

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - Accommodation Needs Assessment 2016



CONTENTS

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
2. INTRODUCTION	4
3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	5
4. EXISTING SITES IN WELWYN HATFIELD	7
5. PLANNING DEFINITIONS	8
6. KEY FINDINGS – SITES	12
Holwell - HCC public Gypsy and Traveller site	12
South Mimms - HCC public transit site	13
Four Oaks - private Gypsy and Traveller site	15
Foxes Lane - private Gypsy and Traveller site	16
Thunderbridge Yard - temporary private Gypsy and Traveller site	16
Barbaraville - private Gypsy and Traveller site	16
Fairfields - Travelling Showpeople's site	17
7. UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS AND ILLEGAL ENCAMPMENTS	18
8. WAITING LIST FOR A PITCH ON HOLWELL	21
9. CONCLUSION - NEED FOR PITCHES 2016-2032	25

UPDATES:

In order to respond to matters discussed and agreed at the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Stage 3 Hearing Sessions in February 2018, paragraphs 3.11 to 3.13 of the original 2016 report have been updated, with the effect that participation rates are now reported. (March 2018).

1. Acknowledgements

- 1.1 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council would like to thank all those individuals from the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities who took part in the fieldwork associated with this assessment.
- 1.2 Officer representatives from the following service providers are also acknowledged for all their support in carrying out the assessment:
 - Hertfordshire County Council Gypsy and Traveller Section;
 - Hertfordshire County Council - Access to Education for Travellers and Refugees Integrated Services for Learning
 - Welwyn Hatfield Housing and Planning teams and the Welwyn Hatfield Community Trust.
- 1.3 In particular, the Council would like to thank officers from the Hertfordshire County Council Gypsy and Traveller Section for all their assistance and time in carrying out joint visits to sites and for collating data to inform the analysis of the HCC Waiting List for a pitch on an HCC public site.
- 1.4 Thanks are also extended to officers from the Access to Education for Travellers and Refugees - Integrated Services for Learning team for assisting with completing the fieldwork.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Under the Housing Act, local authorities have had a duty for a number of years to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Travellers residing in or resorting to their area.
- 2.2 In 2011, the Council carried out a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTTSANA). The report was published in 2012. In summary, the key findings were:
- In August 2011, there were 120 applicants on the waiting list for a pitch on the various sites managed by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) across the county with all pitches on HCC public sites occupied.
 - In Welwyn Hatfield, there was an estimated need for 25 additional pitches to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers by 2016.
 - Beyond 2016, demographic growth and household formation pointed towards the need for a further 29 pitches by 2026.
 - The number of available pitches on authorised sites was insufficient to meet the identified need.
 - A number of households were living in overcrowded accommodation and larger plots would need to be considered on any new development sites.
 - Residents on existing sites would prefer smaller managed sites to be provided with between 10-20 pitches.
- 2.3 At the time of the 2011 assessment, for the purposes of planning, Gypsies and Travellers were defined in Circular 1/2006 and Travelling Showpeople were defined in Circular 04/2007.
- 2.4 Consistent with the Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018, a new GTTSANA was carried out in 2016.
- 2.5 A key change between the two 2011 and 2016 assessments has been the introduction of national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. First issued in March 2012, this policy was revised and re-issued in August 2015. This latest version revised, for the purposes of planning, the definition of Gypsies and Travellers. This has been taken into account in carrying out this assessment.

3. Stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 To carry out this GTTSANA, a Steering Group was formed comprising officer representatives from:
- Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Gypsy and Traveller Section;
 - HCC - Access to Education for Travellers and Refugees Integrated Services for Learning;
 - Welwyn Hatfield Housing and Planning teams; and
 - The Welwyn Hatfield Community Trust.
- 3.2 At the time of the 2011 assessment, the Steering Group also comprised a representative from the Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment group (GATE). In 2016, notwithstanding efforts by officers, no representatives from GATE or from the Traveller Movement Resource Centre were available to take part in the Steering Group.
- 3.3 The assessment was discussed as an agenda item at the Hertfordshire County Council Gypsy and Traveller Multi-Agency meeting.
- 3.4 Key stakeholders were those individuals from the Gypsy and Traveller community who took part in the fieldwork associated with this assessment. To publicise the assessment in advance of the fieldwork being carried out, the following steps were taken:
- 3.5 All authorised Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites and sites with known unauthorised development known to be present (except one where no access was possible) were visited on the 15th January 2016 and discussions were held with lead persons on the site. Officers advised residents:
- That fieldwork would take place through-out February 2016;
 - What the purpose was of the needs assessment (to assess the need for pitches and inform local planning policies and housing strategies);
 - What the fieldwork would entail (a face to face interview with a survey form to provide structure to the interview and a tool for recording answers);
 - The benefits of taking part (informing the need for additional pitch provision in the borough for existing and newly forming households); and
 - What could be achieved from the assessment (sites being allocated for additional pitch provision and delivered).
- 3.6 In addition, publicity posters/leaflets were produced and delivered to all sites by officers from the HCC Gypsy & Traveller Team, explaining all of the above.
- 3.7 Publicity material was also distributed to those members of the Gypsy and Travelling community living in Bricks and Mortar by officers from the HCC Access to Education team.

