

Dorset Traveller Needs Assessment

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ABBREVIATIONS

CRE	Commission for Racial equality
DfES	Department for Education & Skills
DH	Department of Health
GP	General Practitioner
GTAA	Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
TES	Traveller Education Service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Regional Spatial Strategies are required to express the spatial pattern of need for Gypsy and Traveller pitch numbers at local authority level, to assist in identifying specific site locations for future accommodation, and funding priorities for such accommodation.
- 1.2. This report represents the first detailed proposals for the Dorset sub-region (the 4/4 authorities in Dorset) for the period up to 2011 (projected to 2026). It was commissioned from Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), and follows the approach recommended by the ODPM (now DCLG).
- 1.3. The methodology incorporates several data sources, particularly:-
 - Data held by the 4/4 authorities on unauthorised encampments within their areas
 - Returns to the ODPM on the six-monthly official counts of Gypsy caravans.
 - A survey of 143 Gypsies and New Travellers, on unauthorised encampments, authorised sites and other forms of accommodation including housing. The survey was carried out by trained and supervised interviewers selected from the Gypsy/Traveller communities as recommended in Government Guidance.
- 1.4. The need for Gypsy and Traveller pitch numbers by local authority for the Sub-Region is quantified in the table at the end of this summary. The study highlights seasonal differences in levels of unauthorised camping, and different travelling patterns for Gypsies and Irish Travellers and New Travellers respectively. The estimated pitch numbers, therefore, take account of the need to provide for peak demand, allowing the Dorset Police to exercise their powers of redirection to authorised sites. The relative infrequency of unauthorised encampments in some parts of the county suggests that this demand could be met through joint use of car parks, fields or open spaces rather than by permanent development. Similarly, demand for pitches in North Dorset during the period of the Great Dorset Steam Fair can be met by the provision of a temporary site for up to 100 pitches.
- 1.5. The study suggests a hitherto hidden demand from Gypsies currently in housing, especially in and around the Eastern Dorset conurbation, for transfer to a caravan pitch. This new and previously unidentified potential demand is difficult to quantify, and the local authorities may wish to undertake further investigative work. The pitch demand numbers for transfer from housing, therefore, should be viewed as provisional and speculative.
- 1.6. Pitch numbers identified in the family formation column (Column 6) seek to take account of estimated population growth for the Gypsy and Traveller community over the life of the Regional Spatial Strategy (to 2011 and 2026). These are calculated at 3%-4% of baseline demand and existing supply per year (Col 2+3) excluding demand from unauthorised families attracted by the annual steam fair in North Dorset. This draws upon earlier work by Birmingham University.

1.7 The estimated pitch numbers outlined above should be subject to regular 5 year review to take account of:-

- Variations in travelling patterns. These changes may be influenced by the economic cycle, changes in housing and welfare policies, the impact of increased site provision (both permanent and transit), and changing cultural preferences of Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- Demand for transfer from conventional housing to caravan pitches.
- Possibility of Gypsies and Irish Travellers being included as an ethnic grouping within the 2011 census.

1.8 Further authorised accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers can potentially come from the following sources:-

- New permanent transit or temporary sites provided by local authorities or social landlords or expansion or intensification of existing sites.
- Private sites with planning permission, a contribution to which could be made from the existing stock of non-Gypsy caravan sites and mobile home parks.

1.9 The 4/4 authorities should work sub-regionally to best meet the identified need, subject to further review. Pitch numbers based on peak demand in some areas will inflate demand.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
District	Supply	Demand (unauthorised) families	Demand (overcrowding)	Demand (Housing transfer)	Family formation from 2006 to 2011 (and 2006-2026 @ 3% & 4%)	Total demand 2006	Total demand to 2011 (and 2026)
Christchurch	3	30	4	20	6-9 (32-47)	54	60-63 (86-101)
East Dorset	1	45	4	30	9-13 (44-64)	79	88-92 (123-143)
North Dorset	21	150	7	0	8-11* (40-57)	157	165-168 (197-214)
Purbeck	15	65	6	0	8-12 (40-57)	71	79-83 (111-128)
West Dorset	14	65	7	0	8-12 (40-57)	72	80-84 (112-129)
Weymouth	0	25	2	0	2-3 (11-14)	27	29-30 (38-41)
Bournemouth	0	17	1	25	5-8 (27-39)	43	48-51 (70-82)
Poole	4	10	1	30	7-9 (31-47)	41	48-50 (72-88)
Total	58	407	32	105	53-77 (265-382)	544	597-621 (809-926)

*** 100 pitches required in connection with the Great Dorset Steam Fair are excluded from this calculation.**

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The brief

- 1.1.1 The brief (from Dorset County Council) required an assessment of accommodation needs for Travellers (now known as Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments, or GTAA), to include a survey, and supported by material from relevant public agencies and other sources. The Housing Act 2004 imposes a statutory requirement upon local authorities to undertake such assessments for their areas, and ODPM (now DCLG) guidance on them was published in February 2006.
- 1.1.2 This report applies the ODPM approach, adapted as appropriate. A draft report (December 2006) was presented to senior officers and formed the basis of a submission to the Regional Assembly. It has been subsequently amended to incorporate the final results of the survey and the issue of ODPM guidance, and the accommodation assessment figures have been reviewed and adjusted..
- 1.1.3 The study area comprises the districts of Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset, West Dorset, Purbeck and Weymouth & Portland ('new Dorset'), together with the unitary authorities of Bournemouth and Poole (separated administratively from Dorset in 1997). The combined study area districts comprise the Dorset sub-region. In 1986 Wimborne district changed its name to East Dorset.

1.2 National and legislative background

- 1.2.1 Three Acts of Parliament since 1960 have had a major impact upon the Gypsy/Traveller way of life. The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act of 1960 empowered local authorities to stop the unlicensed development of caravan sites and prohibit encampment on commons, and resulted in the closure of many sites traditionally used by Gypsies/Travellers.
- 1.2.2 The Caravan Sites Act 1968 (Part II) then required local authorities 'so far as may be necessary to provide adequate accommodation for Gypsies residing in or resorting to their area'. It also empowered the Secretary of State to make designation orders for areas where he was satisfied that there was adequate accommodation, or on grounds of expediency; designation gave local authorities additional powers to remove unlawful encampments. By 1994 a third of local authorities had achieved designation (Dorset being the first), and were thus both excused from making any further provision and empowered to act against unauthorized encampment.
- 1.2.3 The 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act repealed most of the 1968 Act, abolished any statutory obligation to provide accommodation, discontinued government grants for such sites, and made it a criminal offence, with heavy sanctions, to camp on land without the owner's consent. Since the 1994 Act the only places where Gypsies/Travellers can legally park their trailers and vehicles are as follows (in order of contribution):

- a) Council gypsy caravan sites. By 2000 nearly half of Gypsy caravans were accommodated on council sites, although no new council sites were being provided since the end of the statutory duty,
- b) Privately owned land (usually Gypsy/Traveller-owned) with planning permission specifically for a Gypsy occupied Caravan Site. These now accommodate a third of total caravans in England.
- c) Some land with established use rights (ie more than ten years without planning enforcement action), other caravan sites or mobile home parks by agreement or licence, and land required for a seasonal farm worker (under site licensing exemptions).

1.2.4 By the late 1990s, pressure was being exerted upon government over the damaging effects of the 1994 Act. A Home Office study found that groups of Travellers were being 'chased...from one bit of land to another bit of land, to another bit of land to another bit of land...you just chase them around' (in the words of a police officer). Travellers were tending to group together into larger bands on fewer sites, leading in turn to higher public anxiety over their presence, and further rounds of evictions.

1.2.5 Following various studies, a major review of law and policy began in 2004, and resulted in a new approach, reflected in the guidance issued in February 2006.

