a 5 year period and a further XX Travelling Show People pitches in Doncaster.

**Outputs of the study**

The refresh will provide an update of the 2006/07 GTANA in the South Yorkshire sub region (including New Age Travellers and Travelling Showpeople). It will identify both current and future accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities by use of local data.

In the case of Gypsies and Travellers it is not realistic to forecast need for up to 15 years ahead, as recommended within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment guidance for the rest of the community. However, the most accurate projections covering the next 5 years (2011 – 2016) will be made.

**National Policy Context**

Gypsies and Travellers are recognised as ethnic minority groups under the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the European Human Rights Act 1998. The Equality Act 2010 brought together all the existing equality law and reinstated the enactments relating to discrimination and harassment. This act placed a duty on all public authorities to understand the effect their policies and practices have on equality, and provide equal access to services to all the protected groups: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The needs of Gypsies and Travellers should therefore be considered as part of this act.

There are a number of key pieces of legislation that relate to the provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers. One of the first, nearly 50 years ago, was the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act in 1960. This led to the closure of many sites that had been traditionally used by Gypsies and Travellers.

The Caravan Sites Act, 1968: Part II placed a requirement on local authorities, ‘so far as may be necessary to provide adequate accommodation for Gypsies residing in or resorting to their area’. The 1968 Act also gave the Secretary of State the power to exempt local authorities from the requirement to provide accommodation.

In 1994, the introduction of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act repealed most of the 1968 Act. The 1994 Act removed the statutory obligation to provide sites and also to provide funding for sites. The lack of appropriate sites led to large numbers of those travelling, unable to find authorised places to stop. Provision that had been made by the Gypsy and Traveller community, within planning guidance on the provision of sites, also proved ineffective as the vast majority of planning applications for sites were refused.

Central government has sought to address some of the problems arising from the 1994 Act. A range of guidance documents have been published, relating to planning and site provision; including a revised Planning Circular (01/2006), a consultation on the definition of Gypsies and Travellers, Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs
Assessment Guidance, a guide to responsibilities and powers as well as guidance on the use of enforcement powers.

Part 6 of the Housing Act 2004 contains provisions designed to mainstream the provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers alongside that of the settled community. This includes a requirement that local authorities take a strategic approach to assessing, monitoring and meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers as they do for the rest of the community.

In addition, the current Government priorities offer both challenges and opportunities for the way in which local authorities can deliver local priorities and core services. Key government proposals that will affect Gypsy and Traveller policy are:

- **Welfare Reform Bill** - The bill introduces a wide range of reforms to make the benefits and tax credits system fairer and simpler. This includes: changing Incapacity Benefit to Employment and Support Allowance, the introduction of a Universal Credit and reducing Housing Benefits. This could impact on Gypsy and Traveller communities through reductions in benefit levels. Many Gypsy and Traveller families are in receipt of benefits and the implication of changes could push many families into severe deprivation. The increase to the non-dependant Housing Benefit deduction could also affect those Gypsy and Traveller households with a non-dependant, as they may decide to no longer accommodate the non-dependant, potentially leading to an increase in the demand for pitches or other forms of accommodation.

- **Localism Act** – The overall aim of this Act is to shift power and decision making away from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. This could impact on Gypsies and Travellers through site provision. Many planning applications from Gypsy and Traveller groups are already refused, greater community involvement in planning applications may make achieving permissions even more difficult.

- **Changes to social housing** – There are number of proposed reforms to how social housing is managed and funded, which could have an impact on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. These include, the reform of local authority housing finance, the Affordable Rent schemes and, the greater flexibility for councils in relation to lettings policies, waiting lists, length of tenancies, and increasing mobility for tenants to move across the country. These reforms could impact on how local authorities allocate pitches on their sites.

The Local Planning Authority is currently obliged to identify suitable land for Gypsies and Travellers and Show People under 01/06 (ODPM): Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites and Circular 04/07: Planning for Show People, see below:

### Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites

The Government has recently replaces circulars relating to Gysies, Travellers and Traveling Showpeople with a new short, light touch single Planning Policy Statement for Traveller Sites. Consultation on this new policy was undertaken in July 2011 and the new policy was published on 23rd March 2012

Government’s aims in the new policy document are:

- That local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning
• To ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites
• To encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale
• That plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development
• To promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those travellers who cannot provide their own sites
• That plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective for local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies
• To increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply
• To reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions
• To enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure
• For local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.

The new national policy can be accessed via the following link; http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2113371.pdf

Local planning authorities must allocate sufficient sites for Gypsies and Travellers, in terms of the number of pitches based on the assessed need. The Core Strategy should set out criteria for the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites, which will be used to guide the allocation of sites in the relevant Development Plan Document (DPD).

Planning for Show People

The Core Strategy should set out criteria for the location of travelling show people sites, which will be used to guide the allocation of sites in the relevant DPD. As with Gypsy and Traveller sites, these criteria can also be used in determining respect to planning applications on unallocated sites that may come forward.

