

Highland Council

Accommodation Needs of Gypsy/Travellers in Highland

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Highland Council commissioned Craigforth to undertake research to improve understanding of the accommodation needs of Gypsies/Travellers in the Highland area. The study built on a number of earlier pieces of work focused on the needs and preferences of this population - including a desk-based needs assessment undertaken by the Council in 2010, and consultation with Council site tenants undertaken by Craigforth in 2012.
- 1.2. The overall objective for the study was to provide an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsy/Travellers in Highland, to inform development of the next Local Housing Strategy and associated plans. The site consultation element of the study will also feed into future investment and service development in relation to Council site provision.

Gypsy/Travellers in equalities policy and legislation

- 1.3. Scottish Government policy and guidance recognises Gypsy/Travellers as an ethnic minority in need of the same level of protection from discrimination in common with all of Scotland's minority ethnic communities. The **Equality Act 2010** provides the legislative framework which protects those in distinct ethnic groups (such as Gypsy/Travellers) from being discriminated against on the grounds of ethnicity. The Act places a general duty on local authorities and other public bodies to give due regard across all of their work to the need to remove unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.¹
- 1.4. In setting **Equalities Outcomes** in 2013 the Scottish Government recognised the significant issues facing the Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland, including widespread prejudice and discrimination, poorer education and health outcomes, and difficulty accessing services.² These issues are reflected in one of the new Scottish Government equality outcomes being specifically focused on improving Gypsy/Travellers' lives: "*Gypsy/Travellers experience less discrimination and more positive attitudes towards their culture and way of life.*"
- 1.5. Two recent **Equal Opportunities Committee inquiries – Gypsy/Travellers and Care**, and **Where Gypsy/Travellers Live** both published in 2013 – have again highlighted the need for improvement in Gypsy/Travellers' living circumstances, and have made wide-ranging recommendations on how their lives can be improved. This includes particular concern regarding the level and quality of accommodation provision across Scotland.³
- 1.6. The need for specific consideration of Gypsy/Travellers' needs is also recognised in local equalities related policy and strategy. Of particular relevance for the present study, **Highland Council's Equality Outcomes** for 2013 to 2017 (*Working towards a Fairer Highland*) includes a number of outcomes specifically relating to Gypsy/Travellers:⁴

¹ [Equality Act 2010: guidance](#)

² [Equality outcomes and strategy for Gypsy/Travellers](#)

³ [Equal Opportunities Committee inquiries into the lives of Gypsy/Travellers](#)

⁴ [Working towards a Fairer Highland](#)

9. Improvements to the life chances and experiences of Gypsy/Travellers living in Highland.
 16. We will meet the needs of children and Families who have experienced interrupted learning. This includes Gypsy/Traveller and Roma Children, and young carers.
- 1.7. The Council and partners have also previously had a **Multi-Agency Plan for Gypsy/Travellers in Highland** which set out how the Council, NHS, HIE, Police and Fire & rescue services work jointly to improve the lives, opportunities and experiences of Gypsy/Travellers. There is a strong focus in Highland on multi-agency working to meet the needs of Gypsy/Travellers in Highland, and the Council is developing proposals to refresh the Multi-Agency Plan to reflect the current policy and legislative context.

Gypsy/Travellers in housing policy and strategy

- 1.8. Of particular relevance to the study, the Scottish Government's revised **Local Housing Strategy guidance** also includes more prominent recognition of the need to consider Gypsy/Travellers' specific accommodation needs. Guidance requires Local Housing Strategies to include an assessment of the current level of site and pitch provision against identified need, and consideration of whether current provision is of a standard and type to meet Gypsy/Travellers' needs.⁵
- 1.9. In terms of accommodation provision, responsibility for regulation of social rented Gypsy/Traveller sites now sits with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The **Scottish Social Housing Charter** includes a range of outcomes which set out what service users should expect from social landlord services, and which also underpin the SHR's role in protecting the interests of social tenants and users of social landlord services. This includes the following outcome related specifically to accommodation and services provided to Gypsy/Travellers: "*Sites are well maintained and managed.*"⁶
- 1.10. As noted above, Local Housing Strategies are required to assess the suitability of current site provision for Gypsy/Travellers in terms of the level of provision, and its standard and type. The current **Highland Housing Strategy 2010-15** includes the following objective specifically focused on improving circumstances for Gypsy/Travellers in Highland: "*Gypsy/Travellers' access to, and experiences of, services are improved and they have better opportunities and outcomes.*"⁷ Findings from this study will inform development of the updated Local Housing Strategy for Highland.

Study Method

- 1.11. The study was focused around a full survey of Gypsy/Travellers in Highland, supplemented by a desk-based review of available evidence on the Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland. Table 1 over the page details the specific elements of the study.

⁵ [Local Housing Strategy guidance](#)

⁶ [Scottish Social Housing Charter](#)

⁷ [Highland Housing Strategy 2010-15](#)

Table 1: Study Method

Project setup and design	A collaborative approach between Craigforth and the Council to agree the focus for the survey of Gypsy/Travellers, and the timing and approach to the survey fieldwork.
Desk-based analysis	<p>A review of all available national and local data sources to pull together the most robust available evidence base on Gypsy/Travellers' accommodation needs in Highland. This included analysis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly released data from the 2011 Census • Historical data from the Twice Yearly Count of Gypsy/Travellers (last published in 2009) • Council management data relating to site provision and encampment activity • Other Council service data including the Highland Housing Register and Education records. • Relevant published socio-demographic data.
Interviews with key service staff	A series of interviews with service staff involved in accommodation provision for Gypsy/Travellers in Highland, and provision of other services to Gypsy/Travellers.
Gypsy/Traveller survey fieldwork	<p>A comprehensive face to face survey of Highland Council site provision for Gypsy/Travellers, and all Gypsy/Travellers on encampments in Highland during the study period. This was conducted through a series of fieldwork visits to the three active Council sites and areas of encampment activity (informed by encampment reports during the study).</p> <p>The survey achieved a very strong response from Gypsy/Travellers in Highland during the study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with 25 Council site residents, representing a response rate of 96% against tenants on sites during the study period. • Interviews with 14 households on roadside encampments during the study. An approach was made to all potential Gypsy/Traveller encampments during the fieldwork period, with multiple approaches made where caravans were vacant. A number of Gypsy/Travellers on encampments declined participation in the study, but nevertheless a response of 14 households represents a very strong response (the majority of contacts made with encampments).
Assessment of need	Bringing together the evidence base produced through desk based analysis, and survey fieldwork findings to provide an assessment of Gypsy/Traveller accommodation needs in Highland over the period 2014-19. The outputs of this assessment are presented at Section 5 of this report.

2. GYPSY/TRAVELLERS IN HIGHLAND

- 2.1. This section provides an overview of the Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland, in terms of the scale and distribution of the population and available evidence on the demographic profile.
- 2.2. Gypsy/Travellers are a recognised ethnic minority within Scotland, with the term intended to describe a population for whom a nomadic travelling lifestyle is an important element of their ethnic identity. However it is important to recognise that Gypsy/Travellers are by no means a homogenous population, with the term encompassing a number of distinct groups such as Scottish Travellers, Irish Travellers, Roma/Romany and English or Welsh Travellers. These population subgroups share aspects of the travelling culture, but successive research studies have highlighted the clear distinctions between specific groups – most notably between Scottish and Irish Travellers, and between Scottish/Irish Travellers and Roma/Romany.
- 2.3. For the purposes of the present study the Gypsy/Traveller population is taken to include Scottish, Irish, English or Welsh Travellers, and Roma/Romany. Recognising that preference for these descriptors varies across the population, those taking part in the study were invited to self-describe their identity. On this basis the majority of participants described themselves as “Scottish Traveller” or “Traveller” – around three quarters of participants used these descriptors, and to an extent these terms were used interchangeably. A further 1 in 7 described themselves as “Gypsy Traveller” and around 1 in 10 as “Irish Traveller”.

Estimating the Gypsy/Traveller population

- 2.4. The Gypsy/Traveller population is recognised as being difficult to quantify. This is in part due to the fine grained – and somewhat fluid - ethnic identity noted above. In addition, the significant level of travelling activity across much of the population, and resistance for some to be counted or identified as Gypsy/Travellers presents significant challenges in producing accurate population estimates:
 - The Gypsy/Traveller population in Scotland is spread across a number of accommodation types – including social rented sites, private sites and bricks and mortar housing. However, travelling remains an important part of life for many Gypsy/Travellers who are thus likely to be using sites (authorised and unauthorised) and services across what is often a broad travel area. Travelling is significantly more prevalent during the period May to September, although there are a small number of families with no settled accommodation of their own who travel for much of the year. Clearly this travelling activity presents challenges for recording methods designed for a more settled population.
 - Many individuals are reluctant to identify themselves as Gypsy/Travellers. This reluctance can reflect a range of motivations, perhaps most common being concern regarding any perceived prejudice towards Gypsy/Travellers and in some cases previous experience of discrimination or harassment. In terms of estimating size of the population, this reluctance means that data sources such as service records, surveys and the Census are likely to miss a proportion of the Gypsy/Traveller population.

- 2.5. Recognising these challenges, and the lack of a single reliable data source that provides a comprehensive estimate of the Gypsy/Traveller population, the remainder of this section draws on the evidence noted below. This approach also reflects current Scottish Government housing needs assessment guidance, which emphasises the role of triangulation of multiple data sources for quality assurance purposes.
- 2.6. The 2011 Census introduced “Gypsy/Traveller” as a specific ethnic group for the first time. The Census is now the most comprehensive source of demographic information on Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland, although the full range of ethnicity data has not yet been released at the time of the study. Despite this, the Census is unlikely to offer 100% coverage of the population. For example, coverage of those in bricks and mortar housing is likely to be affected by some reluctance for Gypsy/Travellers to self-identify, and the Census method is less likely to capture the more transient roadside encampment population.
- 2.7. A full survey of Gypsy/Travellers in Highland at the time of the study was a core element of our approach. This sought 100% coverage of the Gypsy/Traveller population in the area during the study, and as noted in the previous section achieved a very positive response. Survey fieldwork does not include Council site tenants who were travelling at the time of the study, but allowance has been made for this in our population estimates. Similarly, an allowance has been made for families on encampments who refused participation, and for the small number of encampments that could not be included within the survey fieldwork period.
- 2.8. Council management records have also been an important source across all elements of the study. This includes data on residence levels for Council sites at the time of the study, and management reports recording the number of caravans across Gypsy/Traveller encampments during the study.
- 2.9. The Twice Yearly Count of Gypsy/Travellers was the main source of demographic information on the population up to the last full Count in 2009. Population estimates derived from the Count are not directly comparable to current Census data, primarily due to the Count excluding those in bricks and mortar housing. Nevertheless, the Twice Yearly Count provides a useful historical context on the size of the Gypsy/Traveller population over time.
- 2.10. Total population figures below are based primarily on Census data, supplemented with survey fieldwork data and management records to make an allowance for the encampment population during the study period. These estimates assume that the Census figures for Gypsy/Travellers in Highland primarily represent the more settled Gypsy/Traveller population, and include only a small proportion of the roadside encampment population – this reflects the Census method and timing in the year (April being at the very beginning of the traditional travelling period). Specifically, we have assumed that 90% of the encampment population recording during the study period is additional to Census figures.
- 2.11. This total population figure has been disaggregated to specific accommodation types based on comparison of Census data, survey fieldwork and management records. These estimates are the most comprehensive available account of the Gypsy/Traveller population. Nevertheless, a substantial degree of judgement is required to integrate the varying data sources – to reflecting, population figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

The Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland

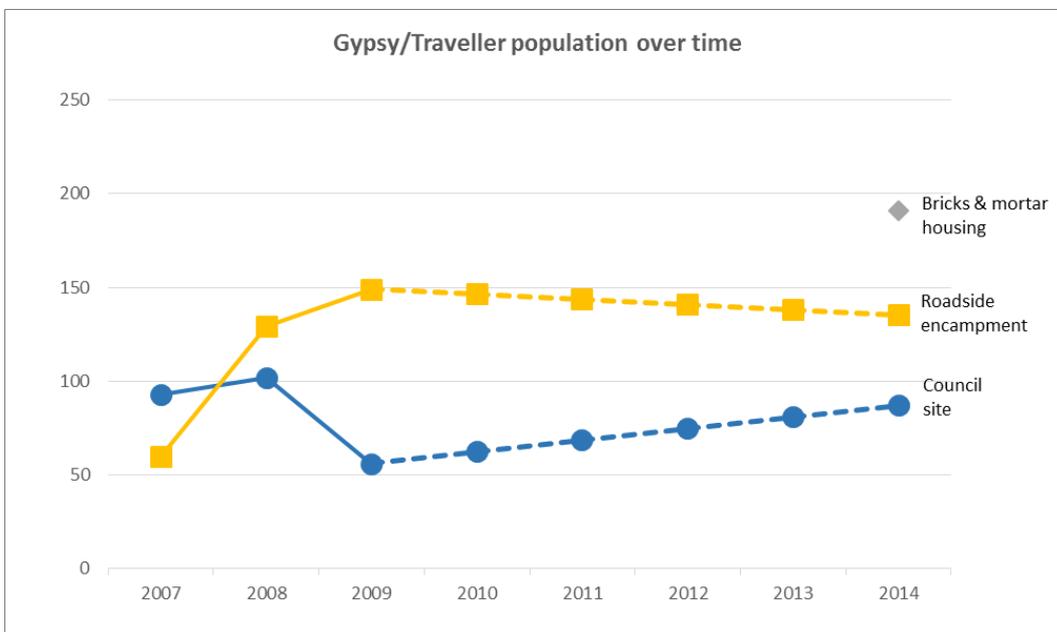
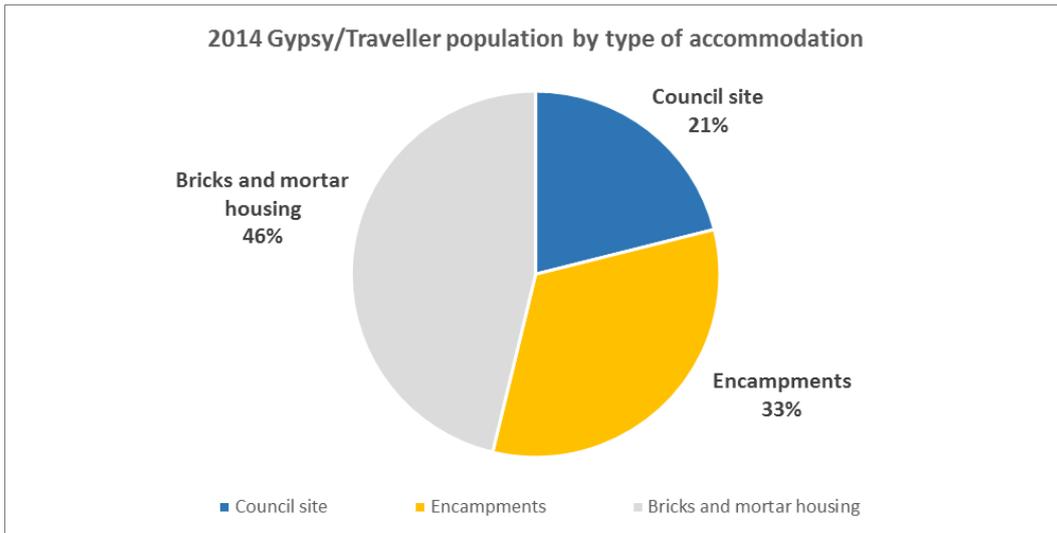
- 2.12. Based on this range of data sources, we estimate the Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland to be around **415 individuals across 130 households** - equivalent to around 0.2% of the total Highland population. While this is a small proportion of the resident population, the 2011 Census indicates that Highland has the third largest Gypsy/Traveller population in Scotland in terms of share of the total population. This is also evident in Highland's share of the total Gypsy/Traveller population; the Census records 7% of all Gypsy/Travellers as being resident in Highland, compared to 4% of the population across all ethnic groups.
- 2.13. As Figure 1 below sets out, this population includes those living on Council sites, those living in bricks and mortar housing, and those on roadside encampments at the time of the study:
- Gypsy/Travellers on Council sites account for around a fifth of the total population (21%, c90 individuals), while those on roadside encampments at the time of the study account for around a third of the total population (33%, c135 individuals). The largest group of Gypsy/Travellers live in bricks and mortar housing – this group is estimated to comprise a little less than half of all Gypsy/Travellers in Highland (46%, c190 individuals).
 - Historical Twice Yearly Count data indicates that the population on Council sites and encampments has typically been 30-40% lower in winter. This indicates that the total winter Gypsy/Traveller population is likely to be around 325-350.
 - The chart over the page provides an overview of the Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland over the period 2007 to 2014. Caution is needed in comparing these population estimates from year to year. For example while the current Council site population is broadly similar to that recorded in 2007 variation in the site population over this period reflects changes in provision – most notably moving the Newtonmore site to year-round use from 2011 and the abandonment of the Kentallen site in 2013. Similarly, increase in the encampment population from 2007 to 2009 is likely to reflect improved recording practices rather than a significant genuine change – and the 2014 encampment population is similar to that estimated in 2009.