1.3 Accommodation needs

1.3.1 The Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (University of Birmingham) study for ODPM, *The Provision and Condition of Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England (2002)* estimated the need for more caravan pitches in England at 1,000-2,000 residential, and 2000-2500 transit or stopping places, over a five-year period. An even distribution across the country would equate to about thirty additional residential pitches and forty transit pitches in each county, but it should be recognised that the target population is unevenly distributed, both in relation to land area and the general population. Actual progress since then has been slow.

1.3.2 Meanwhile the costs of the present situation are high. Councils spend substantial funds monitoring and securing the removal of unauthorised illegal encampments, especially in legal and associated fees. The costs, in financial, health and other respects, to the Gypsies/Travellers themselves are high: those in unauthorised caravans experience greater difficulties in access to basic services, stress associated with impending eviction procedures (particularly affecting children), poor relations with the settled communities, and sometimes splitting up of extended families and support networks. Amenity, countryside and the settled community are also adversely affected.

1.3.2 Regional Housing Boards are now charged with producing a regional housing strategy, to meet the changing accommodation needs of local residents. The Housing Act 2004 requires local housing authorities, when undertaking a review of housing needs in their area, to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers 'residing in or resorting to their district'. ODPM guidance recognizes that the accommodation needs of Gypsies/Travellers may differ from those of the rest of the population, and cites five specific factors: patterns of extended family living, nomadism or semi-nomadism, a preference for caravan-dwelling, movement between housing and caravans, and their presence on unauthorized encampments or developments. It proposes that the assessment should address potential

accommodation types (standard housing, bricks and mortar 'group homes', permanent residential sites, transit sites and stopping places).

- 1.3.3 The ODPM circular 1/2006 on Gypsy and Traveller Sites and Planning requires that Local Development Schemes and the Regional Spatial Strategy take account of the outcomes of accommodation needs assessments of Gypsies and Travellers. County and Unitary Councils (known as the 4/4 authorities) are required to submit First Detailed Proposals to the Regional Planning Body and a draft of this report was submitted by the due deadline (February 2006).
- 1.3.4 The new circular also recommends that local planning authorities move away from the criteria-based policies prevalent in Local Plans towards policies which specify locations preferred for the development of sites which meet the accommodation needs for their area. This report, therefore, sets out the identified need for caravan pitches and sites for permanent, transit and temporary stopping places for Gypsies and Travellers by local planning authority area.

1.4 Data sources and quality

- 1.4.1 The main data source for this study is a new survey, undertaken by a supervised team of mainly Gypsy/Traveller interviewers, and comprising face-to-face interviews with 143 Gypsies/Travellers on sites of all types and in housing, within the study area, in 2005. The methodology is innovative, particularly for its Gypsy/Traveller involvement (recommended in official guidance). The sample was designed to be broadly representative of the total survey population, but with emphasis upon those in roadside encampments (who comprise a major demand for new accommodation).
- 1.4.2 To provide a robust methodology for verification, the survey findings have been cross-checked with other data sources, including:
- a) **Official counts of caravans.** Central government has since 1979 required 'gypsy caravans' (distinguished from other types of caravan or mobile home) to be counted six-monthly by local authorities under three categories (council authorised, private authorised, and unauthorised). The count has been criticized but offers a time-series record of the distribution of Gypsy/Traveller caravans in England. The count does not record showmen, and not usually new Travellers.
 - b) **Local data.** This includes the county database of unauthorized encampments (since 2002). TES school roll records are also helpful, but some children may only be in the county for short periods, and seasonal encampments during school holidays will not feature on school rolls.
 - c) **Other research.** This includes the Birmingham University study of council sites (2002), the Sheffield University health study (2004), the Leeds University baseline study of Leeds (2005), and the results of a focus group meeting of ethnic gypsies from Piddlehinton Gypsy site (conducted by MORI in December 2005).

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY AREA GYPSY/TRAVELLER POPULATION

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 The statutory definition of 'gypsy' (1968 Caravan Sites Act) refers to 'persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin'. It did not include ethnicity: ethnic 'Gypsies' could lose their legal status if they ceased to travel, and individuals with no ethnic connection adopting a nomadic way of life could become 'gypsies'. Our survey has followed the more inclusive definition used in current government advice, which includes showmen, those leaving the settled community for a travelling lifestyle, and ethnic gypsies in settled accommodation. We heard anecdotally of Eastern European immigrant labour in the study area, who may or may not have been European Roma, but our surveyors did not encounter any of them, and we are unable to estimate their possible numbers or include them for the purposes of this study (numbers are likely to fluctuate over time and to be small).

2.1.2 The distribution of survey responses is set out in Figure 1. The 'other' category includes many who should probably be regarded as New Travellers, and raises the proportion of this category to over 50% of the survey population (which correlates to the proportion suggested in other data sources, and is higher than that found in other similar studies). There are significant differences between these categories in the responses to some questions, which are commented upon where appropriate. The male:female ratio of respondents was 68:32.

2.1.3 Survey respondents were asked to self-identify under the following six categories:

- English Gypsies/Romanies. These were mostly found on council sites.
- Irish Travellers (both based in England and Ireland, and some with frequent patterns of travel to Ireland),
- New Travellers. If we assume that most of those self-identifying as "other", are New Travellers, then the proportion interviewed would be about 60%, which is consistent with county-held data.
- Scottish/Traveller-Gypsy,
- Showman. This group is specifically excluded from the statutory definition of gypsy, and separate circulars (most recently 22/91) have addressed their specific needs for winter quarters, which combine residential use with areas for maintenance of rides and other equipment. Official statistics are lacking on them, and former proposals to separate them in the six-monthly counts were not adopted. They were not included in the former statutory duty upon local authorities to provide sites, but 22/91 recognises that specific local proposals may be appropriate where there is a tradition and local need can be demonstrated. The Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee Ninth Report (2000) addressed the issue of 'Travelling Fairs'. They have been

included in our study, and exhibit a similar demographic profile to the rest of the Gypsy/Traveller population. They are unlikely to require public sector site provision, and their locational requirements may be more flexible because of their relatively high mobility. Travelling showmen attending the steam fair are generally accommodated temporarily by the steam fair organisers.

- Other. Most of these we assume to be ‘New Travellers’ reluctant to accept classification, but includes a few Welsh Travellers attending for the steam fair.

2.1.4 The distribution of completed survey questionnaires is set out in Table 2. Three-fifths (61%) were on unauthorised or roadside encampments, and 39% in settled accommodation of some description.

2.1.5 There is no reliable guarantee that this distribution is representative of the total survey population, and it probably over-represents those in unauthorized and roadside caravans and under-represents those in housing. We consider, however, that it provides robust evidence for estimating accommodation demand. North and West Dorset districts accounted for most of the survey responses, which we consider reflects the likely actual distribution at the time of the survey (which included the month of the annual steam fair).

Figure 1: Distribution of survey responses by self-identification

District	English Gypsy	Irish Traveller	New Traveller	Showman	'Other'	Welsh or Scottish Gypsy	No ethnicity provided	Total
West Dorset	2	2	7	4	14	1	-	30
North Dorset	12	4	26	-	20	2	1	65
East Dorset	4	1	1	-	1		-	7
Weymouth & Portland	1	-	-	-	-		-	1
Poole	9	2	2	-	2		-	15
Purbeck	5	1	7	-	3		-	16
Bournemouth	1	-	2	1	4		-	8
Christchurch	1	-	-	-	-		-	1
Study Area	35	10	45	5	44	3	1	143
Percentage	24.5%	7.0%	31.5%	3.5%	31%	2%	0.5%	100%

Figure 2 - Gypsies in accommodation types in each district and study area.