Funding for Gypsy and Traveller site provision

Until 2011 the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant was administered by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), it provided funding for local authorities and RHPs to create new sites and refurbish existing sites. However, due to the funding restrictions, following the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010, there was no bidding round for Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant funding in 2010/11.

The funding for Gypsy and Traveller sites has since been replaced by the Affordable Homes Programme and the New Homes Bonus. Pitch funding of up to £60m is available nationally as part of the Affordable Homes Programme, to support local authorities, RHPs and other delivery partners to provide good quality public sites to help meet the need for accommodation for these communities.
Scheme proposals are assessed on the value for money, deliverability, sustainability and how well the proposals meet local needs. Priority is given for new permanent sites but funding is available for refurbishment and temporary or transit sites where they are the most appropriate solution for local needs.

Along with other areas, South Yorkshire faces big funding challenges over the coming years. Nationally, government is committed to cutting the national debt, resulting in reduced public investment.

Local Authority Overview

Doncaster

Introduction
Gypsies and Travellers make up a relatively large proportion of the population with estimates in the region of 4000 to 6000, around 2% of the population depending on the time of year\(^1\). This is one of the largest populations of Gypsies and Travellers in England.

Doncaster is relatively well placed when the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites is considered. In addition to the established caravan sites, Doncaster has an estimated 900 Gypsy and Traveller households who live in bricks and mortar housing.

Current Provision

Doncaster Council owns and manages four residential sites, and one transit site. The sites are:
- Sprotborough (New Travellers)
- Armthorpe
- Thorne
- Long Sandall
- Thorne (transit site)

There are also a number of authorised and privately managed sites owned by Gypsy and Traveller families which accommodate around 262 households, these can be found in:
- Armthorpe
- Intake
- Stainforth
- Dunsforth
- Bentley
- Mexborough
- Askern (Hacienda)

There are also wintering sites used by Fairground and other Travelling Showpeople:
- Branton
- Blaxton
- Mexborough
- Stainforth
- Tickhill

Changes since the 2006/7 GTANA

\(^1\) Doncaster G&T strategy
Refurbishments
Since the 2006/7 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) Doncaster Council has worked to improve provision in the borough. In doing so the Council has been granted planning permission for pitches, carried out refurbishment work and developed a new transit site which is currently being finalised. Little Lane and Lands End sites have also undergone full refurbishments, including new kitchens/bathrooms and extension of sheds.

Policy Development

Following the 2006/7 GTANA

- **Allocations policy waiting lists** – An allocation policy was developed to greater control the way plots are allocated, similar to Choice Based Letting’s allocation policy; pitches are allocated by the priority need of applicants.
- **Pitch requirement action plan** - Joint working with the planning department has enabled a decision to be made on all previous unauthorised sites.
- **Police protocol** – The Liaison team have worked on developing a stronger partnership with the local police to help with disturbance, enforcement and eviction.
- **Weekend call out** - A weekend call out service was developed ensuring that any reports of unauthorised encampments could be actioned straight away. This is currently not in operation although it is expected the service will begin again soon.

Rotherham

Introduction
Rotherham currently has no local authority owned or privately owned authorised Gypsy and Traveller site provision in the borough. This has been the case since 1996.

Current Provision
Local knowledge has indicated that there are 6 unauthorised pitches on private land that have been in existence for some time, one of which has had temporary planning permission in the past. Caravan counts and enforcement monitoring suggests that there can be on average 11 reported unauthorised encampments in the borough in any one year, with 7 to 10 being the minimum expected. Clear patterns of unauthorised encampments have been recorded and mapped since 2001, demonstrating three locational patterns.
- Historically, the south and east of the borough have been used by Gypsy and Travellers with family associations and links to Worksop, including the settlements of Anston, Dinnington and Maltby.
- The Dearne Express Parkway/ Manvers Way, has featured since 2003 as a regular transit stop between the settlements of Barnsley and Doncaster, and in 2007 featured highly amongst all notified unauthorised stops.
- Junction 34 of the M1, and to a lesser extent junction 35, has provided transit families with ready access to Sheffield and Rotherham centres. The linking
road network to Rotherham’s A630 provides ready access to sites around the town centre in particular former industrial areas and urban green spaces.

**Changes since the 2006/7 GTANA**

There have been no new Gypsy and Traveller Strategies in Rotherham since the submission of this document. No new sites are planned at the current time.

- Temporary permission was granted for a small site in Wales in 2008. At this stage it is not know whether a further planning application will be submitted.
- In 2006, with no existing supply the number of households requiring immediate accommodation totalled 16 pitches.
- Following the 2007 study, over 2,000 pieces of land were assessed for Gypsy & Traveller suitability.
- In June 2009, a bid was submitted to the Gypsy & Traveller Sites Grant 2008-11 resource framework. The bid was well received but not ultimately supported, due to a lack of Gypsy & Traveller or public consultation on the proposals; conversely, the Council was unable to undertake consultation without first securing funding.
- Work is ongoing as part of the Local Development Framework to identify and allocate suitable sites across the borough.