- 3.8 Site visits were carried out every week through-out February 2016. Multiple visits were made to sites to maximise participation rates. The majority of residents on private sites politely refused to take part in the fieldwork. However, fieldwork was completed at the HCC public site at Holwell and at one private site in the borough.
- 3.9 In addition, fieldwork was completed at the South Mimms Transit (HCC public) site, which serves the whole of Hertfordshire and is located outside of the borough in Hertsmere.
- 3.10 Officers from the HCC Access to Education for Travellers and Refugees Integrated Services for Learning team contacted all those households known to the team who are currently living in bricks and mortar in Welwyn Hatfield, to carry out interviews and complete fieldwork surveys.
- 3.11 A lower participation rate was achieved in 2016, compared to the previous assessment which was carried out in 2011. However, participation rates in 2016 remained sufficient for the purposes of preparing a proportionate evidence base and the responses received were considered alongside other data.

Fieldwork - participation rates 2016

Site name (public/private)	Number of pitches¹	Participation rate
Holwell (public)	39	54%
Barbaraville (private)	10	-
Four Oaks (private)	5	40%
Two Caravans, Foxes Lane (private)	3	-
South Mimms Transit (public)	15	60%

- 3.12 For those sites where participation could not be achieved in the 2016 fieldwork, site representatives were happy to explain why they preferred not to take part:
- The recent change by the government to the planning definition of Gypsies and Travellers has met with some controversy. It is clearly seen by the community as an attack on their ethnicity and culture and a threat to their future way of life.
 - Engagement with anyone in authority is being met with suspicion - seen as trying to identify those that are settled/not settled in light of the new national planning definition.
 - It was not clear to the Gypsy and Traveller community what had changed since the last assessment in 2011. The perception was that nothing had

¹ Pitch numbers refer to authorised pitches

changed, there was still a shortage of sites and there had been little feedback to the community since the last assessment.

- Those living on private sites considered themselves to be self-sufficient in making future provision for themselves, regardless of planning consent, and did not see the need to take part.

3.13 Notwithstanding the above, a sufficient participation rate was achieved and this data has been supplemented with other data sources in order to carry out the assessment. Further details are provided in the following sections of this report.

4. Existing Sites in Welwyn Hatfield

4.1 The following sites are located within Welwyn Hatfield:

Site name and location	Number of Public Pitches	Number of Private Pitches
Holwell, Hertford Road, Cole Green	39	
Barbaraville, Hertford Road, Mill Green		10
Four Oaks, Great North Road, Oaklands & Mardley Heath		5
Two Caravans, Foxes Lane, Welham Green		3

Existing Permanent Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Welwyn Hatfield

4.2 In addition, there is one permanent Travelling Showpeoples site at Fairfield, Foxes Lane, Welham Green.

4.3 There is one temporary Gypsy and Traveller site at Thunderbridge Yard, Bulls Lane, Welham Green. The site was granted planning permission on appeal for a temporary period (expiring in 2016). The site lies within Flood Zone 3, the highest risk of fluvial flooding and was not considered by the inspector to be a suitable site for a permanent site.

The borough's Gypsy and Traveller population

4.4 At the time of the 2011 Census, the borough's Gypsy and Traveller population accounted for 0.14% of the borough's overall population (155 people in a total population of 110,535). This is consistent with the proportion of the population for the East of England (0.14%) and slightly greater than the proportion of the population in England (0.10%).

5. Planning definitions

- 5.1 National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) was issued in March 2012. The policy was then revised and re-issued in August 2015. Annex 1 of the national policy sets out the following definitions, which were taken into account in the 2016 assessment.