Accommodation Type	LA site	Self-owned with planning permission	Private/Self no planning permission	Roadside	Unauthorised Other	LA housing	RSL housing	Private Housing	No response	Total
DISTRICT										
West Dorset	-	-	8	11	8	1	1	1	-	30
North Dorset	4	3	5	26	12	9	2	4	-	65
East Dorset	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	2	-	7
Weymouth & Portland	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Poole	8	-	-	-	1	2	-	4		15
Purbeck	-	3	1	5	5	1	-	1	-	16
Bournemouth	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	2	1	8
Christchurch	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Study Area	12	7	16	43	28	18	4	14	1	143
%	8%	5%	11%	30%	20%	13%	3%	10%	0.5%	100%

2.2 Estimates of numbers

- 2.2.1 The decennial population census does not identify Gypsies/Travellers as a separate racial group, but the official caravan counts currently record some 14,000 gypsy caravans in England, estimated to represent about 10,000 families, or 40,000 individuals. Estimates of the total Gypsy population (including those in conventional housing) range between 120,000 and 300,000. Schools Census data suggests a figure at the higher end of that range, and, applying various assumptions, we suggest about 250,000 for England, and for the South-West region a range of 7000-9000 (rising in the summer months). In the Dorset sub-region a figure of 600-700 Gypsy/Traveller school-age children (estimated by the Traveller Education Service) suggests a total residing/resorting population of 2400-3000. This underestimates numbers of housed Gypsies and Travellers (who after two years of settlement are normally removed from TES records), which are likely to be considerable (thousands rather than hundreds). The implications of the numbers for potential transfer from housing back into caravans are discussed later.
- 2.2.2 The evidence indicates that the Dorset Gypsy/Traveller population is particularly transient in the summer months, creating a need for transit rather than long-stay accommodation. This is supported by the January/July fluctuations in official counts, and by our survey findings. 95% of respondents saying that they had travelled outside Dorset in the past year (even if only to the neighbouring counties).
- 2.2.3 **Household size** Our survey found an average household size of 2.9. This varied between site types, respondent age and ethnicity; for instance, it was higher for English Gypsies and Irish Travellers than other categories. This is consistent with other research findings. For the majority white British population of England the figure is 2.4, and for Dorset is 2.15 (2001 census). The larger household sizes for Gypsies/Travellers reflect higher proportions of children, extended family structure, and effects of the accommodation shortage. The survey population shows a higher proportion of children than the general population and lower proportions of older people, probably reflecting high birth rates and low life expectancy respectively.
- 2.2.4 **Overcrowding** While we are not aware of an official definition of over-crowding where the unit of accommodation is a caravan, the 1965 census study equated a caravan to a room, and estimated that 65% of Gypsies were living in over-crowded conditions, more than 2 people per caravan (compared with less than 3% of the settled population in the 1961 census). Caravans may vary in size (and legally since the 1968 Act be up to 1200 square feet for a twin-unit mobile home), and have more than one room, which would reduce overcrowding. Our survey did not measure the dimensions of individual caravans, but, even adjusting for the numbers of mobile homes, we take an average figure of 3 persons per caravan as evidence of overcrowding. Overcrowding appears to be almost as bad for ethnic Gypsies nationally as it was forty years ago, over a period when overcrowding in the settled population has continued to fall. New Travellers, with smaller average household sizes and a significant proportion of single males, are less likely to be overcrowded than English Gypsies and Irish Travellers.
- 2.2.5 **Housed Gypsies** The caravan counts do not include Gypsies/Travellers living in conventional housing, for which no official figures exist, but numbers can be estimated by cross-checking with other data sources. 78% of those surveyed had

lived in housing in the past, and 32% said they wanted housing rather than caravan accommodation. Based upon TES school roll data, we estimate that about a third of the Gypsy/Traveller population are in housing, mostly in the Bournemouth/Poole area, to which should be added those settled for more than two years. Based upon evidence from knowledgeable community members and service providers, our survey data and personal observation visiting various estates, we have estimated that Bournemouth and Poole each have at least 1500 Gypsy/Traveller housed families, and Christchurch and East Dorset a further 250 each.

2.3 Patterns of work and travel

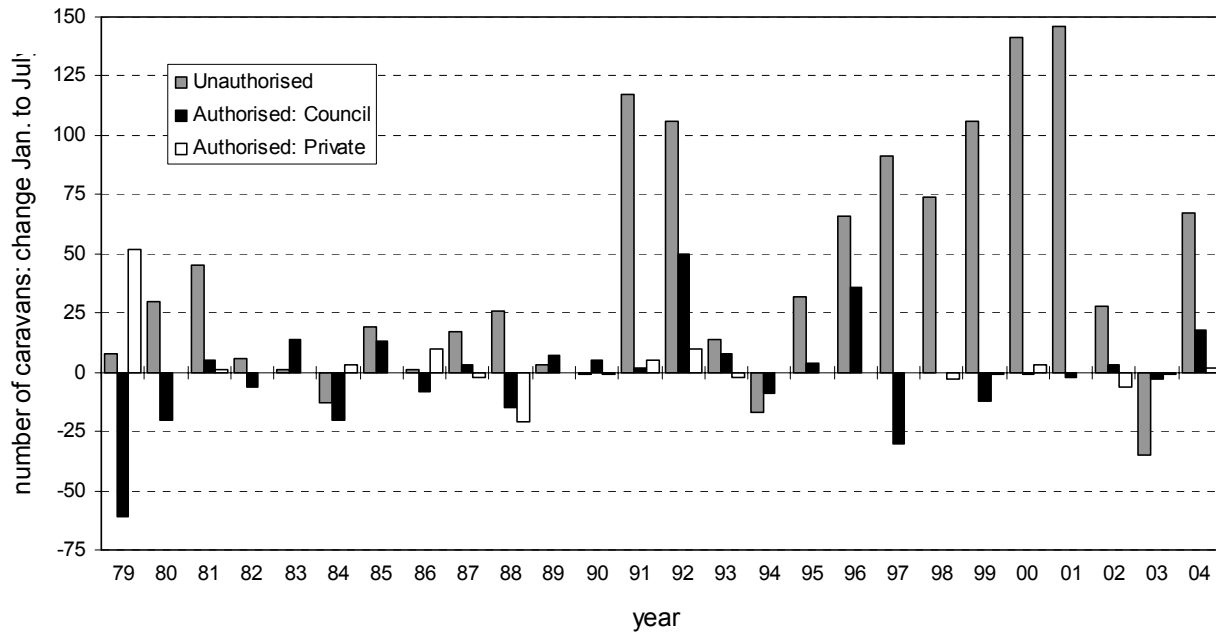
- 2.3.1 The survey sought information on patterns of work and travel; questions about travel patterns were more willingly answered than about work.
- 2.3.2 Most Gypsies/Travellers prefer self-employment, in such occupations as land work, tree-logging, vehicle trading, tarmac and external building work. Our survey found evidence that:
- a) Types of work had changed over the years, with a decline in traditional types of work, contributing to economic disadvantage and social exclusion.
 - b) Travelling to carry out and sell traditional roadside crafts by single family groups, eg woodworking, carving and wreath making was continuing.
 - c) Difficulties in travelling, and being frequently moved, made it harder to get work.
 - d) Family networks and informal reciprocal arrangements are important for encouraging and sustaining economic activity
 - e) Seasonal social security benefits can be important income sources, especially for those on council sites.
- 2.3.3 Of those responding to the survey, 22% claimed to travel only in Dorset (26% said they had not been outside Dorset in the past year), and a further 20% only in the South-West; 13% said that they travelled outside the UK. There appear to be two distinct travelling patterns. The Gypsy and Irish Traveller population is the most seasonally transient, focusing in and around the eastern conurbation, events such as the Great Dorset Steam Fair, along the A31 trunk road and more sporadically the Weymouth/Dorchester area. The New Traveller population seems more stable throughout the year, in rural areas with longer stays for months and exceptionally for over a year. These travelling patterns are characterized by medium to large encampments up to 25/30 caravans for relatively short periods of days and weeks. Most New Travellers surveyed were based within the region, moving between known sites, but also travelling elsewhere. Several small family groups of Gypsies and New Travellers move throughout Dorset and adjacent counties, staying at roadside locations, carrying out creative and traditional crafts, and having minimal impact on resident communities and the environment.
- 2.3.4 With such complex travel patterns, we found it difficult to distinguish those Gypsies/Travellers 'residing in' (ie 'local') from those 'resorting to' an area. 43% of our survey respondents said they were looking for accommodation in Dorset. Asked why they were in the area, responses included: work (45%), social (17%), and a

variety of other reasons (family in area, education of children, good site, local to area etc).