Figure 1: Estimated population of Gypsy/Travellers in Highland

Year	TOTAL		POPULATION			
	Households	Population	Council site	Private site	Encampment	Housing
2014 (summer)	130	415	90	0	135	190
2014 (winter)	100-110	325-350	50-60	0	80-95	190
2009 (summer)	<i>Not comparable</i>		55	0	150	-
2008 (summer)	<i>Not comparable</i>		100	0	130	-
2007 (summer)	<i>Not comparable</i>		95	35	60	-

Note: Population estimates rounded to nearest 5. Winter population estimates based on estimated 30-40% fall from summer site and encampment population.

Sources: 2011 Census, survey fieldwork, Twice Yearly Count, Council management data.



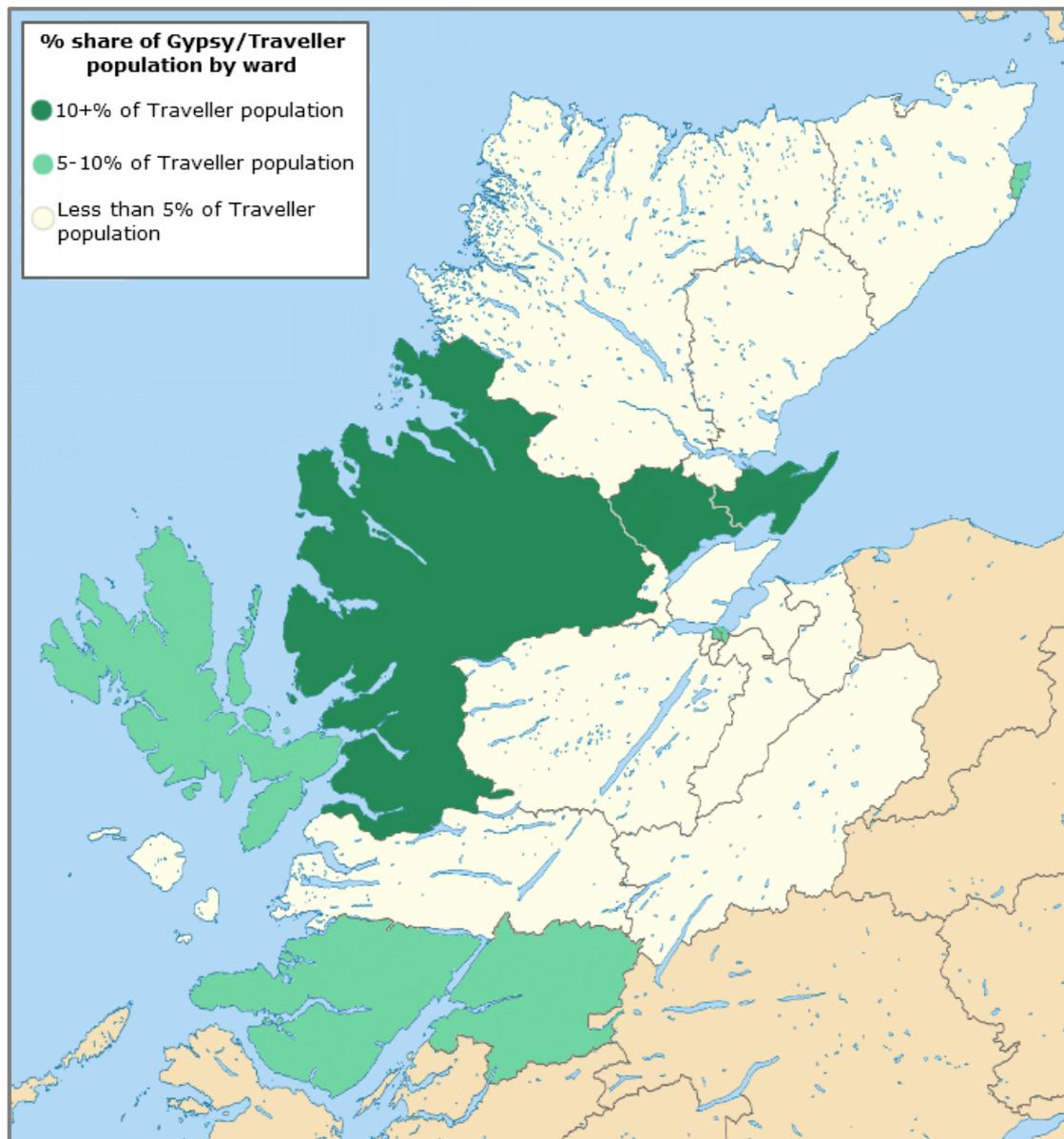
Note: Population estimates rounded to nearest 5.
Sources: 2011 Census, survey fieldwork, Council management data

2.14. Census data makes clear that the Gypsy/Traveller population is dispersed across all parts of Highland. However, as Figure 2 over the page indicates, Gypsy/Travellers recorded by the Census are concentrated in a number of areas. Specifically, the following areas show the largest Gypsy/Traveller population, and together account for nearly two thirds of all Gypsy/Travellers as estimated by the Census:

- Cromarty Firth (15% of all Gypsy/Travellers);
- Tain & Easter Ross (11%);
- Wester Ross, Strathpeffer % Lochalsh (11%);
- Inverness Central (8%);
- Skye (7%);
- Fort William & Ardnamurchan (7%); and
- Wick (5%).

- 2.15. This distribution pattern is in part a reflection of the location of official Gypsy/Traveller sites – the Inverness and Fort William/Ardnamurchan areas account for 3 of the 4 Council sites. However the large proportion of the Gypsy/Traveller population recorded in Tain, Cromarty Firth and Wester Ross areas indicates a substantial number of Gypsy/Travellers living in bricks and mortar housing in these areas.
- 2.16. It is important to note that the population distribution presented at Figure 2 is likely to exclude a substantial proportion of Gypsy/Travellers on roadside encampments. The distribution of encampment activity is considered further at section 4 of this report. In addition to the ward areas noted above, including encampments also highlights the area to the east of Inverness (primarily the Inverness Millburn and Culloden & Ardersier wards) as accounting for a substantial proportion of the Gypsy/Traveller population.

Figure 2 : Distribution of the Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland



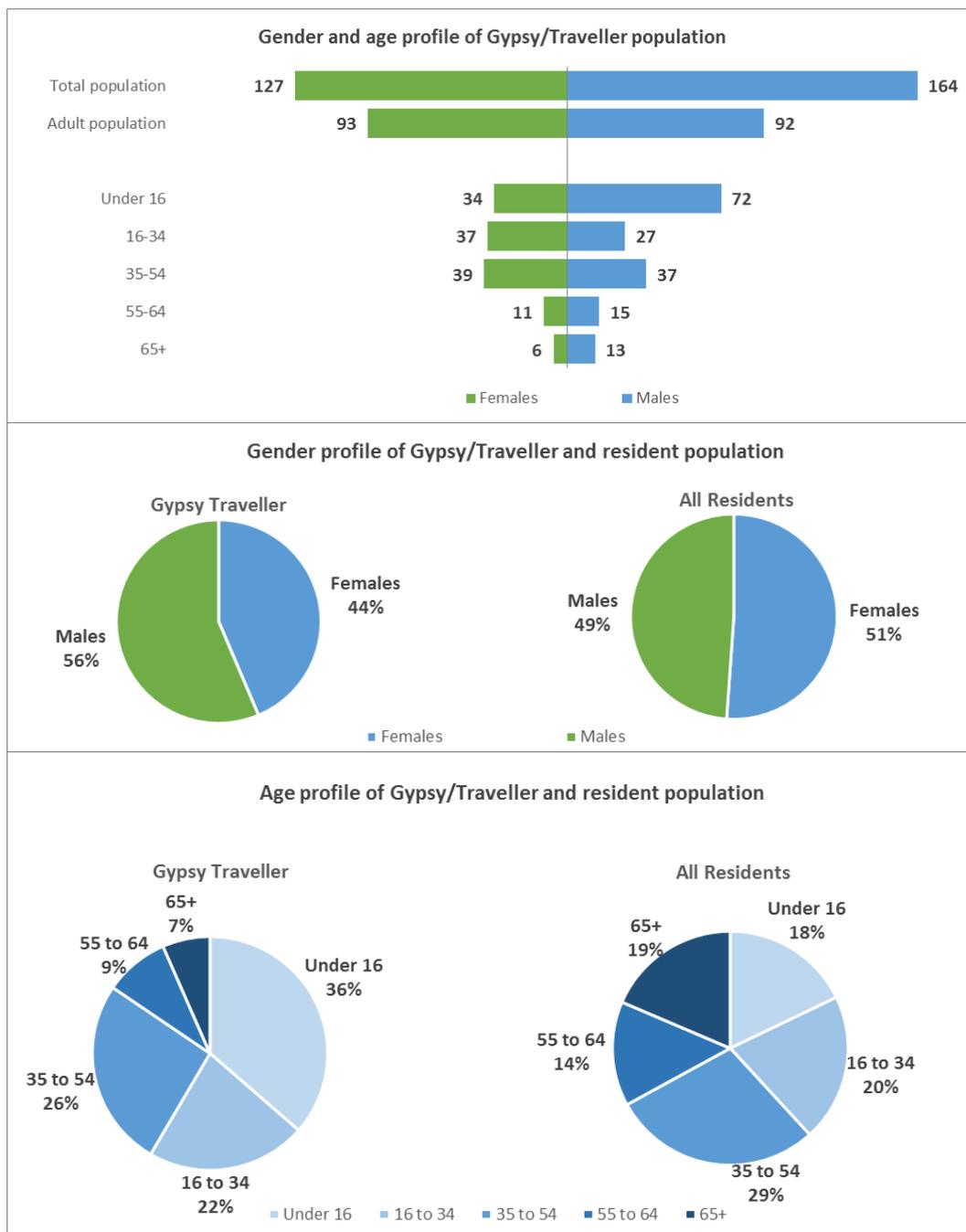
Note: based on Census population figures, likely to exclude substantial proportion of the summer encampment population. Source: 2011 Census

Profile of the Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland

2.17. The Census also gathers a range of information on the socio-demographic profile of the Gypsy/Traveller population – and indeed is the only robust, comprehensive source of such information. The range of information available to inform the present study is limited to that included in Census data releases to date. However this does include relevant information on the gender, age and national identity profile of the population. Figure 3 below summarises the profile of the Gypsy/Traveller population, and compares this with the overall resident population profile.

- **The Census records 56% males and 44% female** – broadly similar to the resident population although the male Gypsy/Traveller population is proportionately larger (males account for 49% of the resident population). This difference in gender balance is primarily due to a large proportion of male Gypsy/Traveller children; the gender profile of the adult Gypsy/Traveller population is more evenly balanced, and is closer to the profile of the resident population.
- **The Gypsy/Traveller population shows a relatively young age profile** with children accounting for more than a third of the total population (36%), and more than half aged under 35 (58%). The older population is relatively small; only around 1 in 20 Gypsy/Travellers recorded by the Census are aged 65+ (7%). This is a significantly younger age profile than is the case for the resident population; around a fifth of Highland residents are aged 65+, nearly three times the proportion of Gypsy/Travellers.
- Census data on **national identity** indicates that a large majority of Gypsy/Travellers describe themselves as Scottish Travellers (77%). A further 14% describe themselves as being a British or other UK, and 8% as “other” (with this latter group likely to include Irish Travellers). This is similar to the profile of research participants, although the survey recorded a slightly larger proportion of Irish Travellers (primarily on encampments).
- Although not currently available through the Census, survey fieldwork and housing management data shows a **larger average household size for Gypsy/Traveller families**. The average size of Gypsy/Traveller households is 3.0 to 3.5 persons, substantially higher than the average of 2.3 persons per household across the Highland population as a whole. This is also reflected in fieldwork findings; the majority of Gypsy/Traveller families taking part in the study had one or more children in the household, including a number of large households of 6 persons or more.

Figure 3 : Profile of Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland



National identity	Gypsy/Traveller population		Resident population
	Count	Percentage	
TOTAL POPULATION	291	100%	
Scottish only	224	77%	62%
British only	13	4%	10%
Scottish/British, Scottish/Other	20	7%	17%
English	4	1%	4%
Other UK	6	2%	3%
Other	24	8%	4%

Source: 2011 Census

3. ACCOMMODATION USED BY GYPSY/TRAVELLERS IN HIGHLAND

3.1. Gypsy/Travellers across Scotland make use of a wide variety of accommodation types. The range of options available to Gypsy/Travellers varies across local authority areas but across Scotland as a whole includes:

- Social rented Gypsy/Traveller sites – a mix of Council and RSL managed sites with varying on-site amenities, most offering year-round accommodation but some operating on a seasonal basis. As at 2009, 31 social rented sites were recorded across Scotland (3 being seasonal in operation).
- Private sites accommodating Gypsy/Travellers, including dedicated private sites specifically for Gypsy/Travellers and commercial holiday sites known to accept Gypsy/Travellers. Dedicated private sites are typically established by Gypsy/Travellers and usually cater for specific families or extended families. 22 private sites were recorded as accommodating Gypsy/Travellers at 2009, although data on such provision is known to be incomplete.
- Bricks and mortar housing including social rented, private rented and owner occupied tenures. Evidence on Gypsy/Traveller households living in bricks and mortar housing is very limited, although as is discussed in the previous section, 2011 Census data indicates that a substantial proportion of the Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland is likely to live in bricks and mortar housing.
- Roadside encampments where Gypsy/Travellers pull onto land for a short period (typically 1-2 weeks although this can vary widely) while travelling or where families are struggling to find settled accommodation. A wide range of locations are used including lay-bys, wasteland, industrial sites, open space areas, lay-bys, car parks and more secluded locations such as river/loch shores and grazing pastures. Some of these are long-established ‘stopping places’ that may have been used by Gypsy/Travellers for many years. Encampment locations may be used with the agreement of landowners - survey fieldwork and interviews identified a number of potential examples of these arrangements across Highland, although it was not possible to confirm these. However, in most instances encampments on Council and private land are unauthorised – in these cases families typically move on after a short stay, either of their own accord or as a result of an eviction notice.
- A number of transit sites or stopping places are provided in other parts of the UK, available to Gypsy/Travellers to use on a temporary short-term basis while travelling and providing basic amenities (typically with a nightly fee). Several Scottish local authorities have considered proposals for transit site provision, but at present none of these proposals have been taken forward.