National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites - Planning definitions

1. For the purposes of this planning policy “gypsies and travellers” means:
 - *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, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.*
2. In determining whether persons are “gypsies and travellers” for the purposes of this planning policy, consideration should be given to the following issues amongst other relevant matters:
 - a) whether they previously led a nomadic habit of life
 - b) the reasons for ceasing their nomadic habit of life
 - c) whether there is an intention of living a nomadic habit of life in the future, and if so, how soon and in what circumstances
3. For the purposes of this planning policy, “travelling showpeople” means:
 - *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, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above*
4. For the purposes of this planning policy, “travellers” means “gypsies and travellers” and “travelling showpeople” as defined above.
5. For the purposes of this planning policy, “pitch” means a pitch on a “gypsy and traveller” site and “plot” means a pitch on a “travelling showpeople” site (often called a “yard”). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for “gypsies and travellers” and mixed-use plots for “travelling showpeople”, which may/will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.

5.2 Prior to the 2012 version of the PPTS, national planning objectives were set out in Government Circulars. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 01/2006: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites; and Department for Communities and Local Government Circular 04/2007: Planning for Travelling Showpeople were in place at the time of the previous accommodation needs assessment carried out in 2011. Those Circulars contained different planning definitions to those currently in place.

5.3 For the purposes of Circular 01/2006 Gypsies and Travellers meant:

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, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

5.4 The key difference between the Circular 01/2006 definition and the PPTS 2015 planning definition is the omission of "... or permanently ...". The implication is that if households do not meet the planning definition, housing needs should be assessed as part of the wider population

5.5 No definition or guidance is provided in the PPTS of what is meant by "... ceased to travel temporarily, ..." or what a reasonable interpretation of "a nomadic habit of life ..." would be. Further, no guidance is provided where part of a household may settle for educational or health needs but other members of the household still travel. Also, if a household has ceased to travel on the grounds of old age, those individuals are likely to be in need of a more settled base rather than continually having to travel from place to place.

5.6 Notwithstanding the narrowing of the national planning definition, the PPTS still states that the Government's overarching aim includes facilitating the traditional and nomadic way of life and local planning authorities should still ensure that their policies (amongst other planning objectives)²:

... aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments ... (4 f)

Provide a settled base that reduces both the need for long-distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment (13 d); and

Reflect the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability (13 h).

² Underlining is the Council's highlighting

- 5.7 Further, when plan-making, local planning authorities should " ... set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers as defined in Annex 1 which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area ..." (9).
- 5.8 It should also be noted that whilst paragraph 2 of the PPTS 2015 sets out three issues (2, a, b and c) which relate to a previous nomadic habit of life, reasons for ceasing a nomadic habit of life and future intentions [to resume a nomadic habit of life], it also says that such issues should be considered "amongst other relevant matters".
- 5.9 Whilst the PPTS definition excludes those households who have ceased to travel on a permanent basis - the implication being that the accommodation needs of these households are assessed as part of the wider population, taken as a whole, the wider policy still refers to the need for permanent pitches, providing settled bases which reduces the need to travel, reflects the fact that some travellers do not need to travel for work and secures the objective of reducing unauthorised developments and illegal encampments.
- 5.10 Further, under the Equalities Act 2010, the courts have determined that Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are protected against race discrimination as ethnic groups. There may be a cultural preference (and need) to live in a caravan for some households, regardless of whether they still intend to lead a nomadic habit of life.
- 5.11 This is an area where case law is likely to develop over time but for the purposes of this assessment in 2016, the Council has taken a pragmatic approach. For example, for the purposes of a nomadic habit of life, those households who indicated that they have ceased to travel, have no intention to travel again, or who now only travel to go on holiday/visit friends and family have been considered to not meet the PPTS definition; whereas those households (part or whole) that still travel for work or cultural reasons and intend to travel in the future were considered to meet the definition.
- 5.12 A limited number of exceptions were made to this approach, e.g. No information relating to future intentions to travel was available for those households on the HCC Waiting List for a pitch on a public site. Neither was this information available for those households living on private sites, without the benefit of planning permission (unauthorised developments). However, the relevant sections of this report explain why a pitch allowance has been made in each of these instances.
- 5.13 It is very challenging to try and predict at this point whether households that may form in the longer term as a result of demographic growth (currently children/young teenagers) will choose to lead a nomadic habit of life and therefore meet the national planning definition. The relevant sections of this

report explain where a pitch allowance has been made for newly forming households and as part of the conclusion, it has been assumed that the need for pitches in the longer term is likely continue at similar rates as that assessed in the short-medium term.