**Barnsley**

**Authorised Sites with Permanent Planning Permission**

Barnsley has four permanent sites. The local authority site at Smithies Lane, Barnsley is currently being extended, remodelled and refurbished and is therefore not fully occupied. The works will see 28 pitches increased to 30 pitches which equates to an increase from 112 bed spaces to approximately 138. Two private family owned sites currently provide pitches to accommodate 18 households; one is large and provides 16 pitches for members of the extended family, the other is small providing for one family and immediate offspring (2 households) the site does not have defined pitch areas. This permanent provision will increase by another 8 pitches by the end of 2011 upon completion of another private family site.

**Unauthorised Sites with Temporary Planning Permission**

There are four private sites with temporary permission which expire before 2016, the end of the period covered by this assessment. These are small family owned sites that provide accommodation for 7 households.

**Unauthorised Sites without Planning Permission**

There are four locations that are occupied without permission but are currently being tolerated by the authority. One site is currently subject of appeal action and the three other locations are currently being tolerated by the authority. It is estimated that approximately 10 households are being accommodated in this way.

**Unauthorised Encampments (On land not owned by the Occupiers)**

The January and July 2011 Caravan Count recorded 3 family groups occupying unauthorised encampments. These range in size from 3 caravans to 9 caravans. An average of 8 households have been recorded as on unauthorised encampments. It has been noted that families who are travelling or living roadside, typically occupy fewer and smaller caravans per household than those in more permanent situations.
The bi-annual caravan count records encampments at a given point in time, failing to reflect the recurring nature of encampments at various locations in Barnsley throughout the year. In the year April 2010 to end of March 2011, 29 unauthorised encampments had been recorded, 2 of which were being tolerated on a long term basis by the local authority on account of health and welfare issues. These encampments occupied 10 different local authority owned locations and 11 privately owned locations. Up to the time of the July 2011 Caravan Count, 10 encampments had been recorded, one being tolerated from the previous year.

What has happened since the last study

Barnsley has seen significant changes to the provision in the borough and its engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller community as a whole. Whilst the study highlighted the needs and issues of the travelling community; the floods of July 2007 which devastated several communities across Barnsley, had a particularly severe impact on the one large privately owned Gypsy and Traveller site. This brought about a period of intense activity and engagement with the families affected. Positive engagement with the wider Gypsy and Traveller community has continued and seen the development and establishment of additional authorised pitches as well as changes to policies and management practices within the Council.

2007 Flood Recovery Activity

In the summer of 2007, the Ings Lane caravan site which is a private family owned site was devastated by floods. Rehousing in bricks and mortar accommodation was not culturally acceptable and those affected wished to remain with their extended family unit and return to the family site.

It was agreed that work would be undertaken by the Council to clean and clear the site of all debris and flood damaged accommodation, including chalets, trailers and various outbuildings. The cost of this work was applied as a charge on the land thereby avoiding considerable debt for the family. However, this did not resolve the issue of accommodation.

Provision of Council Owned Mobile Homes

An appeal was made to the government who agreed to allocate funding which enabled Barnsley Council to purchase seven mobile homes which were let on a weekly "rent" to those households unable to reinstate their own accommodation, the majority of who were elderly or single parent households.

The work to clean and clear the site plus the provision of new accommodation enabled the families to move back onto the site and continue living in the custom and manner suited to their culture and lifestyle.

Adaptations to Council Owned Mobile Homes on a Private Site

One of the tenants of a mobile home suffered serious health problems affecting their mobility. Adaptations to bathing facilities and access to the mobile home were achieved through the use of Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) monies from the Council budget. The use of discretionary funding is now established practice and has been used to fund adaptations for two other households.

Fuel Poverty

It was identified that the mobiles homes owned by Barnsley Council provided inadequate levels of thermal comfort causing significant financial pressure on the household budgets. Again, discretionary monies were used to fit external thermal cladding to each of the seven mobile homes bringing them up to decent homes standard. This has significantly improved the thermal comfort in summer and winter months as well as reducing fuel bills and fuel poverty issues.
A Management Service for the Mobile Homes on Private sites

An agreement with the Berneslai Homes (ALMO) means that the tenants of the mobile homes benefit from a housing management and repair service similar to that received by residents of the Council owned site and those living in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Additional private site provision

Since the completion of the 2006-07 study, two existing unauthorised developments obtained temporary planning permission, formalising provision for three families.

A further three unauthorised sites became established; one obtained a life time permission specific to the occupying family for two caravans and associated units; another subsequently obtained temporary permission for three families or pitches (approximately six mobile units) and the latest unauthorised site, established in 2010, obtained temporary permission, specific to the named family, for two caravans.

In 2009, an application for permission to develop a privately funded site with eight family pitches, each to accommodate a large mobile unit or caravan, was received through the normal channels. Following the various stages of the appeal process, full planning permission was granted to the applicant. This site development is nearing final completion and is due to be occupied before the end of 2011.