3.2. ***Gypsy/Traveller accommodation options in Highland are restricted to a total of four Council sites (three in operation at the time of the study, one subject to investment to bring pitches back into use), bricks and mortar housing and roadside encampments.*** There is no transit or private site provision in the Highland Council area. Service records and research participant feedback indicate that a small number of private holiday or touring sites in the area may accommodate Gypsy/Travellers for short stays, although it was suggested that Gypsy/Travellers may have to conceal their ethnicity to access such sites.

- 3.3. The remainder of this section provides an overview of these accommodation options in Highland, and Gypsy/Travellers' views on these.

Residential Council site provision

- 3.4. The Council provides four permanent Gypsy/Traveller sites with a total of 47 pitches. The Kentallen Park site was inactive at the time of the study with a number of pitches expected to be back in use by the end of 2014; at the time of the study total Council site capacity was 34 pitches across three active sites.
- 3.5. Based on most recent available data (from the 2009 Twice Yearly Count), active Gypsy/Traveller provision in Highland equates to around 12% of total pitch provision nationally. This suggests a higher rate of site provision relative to the Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland; Census data indicates that Highland accounts for 7% of the total Gypsy/Traveller population in Scotland.
- 3.6. There is some variation in pitch numbers and provision of amenities across the four Council sites, but broadly this site accommodation comprises individual hard standing pitches and an associated amenity block (with bathroom and laundry facilities), and with other on-site amenities typically comprising children's play parks and site offices. Table 2 over the page provides an overview of Council site provision, and each site is described below:
- The Longman site at Inverness is the largest site with 18 pitches in total, although only 13 of these were in active use at the time of the study – a further 5 pitches were unavailable to let due to condition and/or ongoing upgrade works. An amenity block is provided to each pitch, a full-time Travelling Persons Officer is based at the site office, there is a small play park, and an onsite portacabin used by visiting education services. Longman differs from other sites in having a security barrier which restricts access to vehicles larger than a car from 4pm during weekdays and all day at weekend. The site has received substantial investment over recent years to upgrade amenity blocks, with this work expected to be completed over the coming 1-2 years.
 - The Newtonmore site is a smaller 7 pitch site, originally established as seasonal provision but moving to permanent year-round provision from late 2011. Each pitch has a dedicated amenity block, but differs from other Council provision in these being located in a central block alongside the site office. A part-time Travelling Persons Officer is located onsite, providing a total of 12 hours per week. The site has been primarily occupied by members of a single extended family since moving to permanent provision and is generally known as such to Gypsy/Travellers in the region – although a small number of pitches are typically occupied on a shorter-term basis by families travelling in the area.
 - Spean Park provides a total of 14 pitches, with dedicated amenity blocks at each pitch and a small play park. The site has an assigned Travelling Persons Officer, who also has responsibility for the Kentallen Park site at Lochaber. There is no onsite office. Pitches at Spean Park differ from Longman and Newtonmore in having fences/gates around each pitch which permits tenants to secure access to the pitch.

- Kentallen Park at Lochaber provides a total of 7 pitches, but was not in use at the time of the study. The site had previously seen good occupancy levels but was vacated over a period of months during 2013 following disputes between resident families and vandalism of several pitches. As a result of further vandalism incidents since the site was vacated all 7 pitches are currently unsuitable for let. However, work is in progress to bring a number of site pitches back into use.

3.7. Rent levels vary across Council sites dependent on running costs to cover variation in site provision, from £62-63 per week for the Newtonmore and Spean Park Sites, to £88 for Longman. The overall average pitch rent of £72 per week compares to an overall average of around £70 per week for a Council tenancy. It is difficult to make direct comparisons between rent levels for site provision and permanent housing, as rents typically reflect differing models of service provision and development funding. However, as is discussed later in this section the survey identified some negative views of the extent to which pitch rents represent value for money, and it was clear that comparison with rents for bricks and mortar housing influenced views here.

Table 2: Overview of Council Site Provision in Highland

Site	PITCH provision			Site office	Other amenities	Weekly rent
	Total site capacity	Occupied or available for let at time of study	Share of provision			
TOTAL	39	34	100%			£72
Longman, Inverness	18	13	38%	Y	Amenity blocks at each pitch, play park, portacabin used by visiting education services, full-time onsite officer.	£88
Newtonmore site, Newtonmore	7	7	21%	Y	Central amenity blocks, play park, part-time onsite officer.	£63
Spean Park Spean Bridge	14	14	41%	N	Amenity blocks at each pitch, play park, part-time onsite officer.	£62
<i>Kentallen Park, Kentallen</i>	7	<i>Not in use at time of the study.</i>				£62

Note: Total excludes Kentallen Park. 5 Longman pitches were not occupied or available for let at the time of the study due to renovation works. Source: Council management data

3.8. Turnover of Council site pitches varies considerably from year to year dependent on a range of factors including the profile of tenants, and incidence of any tensions or disputes between families. Against the annual average of 18 vacancies arising across the three active sites, the number of pitches falling vacant has varied from 14 to 24 (the largest variation being on Longman with 4 to 17 vacancies per year).

- 3.9. Overall, this equates to an average rate of vacancies arising of 40-50%. Looking across the three active sites the rate of turnover has been highest for Longman (average of 50-60%) and lowest on Spean Park (average of 25-35%). The Newtonmore site also shows a relatively high rate of turnover over this period (average of 50-60%), but this has varied widely from year to year reflecting the small number site pitches still used for shorter-term lets.

Table 3: Turnover of Council Sites

Site	Total site capacity	Occupied at time of study (% of capacity)	Vacancies arising			Lets made			Avg Annual Voids	Avg Annual Lets
			13/14	12/13	11/12	13/14	12/13	11/12		
TOTAL	39	27 (73%)	24	14	17	18	12	16	18 (47%)	15 (39%)
Longman	18	8 (62%)	17	10	4	12	9	1	10 (57%)	7 (41%)
Newtonmore	7	6 (86%)	3	1	8	1	0	8	4 (57%)	3 (43%)
Spean Park	14	13 (93%)	4	3	5	5	3	7	4 (29%)	5 (36%)
<i>Kentallen Park</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>6 (86%)</i>	<i>4 (57%)</i>

Note: Total excludes Kentallen Park. Source: Council management data

- 3.10. We consider the implications of current Council site waiting lists for the accommodation needs assessment at section 6, and it is important to note the challenges in interpretation of Gypsy/Traveller site list demand. For example service experience and previous research suggest that Gypsy/Travellers often wait to apply for site provision until they are expecting to move to an area, and/or they are aware of a forthcoming vacancy. As such, waiting list demand for Gypsy/Traveller sites differs from “mainstream” housing list demand in having few “insurance” applications from households who are not expecting to move in the short term.
- 3.11. Despite the challenges around interpretation of site waiting list demand, it is useful to compare with site vacancy and void rates in considering the popularity of sites. Low list applicant numbers and higher vacancy rate for Newtonmore are affected by the nature of the site; primarily occupied by members of a single extended family and having a small number of pitches typically occupied on a shorter-term basis.
- 3.12. In terms of other site provision, the indicators at Table 4 show lower list demand and a higher void and vacancy rate for Longman (only 0.4 applicants per vacancy, compared to 1.5 per let for Spean Park). These indicators can be affected by differences in the profile of site residents, but Table 4 is consistent with Longman being less popular and in lower demand than other Council sites in the area. We consider residents’ views on site provision in further detail over the following pages.

Table 4: Current Occupancy and Waiting List Applicants

Site	Occupied vs Available pitches	Average annual vacancy rate	Current list applicants
TOTAL	27 of 34 (73%)	18 (47%)	10
Longman	8 of 13 (62%)	10 (57%)	4
Newtonmore	6 of 7 (86%)	4 (57%)	0
Spean Park	13 of 14 (93%)	4 (29%)	6
<i>Kentallen Park</i>	-	-	4

Note: Total excludes Kentallen Park. Source: Council management data

Gypsy/Traveller views on site provision

- 3.13. A core element of the household survey sought the views of current Council site residents on the quality of site provision, and to identify investment priorities for sites.

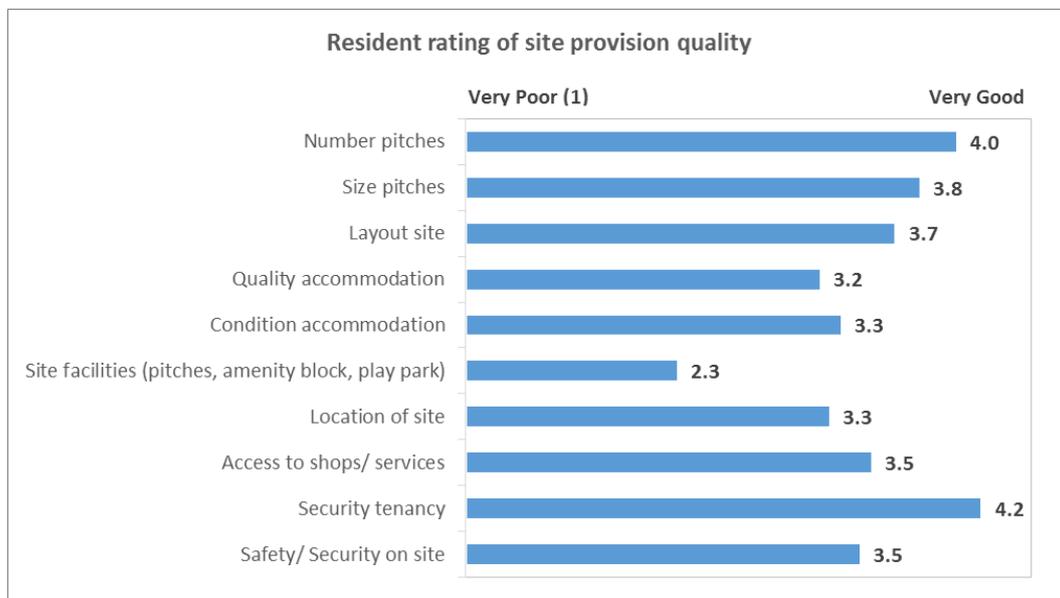
Rating key aspects of site provision

- 3.14. Looking first at views on the quality of site provision, Figure 4 over the page summarises respondent ratings of the 10 aspects of provision on which the survey was based (respondents rated each out of 5, 5 being very good and 1 being very poor). While ratings were affected by the specific circumstances and conditions of each site, survey data suggests some commonality of views across the three sites:

- Across all sites, most aspects of current site provision were rated positively by participants. However there was significant variation in views on specific aspects of provision.
- Views were ***most positive on the size of Council sites (the number and size of pitches), security of tenancy and site layout***. Around three quarters of participants scored these at 4+ out of 5, and very few rated these negatively.
- Views were ***least positive in relation to availability and quality of onsite facilities*** such as pitches (quality of surface, provision of fences/gates), amenity blocks and play parks. The average rating of 2.3 out of 5 for site facilities is significantly lower than for any other aspect of site provision, and this was the only area where the majority of participants gave a negative rating. Onsite facilities were consistently amongst the lowest rated aspects across all three sites, although there was some variation in the specific focus for each site in terms of onsite facilities:
 - Longman: dissatisfaction with the condition of pitch surfaces (broken, uneven), lack of fences/gates to pitches, general maintenance and upkeep of the site including problems of fly tipping on vacant pitches, and the condition/suitability of the play park for younger children.

- Newtonmore: dissatisfaction with the distance from pitches to chalet blocks (particularly for those with young children or health problems, but most residents mentioned concerns in icy conditions), the condition of chalets with significant mould/damp problems and a view that the chalets were not suitable for year-round use, and condition of pitch surfaces.
- Spean Park: dissatisfaction with pitch surfaces (broken/uneven), the condition of play park facilities, and some concerns regarding the size and condition of amenity blocks.
- Other aspects of site provision were generally seen as of fair quality with ratings of 3.2-3.5 out of 5. However residents' views were somewhat divided on these elements, and some dissatisfaction was evident in relation to:
 - The quality and condition of accommodation – around a quarter rated these as poor.
 - Access to shops and services – around a fifth rated this as poor.
 - Safety and security of the site – around a fifth rated this as poor, rising to 4 in 5 Longman residents rating safety/security as poor.
- Residents' rating of the quality of their site provision are broadly similar to those reported in the 2010 consultation; the site of sites and security of tenancy remain the top rated aspects of provision, and views remain least positive in relation to quality of onsite facilities. The only notable change has been an increase in the proportion of respondents raising concerns regarding safety and security of sites, with this driven primarily by more negative ratings from Longman residents than was evident in 2010.

Figure 4 : Resident Rating of Aspects of Site Provision



Source: Survey fieldwork (base: 25)

Overall quality

- 3.15. In addition to considering views on specific aspects of Council site provision, the survey also asked participants to indicate their satisfaction with the site as a whole. Figure 5 provides an overview of average quality ratings across the three sites.
- 3.16. Residents were **generally positive on the overall quality of their site provision**, with an average rating of 3.5 out of 5 and two thirds of participants indicating that they were satisfied with their site overall. However there remains around 3 in 10 participants expressing dissatisfaction with their site provision. Dissatisfaction with site provision was significantly higher in relation to the Longman site; around 2 in 5 Longman residents are dissatisfied with their site provision and this is reflected in a significantly lower average score of 2.3 out of 5 (compared to 4.2 for Newtonmore and 3.9 for Spean Park).

Figure 5 : Resident Rating of Overall Site Quality



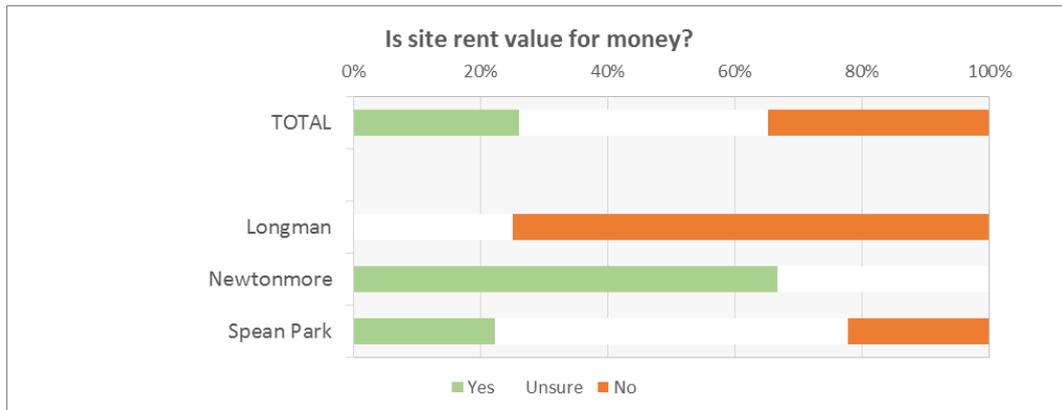
Source: Survey fieldwork (base: 25)

- 3.17. This difference in **overall satisfaction ratings across the three sites appears to be driven by some significant concerns amongst Longman residents regarding the safety and security of the site**. Residents' rating of specific aspects of their provision are broadly consistent across the three sites, but Longman stands out as having a significantly lower rating of site safety and security when compared with Newtonmore and Spean Park; 1.6 out of 5 for Longman compared to 4.1 out of 5 across other site provision.
- 3.18. To some extent the poor rating for site safety and security at Longman appears to reflect residents' experience over recent months, with an increase in disputes and instances of vandalism over the last year or so. It is clear that these more recent difficulties have adversely affected perception of the Longman site for current residents and others travelling in Highland; several of those on encampments made specific reference to "trouble" on the Longman site in relation to their unwillingness to consider a pitch on the site.