2.3.5 Asked how many of their siblings still travelled, in larger ethnic Gypsy families most or all members retain their travelling habit, perhaps because cultural continuity and familial support may be stronger in a large kin grouping. A similar pattern has been found in other studies.

2.3.6 Figure 3 shows fluctuations between the January and July figures by district and type of site. An increase in unauthorized caravans (July over January) is particularly marked. Between 1979-2004, the July total caravans averaged 35% more than in January (significantly higher than, for example, Cambridgeshire at 9%). since 1990, reflecting probably increased numbers of New Travellers leaving housing, and recent price increases making housing unaffordable). Numbers on council sites fall in July, as their occupiers are likely to travel in the summer months, while retaining their empty pitches. Five districts (Bournemouth and Poole, East, North and West Dorset) showed July increases over January in more than six years, suggesting relatively greater summertime demand in those districts.

Figure 3: Caravan number fluctuations January/July by type of site, all districts in Dorset Sub Region, 1979-2004.



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Figure 4: Changes in caravan numbers between January and July, 1979-2004, by district. (Increases by 10 or more caravans shaded, decreases boxed)

	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04
Bournemouth (UA)	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	21	0	-2	0	0	172	12	0	0	2	42	0	29	-10	0	29	4	0
Christchurch	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	7	-12	3	-8	-4	-1	-14	-5	0	13	9	0	-1	1	1	-2	-5	3	5
E. Dorset (Wimborne)	-1	-5	43	9	2	-13	0	0	5	-1	-2	-7	14	-12	2	-13	-8	12	30	25	74	136	171	4	1	15
North Dorset	10	0	1	-1	0	1	0	6	4	0	-3	0	28	5	-2	1	25	33	-1	10	-7	8	0	-1	14	0
Poole (UA)	-16	17	3	-6	16	-4	32	-9	0	-5	7	13	20	-2	29	-1	6	-4	-18	13	-8	16	0	-6	-3	1
Purbeck	5	-2	0	0	-1	-14	6	3	1	-10	1	1	7	-4	-6	-6	-1	31	-4	-9	-3	0	-4	-7	-59	64
W. Dorset	1	0	2	-2	-2	0	-16	-4	-1	3	17	1	51	10	-14	-10	1	19	12	33	7	-7	-41	4	1	-1
Weymouth & Portland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	5	11	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	-1	20	7	0	3

expressed as absolute numbers.

3. ACCOMMODATION TYPES AND CONDITIONS

3.1 Caravan count data

- 3.1.1 Figures 3-5 present six-monthly caravan count data for the period 1979-2004, giving evidence on long-term trends. During the 1980s, following designation of the county, caravan numbers in the Dorset Sub Region remained in the range 100-150, rose sharply to over 300 around 1990-92 (perhaps partly connected with the economic recession of the time, which was displacing people from housing), fell to former levels with increased sanctions introduced by the 1994 Act, and since 1998 rose briefly to 1992 levels, being now in the range 150-200. The figures have exhibited greater year-on-year fluctuations since the 1990s than the earlier period. The official counts are recognized as merely a snapshot on two days. They do not consistently record New Travellers, whose numbers additional county survey data confirm are significant, especially in the summer months.

Figure 5 Caravan totals by district, Dorset Sub Region, 1979-2004 (January and July)