Additional public site provision

In 2008-09 and again in 2009-10, Barnsley successfully secured a total of £2.4m for the remodelling, refurbishment and extension of the council owned Smithies Lane Caravan Site. Whilst the management of the council site was considered to be excellent; an assessment of the site identified health and safety issues arising from doubling up on pitches and overcrowding which could only be resolved by increasing the pitch sizes and number of pitches.

The works on site will increase the number of pitches from 28 to 30 and will include:

- A significant extension to the size of the existing site to enable a completely new layout of pitches, roads, communal rooms and service blocks
- The redesigned pitches to include 6 much larger family pitches (to accommodate extended families) and thus the number of bed spaces will increase from 112 (under 28 pitch layout) to 138 approx (under new 30 pitch layout)
- Improved buffer zones and between pitches to reduce fire risks and improve privacy
- Better traffic circulation, separation of pedestrian traffic and improved car-parking arrangements
- Adherence to improved design standards throughout

Works are ongoing and the scheme will be completed in 2012.

Site Selection Criteria- Barnsley

Barnsley has established Site Selection Criteria in the Adopted Core Strategy (September 2011) to facilitate identification of land suitable for development as Gypsy and Traveller sites. Given that a Key Equality Priority for Barnsley is ‘To improve the provision of permanent and transit provision for Gypsies and Travellers within the Borough’; the establishment of the Site Selection Criteria has enabled a structured, auditable approach to the assessment of land holdings across the borough for development as Gypsy and Traveller sites.

The land holdings within the Barnsley Borough will be assessed and prioritised against the site selection criteria, RAG (Red, Amber, and Green) rated, according to
the potential to provide suitable accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community according to type of provision. The prioritised listing will be included in the Development Sites and Places Development Plan Document (DPD) which is part of the Barnsley Local Development Framework (LDF). This is an ongoing process.

**Additional Management Support on G&T issues**

**Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer, Barnsley**

Supporting people monies have been secured to fund the appointment of a Liaison Officer until March 2012. The main responsibilities of the officer include the management of unauthorised encampments and the monitoring and maintenance of relevant information to support future need assessments and policy development.

**Methodology**

The 2011 South Yorkshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment is a joint project by all South Yorkshire Local Authorities:

- Barnsley
- Doncaster
- Rotherham
- Sheffield

The work has been carried out in partnership to reflect the cross boundary nature of the accommodation issue experienced by this community.

The refresh of the assessment was carried out using a similar methodology to the Gypsies and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments: Guidance published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in 2007, which was the methodology used for the 2006/07 assessment. However, the refreshed 2011 methodology addresses issues with the previous guidance around double counting and exclusion of certain groups. It also provides more local analysis at the South Yorkshire and individual authority district geographical levels by allowing Local Authorities to include information recorded locally rather than just relying on bi annual caravan counts.

Travelling Showpeople have different housing and accommodation needs than the wider Gypsy and Traveller communities due to their need for storage of equipment. As such this assessment has split the calculations to assess requirements separately. Doncaster has the largest community of Travelling Showpeople in South Yorkshire with 10 sites, there is also one further site in Sheffield.

It is proposed that the Showpeople requirement is proportioned between South Yorkshire authorities based on consultation feedback from the Showmen’s Guild that the community would live in other areas if land was available.

There have been 2 new sites for Travelling Showpeople since the 2006/07 assessment in Doncaster but many of the sites are still overcrowded.

**Bricks and Mortar Accommodation**

There is anecdotal evidence that significant number of Gypsy and Traveller families are living in housing within the wider Barnsley community but records held by the authority do not reflect this situation. This type of information relies on self identification by the community and update of long standing records. Therefore the
information provided by the GTANA study of 2006/7 will remain the basis of this refresh of the GTANA.

Survey and consultation

To help us assess need, a new survey was developed to provide some insight into the changing demand levels and to assess if any new issues have arisen since the last assessment.

The survey was developed by the GTAA steering group and each local authority lead on the collection of surveys in their own area. Over XX surveys were completed, the respondents included Gypsies and Travellers from the social and private sites, and where possible those living in bricks and mortar housing.

The new survey results gave an updated and improved picture of need in each area. A copy of the survey and a summary of the results are attached in appendix XX.

Consultation was also carried out with Travelling Show People. This included a focus group and consultation exercise, in Doncaster, conducted by the Showmen's Guild rep, and a telephone interview with the owner of the private site in Sheffield. This exercise aimed to collect specific needs information and clarity on requirements for this specific group. The calculation of needs was assessed using the same methodology as the wider Gypsy and Traveller assessment but the results reflect the differences in the communities (such as the greater tendency for overcrowding and the need for increased space).

The unauthorised New Age Traveller site in Sheffield was also visited and consultation was undertaken with some of the residents. This visit was carried out to collect information on the number of households currently living on this site and to gain an understanding of the needs of this specific group.