- 3.19. However, feedback from participants indicates that these more recent issues may have exacerbated longer-term concerns regarding safety and security on the Longman site. Residents' concerns appear to be linked to management of access to the site, and particularly locking of the entrance barrier at 4pm as the site officer leaves for the day. The barrier allows car access but prevents entry of caravans, goods vehicles and emergency vehicles out of hours – any vehicles requiring access call out of hours cover staff who attend to give site entry, and site residents do not have a key. The main purpose of the barrier is to limit non site residents moving onto the site out of hours, which the service indicates has been an issue in previous years. Notwithstanding this, it is clear that the approach is not supported by residents. Nearly all participants raised significant concerns regarding safety implications of the barrier, and were aware of cases of emergency services not being able to access the site promptly, typically where emergency response staff were not aware of the location of the access key provided. Several residents also noted that Longman is the only Gypsy/Traveller site in Scotland to use this kind of security barrier.
- 3.20. In practical terms, a number of residents also suggested that the barrier does not have any impact on non-residents visiting the site out of hours (on foot or by car), and this appeared to be more of a concern in terms of security and condition of the site. In addition, it is not clear how effective use of the barrier is in controlling caravan access to the site.

Value for money

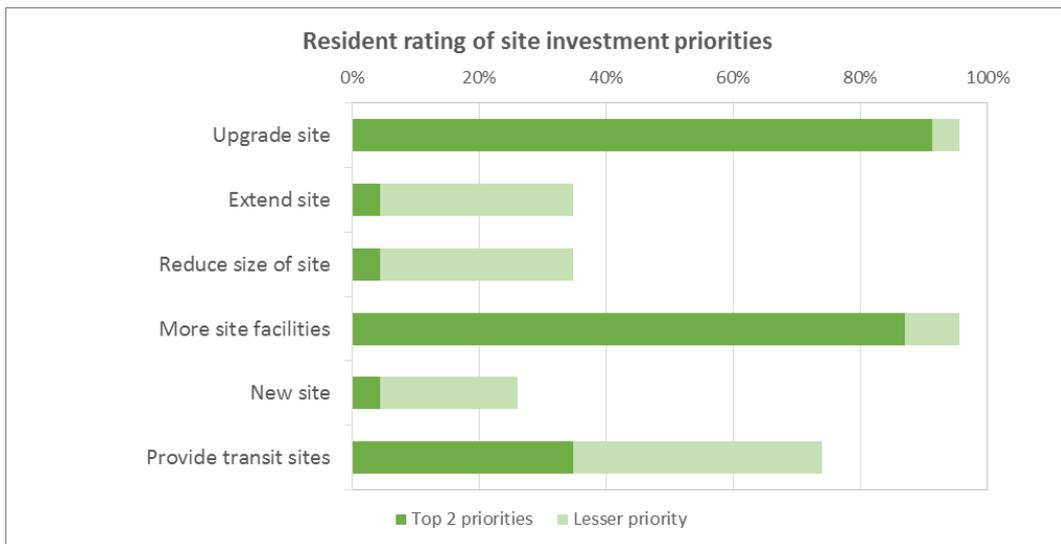
- 3.21. Site residents were asked to consider ***the extent to which their pitch rent represents good value for money*** in relation to site provision and the services they receive. Figure 6 summarises views and shows that around 2 in 5 of all participants did not give a clear view on the extent to which their rent was good value for money, and to an extent this appeared to apply where residents were in receipt of full Housing Benefit and were not clear on the level of their rent. However, most participants gave a clear view on the value of their rent and key points of note are:
- Overall, residents were fairly evenly divided between those who feel their rent is poor value for money (around a third) and those who feel they get good value for money (around a quarter).
 - Views on value for money appeared to be driven primarily by the extent to which residents feel they receive a good “return” on their rent (e.g. site investment and quality of facilities) and how their rent compares with that for a bricks and mortar Council house. Several residents indicated that their rent is similar to or higher than a typical Council house rent, and clearly felt that they did not receive an equivalent level of accommodation for their rent.
 - There was significant variation in views on value for money across the three sites. Residents were most positive on Newtonmore (two thirds rating their rent as good value for money) and least positive on Longman (three quarters rating their rent as poor value for money). These variations appeared to be influenced by views on the quality of site provision and services, with residents who were more positive about the quality of site provision generally more positive about value for money. In addition to views on site provision, Longman residents' more negative view of value for money may also reflect the higher pitch rent for the site.

Figure 6 : Perceived Value for Money of Site Rent

Source: Survey fieldwork (base: 25)

Investment priorities

- 3.22. Residents' rating of the quality of specific aspects of their site provision (discussed over the previous pages) may suggest potential areas for future improvement. The research also asked participants to rate a number of specific priorities for future investment, and these are summarised at Figure 7 over the page.
- 3.23. Upgrading of existing onsite facilities and/or provision of additional facilities were by some margin the most commonly suggested priority for investment; around 9 in 10 participants included one or both of these in their top two investment priorities. This is consistent with the relatively low quality ratings given to current onsite facilities (see Figure 4).
- 3.24. Providing transit sites or temporary stopping places was the other notable priority for investment identified by research participants. Around three quarters of participants mentioned this as an investment priority, including around a third who rated this as one of their top two priorities. This was a particularly common view amongst site residents who still travel regularly, and reflected a commonly expressed view that it is getting more difficult for Gypsy/Travellers to find suitable stopping places when travelling as many traditionally used places have been closed off.

Figure 7 : Investment Priorities for Site Provision

Source: Survey fieldwork (base: 25)

3.25. The profile of views on site investment priorities is very similar to that reported in the 2010 site consultation. Moreover, resident views on investment priorities were broadly similar across the three sites, with investment to site facilities and provision of new transit sites the clear focus. However, there was some variation in views on the specific improvements or investment required to site facilities. Over the page we summarise specific investment priorities to facilities on each of the three sites:

- For **Longman** residents the top investment priorities were:
 - Provision of lockable fences/gates to individual pitches, similar to those at Spean Park. Nearly all participants suggested this as an investment priority, and it appeared to be linked to concerns regarding security on the site including for families with young children who expressed concern regarding the number of people visiting the site out of hours and previous dispute/vandalism issues. Some felt that pitch sizes would need to be extended if fences are to be installed, but this was not a universal view.
 - Repairs to pitch surfaces, many of which are cracked and uneven and were a clear safety concern particularly for those with health problems or younger children.
 - More/better facilities for children, including replacement of the existing play park with an alternative better suited for younger children.
- For **Newtonmore** residents the top investment priorities were:
 - Installation of a dedicated amenity block at each pitch. This was a top priority for all residents in light of concerns regarding the distance between amenity blocks and pitches, and the poor condition of amenity blocks.

- Installation of road warning signs and/or extension of the 30mph zone to cover the site entrance – a number of residents expressed concerns regarding the site opening out directly onto a 60pmph road with very limited visibility.
 - Replacement of the play park which was seen as unsafe for younger children due to the lack of a barrier at the top of the frame.
 - Installation of lockable fences/gates to individual pitches was rated as a priority for several residents.
 - For **Spean Park** residents the top investment priorities were:
 - More/better facilities for children, including replacement of the existing play park with an alternative better suited for younger children.
 - Repairs to pitch surfaces, several of which are cracked and uneven and were a clear safety concern particularly for those with health problems or younger children.
 - Repairs to amenity blocks, which several residents suggested were in relatively poor condition.
 - Provision for caravans to be plumbed in on pitches.
- 3.26. In addition to these specific investment priorities highlighted by participants, the research also emphasised the importance of meaningful consultation with residents on the detail of proposed investment. Even where residents were broadly in agreement with improvement works undertaken to Council sites, some residents felt that consultation had not been meaningful in terms of enabling them to input their knowledge to the detail of the improvement works.

Permanent bricks and mortar housing

- 3.27. Based on 2011 Census data and local management records, we estimate that **46% of the total Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland live in bricks and mortar housing** (around 190 individuals). However, while the Census provides the first source of reliable information on the number of Gypsy/Travellers in bricks and mortar housing, the profile of this population remains largely unknown. Future Census data releases may address this data gap, but at present there is no published information on the characteristics of Gypsy/Travellers living in bricks and mortar housing.
- 3.28. Survey fieldwork evidence makes clear that bricks and mortar housing does not preclude a travelling lifestyle. Around half of Gypsy/Travellers on encampments at the time of the reported having previously stayed in bricks and mortar housing, including two families who currently had access to a house which they used as a base for travelling.

- 3.29. In terms of location, research participants made reference to having stayed in housing across Grampian, Highland and Argyll & Bute. A number of participants also referred to extended family members who stayed in bricks and mortar housing, including reference to a number of families in the Highland area (primarily in the Inverness and Dingwall/Tain areas). It was not possible to gather details on the profile of those staying in permanent housing through the study, but feedback from participants suggested that these were typically more settled families who travelled less frequently. This is consistent with the Census having identified a substantial, relatively settled Gypsy/Traveller population living in bricks and mortar housing.
- 3.30. While there may be a population of more settled Gypsy/Travellers in Highland living in bricks and mortar housing, the experience of those on roadside encampments and Council sites at the time of the study suggests some considerable “churn” with families moving in and out of housing over relatively short periods.
- 3.31. For example, 6 families living on Council sites or encampments at the time of the study were potentially interested in bricks and mortar housing in the short to medium term. One of these families is currently registered on the Highland Housing Register (HHR), and there are a further 4 current HHR applicants identifying themselves as Gypsy/Travellers. In contrast with this expressed interest in bricks and mortar housing, most of those on roadside encampments who had lived in housing indicated that they had given this up and wouldn’t consider a return.
- 3.32. The research has highlighted a mix of push and pull factors around Gypsy/Travellers’ interest in a move to bricks and mortar housing, and some of the issues or difficulties that may cause Gypsy/Travellers to give up this form of accommodation. These factors are summarised below, and suggest that moves to or away from bricks and mortar housing can for these Gypsy/Travellers reflect a complex mix of motivations.
- 3.33. In terms of ***moves to bricks and mortar housing***, for some this reflects a positive choice for an option that is better suited to meet a family’s accommodation needs (particularly older people and those with health needs), that may provide the best standard of accommodation available to Gypsy/Travellers, and in some cases was seen as lower cost than site accommodation. However, for some a move to bricks and mortar housing was driven primarily by a lack of Gypsy/Traveller site accommodation that can meet their accommodation needs.

Factors influencing moves TO bricks and mortar housing

- Better able to meet the accommodation needs of older people and those with health needs/mobility problems – including examples of these needs not being met on Council site provision.
- Available bricks and mortar housing offer better quality accommodation than available Gypsy/Traveller site accommodation.
- A lack of choice of Gypsy/Traveller site accommodation – due to lack of residential pitches, available pitches not considered a feasible option due to disputes with other site residents, poor residential site conditions.
- A desire to “get space” from current circumstances, relatives, neighbours.
- More settled accommodation while children are in school.
- Lower cost of bricks and mortar housing.

- 3.34. Research participants also highlighted a range of factors influencing decisions to ***give up bricks and mortar accommodation***. For some this move had been motivated by some significant distress linked to feeling “closed in” when living in larger housing estates, disputes or perceived discrimination from neighbours, and loss of contact or isolation from family members.

Factors influencing moves FROM bricks and mortar housing

- Feeling uncomfortable when living in larger housing estates – “closed in”.
- Disputes or discrimination with neighbours.
- Loss of contact with family members.
- Suggestion that staying in bricks and mortar housing had a negative impact on mental health.
- Suitable site accommodation becoming available.
- A preference for site accommodation to be closer to family, including for care and support.

4. TRAVEL PATTERNS AND ENCAMPMENT ACTIVITY

- 4.1. Fieldwork conducted for this study has confirmed previous research findings that travelling remains a significant aspect of life for a substantial proportion of Gypsy/Travellers across Scotland. This is evident both in terms of the time spent travelling with the majority of research participants indicating that they travel regularly, and the importance of the travelling lifestyle for families.
- 4.2. Section 2 of this report highlighted the size of the Gypsy/Traveller population living on encampments at the time of the study. This section considers encampment activity in Highland during the study and over recent years, and the basis of study fieldwork and service records.
- 4.3. Interviews with Gypsy/Travellers and service providers suggest that, in addition to the encampments recorded by service records, there are likely to be a number of instances across more rural parts of the Council area where informal arrangements have been made between Gypsy/Traveller encampments and private landlords. A small number of potential examples were noted during the study fieldwork, but it was not possible to verify these (e.g. there are often similar arrangements for seasonal farm and manual employees). As such, and reflecting the fact that service records are often prompted by complaints raised about encampment activity, the following data focuses on unauthorised encampments.

Encampment activity

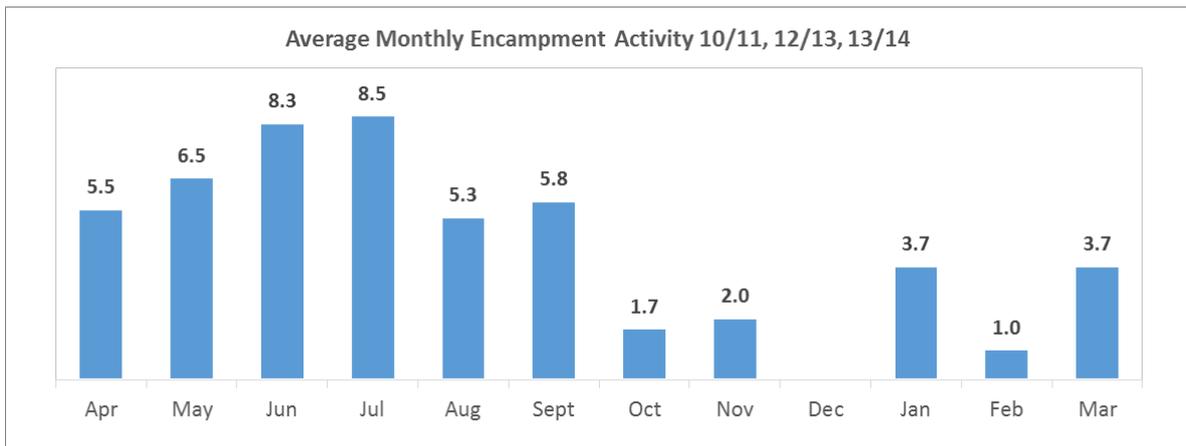
- 4.4. Figure 8 over the page summarises available data on encampment activity for the period 2010/11 to 2013/14. Data is available for three years over this period; data for 2011/12 is not sufficiently complete to provide a representative picture of activity over the year.