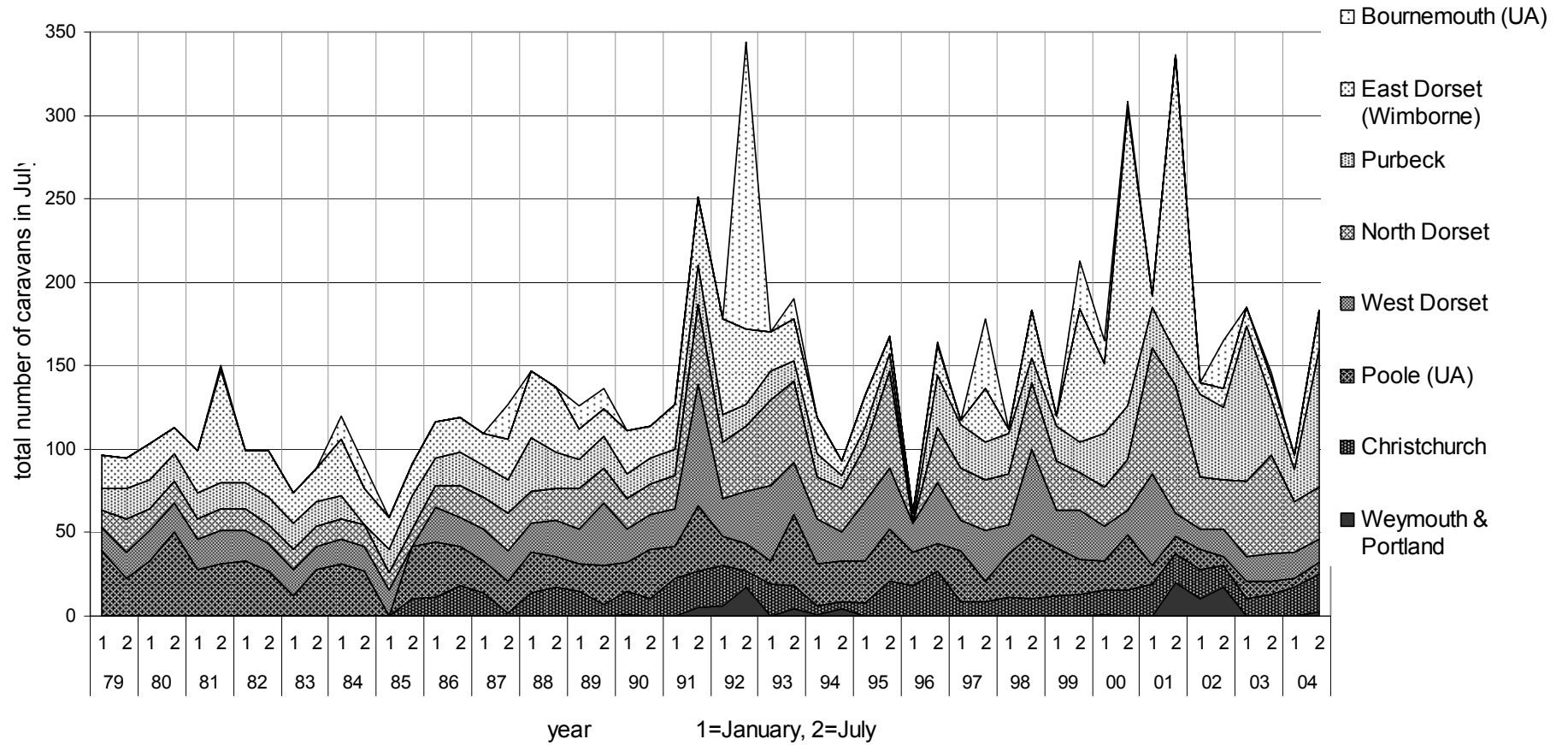
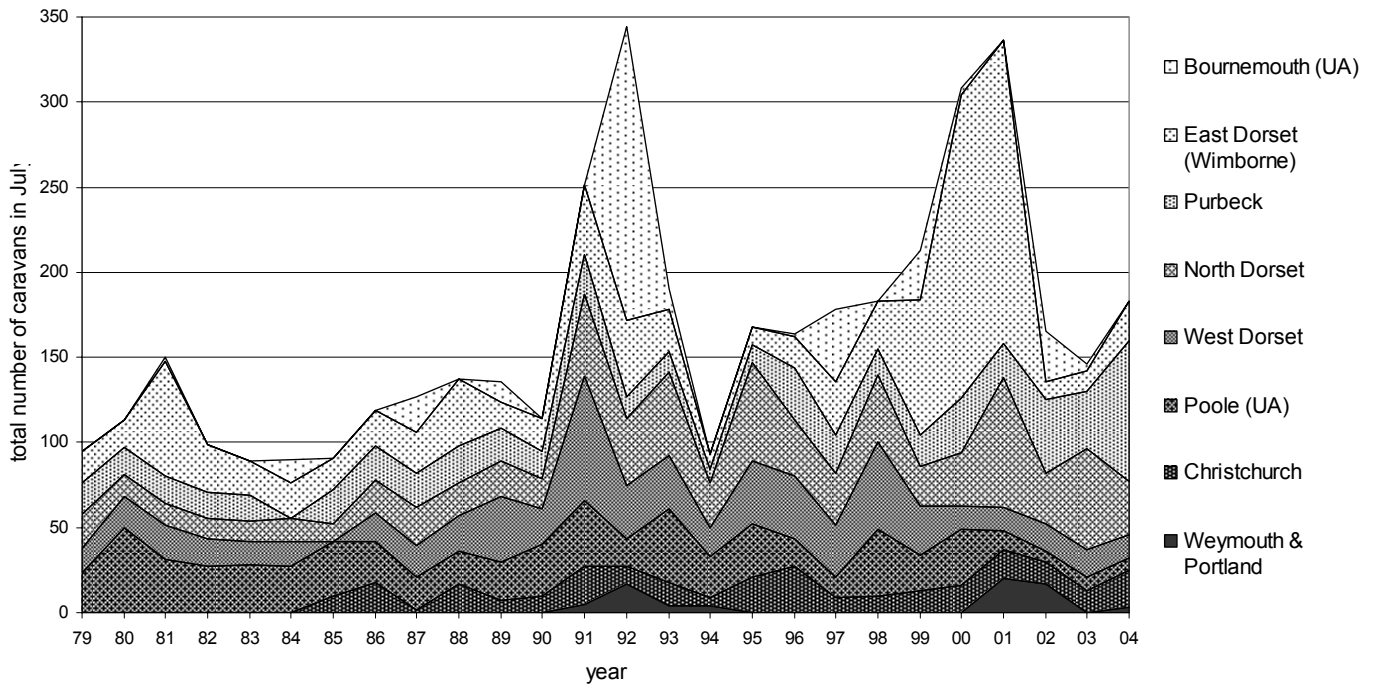


Figure 6 July total caravans by district, Dorset Sub Region, 1979-2004.



3.2 Accommodation Types

3.2.1 The official six-monthly counts distinguish three site categories (council or public authorised, private authorised, and unauthorised). Figure 3 shows: a decrease in caravan numbers on council sites (especially since the 1994 Act abolished the statutory duty), a slight increase in numbers of private authorised caravans (from a low base), and sharp increases and fluctuations in unauthorised caravans, accounting for total figures of over 150 in July counts for most years since 1991.

3.3 Council sites

Figure 7: Council Gypsy sites in the Dorset Sub Region (2005)

District	Site location	Pitches	Capacity	Date opened (date upgraded)
North Dorset	Shaftesbury	5	10	1988 (2002)
North Dorset	Thornicombe, Blandford	12	24	1975 (10 in 1979)
Purbeck	Coldharbour, Wareham	15	15	1976 (16 in 1979)
West Dorset	Piddlehinton	14	14	1975 (2002) (16 in 1979)
Poole	Mannings Heath Road, Poole	4	8	1971 (21 in 1979, 22 in 1989)
Total		50	71	

3.3.1 Dorset was among the first local authorities to provide sites under the Caravan Sites Act 1968, and in 1978 was the first to achieve designated status as having provided sufficient accommodation. Since then one small site (occupied by an extended family under lease from the council) has been added (Shaftesbury 1988), although there is currently some uncertainty over its future because of development proposals on adjoining land. Another site at Mannington Park, Wimborne (16 pitches, East Dorset), closed in the 1990s, following rehousing of the occupants. All permanent council sites are long-stay residential, although temporary sites are provided for specific events.

3.3.2 Dorset had 79 pitches on council sites in 1979, but by 2005 this had dropped to 50, a fall of over a third, which has contributed to the current shortfall, and ignores increased caravan numbers in recent years. (Between 1995 and 2002,

caravan numbers on council sites in England fell by about 600, as sites closed or reduced following abolition of the statutory duty.)

- 3.3.3 The quality of council sites varies, and there was evidence of overcrowding. The best sites are often occupied by related families and older residents, and appear to function well (eg Thornicombe and Piddlehinton). Others are in poor condition, and had reduced in size (eg Mannings Heath and Coldharbour). The reduced site at Mannings Heath is in poor condition, and the occupiers wanted it refurbished and restored to optimal pitch capacity and condition. Criticisms included: ‘two year wait to have toilets repaired’, ‘rent too high for the services we receive’, ‘pick up the rubbish’. Suggestions for improvement included more play space, better public transport, bigger refuse bins, provision of telephones and broadband connection and ‘give us a postal delivery’.
- 3.3.4 A Focus Group with participants from Piddlehinton Gypsy Site was facilitated by MORI in December 2005. The group were complimentary about their site but expressed a wish for larger plots to accommodate expanding families, and criticized the inability of the planning system to deliver permissions for private sites on land owned by Gypsies.
- 3.3.5 Those on council sites lack the security of tenure enjoyed by tenants on mobile home parks, being under law mere licensees subject to (usually) 28 days’ notice. The Connors case in the European Court of Justice (2004) recently found the discrepancy between the rights of housing tenants and site licensees to be unlawful. Few of our survey respondents understood the difference between tenancies and licences. Of those who said they did, few got it right, most believing that a licence referred to having your own site and being thus ‘able to do what you want’. This poor response seems to reflect a general ignorance on legal and official matters, linked to low literacy levels and general exclusion.

3.4 Transit sites

- 3.4.1 This is recognised as particularly important for Dorset. Even if every Gypsy/Traveller family in the country had their own long-stay or ‘settled’ base, there would still be a need for transit sites for those who are travelling, particularly in the summer months from April to October. If sites existed police would be able to refer unauthorised encampments to them, and the count statistics show that authorities with transit provision have a lower incidence of unauthorised encampment. There is, however, little consensus on how they should be provided and what facilities offered. There are in England only about 300 council transit pitches (and perhaps 200 private). Dorset has provided some temporary transit accommodation (eg during the Steam Fair).
- 3.4.2 Emergency Stopping Places have been promoted by government, and councils are urged to identify land in their ownership that could be suitable. These sites offer temporary facilities, suitable for overnight or short stay (up to 28 days, transit sites

being officially intended for stays of up to 3 months), but such sites as exist have a poor record of management problems. Given the incidence of New Traveller encampment in Dorset, short-term camping could be tolerated in 'green lane' locations. St. James' Common, Shaftesbury, is one such location where informal camping is tolerated for short periods.