Data sources

A number of secondary data sources for the assessment of need were used in this methodology. These are set out in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pitch Information</th>
<th>Data sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of local authority pitches (current)</td>
<td>Local authorities hold up-to-date information on pitch numbers through site management and planning permission applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of private pitches (current)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unused pitches and vacant plots (current)</td>
<td>This is collected from the July caravan count and council tax data on private caravan pitches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pitches expected to become vacant (over a year)</td>
<td>The number of terminations on the local authority sites-turnover of pitches in year, averaged over past 3 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New LA pitches planned or due to be completed (in next 12 months)</td>
<td>The turnover rate for the settled population and survey data has been used to assess vacancies on private sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New private pitches likely to gain permission or be completed (in next 12 months)</td>
<td>Collected through planning permissions and local authority plans. From March 2011 to March 2012.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Households (current numbers)  
As we have no up-to-date information on the population we have used the figures from the 2006/07 assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seeking permanent site accommodation in the area</th>
<th>The number of households on the local authority site waiting lists and information from the survey.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of households on unauthorised sites not on own land</td>
<td>The average number of unauthorised sites recorded in the January and July Caravan Counts. It is assumed that 1 household occupies 1.5 caravans as an average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On unauthorised sites on own land</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households new expected to arrive from elsewhere</td>
<td>The number of households on the local authority waiting lists who live outside the area and survey data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

South Yorkshire Findings

Caravan count

The Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans is compiled from information submitted by local authorities in England. Local authorities carry out a count of caravans on Gypsy and Traveller sites twice a year, in January and July, providing a snapshot of the number of caravans on the day of the count. Information is collected about caravans on authorised socially-rented sites, authorised privately-funded sites, unauthorised developments (sites on land owned by Gypsies or Travellers for which planning permission had not been granted) and unauthorised encampments (on land not owned by Gypsies or Travellers and which do not have planning permission). The table below shows the Caravan Counts for South Yorkshire over the past five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Authorised sites (with planning permission)</th>
<th>Unauthorised sites (without planning permission)</th>
<th>Total all caravans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No. of caravans on socially rented sites</td>
<td>No. of caravans on private rented sites</td>
<td>No. of caravans on sites on gypsies’ own land</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Yorkshire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-11</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan-11</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-10</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan-10</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-09</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan-09</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-08</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan-08</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-07</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doncaster</td>
<td></td>
<td>87</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan-11</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jul-10</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan-10</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>77</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jul-09</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan-09</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-08</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>91</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan-08</td>
<td>93</td>
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<td>Jul-07</td>
<td>81</td>
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<td>Jul-11</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>Jan-08</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Jan-11</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan-10*</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jul-09*</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan-09*</td>
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<td>Jul-08</td>
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<td>Jan-08</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jul-07</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>54</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan-09*</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jul-08</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan-08</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jul-07</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotherham</td>
<td>Jul-11</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan-11</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan-10*</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jul-09*</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan-09*</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jul-08</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan-08</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-07</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(GTCC, CLG July 2011)*

*count did not take place so estimates were used*
Although the caravan count is seasonally variable there is a slight general downwards trend in the count. This could be due to several reasons:

- Increased tendency for Gypsies and Travellers to live in bricks and mortar housing.
- Lack of suitable sites in the area forcing Gypsies and Travellers to live elsewhere.
- Increased levels of concealed households.
- Increased overcrowding.
- Lower levels of household growth within the community.
- Smaller household size.
- Increased size of trailers and caravans, it is a growing trend that families are having larger units meaning that they may only need one caravan to house the household rather than additional trailers.

**Unauthorised Caravans**
Levels of unauthorised caravans vary seasonally and can not only be used as a proxy for housing need (where a family does not have access to a permanent site) but also as an indication of transient need (many households may travel for a short period for work, but return to a permanent site for wintering months.)

Rotherham on average has 11 unauthorised encampments in a year. This indicates a need for a transient site to address unauthorised encampments.

Further information on unauthorised caravans is attached at appendix XXX

**Survey Summary**

in total XX surveys were completed for the South Yorkshire area.

The main findings from the survey are as follows;

- Family size
- Growing size
- Affordable need
- etc
Calculating Pitch Provision

Current Provision

Current provision is calculated by summing:

- The number of pitches available on local authority owned sites and private sites with planning permission.
- Unused pitches and vacant plots on the local authority and private sites.
- The number of pitches expected to become vacant (over a year) on local authority and private sites.
  - Local authority sites - this is the average number of terminations each year (based on a 3 year average). This provides a figure for turnover, allowing us to assess the number of sites that become vacant over the year.
  - Private sector sites - this is the turnover rate for the settled population. Whilst we recognise that Gypsy and Travellers pitches are likely to have a higher turnover rate than the settled population, due to higher mortality rates and travelling patterns, there is an absence of detailed information relating to private sector turnover. However, we do know that the turnover on private sites will be lower than the turnover on local authority because most private sites tend to be family owned and offer greater stability for residents. Therefore a general turnover rate for each area is used to assess the level of private sector pitch turnover. Additionally, we will also refer to survey information to check this assumption is correct.
- New local authority pitches planned.
- New private pitches likely to gain permission or be completed.