Level of encampment activity

- 4.5. Available data shows an average of 54 unauthorised encampments per year. The volume of activity has ranged from 48 to 59 encampments per year, but there has been no consistent upward or downward trend over this period. However, there is a consistent pattern of activity during the year; the travel season typically begins in April (avg 5.5 camps per month), increasing to a peak during June to August (avg 7-9 camps) and ending by October. There is only sporadic encampment activity over the winter period (avg of 1-4 camps per month over the period October to March) and fieldwork suggests this is likely to include some families without a settled accommodation base.
- 4.6. Data is not available on the size of encampments over this period. More detailed information collected during the study period shows an average of around 4 caravans per encampment, although these varied from single caravan encampments to instances of up to 10+ caravans. A number of significantly larger encampments (up to 20+ caravans) were recorded in and around Inverness earlier in the summer. However, these are not representative of the majority of encampment activity across Highland where encampment sizes of 3-6 caravans are more typical. This is also consistent with data from the most recent published Twice Yearly Count which recorded an average encampment size of around 5 caravans over the 6 month period to July 2009.

Figure 8 : Encampment Activity Trends 2010/11 to 2013/14

Region	TOTAL	Annual Average	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
TOTAL	214	54	56	59	48	51
Caithness, Sutherland & Ross	10	3 (6%)	2	1	1	7
Inverness & Inner Moray Firth	102	36 (67%)	28	40	37	37
Skye, Lochaber & Badenoch	42	15 (28%)	26	18	9	7



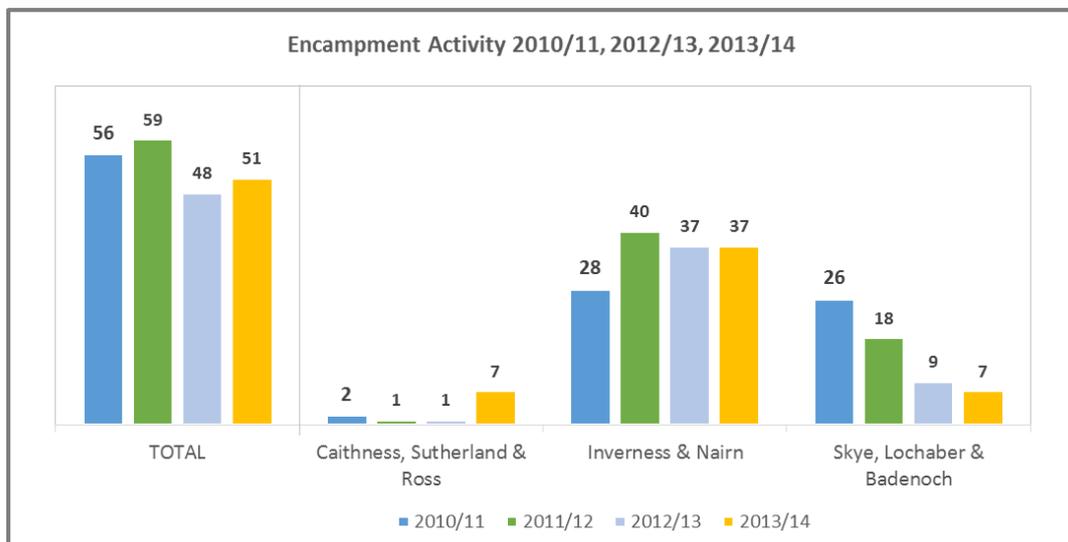
Note: Part year data for 2012/13 has been rated up to annual equivalent. Source: Council management data

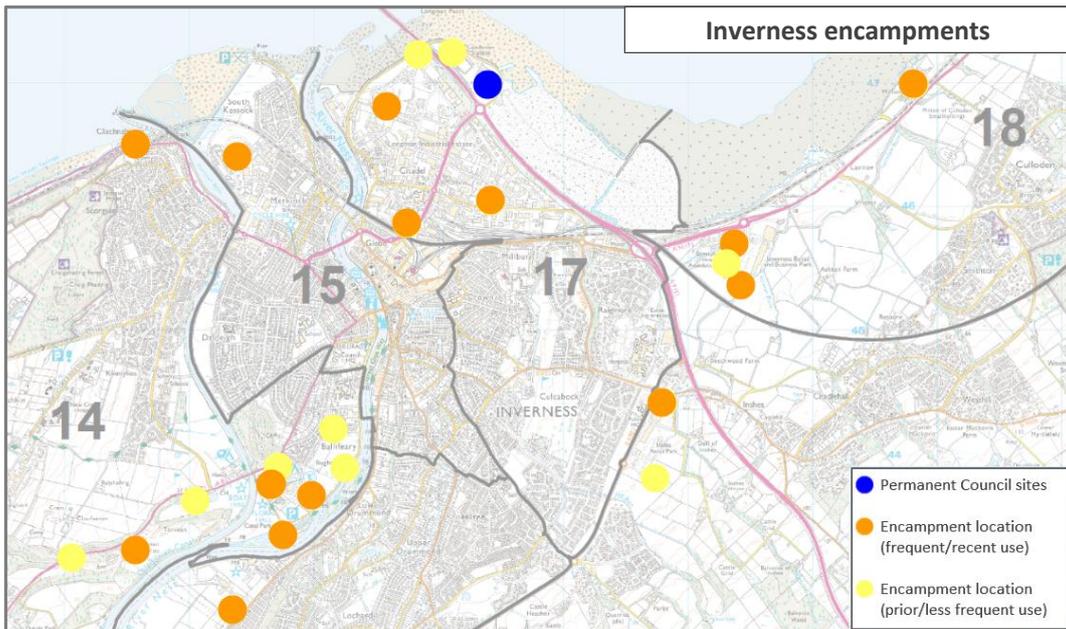
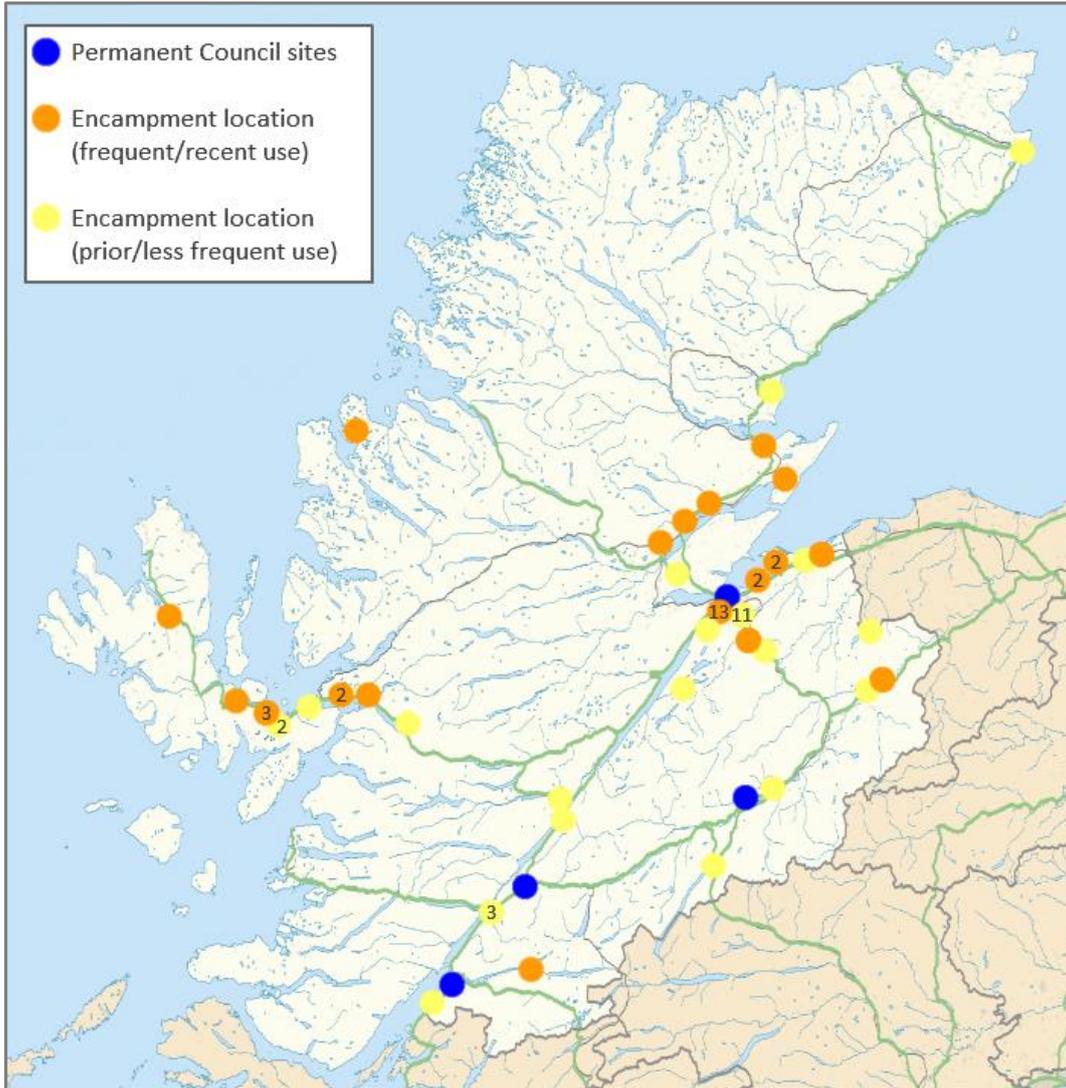
Locations used

- 4.7. While it is clear that Gypsy/Traveller encampments take place across most parts of the Highland area, available evidence suggests that encampment activity has a strong regional bias. As Figure 9 (over the page) indicates, the Inverness & Inner Moray Firth area accounts for around two thirds of encampment activity (average 36 per year), and the Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch area for around a quarter (15 per year). There has been relatively limited encampment activity over recent years in the Caithness, Sutherland & Ross region. Activity is too variable to draw firm conclusions on longitudinal trends, but at a regional level there has been an increase over the last 3-4 years in Inverness & Inner Moray Firth encampments and a decrease in the Skye, Lochaber & Badenoch area.
- 4.8. Maps at Figure 9 show specific encampment locations used in recent years, highlighting those used frequently and recently. This suggests that more frequently and recently used encampment locations are clustered primarily around Inverness, Dingwall and Tain, and Skye/Lochalsh. These are quite diverse areas and are likely to reflect a mix of motivations affecting travel patterns, including:
- Those travelling for employment, a significant group across all areas but particularly Inverness and Skye/Lochalsh;
 - Those travelling to visit family members, particularly significant in Inverness; and
 - Those travelling for a holiday, significant across all areas.

- 4.9. These encampments also represent a range of location types including retail and business parks, industrial sites, roadside locations such as laybys and viewpoints, parks/open spaces and unused land. Interviews with Gypsy/Travellers suggests that avoiding community complaints or eviction action is the over-riding concern when choosing encampment locations – “peace and quiet”, “out of the way”. This is reflected in a preference to low visibility sites, away from residential areas but close enough to allow access to shops and services. However Gypsy/Travellers also expressed a common view that it is becoming more difficult to find suitable encampment locations, and noted a number of instances where previously well used locations had been physically closed off to prevent Gypsy/Traveller encampments. Some suggested that decreasing choice of locations may be forcing more Gypsy/Travellers to stop at places where they are more likely to be evicted and/or receive community complaints.
- 4.10. It is notable that around half of recently or regularly used encampment locations in Highland are retail, business or industrial locations – typically in and around Inverness. A number of these are regularly used locations where Gypsy/Travellers are able to stay for a number of weeks, and survey fieldwork makes clear that those travelling regularly in Highland quickly identify locations where they are likely to be permitted to stop for a period of time. However, several of these retail or business sites are privately owned locations from which Gypsy/Traveller families have been evicted in the last 1-2 years. To some extent use of these locations may reflect a lack of options in terms of alternative encampment locations in the area, but it is also clear that in some instances families may be happy to use these locations when stopping for a short period (i.e. where landowners would not have time to service an eviction notice).

Figure 9 : Encampment Activity by Region





Source: Council records, study fieldwork

Travel patterns

- 4.11. There is very limited evidence available on the profile of Gypsy/Travellers travelling in the Highland area, in terms of demographic profile or travel motivations. Survey evidence suggests that Gypsy/Traveller families who still travel regularly are varied in profile, but are typically working age households including some smaller single or couple households but with most being larger households with children. These households were typically travelling for employment and /or holiday purposes, but a number of otherwise relatively settled family households also highlighted the importance of giving their children experience of the travelling lifestyle.
- 4.12. This profile is also consistent with the reasons given by Gypsy/Travellers for no longer travelling regularly. This was primarily linked to ill health or physical frailty, where individuals were no longer able to cope with some of the physical tasks related to travelling (such as hooking up the caravan) or where travelling in smaller tourer caravans had a negative impact on their health. Several larger families also noted that their travelling was less frequent, or restricted to specific times of the year, to avoid disrupting to children schooling.
- 4.13. Table 5 below presents available data on the area connections for Gypsy/Travellers staying on roadside encampments in Highland over recent years. This suggests that Gypsy/Travellers travelling in the area are most likely to have links to other parts of Highland, Central Scotland and England/Wales.⁸ In terms of other parts of Scotland, Gypsy/Travellers travelling from the Moray and Grampian, Tayside/Perth & Kinross/Fife and Argyll & Bute areas are the most significant.
- 4.14. Within this overall profile, there appears to be some regional variation in travel patterns and area connections. For example encampments of Gypsy/Travellers from England/Wales and Central Scotland are focused almost exclusively around the Inverness area. In contrast encampments in the Skye, Lochaber & Badenoch region are more likely to be travelling within the Highland or wider north Scotland area (Grampian and Argyll & Bute). This includes particular links between Skye and the Moray area.

Table 5: Area Connections of Families on Roadside Encampments

Region	Annual Avg	Highland	Grampian	Argyll & Bute	Tayside, P&K, Fife	Central Scotland	England/ Wales	Outwith UK	N/A
TOTAL	52	14%	9%	7%	8%	11%	18%	1%	32%
Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	3	10%							90%
Inverness and Nairn	34	10%	5%	5%	10%	16%	24%	1%	28%
Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	14	22%	18%	13%	4%	2%	11%		29%

Note: Based on encampment activity recorded for 2010/11, 2012/13, 2013/14. Source: Council management data.

⁸ The number of encampments linked to England and Wales may be affected by the tendency over recent years for some larger Gypsy/Traveller groups that may separate and recombine into multiple encampments. As such a single group may result in a number of encampments in a short period.

- 4.15. These travel patterns may suggest some correlation between reasons for travelling and travel routes/destinations. Survey evidence suggests a broad range of reasons for travel amongst those on encampments during the study period with interviewees mentioning:
- Travel to find employment – for those in the Inverness area (some of whom used this as a base to travel in the wider region to access work) and those on Skye who were typically visiting for the whelking season.
 - Travel for a holiday and/or to visit family in the area.
 - A generational connection to the area, including some who had been brought up in the Highland area but who now had settled accommodation elsewhere in Scotland.
- 4.16. In terms of routes, survey findings suggest that families travelling primarily for employment reasons are more likely to have travelled further; this is consistent with the higher proportion of encampments in the Inverness area with connections to Central Scotland and England. By contrast, this evidence suggest that those camping in the area for holiday purposes and/or previous connection to the area are more likely to have travelled from neighbouring areas such as Grampian and Argyll & Bute.
- 4.17. Over and above these specific motivations for travelling, Gypsy/Travellers involved in the study also suggested that many families chose to stop in the Highland area as it is seen as more tolerant of Gypsy/Traveller culture. Several Gypsy/Travellers on encampments during the study made reference to significant discrimination and harassment issues in other parts of Scotland, and suggested that these kinds of issues are much less prevalent in Highland.