- 5.14 This takes a positive approach to assessing need but it is recognised that the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will need to be reviewed in the future.

6. Key Findings – Sites

Holwell - HCC public Gypsy and Traveller site

- 6.1 Holwell is a site which is managed by Hertfordshire County Council. It has permission for 39 pitches with a maximum of 78 caravans (two caravans per pitch). There is a waiting list for pitches on the site.

Evidence of nomadic habit of life

- 6.2 Of the households who took part in the fieldwork on the Holwell site, nine still travel occasionally, with 6 of those 9 households having travelled in the last 12 months. Eight of those households describe themselves as English/Romany Gypsy, one as Welsh Traveller.
- 6.3 Seven of the nine households still travel for cultural reasons (two travelled for holidays only, with no intention to travel again in the future). In four instances, the whole household travels, in two instances, part of the household travels.
- 6.4 Two of the seven households said they intend to travel again within 3-5 years. Of the five remaining households who said they still travel occasionally, one did not intend to travel again and would prefer a larger pitch on the existing site; and one household had family responsibilities locally, which meant they were unsure if or when they might travel again and in any event is registered on the housing waiting list.
- 6.5 There were three remaining households who indicated that they still travelled occasionally for cultural reasons. Whilst all said they did not intend to travel in the future, these households either said that travelling had become too difficult with nowhere to stop, that they would move if the council built new sites (not in remote locations), that there was a need for new transit sites (in every county) or sites with visitor pitches. It is likely that these 3 households would consider travelling again if there was a better supply of sites and a range of transit or visitor pitches.

Holwell - evidence of nomadic habit of life

Two households who currently live on the Holwell site indicated that they intend to travel again and three households may travel again if there were alternative sites to stop or reside on.

Reasons for ceasing travelling temporarily

- 6.6 Of the households who had not travelled in the last 12 months:
- Two had ceased travelling due to the education needs of children,
 - One for ill health reasons,

- Two to look after the pitch
- Two gave no reason.

Existing need for pitches

- 6.7 Of the two households who intend to travel again and the three households who may travel again, one household has an existing accommodation need for one existing (concealed) adult household (aged 18-29).

Future Need for pitches

- 6.8 Of the two households who intend to travel again and the three households who may travel again, and with a reasonable assumption that children within these households will also adopt a travelling lifestyle in the future; one respondent indicated that there would be a need for one newly forming household in the next 5 years but all children in this household are aged under the age of 11 (meaning that within 5 years, no children will be older than 16 years of age). The need is therefore understood to be better reflected in 5-10 years.

Holwell - accommodation needs

Existing need: 1 pitch to meet the accommodation needs (2016-2021) of an existing adult household.

Future need: 1 pitch for the accommodation needs of a newly forming household 2021-2026.

South Mimms - HCC public transit site

- 6.9 The HCC public transit site at South Mimms is located within Hertsmere borough but it is the only public transit site in Hertfordshire. Consistent with the previous assessment in 2011, fieldwork was carried out in 2016.

Evidence of nomadic habit of life

- 6.10 Of the nine households who took part in the fieldwork on the South Mimms Transit site (in Hertsmere), eight still travel regularly and one travels occasionally. All nine households described their ethnicity as English Gypsy.
- 6.11 Five households travel for cultural/work reasons, one for cultural reasons, and three travel because they have nowhere [more permanent] to live. Three households intended to travel again within 1 month and six households within six months.

- 6.12 Four households had previously lived in bricks and mortar but had all returned to living in a caravan either because they could not adjust to living in bricks and mortar, preferred site living or left to get married. Only one household would consider living in bricks and mortar again.
- 6.13 All nine households are looking to move because they have nowhere [settled] to live. All nine households said that the lack of sites is preventing them from moving in the area. Two households have a household member who suffers from severe ill-health and these households need to settle to access medical services and treatment (as it can be difficult to obtain treatment with no settled address).

South Mimms transit site - evidence of nomadic habit of life

All nine respondents still lead a nomadic habit of life. However, the ability for households to travel again was impeded by the lack of sites to move to. Two households need a more settled habit of life on the grounds of ill health.

Evidence of where existing households want to live

- 6.14 Four respondents said they wanted to live on a site either in Welwyn Hatfield or Hertfordshire, two anywhere in Hertfordshire (three would consider anywhere in the country). This does not mean that any need arising from six households should all be met in Welwyn Hatfield (given that anywhere in Hertfordshire would be acceptable to all six households).