- 3.4.3 In 2003 Dorset County Council reviewed its policy towards Gypsies/Travellers, and resolved to 'seek the additional powers of eviction for Dorset Police by identifying and establishing a range of temporary stopping places and transit site provision to which Travellers can be directed'. It has identified a need for 2 transit sites and 6 temporary stopping places for Gypsies and Irish Travellers and 13 to 18 Transit Sites for New Travellers (based on recent travelling patterns) if that policy objective is to be realized across the County Council area.
- 3.4.4 Our survey asked whether residential and transit could be combined. Of those responding, 66% said no ('there'd be too much trouble'). We consider that there is scope for transit places on existing sites, if limited to relatives and associates of current occupiers.

3.5 Private authorised sites

- 3.5.1 The number of such sites (mostly owner-occupied, with planning permissions granted on appeal) has grown nationally, from 14% to 25% of total counted caravan numbers in 25 years. In Dorset in 2005 they represented 19% of total caravan numbers, averaging 15 caravans in recent counts. Private sites generally appear to work well; some accommodate only small groups (a single or extended family), others large numbers of families. Showmen tend to accommodate themselves on such sites, usually classed as winter quarters and requiring space for storage and maintenance of rides and equipment.
- 3.5.2 Gypsies have gradually, and only reluctantly, been accorded special policy consideration in the 'plan-led' planning system, with most local plans now having specific criterion-based planning policies for them. Recent research has found that councils approve as few as 5% of planning applications for private Gypsy sites, with about 30-35% subsequently succeeding on appeal.

3.6 Unauthorised sites

- 3.6.1 Unauthorised caravans in England now number about 2500 (about a quarter of the six-monthly count totals), and the figures have been accepted in case law as an approximate measure of need for accommodation. In the Dorset sub-region the average number of unauthorized caravans recorded in the official counts over the years 2002-2004 was 76. These numbers, while unwelcome to the settled population, are small when compared, for example, with numbers of homelessness applications, or with housing supply forecasts for the general population.

3.6.2 A distinction should be made between:

- Caravans on gypsy-owned land without planning permission, and often subject to local authority enforcement action (although some sites are ‘tolerated’), and
- ‘Unauthorised encampments’ of caravans on land owned by others, eg car parks, highway or other land. These may be subject to both police action under the 1994 Act, and council civil action. Our survey found a pattern of repeat evictions for those on the roadside, 44% having been evicted more than five times in the last five years.

3.6.3 The six-monthly counts record both such sites, but tend to considerably undercount roadside caravans (which have marked seasonal peaks). The six-monthly counts have been supplemented in the 4/4 authorities by year-round records of ‘unauthorised encampments’, but these relate to specific incidents, sometimes the same group moving from site to site. This data confirms the seasonal nature of unauthorised camping by Gypsies and Irish Travellers, and that the statutory counts consistently under-represent Gypsy/Traveller numbers. Dorset since January 2002 recorded 229 occurrences (an average of about 60 a year) at 149 different locations. The ratio of Gypsies:New Travellers encountered was about 2:1 (the latter often not included in the official six-monthly counts), and 61 cases involved children of school age. Some 78% of encampments were terminated in less than 50 days; in 18 cases the length of stay was 50-100 days, in 12 100-200 days, and in 19 over 200 (the longest being nearly two years). Since investigations are complaint-driven, numbers of telephone complaints are recorded: 11 incidents incurred more than 10, another 11 5-9 complaints.

Figure 8: Unauthorised encampments by district, Dorset, 2002-2004

District	No. of encampments	%age
Christchurch	17	7.4
East Dorset	23	10.0
North Dorset	76	33.2
Purbeck	33	14.4
West Dorset	48	21.0
Weymouth	32	14.0
Total	229	100.0

- 3.6.5 Figure 9 highlights the locations of main unauthorized encampments. The pattern of unauthorised encampments varies between types of Travellers, and “Gypsy Travellers” tend to cluster around Christchurch, Blandford, Weymouth and Purbeck and the A31 corridor. “New Travellers” are scattered in mostly rural locations, on land owned by public authorities (local authorities and Forestry Commission) and private landowners. There are no official sites for New Travellers in Dorset. Large encampments of New Travellers have been associated with events such as the Eclipse in 1999, and, in 2001, a large group of Irish Travellers visited Kings Park, Bournemouth for the Christmas period. New Traveller encampments in recent years have tended to become larger, last longer, and cause more disruption; they tend to occur on bridleways, picnic sites, common land, council storage depots and in woodland.
- 3.6.6 Unauthorized encampments of English Gypsies and Irish Travellers, tend to occur mainly in and around the East Dorset urban areas, and around Blandford at the time of the Great Dorset Steam Fair. A smaller number of seasonal, short-term, Gypsy and Irish Traveller encampments occur in the Dorchester/Weymouth areas. Gypsy and Irish Traveller encampments generally occur in unsuitable locations, such as public or business car parks or on industrial estates or recreation grounds, sometimes affecting the economic activities of other people.
- 3.6.7 Unauthorized caravan encampment is in housing law a form of homelessness: the occupier of a caravan (or ‘moveable structure’) is homeless if there is nowhere that he or she can legally place it and reside in it, yet local authorities are not obliged to make equivalent accommodation available. According to the statutory central government homelessness code of guidance, Gypsies and Travellers are to be considered on the same basis as any other applicant, and can be offered ‘some other suitable form of housing’, although it recognises that they may not wish to settle in conventional housing. Statistics of homelessness applications do not differentiate Gypsy/Traveller applicants from others, and few Gypsies/Travellers seem to apply; indeed there was no mention of Gypsy/Traveller applicants in any of the Homelessness Strategy documents seen for Dorset.