Managing encampment activity

- 4.18. The evidence considered above makes clear that encampments are part of long established travelling behaviours for Gypsy/Travellers in Highland, and this is likely to continue to involve relatively significant levels of encampment activity across the area. In this context, the management and engagement with Gypsy/Travellers on encampments will continue to have a significant role in ensuring the Gypsy/Traveller population is able to access services to meet their needs, and in managing the impact of encampment activity on the local area.
- 4.19. In line with the Council's *Policy on Managing Unauthorised Encampments*, Housing takes the lead coordinating role for liaison and management of Gypsy/Traveller encampments, with much of frontline role sitting within the Travelling Persons Officer and Area Community Services Manager remits. This includes undertaking an initial liaison visit and subsequent liaison for the duration of the encampment (including regular waste collection), information gathering and dissemination to key service partners including travel intentions/likely length of stay and identification of need for services, and signposting or referral to services as appropriate.

- 4.20. Interviews with service staff and Gypsy/Travellers indicate that this approach is generally working well, both in terms of liaison and management of the encampment stay, and the importance of this liaison role in making links to other services. This development of relationships and trust with Gypsy/Travellers is a crucial element for service take-up and in improving identification of potential need for service – for example the Housing liaison role is an important element in signposting or referrals to other services. Service providers' experience also suggests that increased trust is a crucial element in enabling better engagement with Gypsy/Traveller families, and improved outcomes. This is evident for example in schools and Education services, with some indication of greater recognition of the value of education amongst the Gypsy/Traveller population, and improved school attendance.
- 4.21. While there are clearly a number of positive aspects to service engagement with Gypsy/Travellers on encampments, the study has also identified challenges for management of encampment activity across Highland. The most significant challenges are noted below.
- 4.22. In terms of **types of encampment**, service experience indicates that more visible locations (e.g. near to residential areas, within parks, etc), larger encampments (in terms of number of caravans) and longer-term encampments are more challenging to manage. This is both in terms of the need for more intensive or longer term service provision, but particularly incidence of complaints from local communities. A number of encampments were also highlighted as raising significant health and safety concerns for Gypsy/Travellers, including encampments on water treatment facilities.
- 4.23. **Waste management** emerges as perhaps the most significant issue linked to Gypsy/Traveller encampments. While some complaints appear to reflect local community fear or discomfort regarding Gypsy/Travellers stopping in the local area, waste is the most common focus of community complaints. In this context, there is a wider challenge in balancing enforcement with Gypsy/Travellers who do not meet expectations as set out in Council Policy, and maintaining constructive relationships with the Gypsy/Traveller population.
- 4.24. As noted above, Housing's lead liaison role with Gypsy/Traveller encampments means that **encampment reports have a key role in identifying need for service response from Council and partners**. It is important to recognise that response from these services is often reliant on Housing resources identifying encampments, and any potential service need. While it is clear that this approach is working positively across much of the Highland area, from a resource point of view it appears that identification and engagement with encampments across most rural areas such as Skye, Lochaber and Dingwall/Tain is less comprehensive. This has potentially significant implications in terms of identifying need for services.
- 4.25. Over and above these immediate service challenges, there may be significant value in improving collection of information on encampment activity, which appears to have reduced somewhat since cessation of the regular Twice Yearly Count. There are recognised challenges to improving data collection here (not least the resourcing required in more rural areas) and to some extent this is dependent on the willingness of Gypsy/Travellers to engage with this process. However improved information on the size and demographic composition of encampments in particular, could offer significant benefits for service planning.

- 4.26. The study also highlighted ***difficulties managing encampments on inappropriate sites where there is a lack of alternative options***. In the case of encampments around Inverness this may be because families are looking for shorter-term stopping places rather than settled site accommodation (e.g. at Longman). However, encampments in areas without Gypsy/Traveller provision present a significant challenge. While the Council's policy makes clear that Gypsy/Travellers will not be needlessly evicted from such sites, a lack of alternative suitable stopping places means that Gypsy/ Travellers may be spending relatively large periods of time on encampments which have substantial safety risks and/or cause significant disruption in the local area.
- 4.27. In addition to the above issues impacting on service response to Gypsy/Traveller encampment activity in Highland, the survey also identified the following issues from ***the perspective of Gypsy/Travellers on encampments***:
- A perception that suitable stopping places are becoming more restricted. This includes some who felt that they were forced to stay on unsafe or prominent locations as more suitable locations had been blocked off to Gypsy/Travellers by landowners.
 - Some instances of significant safety risks from passing traffic at encampments where young children were staying for some time. This includes encampments on laybys and alongside delivery access routes which are regularly used by families with young children, where passing (often high speed) traffic is very close to Gypsy/Travellers' caravans.
 - Availability of portable toilets to those on encampments. A number of Gypsy/Travellers had been travelling in other parts of Scotland and the UK where toilets are provided (particularly to longer-term encampments) and noted that Highland Council do not make this provision. Several participants suggested that would be of significant benefit, particularly for those with young children, those with health problems, and for the longer term encampments over the summer. This included some families who had experienced local facilities refusing use of toilet/bathroom facilities.
 - A small number of Gypsy/Travellers on encampments reported having not had any contact from Council or other services, including collection of waste. More commonly, several research participants indicated that they did not have a contact number for the Council, if for example they require a specific service or more refuse sacks, bins, etc. This appeared to be a particular issue in more rural parts of the local authority area.

Potential for stopping places or transit sites in Highland

- 4.28. In the context of the challenges highlighted above in managing encampment activity across Highland, the study also considered Gypsy/Travellers' and service providers' views on the potential role of stopping places or transit sites. This form of provision is relatively common elsewhere in the UK, but to date has not been taken forward in Scotland. Several local authorities have considered specific proposals for transit site provision, often prompting a negative reaction from local communities, and none have progressed.

- 4.29. Across the UK, this form of provision typically takes the form of:
- Transit sites: permanent provision dedicated for use by Gypsy/Travellers as temporary accommodation, transit sites are smaller than permanent site provision but include some of the same facilities. The range of facilities at transit sites vary but as a minimum typically include cold water supply (e.g. standpipe), portaloos, sewage disposal facilities, refuse disposal facilities. Lengths of stay vary, in some cases up to several months, but would typically be similar in length to encampments; and
 - Temporary stopping places: identified pieces of land where Gypsy/Travellers are able to stay for short periods, stopping places are typically no more than encampment locations where Gypsy/Travellers are authorised to stay. This type of provision will usually have minimal facilities (e.g. refuse disposal and portaloos). Length of stay may be shorter than for transit sites, but could vary quite widely for example similar to current encampment activity.
- 4.30. Whatever the specific form of this type of provision the clear purpose is in making Gypsy/Travellers' travelling behaviour safer and more sustainable. Transit sites and stopping places should not be expected to stop encampment activity. However, by providing more suitable stopping locations they can improve management of unauthorised encampments, and potentially reduce the impact of travelling activity on local services, environment and communities.
- 4.31. In this regard the scale and distribution of encampment activity across Highland, and particularly the challenges in management of some encampment locations, would appear to make a case for the potential benefit of transit or stopping place provision. Moreover, it is notable that around a third of all research participants, around a half of those who still travel regularly, indicated that they would use stopping places or transit sites in Highland. If applied to the rate of encampment activity recorded across Highland, this level of interest suggests a potentially significant level of demand for transit/stopping place provision.
- 4.32. However, Gypsy/Travellers and service providers also identified a range of **potential concerns that may impact on the effectiveness of transit sites or stopping places**, and the extent to which potential demand may translate into actual use of such provision. These issues typically focused on how the location, physical form and management of this kind of provision will work in practice, and the extent to which the provision would deliver anticipated benefits. The main issues identified were:
- The risk of transit sites becoming used by Gypsy/Travellers as permanent provision over time, potentially resulting in permanent provision with unsuitable design. It was suggested that careful design would be required to ensure a clear distinction between transit and permanent sites in terms of the size and facilities provided – in this regard, this issue may be less of a risk for stopping places with more minimal provision of facilities. Similarly, the management approach should be developed to ensure that length of stay can be limited to ensure provision remains temporary in nature.

- Some suggested that the risk of transit/stopping places becoming more permanent in use may be an illustration of a lack of suitable permanent site provision, and that if this is the case then permanent site provision should be the focus for the Council. This was for example highlighted in relation to the Skye area, with a number of participants suggesting that any transit or stopping place provision would be likely to become permanent over time given the absence of other permanent Gypsy/Traveller provision in the area. For the Inverness area, there were concerns that careful design of any transit or stopping place provision would be required to maintain a clear distinction from existing permanent provision – this appeared to reflect a view that transit provision could divert existing demand from the Longman site, or stimulate additional demand.
 - The risk of sites becoming dominated by a single family, with the result that other families may be unwilling to make use of the provision. This concern was also linked to the potential for transit sites with a wider range of facilities becoming more like permanent provision.
 - Difficulties identifying suitable locations, particularly given the likelihood of community objection to additional Gypsy/Traveller provision. Indeed a number of research participants were of the view that community objection may be the most significant barrier to delivery of transit stopping place provision, and this is consistent with experience across other local authority areas. Careful selection of suitable locations and a focus on potential benefits in reducing the impact of encampments may be beneficial here, but strong strategic and political support will also be required.
 - It was noted that smaller transit sites or stopping places would not be able to accommodate larger encampments. In this regard, transit/stopping provision would only have an impact on some encampment activity, although survey evidence suggests there may be substantial demand from smaller encampment groups.
 - Questions regarding the extent to which one or two isolated transit sites or stopping places will have the required impact on levels of unauthorised encampments, particularly in the context of a lack of such provision elsewhere in Highland and neighbouring authorities.
- 4.33. These were raised as genuine concerns by a number of Gypsy/Travellers and other stakeholders, including some who felt they may undermine the effectiveness of transit site or stopping place provision. However, there remained a substantial group of Gypsy/Travellers who travelled in the Highland area, and who felt that there is scope for this kind of provision in Highland – and indeed who would wish to use such provision. For these families, rather than undermining the effectiveness of transit site or stopping place provision, these concerns ***highlighted considerations for the specification of transit site or stopping place provision:***

- Design and provision of facilities. It is important that there is a clear distinction from permanent site provision, in terms of the size and provision of facilities:
 - Relatively small size was generally preferred, in part to maintain a clear distinction from permanent provision but also recognising that larger transit provision may be unworkable as Gypsy/Travellers may be unwilling to move onto a site dependent on the families already on site. Suggestions were generally in the range of space for 3-6 caravans.
 - There was a clear view that provision of facilities should be more limited than for permanent sites. Indeed some expressed a preference for a model closer to stopping places where spaces currently used as encampments were designated for such use and bins and portaloos provided.
 - Most suggested that the “core” of basic facilities should include cold water supply, toilet facilities and refuse collection. Provision of security lighting was also suggested.
- Location. Encampment activity suggests that the focus of any transit or stopping place provision should be on Inverness and Skye/Lochalsh, in terms of where this provision may have greatest potential to reduce the impact of encampments. This is also consistent with the views of Gypsy/Travellers, which suggested that transit/stopping provision should focus on stopping locations that are currently used by Gypsy/Travellers. It has not been within the remit of this study to assess the feasibility of specific locations, although an extract from DCLG guidance on design of transit sites and stopping places is appended to this report. However, analysis of encampment activity and Gypsy/Travellers’ views suggests a “long list” of potential locations focused around Inverness (behind the A96 retail park, Torvean Quarry, Milton of Culloden, reclaimed land at Longman to the northeast of the A9) and Skye (around Broadford – although permanent site provision may be a more suitable option given the profile of need in this area).
- Charges: Most of those expressing potential interest in using transit sites or stopping places were clear that they would expect to pay a charge for doing so. A number of participants felt unable to suggest a specific level of charge, but there was a broad view that charges should take into account the range of facilities provided. For those able to propose charging levels, this was typically on a weekly basis with suggestions falling in the range of £25 to £50 per week dependent on the nature/level of provision.

5. ASSESSMENT OF GYPSY/TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS IN HIGHLAND

- 5.1. The Scottish Government's published guidance on preparation of a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) makes clear that these should identify the accommodation needs of Gypsy/Travellers, and the Council's Local Housing Strategy and related plans are expected to address any identified current or future need for additional provision. However, there is no specific guidance for the methodology to be used in assessing Gypsy/Travellers' accommodation needs.
- 5.2. For this study, the approach has been adapted from the recommended "mainstream" HNDA methodology – which is designed to be applied to need for settled accommodation but has elements of relevance to Gypsy/Travellers – and with reference to 2007 guidance published by the Department for Communities & Local Government on assessment of Gypsy/Travellers' accommodation needs assessment for England and Wales.
- 5.3. Where possible, our approach has sought to triangulate multiple evidence sources to provide the most robust estimates possible. However, there remain known gaps and quality issues in the evidence base on the Gypsy/Traveller population, and their accommodation needs. Moreover, there are fundamental restrictions on the extent to which any approach can produce an absolute "single figure" estimate of needs for what is a relatively transient population. As such, we would highlight that this section provides an *indication of the likely range of current and future Gypsy/Traveller accommodation needs*.
- 5.4. The following pages provide an overview of the specific elements that feed into the needs assessment, and a summary assessment of Gypsy/Traveller accommodation needs over the next 5 years.

Overview of accommodation needs calculation

- 5.5. Table 6 below provides an overview of the key components of the needs assessment, adapted from published HNDA and Gypsy/Traveller needs assessment guidance.
- 5.6. We consider each of these elements in turn over the following pages, but would note here that there is likely to be some potentially significant overlap between some elements. For example the group of households expressing waiting list demand for current Gypsy/Traveller provision (element a) includes some who are travelling in the Highland area without access to settled accommodation (element b). Our estimates against each of the needs assessment elements takes the likely overlap between these groups into account to minimise the risk of double counting of households in need.