Newly forming households

- 6.15 Five of the nine respondents indicated that there was a need for accommodation to meet the needs for nine newly forming households. Three of these households are currently aged 12-17 and six of these newly forming households are young adults (aged 18-29 years).
- 6.16 Respondents indicated that four of these nine newly forming households are likely to consider living anywhere in the UK, one wants to live in Welwyn Hatfield only (to be near family), two in Welwyn Hatfield or anywhere in Hertfordshire, two in Hertfordshire (all to be near family).

South Mimms transit site - Welwyn Hatfield accommodation need

One pitch to contribute towards meeting the need for pitches arising from those currently residing at the South Mimms Transit site who need a more settled site to cease travelling (temporarily), e.g. on the grounds of ill health; and

One pitch to meet the accommodation needs arising from one newly forming household over the next 5 years, currently residing at the South Mimms Transit site, who wants to live in Welwyn Hatfield.

Four Oaks - private Gypsy and Traveller site

- 6.17 Four Oaks is a private site located to the south, and outside the settlement boundary of Oaklands and Mardley Heath, a small village excluded from the Green Belt.

Evidence of nomadic habit of life

- 6.18 Of the two respondents who took part in the fieldwork, both indicated that they no longer travel and are not sure of their intentions to travel in the future. One household had settled for reasons of ill-health. Neither would consider living in bricks and mortar and both indicated that there was a need for a transit pitch in Welwyn Hatfield. Both respondents described their ethnicity as Irish Traveller.

Newly forming households

- 6.19 The two respondents indicated that there would be an accommodation need arising from four newly forming households in the next 5 years. All four newly of these forming households are young adults (aged 18-29).
- 6.20 One newly forming household wants to live in Welwyn Hatfield (to be near to family) and three would be prepared to live anywhere in Hertfordshire.

Four Oaks - accommodation needs

One pitch to meet the accommodation needs of an existing newly forming young adult household who wants to live in Welwyn Hatfield.

- 6.21 Reference is also made to need arising from unauthorised developments and encampments in a following section.

Foxes Lane - private Gypsy and Traveller site

- 6.22 Foxes Lane is a private Gypsy and Traveller site located to East of Welham Green. It has planning permission for three pitches granted on appeal in 2011, but additional caravans have been observed at a number of the bi-annual Census counts.
- 6.23 There were 16 caravans present on site when a pre-fieldwork visit was made but access could not be achieved to this site as part of this assessment. Survey forms were sent but residents and other occupants of this site declined to take part in the fieldwork.
- 6.24 Reference to need arising from unauthorised developments and encampments is made in a following section.

Thunderbridge Yard - temporary private Gypsy and Traveller site

- 6.25 Thunderbridge Yard is a small private site located to the east of Welham Green. It has temporary planning permission, which expires in 2016, for two pitches but additional caravans have been observed at the bi-annual Census counts.
- 6.26 Notwithstanding initial discussions with the occupants of the site in advance of the fieldwork, residents and other occupants of this site declined to take part in the fieldwork interviews or to return survey forms.
- 6.27 Reference to need arising from unauthorised developments and encampments is made in a following section.

Barbaraville - private Gypsy and Traveller site

- 6.28 Barbaraville is a private Gypsy and Traveller site, originally established over 40 years ago; with permanent planning permission granted for a caravan site in 1996. No pitch numbers were stated in the planning permission but the site layout takes the form of 10 established pitches, which have been present for many years.
- 6.29 Notwithstanding initial discussions with the lead occupant of the site in advance of the fieldwork, residents declined to take part in the fieldwork interviews or to return survey forms.
- 6.30 However, the site is regularly visited on the bi-annual Census days and it is noted that there is often one additional caravan present which appears to be occupied by a related young adult household, who doubles up on an existing family pitch.
- 6.31 This leads to an overcrowding but it is not known whether or not the household concerned would meet the national planning definition.

- 6.32 However, given the regular occurrence of a visiting household, this may point to the need for a visitor space or to a private transit pitch to allow for a relation to have a base which does not result in over-crowding on an existing pitch.

Barabaraville - accommodation needs

One pitch to meet the accommodation needs of one young adult household on a visitor/private transit pitch.