Current Demand

Current demand is calculated by summing current numbers of households:

- Seeking permanent site accommodation in the area.
- On unauthorised sites not on own land.
- On unauthorised sites on own land.
- New households expected to arrive from elsewhere.

Household growth

Household growth is calculated by adding 3% per year and multiplying this for the 5 year period 2011-2016.

The growth rate for new household formation takes into account trend-based projections of natural change (births and deaths), marital composition and 'settled community' migration. However, research acknowledges that it is unable to deliver an accurate rate for the particular lifestyle characteristics for Gypsies and Travellers (large families, early marriage, shorter life-spans and nomadism). Gypsy and Traveller family norms facilitate household formation at a faster rate than the settled community as children marry younger (often 16-18) and obtain their own accommodation separate to their parents.

In the 2006/7 assessment the household growth estimate was based on a rate of 4.5% growth per year. It was derived from survey data on the level of additional households that had formed in the past. Over the four year period (2006 – 11) this equated to a growth rate of 19.3% by the end of 2011. However, this growth rate is
high compared to other Gypsy and Traveller assessments where a figure of between 2 to 3% is used. Additionally, the previous growth rate of 4.5% was never actually realised in South Yorkshire, as demonstrated by our waiting list information and caravan count, which has not seen the 19.3% increase in the past 5 years.

Household growth rates of 2% and 3% a year were suggested as appropriate in Pat Niner, Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England, ODPM. A 3% growth rate was also used in the report from The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2006/7) Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies.

Based on the above information and recommendations from CLG we are now basing our growth rate on 3% per year for the next 5 years.

**Pitch requirement over next 5 years**

Pitch requirement over the next 5 years is calculated from the current need for additional accommodation, plus any additional household growth and predicted net movement. These figures are based on current population and policies, hence, the current level of provision will have an impact on the overall requirement of pitches for that authority.

**Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Requirement Summary Table (Showpeople need is assessed in a separate table do to differing needs)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Doncaster</th>
<th>Rotherham</th>
<th>Sheffield</th>
<th>Barnsley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Number of LA pitches (current)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Number of private pitches (current)</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Total pitches/Hholds (a+b)</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Unused pitches and vacant plots (current)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Number expected to become vacant (over a year)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>New LA pitches planned or due to be completed (in next 12 months)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>New private pitches likely to gain permission or be completed (in next 12 months)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Number of available pitches (d+e+f+g)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Total pitch provision (c+h)</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>Households (current numbers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>– seeking permanent site accommodation in the area</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Doncaster has the highest number of pitches in the sub region and one of the highest populations of Gypsies and Travellers in the country. Rotherham currently has no site provision. This uneven distribution of pitches is leading to strong concentrations of Gypsies and Travellers in parts of the region whilst others have no provision despite the growing demand.

Unused pitches

Despite high levels of demand and need for increased provision several pitches remain vacant in Doncaster. This may be due to low demand for particular sites or poor conditions on some sites. Condition of sites needs to be monitored and if required improvements should be made so that sites do not become neglected. Unused sites are a wasted resource and if brought back into use can go some way to meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

The number of vacant pitches on Sheffield’s local authority sites has reduced, following the refurbishments of both sites and turnover is likely to remain low.
Turnover

Despite a nomadic way of life turnover on Gypsy and Traveller sites is lower than expected. Many families do not travel and when they do it may only be for a short while over the summer months. As such, turnover on sites is relatively stable. However, turnover does not just include travelling it also take into account mortality, family break ups and creation of new households.

Barnsley do not anticipate any turnover owing to redevelopment of the site. Vacant pitches are retained in order to provide capacity to decant residents from one pitch to another until completion of all works.

This figure takes into account turnover on publicly and privately owned sites over an average year.

New Pitches

Despite a growing need for new pitches levels planned in the next 12 months are low and will not be sufficient to provide for the household growth and unmet need.

The limited funding available to develop new local authority pitches combined with the difficulty of finding suitable land for new sites has restricted the amount of new local authority provision.

Although the respondents to the 2011 survey did say they would ideally like to own their own site many said they would not be able to afford to develop their own site or to live on a private pitch. This could explain the reason why only 18 private pitches have secured permission in South Yorkshire despite the unmet need and household growth figures being considerably higher.

Waiting lists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Households seeking – permanent site accommodation in the area</th>
<th>Doncaster</th>
<th>Rotherham</th>
<th>Sheffield</th>
<th>Barnsley</th>
<th>SY total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>new – households expected to arrive from elsewhere</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are high numbers of households on the waiting lists for site accommodation. These needs are not currently being met through turnover on sites and are contributing to the growing unmet need figures.