Table 6: Overview of Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Needs Indicators

	a	Households expressing demand for Gypsy/Traveller site provision through Council waiting lists
PLUS	b	Households without access to settled accommodation and who wish to remain in Highland
PLUS	c	Households with unsuitable site accommodation who are unable to access accommodation that meets their needs
EQUALS	d	CURRENT (BACKLOG) NEED
PLUS	e	New households likely to form over the next 5 years, and who will be looking for accommodation in Highland
PLUS	f	Households falling into need over the next 5 years
EQUALS	g	TOTAL NEED OVER 5 YEAR PERIOD
MINUS	h	Expected supply of Gypsy/Traveller site pitches over next 5 years
EQUALS	e	NET SHORTFALL/SURPLUS IN SITE PROVISION

a. Households expressing demand for Gypsy/Traveller site provision

- 5.7. This element is focused on current waiting list demand against each of the Council's Gypsy/Traveller sites – the Council has four sites in total, with three of these active at the time of the study.
- 5.8. There are currently 14 households in total on waiting lists for Council sites. This includes four households who have expressed interest in the Kentallen Park site which is currently under re-development, but prior experience suggests that formal housing applications are unlikely to be forthcoming for the Kentallen site until pitches become available for let:
- 4 waiting list applicants for the Longman site;
 - 6 waiting list applicants for the Spean Park site; and
 - No current waiting list applicants for the Newtonmore site.
 - 4 households having expressed interest in pitch accommodation at the (currently inactive) Kentallen Park site.
- 5.9. In considering this waiting list demand, it is important to note that service feedback suggests that Gypsy/Travellers' expression of demand for site provision is often influenced by their knowledge of the likelihood of imminent pitch vacancies. Gypsy/Travellers are less likely to make a site application "on spec", and waiting list data may therefore under-estimate the extent of potential current demand for site provision.

b. Households without access to settled accommodation and who wish to remain in Highland

- 5.10. This indicator takes account of Gypsy/Traveller households in Highland who do not have access to suitable accommodation of their own, and who are seeking settled accommodation in the area. This includes those on encampments, and also “supressed” households staying with friends or family on site accommodation in Highland and who do not have access to suitable accommodation of their own.
- 5.11. The study took account of research participants’ stated intentions here, but also other indicators such as family connections and recent travel patterns to assess the extent to which these intentions represented “genuine” need or demand for Gypsy/Traveller provision in Highland. On this basis the study fieldwork identified a total of 8 households without their own accommodation who wish to stay in Highland:
- 3 households on encampments on Skye seeking settled accommodation in Highland;
 - 2 households on encampments in Inverness seeking settled accommodation, and 1 supressed household on site accommodation in Inverness; and
 - 2 households on site accommodation at Spean Bridge.
- 5.12. This element is necessarily limited to evidence on households who took part in the study fieldwork. As such this is likely to exclude other households without access to settled accommodation – in our overall backlog need estimate we make a small allowance for this hidden unmet need.

c. Households with unsuitable site accommodation who are unable to access accommodation that meets their needs

- 5.13. This element describes Gypsy/Travellers with settled accommodation which is unsuitable for their needs – whether due to size (overcrowding), suitability for health or mobility needs, etc – and who are looking for alternative accommodation in Highland. In this regard, the study fieldwork identified 2 households currently in unsuitable accommodation:
- 1 household on site accommodation at Newtonmore; and
 - 1 household on site accommodation at Spean Park.
- 5.14. As is noted in relation to element b, this estimate is limited to households who took part in the survey fieldwork and may exclude others in unsuitable accommodation. Our overall backlog need estimate makes a small allowance for this hidden unmet need.

d. CURRENT (BACKLOG) NEED

Based on estimates for elements a-c above, with small allowance for “hidden” unmet need not identified through the study fieldwork

25-30

e. New households likely to form over the next 5 years, and who will be looking for accommodation in Highland

- 5.15. Likely future demand is an important element in assessing likely future Gypsy/Traveller accommodation requirements, and this typically involves considering population growth as a result of new households forming. This element therefore considers the likely number of new Gypsy/Traveller households forming in Highland as a result of children currently living with families seeking their own accommodation, and who will wish to remain in Highland.
- 5.16. This inevitably requires a degree of judgement regarding the stage at which current household members may wish to access their own accommodation, and the proportion of these new households who are likely to be seeking accommodation in the Highland area. An important element of the survey fieldwork involved considering likely housing motivations that may influence this creation of new households. On this basis, the survey identified 3 new households likely to form over the next 5 years and who are likely to be seeking their own settled accommodation:
- 1 emerging household on an encampment on Skye; and
 - 2 emerging households on Council sites.
- 5.17. Against the base of all survey participants, this is equivalent to a household formation rate of around 2% per year. This is also in line with the estimated growth in the site and encampment population in Highland over the last 5 years, although these estimates are not robust due to significant change in quality/completeness over this period. An annual household formation rate of 2% would equate to around 6 new households forming and seeking accommodation in Highland over the next 5 years.
- 5.18. The 2011 Census also identified around 30 Gypsy/Travellers in the age group 12 to 16, and fieldwork suggests that a proportion of this age group are likely to be forming their own households over this 5 year period. It is likely that not all of this age group will form new households, some may combine to form a single household, and not all will be seeking settled accommodation in Highland. Nevertheless, even a conservative estimate of around a quarter to a third of this population seeking accommodation in Highland, would be equivalent to up to around 10 new households.
- 5.19. Taking this range of evidence into account, for needs assessment purposes we have used a working estimate of around 5-10 new Gypsy/Traveller households forming and seeking accommodation in Highland over the next 5 years. These are likely to be split across the Inverness, Spean Bridge/Lochaber and Skye areas.

f. Households falling into need over the next 5 years

- 5.20. The second element in assessing likely future Gypsy/Traveller accommodation requirements, is to estimate the number of households likely to develop a housing need over the next 5 years.

- 5.21. Survey fieldwork identified 1 household currently on a Council site who is likely to require alternative accommodation in the short to medium term. In addition this element includes an estimate of the number of new waiting list applications that may be expected to be received over this period. An allowance has been made for overlap with other elements of the needs calculation – for example a proportion of newly forming households could be expected to make an application for site accommodation.
- 5.22. Taking this into account, as a conservative estimate we have assumed that around 20-25 Gypsy/Traveller households will fall into need (and seek site accommodation) over the next 5 years.

<p>g. TOTAL NEED OVER 5 YEAR PERIOD <i>Backlog need plus estimates for elements e and f above</i></p>	<p>50-65</p>
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h. Expected supply of Gypsy/Traveller site pitches over the period

- 5.23. Against this total estimated need over the 5 year period, the assessment nets off expected supply of Gypsy/Traveller site pitches over this period.
- 5.24. As is set out in section 3 of this report, the three active Council sites have seen an average of 15 lets per annum over the last three years. The rate of supply has varied considerably over this period with no consistent upward or downward trend, and is influenced by the profile of households occupying sites at any time. In addition, an allowance has been made for turnover of pitches being brought back into use at the Kentallen Park site based on previous turnover rates.
- 5.25. Taking these trends into account, our estimate has used a conservative estimate of around 13-14 lets per annum over the next 5 years, equivalent to an expected supply of 65-70 pitch vacancies over the period.

<p>e. NET SHORTFALL/SURPLUS IN SITE PROVISION OVER 5 YEARS <i>Measure of estimated total need over the next 5 years, against estimated supply of Gypsy/Traveller site pitches.</i> <i>Note this does not take account of any geographic mismatch between need and supply.</i></p>	<p>0 to +20 surplus</p>
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Summary accommodation needs assessment

5.26. Table 7 below provides an overview of each element of the needs assessment calculation. The key points of note are:

- An estimated **50-65 Gypsy/Traveller households requiring site accommodation over the next 5 years**. This is expected to be focused on Inverness and Spean Bridge, but also includes accommodation needs at Newtonmore and Skye:
 - Inverness area 20-25 households
 - Newtonmore area 5-7 households
 - Spean Bridge area 15-17 households
 - Lochaber area 5-10 households
 - Skye 5-6 households
- An **estimated surplus of 0 to 20 pitches** over this period (0-4 per annum) on the basis of projected supply of pitch vacancies.
- This suggests that, **across the Highland area as a whole current levels of site provision are likely to be sufficient to meet needs** over this 5 year period. However, available evidence suggests that the balance between likely future need for and provision of accommodation is quite different at an area level:
 - A projected surplus of site provision in the Inverness area, potentially such that the Longman site may continue to experience difficulty filling vacant pitches. As noted earlier, there may be a case for transit site or stopping place provision in Inverness.
 - Need for and provision of Gypsy/Traveller accommodation is likely to remain broadly in balance in the Newtonmore, Spean Bridge and Lochaber areas.
 - There is an estimated need of 5-6 Gypsy/Traveller households for Skye over the next 5 years, and no current provision in the area.

Table 7: Summary estimate of Gypsy/Traveller accommodation needs in Highland 2014-19

Component		Estimate	
	a	Waiting list demand for Gypsy/Traveller site provision	14
PLUS	b	Without settled accommodation wishing to stay in Highland	8
PLUS	c	Households in unsuitable accommodation	2
EQUALS	d	CURRENT (BACKLOG) NEED	25-30
PLUS	e	New households forming over next 5 years	5-10
PLUS	f	Households falling into need over the next 5 years	20-25
EQUALS	g	TOTAL NEED OVER 5 YEAR PERIOD	50-65
MINUS	h	Expected supply of Gypsy/Traveller site pitches	65-70
EQUALS	e	NET SHORTFALL/SURPLUS IN SITE PROVISION	0 to +20

Other factors influencing accommodation choices

- 5.27. In addition to the indicators considered above in relation to the likely scale of accommodation need, the study also highlighted a range of other issues that impacted on Gypsy/Travellers' accommodation choices and quality of life. This included *harassment and discrimination, access to services, and ill health and disability*. We highlight key points emerging in relation to each of these in turn below.

Harassment and discrimination

- 5.28. The Scottish Social Attitudes survey has concluded that Gypsy/Travellers were one of a small number of groups still subject to relatively common discriminatory views: *"...only a minority of people in Scotland hold views that could be described as discriminatory. However, some groups – particularly Gypsy/Travellers and transgender people – appear to be the subjects of fairly widespread discriminatory attitudes."* This is evident in, for example, Gypsy/Travellers being the group which people in Scotland were most likely to be considered unsuitable for a primary school teacher job, or were most likely to be unhappy about a Gypsy/Traveller joining their family circle.⁹
- 5.29. The annual Highland Council Survey of Performance and Attitudes has also consistently identified Gypsy/Travellers as one of the groups most subject to discriminatory views. The 2011, 2012 and 2013 surveys indicate that Highland residents are most likely to be unhappy about family member or friend forming a long-term relationship with a Gypsy/Traveller or transgender person. There has been a small decrease over recent years in the proportion of residents who would be unhappy about a family member or friend forming a relationship with a Gypsy/Traveller, but survey findings suggest that Gypsy/Travellers remain one of the groups towards which residents are most likely to hold discriminatory views.¹⁰
- 5.30. The apparent prevalence of discriminatory views in relation to Gypsy/Travellers is also reflected in the Scottish Government's equality outcomes published in April 2013. This includes the following outcome specifically focused on improving Gypsy/Travellers' lives: *"Gypsy/Travellers experience less discrimination and more positive attitudes towards their culture and way of life."*
- 5.31. Within Highland, evidence from survey fieldwork and stakeholder interviews indicates that ***discriminatory attitudes towards Gypsy/Travellers may be relatively widespread***. This is evident for example in community complaints regarding Gypsy/Traveller encampments. While complaints typically focus on encampments' negative impact on the physical environment (particularly levels of waste), these also appear to reflect wider discriminatory views including fear and mistrust of Gypsy/Travellers. This was also reflected in feedback from Gypsy/Travellers in the area, who suggested that there were instances of the Gypsy/Traveller population being "tarred by the same brush" in locations where unrelated families had for example left significant volumes of waste.

⁹ [Scottish Social Attitudes survey 2010: Attitudes to discrimination and positive action.](#)

¹⁰ [Highland Council Survey of Performance and Attitudes 2013](#)

- 5.32. A number of research participants suggested that these negative perceptions are encouraged by the tone of local press coverage of Gypsy/Traveller encampments and any site and service provision planning. Several Gypsy/Travellers on encampments during the study referred to particularly acute problems with harassment linked to local press coverage in across other parts of Scotland, some to the extent of choosing to move out of the area. Gypsy/Travellers' were generally of the view that media coverage was less of a problem in Highland, but still suggested that coverage was often very negative in tone in relation to Gypsy/Travellers, and this could encourage negative community views.
- 5.33. While study participants identified multiple examples of discrimination and harassment towards Gypsy/Travellers in Highland, it was also clear that ***the majority of participants saw Highland as more tolerant of Gypsy/Travellers than many other parts of Scotland***, and for some this was a motivation for travelling in the area. This included comparison with the neighbouring Grampian region, which is a well-established travel route into the Highland area, and where several participants referred to more serious examples of harassment and damage to caravans.
- 5.34. In terms of Gypsy/Travellers' specific experiences in relation to discrimination and harassment in Highland, participants highlighted the following:
- A view that discrimination or objection from local communities can be the result of previous negative experiences of Gypsy/Traveller encampments, and frustration that local communities typically see all "travellers" as a homogenous community. This can result in problems accessing services and closure of traditionally used locations to all Gypsy/Travellers on the basis of the behaviour of a minority.
 - Reference to examples of what was seen as less significant, but relatively common harassment – for example cars driving by laybys repeatedly, peeping horns late at night, and some throwing food and liquid at caravans.
 - Perception that Police do not take complaints from Gypsy/Travellers seriously. A number of participants expressed frustration about a perceived lack of response to previous reports to the Police of harassment from local communities, but it is clear that many no longer make any official reports of such harassment.
 - Generally very positive experience of contact with Council staff and services. A small number of participants referred to examples of perceived discrimination, but the general view was positive. Several examples of local shops and services refusing access to Gypsy/Travellers were mentioned, including shower facilities and garages selling gas canisters. However, again the general view was that accessing these services is not an issue for the large majority of Gypsy/Travellers.
 - There was relatively common reference to Gypsy/Travellers feeling the need to disguise their identity to access services, often based on experience of discrimination or harassment previously (in Highland or elsewhere).
 - Perception from a small number of Gypsy/Travellers on encampments of more discrimination from Police in some parts of Highland than others, including suggestion from families on Skye.

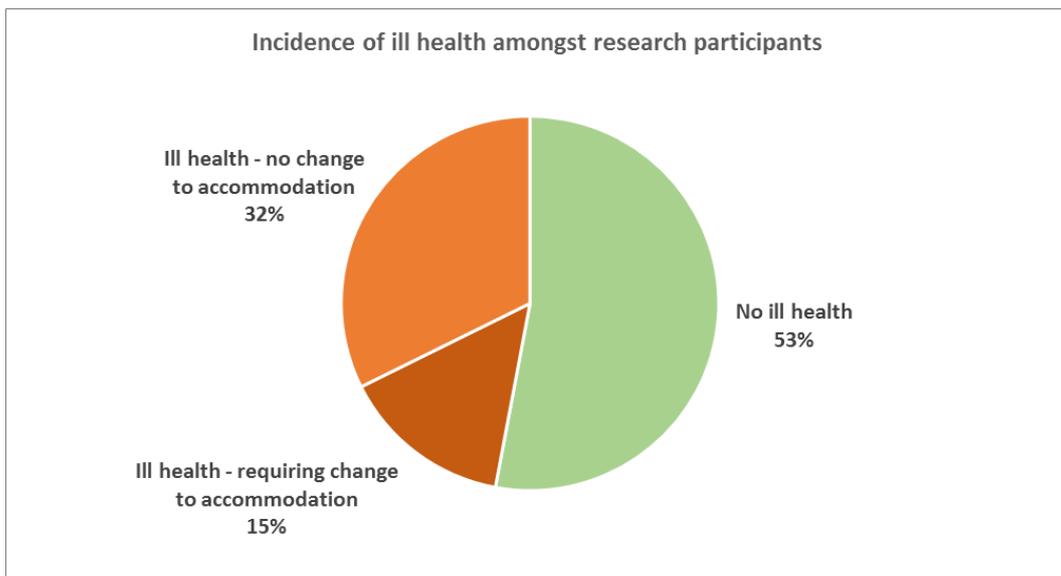
Access to services

- 5.35. Survey fieldwork indicates that access to services is an important factor in Gypsy/Travellers' choice of stopping places. This is most commonly access to toilet/shower facilities, laundry and shops, but for some families access to health service is also a critical motivation.
- 5.36. In terms of **accessing basic amenities, shops, etc** the majority of research participants indicated that this was not a problem. A number of participants referred to difficulty accessing these amenities/services, and these were typically in more rural areas, rather than in Inverness where access to services was not raised as an issue. For example, families on encampments on Skye reported having to walk a considerable distance to access toilet or shower facilities, and travel off island to use laundry facilities. As is noted earlier in relation to discrimination/harassment, several Gypsy/Travellers mentioned instances of being refused access to toilet and shower facilities. A small number of participants also mentioned the significant cost of accessing these facilities as a barrier.
- 5.37. Over and above access to these amenities or facilities, Gypsy/Travellers were generally positive in their experience of accessing public services such as education and health services. In terms of **health services**, the large majority of participants were comfortable with GP registration arrangements (including temporary registration), and it was clear that the Housing service liaison was used as a route to these types of service in some cases. The Council also has an identified nurse with the role of health visitor to the Longman site, and feedback from the service indicates that engagement with health services in relation to pregnancy/birth and for those with acute conditions was generally good. As is noted below in relation to ill health and disability, longer term engagement with Gypsy/Travellers around health improvement remains a challenge.
- 5.38. Published Scottish Government **school attendance** statistics indicate that Gypsy/Travellers have a significantly lower level of school attendance than other ethnic groups – 80% compared to a Scottish average of 93%. In this context, the Council's Interrupted Learning Officer has a key role in supporting Gypsy/Travellers in accessing and maintaining engagement with education services. This includes support to teachers where Gypsy/Traveller children are in school, and providing nursery and secondary sessions at the Longman site for those not in school.
- 5.39. Feedback from Gypsy/Travellers with children in school in Highland was very positive in terms of bus/taxi transport to access schools, and liaison work by the Council to support Gypsy/Travellers through school. There remain some Gypsy/Traveller families settled in Highland where school attendance is very low, with attendance particularly tending to drop off through secondary school. However, the service has seen an overall increase in engagement and school attendance from Gypsy/Travellers on encampments in Highland – including families in the area for a relatively short time who were keen to engage with schools. In these instances, it is clear that the child's experience in school is important here, for example where children find schools to be more welcoming than they expected and are motivated to keep up attendance.