Fairfields - Travelling Showpeople's site

- 6.33 The Fairfields Travelling Showpeople's site is located north of Foxes Lane and to the east of Welham Green. It was granted planning permission in 1978.
- 6.34 Notwithstanding initial discussions with the occupants of the site in advance of the fieldwork, residents of this site declined to take part in the fieldwork interviews or to return survey forms. The site is occupied by one extended family and residents consider that they are self-sufficient in providing accommodation for themselves.
- 6.35 The previous needs assessment undertaken in 2011 concluded that there was no evidence of a need for additional plots. As residents did not take part in the 2016 fieldwork, there is no evidence that the new national definition of Travelling Showpeople is met. There is no evidence of any need for additional plots arising from either existing concealed young adult households or from newly forming households in the younger age groups.

7. Unauthorised developments and illegal encampments

Unauthorised developments

7.1 Welwyn Hatfield monitoring indicates the following numbers of unauthorised caravans, i.e. on private sites but without the benefit of planning permission

- 18 caravans present in the borough on the January 2016 Census day;
- 24 caravans present in the borough on the July 2015 Census day;
- 24 caravans present in the borough on the January 2015 Census day;
- 22 caravans present in the borough on the July 2014 Census day;
- 9 caravans present in the borough on the January 2014 Census day;
- 1 caravan present in the borough on the July 2013 Census day.

7.2 Caravans have been noted to be present at the Foxes Lane, Four Oaks and Thunderbridge Yard sites. One caravan is sometimes noted at the Barbaraville site but this has been noted in an earlier section. (An accommodation need arising from an existing young adult household has also been noted in an earlier section reporting on the Four Oaks site)

7.3 In addition, between six and nine unauthorised caravans were noted to be on one site, other than on a Census day.

Illegal encampments

7.4 Welwyn Hatfield monitoring indicates the following numbers of illegal encampments, i.e. on sites without the permission of the landowner (or the benefit of planning permission).

7.5 Since the last Assessment of Need in 2011, between June 2012 and November 2015, there have been 19 incidences of illegal encampments in the borough.

7.6 Of those, one family group were noted to be moving from place to place on at least 9 occasions, possibly more. The number of caravans present varied from 1 to 26 and the length of stay varied from 1 to 48 days.

- 17 of the illegal encampments took place before (and including) January 2014.
- There was an absence of illegal encampments between (and including) February 2014 and June 2015.
- During this period (February 2014 to June 2015), reasonably high numbers of caravans were present on existing sites without the benefit of planning permission – as noted above in the ‘unauthorised development’ section.
- Since (and including) June 2015, there have been 2 illegal encampments comprising 1-3 caravans, present for between 1-5 days.

- 7.7 It can be observed that there were reasonably regular incidences of illegal encampments in the borough between 2012 and 2014, although much of this activity can be associated with one family group moving from site to site.
- 7.8 However, since 2014, the level of illegal encampments reduced significantly, ceasing at one point coinciding with a rise in the number of unauthorised caravans present on existing sites.
- 7.9 The last 4 Census counts indicate between 18 and 24 unauthorised caravans being present on any one Census day.
- 7.10 There is no evidence from the 2016 needs assessment to demonstrate whether any of those households present would meet the national planning definition of Gypsies and Travellers.
- 7.11 However, the number of caravans does vary from time to time and on site to site, suggesting that travelling is taking place (although it is not known for what reasons households travel or cease to travel temporarily) and households are demonstrating a preference to live in caravans on sites.
- 7.12 A further consideration is that the 2011 Needs Assessment identified a need for 25 pitches between 2011 and 2016. During this period, only 3 additional pitches have been permitted in the borough, leaving a backlog of 22 pitches to meet the previously need identified to 2016.
- 7.13 On the one hand, the absence of information on nomadic habit of life might suggest that a current need cannot be demonstrated for households living on unauthorised sites or encampments.
- 7.14 However, this has been balanced against the fact that unauthorised caravans have been present in the borough on a regular basis during between 2013 and 2016 and once caravans were accommodated on sites, the level of illegal encampment activity in the borough ceased or subsequently reduced significantly. The council has received planning applications relating to two sites which would, if permitted, increase the pitch capacity within the borough. However, at the time of preparing this paper, neither application had been determined.

Need arising from evidence around unauthorised developments and illegal encampments

22 pitches to meet the need as evidenced by consistent levels of unauthorised caravans on existing sites, which would also address the backlog from 2011-2016.

No additional need arising from illegal encampments as there is no evidence that the households concerned would meet the national planning definition or need a settled base in Welwyn Hatfield. Further, monitoring indicates a reduced level of encampment activity since 2014 aligned with an increase in unauthorised caravans on sites for which an allowance is already made.