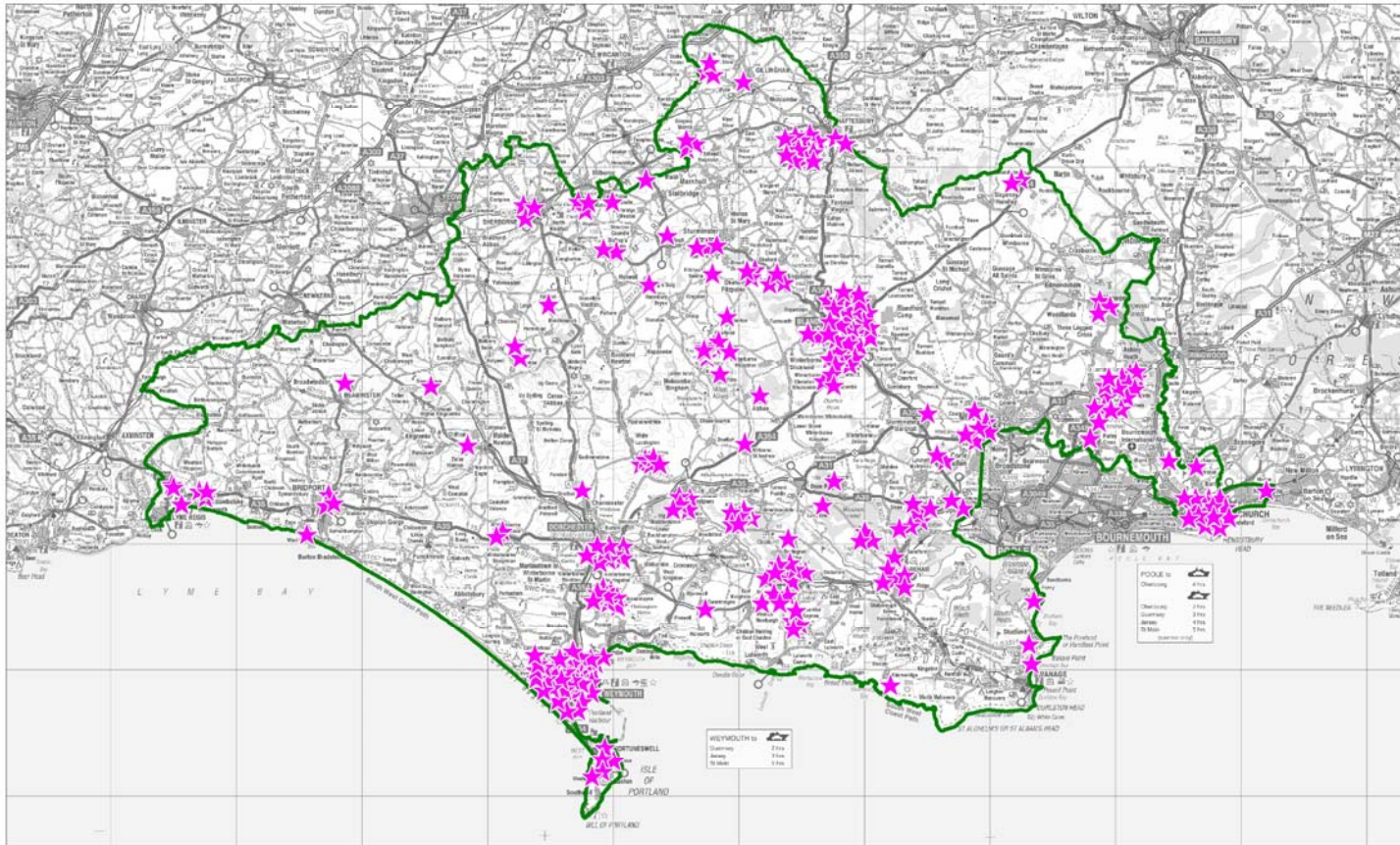
3.7 Gypsies in housing

- 3.7.1 Official statistics are lacking for this group, with registered social landlords not distinguishing their Gypsy/Traveller tenants from others but TES estimates 200-300 children in housed accommodation (settled less than two years), corresponding to an estimated 800-1500 total population. Our survey includes this potential demand as part of our accommodation needs assessment, with a question to identify those in caravans wanting housing. Our survey of housed Gypsies/Travellers found the following problems: levels of racism from neighbours; feelings of isolation and loss of identity; feeling ‘closed in’; drug abuse on estates. None of our respondents who were living or had lived in housing found the transition easy (‘my life completely changed’), several said they were ‘pushed into it’. A third reported problems with the neighbours. One respondent

said: 'I was sick of living on unsafe sites with abuse from the locals. It's better for the kids having the security'. Of respondents on sites 51% said they did not want to live in a house, and 11% said it would be reluctantly.

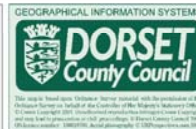
- 3.7.2 The concept of small group housing schemes for Gypsies has been experimented with in Ireland and Northern Ireland, but our survey found no knowledge of, and little interest in, the concept. We did, however, find estates with large concentrations of Gypsies/Travellers on the outskirts of the Bournemouth/Poole conurbation, and a majority of housed English Gypsies said they would prefer to live together. Several said that they kept quiet about being Gypsies/Travellers to avoid racism, and would not want to draw attention to themselves in such a way. The potential of such schemes should be further explored, perhaps by registered social landlords as their experience of providing Gypsy/Traveller accommodation grows.
- 3.7.3 The survey found that, of 36 respondents in housing, two-thirds (64%) had been rehoused from a site, and seven had been in a house before. Of those in caravans responding, 17% wanted (or were prepared) to live in conventional housing, 5% were unsure, and a further 11% said 'with reluctance', while 51% would not wish to move into housing even if they had the opportunity. About half still travelled, although they had difficulty keeping their travelling vehicles with them when in housing. Frequent eviction was cited as reasons for 'getting off the road'; one went into housing after a period in prison. Apart from our survey, there is little published research on movement into (and out of) housing, although, if someone is accommodated in public housing who would prefer to be in a caravan, there is a potential saving of public funds: a council caravan pitch has been estimated to cost half (or less) that of a council house.

Figure 9 Map of Traveller sites in Dorset



Traveller Sites

Ref:
Date: 20/01/2006
Scale: 1:258356
Drawn By: ODP
Cent X: 377498
Cent Y: 99527



4. ACCOMMODATION AND SERVICE PREFERENCES AND NEEDS

4.1 Accommodation preferences

- 4.1.2 The need for more sites was raised by our survey and focus group respondents more than any other topic. The preferred site solution was small, self-owned long-stay sites for family groups. No specific geographical location was proposed, just 'more sites anywhere'. Many wanted more space on the plots they had (council and private), to allow separate sleeping arrangements for boys and girls. 39% wanted more caravans on their plot, and 63% said they were overcrowded. 43% said they were looking for accommodation in Dorset, and 33% wanted housing rather than caravans. Focus group respondents were particularly critical of the inability of the planning system to provide permission for private sites on land bought by Gypsies/Travellers. 45 of 107 in caravans who responded wanted accommodation. Attractions of the area were cited as proximity to family/friends, access to schools and access to work. Few were Dorset-born (2 of 16 responding), and another two wanted a winter site.
- 4.1.3 Overcrowding Asked if they were overcrowded, 23% of Gypsies and Travellers participating in the survey responded yes. 24% of our respondents said that did not have enough space, and 32% wanted more caravans, responses suggesting that Gypsies/Travellers tolerate levels of overcrowding above the official standards.

4.2 Health

- 4.2.1 Of those surveyed, 62 (43%) claimed to be in poor health or to have close family members with poor health (62 cases). Specific illnesses reported were consistent with other studies, the commonest conditions being asthma (27%), depression (19%) and cardio-vascular (15%). Travellers have health outcomes and status significantly poorer than that found in the lowest socio-economic group in the UK population. Their mortality rate is between one and one and a half times that of the housed population, maternal mortality higher than for any other one ethnic group, high infant mortality and perinatal death rates, and higher child accident rates associated with instability of sites and lack of access to health care.
- 4.2.2 Accommodation problems have been found to be a significant factor in studies. A Children Society report (1994) identified the impact of increased evictions, restricted access to healthcare and education, an increase in unsafe conditions on roadside sites, and a breakdown of social and community support networks. Ill-health is exacerbated by living on road-side sites with limited access to clean water, and Gypsies/Travellers particularly suffer from disease linked to sanitation and environment. Unsited Travellers experience inequality in matters such as registering with a GP, obtaining hospital appointments and contact with health services; a settled address is increasingly important for receiving post and obtaining access to medical, educational and welfare services. High child accident rates have been associated with site insecurity and lack of access to appropriate health care, and secure sites can help establish stable relations with the health care system,

although Dorset appears to operate a more tolerant policy than other authorities in our knowledge.

- 4.2.3 The NHS Action Plan (2001) emphasizes the role of health workers in undertaking outreach to marginalized communities, and narrowing the health gap between socio-economic groups, with significant implications for local authority Gypsy/Traveller policy. Specific, culturally sensitive out-reach work is necessary to engage with Gypsies/Travellers in health care access. Grants for disabled access have recently been extended to those on caravan sites.