- 5.40. This engagement with education services in particular is potentially significant in the context of accommodation choices. Feedback from services, and some Gypsy/Travellers involved in the survey fieldwork, suggests that school attendance has some influence on Gypsy/Travellers' travelling behaviour. This includes examples of families remaining in a particular area for longer where children are settled in the school.
- 5.41. As is noted in the previous section in relation to management of encampments, the Council's role as liaison with Gypsy/Travellers travelling in the area is vital in making links to other services. This is clearly working well for most encampment activity. However, resource allocations and logistical difficulties in more rural parts of Highland may have the result of Gypsy/Travellers staying outwith the Inverness area having reduced access to services. This included some instances of Gypsy/Traveller families in more rural areas being unsure of how to get in touch with the Council to request service.

Ill health and disability

- 5.42. There is very limited published service statistics on the health of Gypsy/Travellers, not least due to the relatively small size of the population base. However, a series of research reports have found Gypsy/Travellers to have significantly poorer health outcomes than most other ethnic groups. For example a 2009 Equality and Human Rights Commission study estimated that life expectancy for the Gypsy/Traveller population is around 10 years lower than the national average, and Gypsy/Traveller mothers are 20 times more likely than other populations to have experienced the death of a child.
- 5.43. This is also illustrated in the incidence of health needs amongst research participants. As Figure 9 below indicates, nearly half of participants indicated that one or more members of their household had a health condition that limited their activities. This compares with around a fifth of the Highland population being recorded by the Census as having a long-term health condition or disability. Moreover, around 1 in 7 of families involved in the survey fieldwork indicated that this health condition had an impact on their health needs – this includes some counted in the needs assessment as living in unsuitable housing.

Figure 10 : Ill Health Amongst Research Participants

Source: Survey fieldwork (base: 25)

- 5.44. In terms of service provision, the Council has an identified nurse with the role of health visitor to the Longman site and that supports Gypsy/Travellers' engagement with services. Feedback from services suggests that Gypsy/Travellers' take-up of health services is generally good around more specific need for service – for example the needs of young babies and dealing with more acute conditions. However, challenges remain in engaging Gypsy/Travellers on the subject of health improvement and behaviour change; this work is more reliant on building relationships over time, and this is clearly difficult for the more transient Gypsy/Traveller population. It is also important to note that health improvement remains a significant priority in the context of what remain significantly poorer health outcomes for Gypsy/Travellers.

6. SUMMARY FINDINGS

- 6.1. Below we summarise the key points emerging through the study in terms of the size and profile of the Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland, Gypsy/Travellers' views and investment priorities for accommodation provision in the area, travel patterns and potential for transit site or stopping place provision, and our assessment of Gypsy/Travellers' accommodation needs over the period 2014-19.
- 6.2. In relation to the ***size and profile of the Gypsy/Traveller population*** in Highland, the key points of note are:
- We estimate the Gypsy/Traveller population in Highland to be around 415 individuals across 130 households. While this is a small proportion of the resident population (0.2%) the 2011 Census indicates that Highland has the third largest Gypsy/Traveller population in Scotland in terms of share of the total population.
 - Gypsy/Travellers on Council sites account for around a fifth of the total population, and those on roadside encampments around a third. However, the largest group of Gypsy/Travellers live in bricks and mortar housing, nearly half of all Gypsy/Travellers in Highland.
 - The Gypsy/Traveller population differs in profile when compared with Highland's total resident population. This is particularly evident in the Gypsy/Traveller population having a younger age profile and relatively small population of older people (65+). Available evidence also shows a larger household size for Gypsy/Travellers – 3.0 to 3.5 persons compared to 2.3 persons per household across the Highland population as a whole.
- 6.3. Key findings in relation to ***Gypsy/Travellers' views on permanent site accommodation provision in Highland*** and investment priorities are:
- Gypsy/Traveller accommodation options in Highland include four Council sites providing a total capacity of 47 pitches, although not all pitches were available for occupation at the time of the study and the Kentallen Park site was inactive pending improvement works to bring site pitches back into use. Other accommodation options for Gypsy/Travellers in Highland include bricks and mortar housing and roadside encampments.
 - Across all active sites tenant views were most positive on the size of sites (number and size of pitches), security of tenancy and site layout. Views were generally least positive in relation to availability and quality of onsite facilities, although safety & security was also poorly rated for the Longman site.
 - Site residents were generally positive on the quality of their site provision; two thirds of participants were satisfied with their site overall. There remains around 3 in 10 expressing dissatisfaction with their site.
 - Dissatisfaction was significantly higher for the Longman site (2 in 5 tenants dissatisfied), and this appears to have been driven to some extent by concerns regarding management of safety and security on the site.
 - Upgrading of existing onsite facilities and/or provision of additional facilities were by some margin the most commonly suggested priority for investment – primarily provision of fences to pitches, repair to pitch surfaces, and improvement to amenity blocks.

6.4. The study identified a range of findings in relation to ***travel patterns and potential for transit site or stopping place provision***, with the key points being:

- Available data shows an average of 52 unauthorised encampments per annum, with activity peaking during the June to August period. The size of encampments varies widely, but most consist of 3-6 caravans.
- Gypsy/Traveller encampments take place across most parts of the Highland area, but the largest volume of activity is focused in the Inverness & Inner Moray Firth and Skye areas. There are quite diverse motivations for encampments across these locations – employment (Inverness and Skye), visiting family (Inverness) and holiday (all areas). Many families have a long history of travel through the Highland area and consider this “home”.
- Gypsy/Travellers travelling in Highland are most likely to have links to other parts of Highland, Central Scotland and England/Wales. There are also well established travel routes particularly with Moray and Grampian, and Tayside/Perth & Kinross/Fife.
- Housing Services currently take the lead liaison role with Gypsy/Traveller encampments, and this approach is generally working well with the liaison role significant in enabling other services to link in with Gypsy/Traveller families. However, this means that gaps in knowledge of encampment activity across more rural areas can act as a barrier to identification of potential need for services.
- Also in terms of access to services, provision of services such as education and health/nursing for Gypsy/Travellers appears to be structured around existing service bases, with the result that provision is at a much higher level in the Inverness area than elsewhere in Highland. This indicates a mismatch with the distribution of the Gypsy/Traveller population across Highland, and likely patterns of service need.
- The study has identified a number of challenges for management of unauthorised encampment activity across Highland. The most significant relate to the types of encampment (more visible locations, larger and longer-term encampments more difficult) and waste management (in terms of service impact, cost and cause of community complaints).
- Levels of Gypsy/Traveller encampment activity suggest a potential role for transit site or stopping place provision in Highland - to provide safer and more sustainable stopping locations and to reduce the negative impact of encampments. The study identified a range of concerns regarding the likely effectiveness of transit sites (and to a lesser extent stopping places), but there remains a substantial group of Gypsy/Travellers who felt there is scope for this kind of provision in Highland – and who would wish to use such provision.
- Concerns raised around the effectiveness of transit sites or stopping place provision highlight the importance of design of this provision, and an overview of DCLG guidance on selection and design of sites is appended to this report. In addition, collaborative working with other local authorities may add significant value to the planning and delivery of any transit sites or stopping places in Highland. Travel patterns identified through the study suggest that this could most usefully involve Moray and Grampian, and Tayside/Perth & Kinross/Fife authorities.

6.5. The table below provides an overview of each element of the estimate of ***Gypsy/Travellers' accommodation needs in Highland over the next 5 years***. The key points of note are:

- 50-65 Gypsy/Traveller households are expected to have a need for site accommodation over the next 5 years. This is expected to be focused on Inverness and Spean Bridge, but also includes accommodation needs at Newtonmore and Skye.
- This equates to capacity to meet additional demand of around 0 to 20 pitches (0-4 per annum) over this period, on the basis of projected supply of pitch vacancies. This suggests that across the Highland area as a whole current levels of site provision are likely to be sufficient to meet needs.
- However the balance of need is likely to be quite different at a local level, such that some areas may see more substantial surplus or shortfall in Gypsy/Traveller provision. In particular there is a larger projected surplus in Inverness, and an estimated shortfall of 5-6 places in Skye – where there is currently no Gypsy/Traveller provision.

Component		Estimate	
	a	Waiting list demand for Gypsy/Traveller site provision	14
PLUS	b	Without settled accommodation wishing to stay in Highland	8
PLUS	c	Households in unsuitable accommodation	2
EQUALS	d	CURRENT (BACKLOG) NEED	25-30
PLUS	e	New households forming over next 5 years	5-10
PLUS	f	Households falling into need over the next 5 years	20-25
EQUALS	g	TOTAL NEED OVER 5 YEAR PERIOD	50-65
MINUS	h	Expected supply of Gypsy/Traveller site pitches	65-70
EQUALS	e	NET SHORTFALL/SURPLUS IN SITE PROVISION	0 to +20

APPENDIX: FURTHER READING AND DESIGN GUIDANCE

Relevant legislation, guidance and policy

In relation to equalities policy and legislation:

- Equality Act 2010: guidance - [link](#)
- Equality outcomes and strategy for Gypsy/Travellers - [link](#)
- Equal Opportunities Committee inquiries into the lives of Gypsy/Travellers - [link](#)
- Working towards a Fairer Highland - [link](#)

In relation to housing policy and strategy:

- Scottish Government Local Housing Strategy guidance - [link](#)
- Scottish Social Housing Charter - [link](#)
- Highland Housing Strategy 2010-15 - [link](#)

Relevant research and evidence

Results from the 2011 Census – [link](#)

Gypsies/Travellers in Scotland: The Twice Yearly Count - No. 16: July 2009 - [link](#)

Scottish Social Attitudes survey 2010: Attitudes to discrimination and positive action - [link](#)

Highland Council Survey of Performance and Attitudes reports:

- [2014 Report](#)
- [2013 Report](#)
- [2012 Report](#)
- [2011 Report](#)

Scottish Housing Regulator: The Priorities of Gypsies/Travellers and Factored Owners - [link](#)

The Health Status of Gypsies & Travellers in England (2004), Parry et al - [link](#)

Needs assessment guidance

DCLG Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance for England and Wales (2007) - [link](#)

Scottish Government Housing Need and Demand Assessment Practitioner's Guide 2014 - [link](#)

Guidance on design of Gypsy/Traveller transit sites and stopping places

The Department for Communities and Local Government in 2008 published a Good Practice Guide on design of Gypsy/Traveller sites ([link](#)). The Guide was intended to help local authorities' and other developers' in the design and development/refurbishment of Gypsy/Traveller sites. The Guide was based on a review of previous research and consultation with a range of stakeholders including Gypsy/Travellers and services managing sites in England.

In addition to detail on specific design elements for permanent residential sites, the Guide includes guidance on design of transit sites and stopping places. Although based on service provision and use in England, the key design principles highlighted by the Good Practice Guide remain relevant for services considering the potential scope for such provision in Scotland.

Over the page we provide a brief overview of key aspects of design of transit sites and stopping places as set out in the Guide.

Design of Transit Sites

Adapted from DCLG Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites – A Good Practice Guide

Transit sites may be in use all year round but are not intended or designed for use as permanent accommodation. This is reflected in guidance on design elements.

Site layout, access and orientation

- Number of pitches should not exceed 15.
- There may be less need for “soft landscaping” on transit sites as they are intended only for short stays, but there is a need to maintain the general ambience of sites to an appropriate level.
- It is recommended that parking space for at least 2 vehicles is provided on each individual pitch.
- Site boundaries, health & safety, access for emergency vehicles, security, density/spacing of vehicles and work/animal space should be in line with permanent sites.

Site services and facilities

- Dependent on local circumstances and usage, it is generally recommended that provision is made for a resident manager.
- A central electricity supply administered by site management may be provided, with residents paying by meter or cash retrospectively.
- Mains gas supplies are not applicable to transit sites.
- Waste disposal for individual pitches is recommended. Communal refuse disposal should be provided away from pitches, fenced off, robust and inconspicuous.
- A sluice should be provided on each site.
- Water supply, drainage, sewerage and lighting should be in line with permanent sites.

Individual pitches

- Wherever possible, each pitch should be of sufficient size to accommodate 2 touring caravans, 2 parking spaces and private amenities.
- Most Gypsy/Travellers prefer private amenities at each pitch including toilet, wash basin and shower with hot and cold water supply. Consideration could also be given to providing portable facilities to meet these needs.

Design of Temporary Stopping Places

Adapted from DCLG Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites – A Good Practice Guide

Temporary stopping places accommodate intermittent need for site accommodation for which a charge may be levied by the local authority. They are not intended for year round occupation, but can be made available at times of increased demand.

Site selection/location

- Stopping places should provide safe and convenient access to road networks, and located to cause minimal disruption to communities. The potential presence of young children and risks associated with adjoining land uses should also be considered.

Site layout, access and orientation

- Markings or barriers should be provided to encourage residents to park safely, allowing access for emergency vehicles and enabling maximum use of site capacity. Advice of the relevant fire officer should be sought in this regard.
- Roads to and from stopping places should be of sufficient quality and size to enable access for heavy vehicles such as trailers.
- There must be a clear barrier around the stopping place to discourage unauthorised expansion.

Site services and facilities

- Cold water supply must be provided for residents, by way of water standpipe or bowser.
- Portaloos must be provided for residents, with separate provision for men and women. A minimum of 1 portaloos for every 4 households.
- Sewerage disposal point must be provided.
- Refuse disposal facilities should be provided.