8. Waiting list for a pitch on Holwell

- 8.1 Hertfordshire County Council manages 11 public Gypsy and Traveller sites in seven of the ten Hertfordshire boroughs/districts (Broxbourne, Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Stevenage, Watford and Welwyn Hatfield). The county council also manages a waiting list for pitches on all public Gypsy and Traveller sites in the County. There is one HCC managed site in Welwyn Hatfield at Holwell, located in the east of the borough.
- 8.2 The waiting list data available to Welwyn Hatfield does not specifically identify the ethnicity of applicants, although the Council works with the HCC Gypsy and Traveller section to monitor evidence of need and demand for pitches, and it is considered extremely likely that applicants are Gypsies or Travellers.
- 8.3 At the time of reporting, there were 151 applicants on the county-wide waiting and transfer list. This is an increase from the 93 and 120 applicants reported in the 2011 assessment, but a decrease from the 166 applicants at March 2013 and the peak of 174 applicants at March 2015.
- 8.4 In 2013, there were 20 households where a pitch on the Holwell site (in Welwyn Hatfield borough) was their first choice. Applicants either lived:
- On another HCC site (4);
 - At the South Mimms Transit site (3)
 - On a permanent site outside the county (4)
 - On the roadside / nowhere to stay (10); or
 - In bricks and mortar (8)
- 8.5 In 2015, there were 9 households where a pitch on the Holwell site (in Welwyn Hatfield borough) was their first choice. Applicants either lived:
- On another HCC site (1);
 - At the South Mimms Transit site (0)
 - On a permanent site outside the county (0)
 - On the roadside / nowhere to stay (2); or
 - In bricks and mortar (6)
- 8.6 At the time of the 2016 needs assessment, there were 19 households on the waiting list where a pitch on Holwell was their first choice. Four of these applicants are already living on family pitches on the site and have been assessed as part of the 2016 survey, so to prevent double counting; these are discounted at this point.
- 8.7 This leaves 15 applicants who have the Holwell site listed as their 1st preference at the time of the assessment in 2016.
- 8.8 The three years of available data indicates **an average of 15 applicants** per annum who want to live on the Holwell site.

Moves from Bricks and Mortar

- 8.9 A number of applicants to the HCC Site Waiting List already live in bricks and mortar (and therefore have a permanent home) or on existing permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites either within or outside the county.
- 8.10 From the 2016 needs assessment, it is understood that there are 42 gypsy and traveller households known to live in bricks and mortar in Welwyn Hatfield. 9 households took part in the 2016 assessment. None of the 9 households said that wanted to return to living in a caravan on a site.
- 8.11 However, it is acknowledged that some Gypsy and Traveller households may have an aversion to living in bricks and mortar (as indicated by some respondents who took part in the 2016 needs assessment) and the HCC Site Waiting List indicates an average of 7 households who wish to move from bricks and mortar to a site in Welwyn Hatfield. The waiting list does not however indicate if a household has previously led a nomadic habit of life, currently travels, or intends to lead a nomadic habit of life in the future. This means that as part of the 2016 assessment it is not possible to reach a clear conclusion if the need that exists, as demonstrated through HCC Site Waiting List, would reasonably meet the PPTS definition.
- 8.12 So, either no allowance should be made based on the 'definition' or an allowance made in light of the level of need for pitches demonstrated through the HCC Site Waiting List and the likelihood that some households will travel in the future and lead a nomadic habit of life, even if they then ceased travelling on a temporary basis. There is also insufficient information to ascertain how many households are likely to move from a site into bricks and mortar, although it is known from the 2016 needs assessment that some households are registered on the housing waiting list.
- 8.13 On balance, an allowance is made for a proportion of the need arising from the waiting list, just over half of the average need arising from those currently living in bricks and mortar.

Moves from Bricks and Mortar

An allowance of 4 pitches is made for those on the waiting list who wish to move to the Holwell site – moving from bricks and mortar

Moves from other HCC public sites in Hertfordshire

- 8.14 The reasons for wanting to move from an existing permanent site are not known from the HCC waiting list. If households transfer between HCC public sites, this can have a net zero effect where other existing HCC site tenants fill those voids. However, this is a complex set pattern of movements to monitor and voids may

be allocated to newly arriving tenants and it has not been possible to ascertain any likely patterns of out-migration from sites in Welwyn Hatfield to other parts of the county.