Demand for Sheffield’s permanent site accommodation has grown since the refurbishments were completed on the two local authority sites, and both these sites now have waiting lists. A total of 17 households are on the local authority waiting list, 13 of these are households from within Sheffield, seeking permanent site accommodation, six of these households currently live in bricks and mortar in the city and one of these households is currently overcrowded with two concealed households living in the property. The four households on the waiting list, expected to arrive from elsewhere, all currently live outside of South Yorkshire. However, three of the households do live in neighbouring authorities to Sheffield, two in Chesterfield and one in North East Derbyshire.

### Unauthorised caravans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Doncaster</th>
<th>Rotherham</th>
<th>Sheffield</th>
<th>Barnsley</th>
<th>SY total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>on – unauthorised sites not on own land</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on – unauthorised sites on own land</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst the caravan count only provides a bi annual snap shot of unauthorised caravans it is a useful figure to help assess Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs.

Levels of unauthorised caravans vary around the sub region. Despite having a large Gypsy and Traveller population Doncaster has, in proportional terms lower levels of unauthorised caravans. This is, in part, due to the fact that Doncaster Council has worked with Gypsies and Travellers to develop sites with planning permission and granted several plots retrospective permissions to meet the unmet need identified in the 2006/07 assessment.

Although no caravans were deemed to be unauthorised on the Rotherham caravan count, local knowledge has lead to the reporting of 6 pitches on unauthorised encampments on a permanent basis.

While no unauthorised sites were recorded in the January and July 2011 Caravan Counts for Sheffield, an unauthorised New Age Traveller site does exist in Sheffield. This is located to the north east of the city on council own land and has been there for over 10 years. In order to record the number of caravans currently on unauthorised land in Sheffield, the site was visited in February 2012 as part of this study. At this visit a total of 44 caravans were counted, using the 1.5 caravans per household methodology, this suggests that 29 households are currently living on this site. However, as the site has not been recorded regularly in the Caravan Count we cannot be certain if this accurately reflects the number of households who live on this site permanently, and anecdotal evidence from discussions with residents suggests that occupancy fluctuates linked to seasonal variations.

Detailed information on the number of unauthorised encampments and sites other the past 12 months, across the sub-region, can be found in appendix XX.
Current Shortfall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Doncaster</th>
<th>Rotherham</th>
<th>Sheffield</th>
<th>Barnsley</th>
<th>South Yorkshire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current shortfall (o-h)</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current short fall is assessed though calculating current provision and current demand. There is a current shortfall of 73 pitches across South Yorkshire.

Sheffield has the largest shortfall this has increased from 19 in 2006/07 to 42. This increase is for a number of reasons, such as the increased demand for the local authority sites since the refurbishments and the closure of the Huntsman Gardens local authority site. Although Huntsman Gardens had been empty for a number of years before when it closed and had no demand, the loss of 14 pitches has reduced the potential supply in overall pitch numbers in the city.

The growth of the unauthorised New Age Traveller site is the main reason for the increased need in Sheffield. This has grown from an estimated 12 households in 2006 (8 caravans) to 29 households (44 caravans). Although consultation took place with residents on this site in the 2006/07 assessment not all the 12 New Age Traveller households estimated to be living on the site were included in the overall pitch requirement numbers for the city. This was because the site was not accurately recorded in the July 2006 Caravan Count, which was the main source used to calculate the need from those on unauthorised encampments, and the majority of New Age Travellers who were interviewed said they did not intend to stay in Sheffield permanently. However, as the site has grown since the last assessment it seems that this assumption was incorrect and that the need for site provision from New Age Travellers was under-estimated in the last assessment.

The residents we spoke to as part of this study could not tell us exactly how many people currently live on the site, but they did say that there tends to be more residents during the winter, as people travel during the summer months to take advantage of seasonal work, such as fruit picking and fairground work. Despite this, they did say that they view this site as their permanent base and prefer this to authorised transit sites or stopping places. The general opinion on transit sites seemed to be that they had poor facilities, which were not well maintained and were therefore not value for money. They also said that they would not feel comfortable living with non New Age Travellers because of the cultural differences and risk of conflicts. A further concern was that if they lived on an official site and left to go travelling, there would be no guarantee that they would be able to get a pitch on their return and this was a risk they were not willing to take.

From observation at the visit, the site does seem to have reached its capacity and any more caravans will result in an overspill on to nearby land and roads. The residents also said they have had to turn people away in the past, because the site is full. This suggests that there is demand for this site and the potential for other unauthorised New Age Traveller encampments to emerge elsewhere in the city. In order to reflect this demand we have therefore included all the 29 households in the pitch requirements for Sheffield.

Despite having a large Gypsy and Traveller provision Doncaster has the lower current short fall due increasing the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites since the previous assessment.
There have been XX new pitches in Doncaster since the previous assessment helping to meet the unmet need identified in the 2007 study.