- 8.15 Again, as noted for those households wishing to move to a site from bricks and mortar, the waiting list does not indicate if a household has either previously led a nomadic habit of life, currently travels, or intends to lead a nomadic habit of life in the future. So either no allowance should be made or an allowance made.
- 8.16 On balance, given the overall size of the waiting list and the fact that the number of applicants on the waiting list for a pitch in the county has risen since 2012/13, an allowance could be made for the demand for pitches on a public site within Welwyn Hatfield as a result of in-migration from elsewhere within the county, just under half of the average need arising from those currently living on other sites elsewhere in the county.

Moves from other HCC public sites in Hertfordshire into Welwyn Hatfield

An allowance of 2 pitches is made for those households wanting to move onto the Holwell site - moving from another HCC site within Hertfordshire.

In-migration from permanent sites outside the county to Welwyn Hatfield

- 8.17 In principle, in-ward migration from a permanent site outside the county is no different considering the demand for housing that arises from in-migration for the settled population. However, as above, there is no evidence from the HCC Site Waiting List if applicants have either previously led a nomadic habit of life, currently travels, or intends to lead a nomadic habit of life in the future. Further, it has not been possible to ascertain any likely patterns of out-migration from sites in Welwyn Hatfield to other parts of the country. So either no allowance should be made or an allowance made.
- 8.18 Following the approach taken for other types of moves, an allowance amounting to half the average need arising from those currently living on other sites elsewhere in the country (outside Hertfordshire).

In-migration from permanent sites outside the county to Welwyn Hatfield

An allowance of 2 pitches is made for households wanting to live on the Holwell site - currently living on a permanent site elsewhere in the country (outside Hertfordshire).

Moves from the HCC Transit Site at South Mimms (in Hertsmere)

- 8.19 An allowance has already been made elsewhere in this assessment for pitches arising from the South Mimms Transit site. To avoid double counting, no further allowance is made at this stage.

Applicants with no-where else to live

- 8.20 There are 1 to 2 applicants per annum on the HCC Site Waiting List who have no place to stay and are typically living on the road-side.

Waiting list applicants with no-where else to live

An allowance of 2 pitches is made for households who want to live on Holwell and currently have no place to stay and are typically living on the road-side

- 8.21 Total allowance for need arising from applicants on the HCC Waiting List.

Total allowance for need arising from the HCC Waiting List

10 pitches

Turnover of pitches on the Holwell site

- 8.22 There are 39 pitches on the Holwell site;
- 8.23 In 2014/2015, 1 tenancy ended and one new tenancy commenced.
- 8.24 In the previous year 2012/13, 10 tenancies ended and 10 commenced but most pitches were granted to either a relative of a deceased resident or involved tenants moving to alternative pitches within the site. 3 tenants left the site, freeing up 3 pitches for 3 new tenants to move into the site.
- 8.25 For the 2 years of available data, 2012/13 and 2014/15, there was an average of 2 pitches that became available each year. This is equivalent to around 5% of the stock and is consistent with stock turnover in the council's housing stock.
- 8.26 No deduction is made for this turnover (on the basis of supply) because the waiting list data already takes into account any new tenancies that have been granted during that particular year, i.e. the Waiting List is a reflection of the net need.

9. Conclusion - Need for pitches 2016-2032

Component of need	Need for pitches: 5 yrs (2016/17-2020/21)	Need for pitches: 6-10 yrs (2021/22-2025/26)	Estimated pitch need: yr 11 (2026/27) (i.e. 10 years from adoption)	Estimated pitch need: 2027/28-2031/32)	Total Need: 16 yrs (2016-2032)
Holwell: Concealed households	1	0	-	-	-
Holwell: Newly forming households	0	1	-	-	-
South Mimms Transit Site: Existing need	1	0	-	-	-
South Mimms Transit Site: Newly forming households	1	0	-	-	-
Four Oaks: Concealed households	1	0	-	-	-
Foxes Lane (accounted for in Unauthorised development)	0	0	-	-	-
Thunderbridge Yard (accounted for in Unauthorised development)	0	0	-	-	-
Barbaraville: Visitor/private transit pitch	1	0	-	-	-
Farifields (Travelling Showpeople Site)	0	0	-	-	-
Unauthorised developments/backlog	22	0	-	-	-
Illegal Encampments	0	0	-	-	-
HCC Waiting List	10	0	-	-	-
Estimated need for remaining 6 years of plan period (3.8 p.p.a.= 23 pitches, 4 in 2026/27 and 19 in last five years of plan period)	-	-	4	19	-
Total Estimated Need	37	1	4	19	61



**WELWYN
HATFIELD**