**Pitch requirement**

Pitch requirement over the next 5 years is assessed by calculating the current short fall and household growth (over next 5 years). Throughout South Yorkshire household growth within the Gypsy and Traveller community is expected to be 62 households, predominantly in the Doncaster area, this is due to the large population and the levels of growth that are expected. Combined with the current shortfall there is a requirement for 134 pitches across South Yorkshire, with a need calculated in all South Yorkshire Local Authorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pitch requirement over next 5 years (p+q)</th>
<th>Doncaster</th>
<th>Rotherham</th>
<th>Sheffield</th>
<th>Barnsley</th>
<th>South Yorkshire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Travelling Showmen’s Pitch Requirement Summary Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Doncaster</th>
<th>Sheffield</th>
<th>SY total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of LA pitches (current)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of private pitches (current)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total pitches/Hholds (a+b)</strong></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unused pitches and vacant plots (current)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number expected to become vacant (over a year)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New LA pitches planned or due to be completed (in next 12 months)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New private pitches likely to gain permission or be completed (in next 12 months)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of available pitches (d+e+f+g)</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total pitch provision (c+h)</strong></td>
<td>76</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households (current numbers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sheffield currently has one privately owned Show People site located in Chapeltown. This was first developed 50 years ago and now contains eight pitches with around 16 caravans in total. There are also two empty caravans on the site that are currently used by staff. Four households live on the site permanently, but during the months of March to October the other households travel for work. A caretaker looks after the site when they are travelling.

This site is currently overcrowded and five households are looking for additional land, to buy, to develop a new private site. They ideally want a site ranging from 1.8 to 5 hectares, to accommodate five pitches, a small garden for the children to play and enough space to store and test the equipment. Although they would prefer to remain in Sheffield, to stay near the existing site, they would consider other areas in South Yorkshire if suitable land became available.

Although the Showpeople have not submitted a planning application for a new site in Sheffield over the past 12 months, in 2009 they were interested in a site in the south-east of the city, but were informed they would not receive planning permission because of the risk of flooding.

Doncaster currently has 10 Showpeople sites for the accommodation of around 70 households; however there are high levels of overcrowding. Estimates using the previous survey (2008) and more recent dialogue with the Showmen’s Guild gave an overcrowding figure of 80 households. The Showmen’s Guild are actively looking for new sites in the Doncaster area and are in regular contact with Planning officers about development of new sites.
There are currently a number of unauthorised sites or land close to existing sites used for storage. These would need to be subject to receiving planning consent in the normal manner but in some cases have been operating for some time. Previous estimates state that this is around 15 yards.

Within the previous survey there was a small level of demand for a site run/provided by the local authority and managed by the Showmens Guild. In some instances this was due to affordability issues. The majority of Showpeople have as an aspiration to own their own yard. It is likely that the majority of sites provided through this route would be larger sites rather than individual yards, although both should be considered. Previous estimates stated that the provision of private sites could account for 62 of the yards required. This would equate to three or four large sites.

There have been XX new Showpeople sites in Doncaster since the last assessment.

**Show People pitch requirement**

Pitch requirement for Showmen’s sites over the next 5 years is assessed by calculating the current short fall and household growth (over next 5 years). Throughout South Yorkshire household growth within the community is expected to be 29 households, predominantly in the Doncaster area, this is due to the large population and the levels of growth that are expected. Combined with the current shortfall there is a requirement for 130 pitches across South Yorkshire.

**Conclusions**

There is a clear need across all South Yorkshire Authorities for an increase in Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitch provision. However, whilst all authorities have an identified need the requirement is skewed in the sub region. Doncaster has a long history and significant ties with many Gypsy and Traveller families and as such has the highest levels of need due to high levels of household growth, whereas levels of need in the other authorities is mainly due to existing unmet need.

The overall Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirement over the next 5 years is 134 in South Yorkshire and 130 Showpeople yards. Whist the need for Gypsy and Traveller provision is considerably less than the previous assessment the need for Showpeople yards has remained relatively constant. The change in Gypsy and Traveller need is due, in part, to a reduced figure for household growth and new provision to meet the unmet need identified in the last assessment. However the lack of new provision for Showpeople, coupled with high levels of household growth has lead to a consistent level of need for new Showpeople sites.

**Recommendations and Further work**

Further work is needed to better assess household growth, the previous study (2007) used a household growth rate of 5%, however when comparing the change in household number, changes in caravan count and change in unauthorised encampments and developments it appears that this figure is grossly over estimated. This new assessment uses a figure of 3%, which is widely used in other Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments, however it is possible that even this reduced figure is an over estimation, therefore further work is required for future studies.

Whilst figures are calculated on a individual Local Authority basis it is also important to understand that due to the transient nature of Gypsies and Travellers that their
“housing market” areas may not be confined to local authority boundaries. Therefore it is recommended that although figures are reflected individually the South Yorkshire total is also an important indicator of need. For example, if Rotherham were to develop a new site of 12 pitches, despite only having an identified need of 8, this would reduce the overall need in South Yorkshire as it is likely that households from neighbouring South Yorkshire authorities would move in to the area, reducing need. Further work could include the development of a shared database of new Gypsy and Traveller developments to record progress towards meeting the needs of this group.