4.3 Education

- 4.3.1 Research shows that Gypsy/Traveller children are seriously disadvantaged in the education system, with DES data showing their poor attendance in schools (at secondary level 20% or less). The Parekh Report (2000) noted the ‘generally low educational attainment’ of Gypsy/Traveller children, moving from school to school according to patterns of seasonal mobility and eviction patterns. Children without access to secure sites were least likely to receive a regular education, as enforced movement frequently disrupted their schooling. Gypsies/Travellers often feel excluded from mainstream job opportunities that require much formal education, and they may lack awareness of mainstream life and work opportunities. Given that many are dissatisfied with their increasingly disadvantaged lifestyles, they could become more interested in training opportunities if they were more aware of them. Some Travellers admit that they would be motivated to pursue further education if they felt it helped their business. Literacy and educational take-up rates improve where site security exists. The Council’s mobile library service and the Dorchester Learning Centre were popular with focus group participants. The problem-solving and site security role of the residential warden was also appreciated.

- 4.4.1 In our survey, several respondents reported problems with schooling - ‘short stops make it difficult to get into school’, and racist bullying - but less than in other similar surveys in our experience. A significant proportion (39% of respondents) found the statutory services unhelpful in such matters: ‘they were simply noseys’, ‘never readily available’, ‘we had to self-organise’.

- 2.5.1 Literacy levels of respondents were poor: 62% claimed to have difficulty completing forms, 55% with writing letters, 53% with reading newspapers. The reasons can be grouped into three: little or disrupted schooling because of moving around (and evictions) (70% of reasons stated); bullying or unable to settle at school (24%); and dyslexia “couldn’t learn” (6%).

- 2.5.2 A question about what training might improve employment prospects had varied responses. Few had undertaken any post-school training, but they were slightly more likely to do so if housed rather than on site. Popular courses included: hairdressing, beauty therapy, boxing, plumbing, literacy, teaching assistant, care work, and business/computing. There is clearly a largely unmet need for training, with poor knowledge of what is available, linked to low literacy skills and a reluctance to read newspapers (often because of negative reporting on gypsies).

4.4 Discrimination

- 4.4.1 Asked about their experience of discrimination in services or from the media, a majority (56%) of those responding claimed to have been discriminated against in various ways: access to benefits, getting on site waiting lists, access to sports facilities ('they won't let gypsies use the gyms'), in shops and pubs, on waste disposal sites ('refused access'), in access to health services ('midwife refused to visit after childbirth', turned away by doctors' surgeries).
- 4.4.2 Attitudes to the police were divided, some positive ('they've got better', 'can be helpful', 'OK in Dorset'), but more usually negative ('fascist', 'rude, arrogant', 'bully boys', 'don't want to listen', 'good at lying in court'). Opinions were also divided about whether the media were positive or negative.

5. ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT

5.1 Methodology

5.1.1 Figure 7, on page 33, provides the assessment, disaggregated by district. We have followed (with minor adjustments) the recommended methodology in the ODPM guidance issued in February 2006, especially para.80. The Birmingham study has also been used where appropriate (Niner 2002). The official approach equates a household with a pitch, but the number of caravans on a family pitch may vary (our survey found an average of 1.6), as does the size of a caravan (up to 1200 square feet under present law). We have broken the official approach to five basic elements (current supply, current demand, over-crowding, transfer to/from housing, and family formation), and comment on each below.

5.1.3 Current supply The ODPM approach bases current supply upon occupied council and private pitches, which we have derived from the six-monthly count returns, and local information provided by councils. Niner and the ODPM guidance add to the supply figures, estimates for unused and vacant pitches, 'households expressing a desire to live in housing', and any planned new provision (public or private), but we found insufficient data on those categories to change our figures. We have assumed full occupancy.

5.1.4 Current demand. The ODPM worked example (para. 80 of the guidance) subdivides this into several categories, some of which we consider overlap, and impose some unnecessary complexity. For example, its figure for 'households seeking permanent site accommodation in the area' (which it advises should be 'based on waiting lists and results of survey). We consider it not possible to estimate this with any precision for our study area; it overlaps with 'new households expected to arrive from elsewhere', and could give rise to double counting with other GTAAs. ODPM also distinguishes households 'on unauthorised encampments' and 'on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected'. We convert official caravan counts into households, applying the average (January and July) of the last 3 years count figures, but these have been adjusted significantly upward by more detailed local counts, and recognizing that much roadside demand is not seeking permanent accommodation in the area. Our estimate of demand reflects the existing policy aim to provide sufficient capacity for Dorset Police to be able to exercise their redirection powers. In some areas where unauthorized encampment is infrequent, demand could be met through joint use of car parks, fields or open spaces rather than by permanent development. Demand for pitches in North Dorset peaks during the 2-4 week period around the Steam Fair and has, in the past, been met by the provision of a temporary site.

5.1.5 Over-crowding. ODPM guidance proposes a figure for households 'currently overcrowded', defined as 'eg where family numbers have grown to the extent that there is now insufficient space for the family within its caravan accommodation and insufficient space on the pitch for a further caravan', and another figure for 'new family formation expected to arise from within existing households'. These figures seem to overlap, given the Gypsy/Traveller cultural preference for extended family living. A figure of 3 persons per caravan could be evidence of overcrowding, but our survey found on average only 2.2 persons per caravan. Of Gypsies and Travellers participating in the survey 24% claimed to be over-crowded. We have applied a

cautious 10% overcrowding measure, adjusted downwards in some districts to reflect survey findings of overcrowding more among ethnic Gypsies and Irish Travellers). New Travellers are a higher proportion of numbers, but less likely to be overcrowded. The measure was applied to all types of caravan accommodation (both authorised and unauthorised). We also recommend that some new pitch sizes should be larger than existing, which would affect the figures and allow some extended family accommodation on such pitches.

5.1.6 Transfer from housing. ODPM includes a small figure for those ‘in housing but with a need for site accommodation’, and Niner assumed that, of Gypsies in housing, 1-5% wanted a pitch rather than a house. Our survey of housed Gypsies/Travellers showed significant numbers (especially younger respondents) wanting to be in caravans, from which should be subtracted those in caravans wanting housing. The survey of housed Gypsies was, however, relatively small, however, and we are reluctant to equate a stated preference with real demand. About a third of housed Gypsies expressed dissatisfaction with their accommodation, while 17% of site occupiers (mostly on roadside) expressed a willingness to live in a house. We have been cautious, applying a 5% allowance (of estimated housed families) for potential transfer to caravan pitches, but this generates some relatively large numbers, given our findings of large numbers of housed gypsies, and we recommend further research to investigate this aspect further. The East Dorset and Poole assessment recognizes that some households displaced by site/pitch closures have been forced into housing against their wishes.

5.1.7 Family formation ODPM and Niner recommend a 3% per annum household growth rate, reflecting the known demographic profile of the Gypsy/Traveller population (although Niner for Wales applied a higher figure of 4%). We have had difficulty in establishing the quantum to which such a measure should be applied, particularly because of the large numbers seeking only transit accommodation, and the relatively large number of single-person households among New Travellers (31%). We have, therefore, halved the population growth rate for unauthorised household numbers (1½% and 2%) applied no growth to the 100 pitches required by the Steam Fair event and applied 3% and 4% to the remaining supply and demand figures, to produce a high/low range for the forward projections to the years 2011 and 2026.

Figure 10 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs 2006-2011

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
District	Supply	Demand (unauthorised) families	Demand (overcrowding)	Demand (Housing transfer)	Family formation from 2006 to 2011 (and 2006-2026 @ 3% & 4%)	Total demand 2006	Total demand to 2011 (and 2026)
Christchurch	3	30	4	20	6-9 (32-47)	54	60-63 (86-101)
East Dorset	1	45	4	30	9-13 (44-64)	79	88-92 (123-143)
North Dorset	21	150	7	0	8-11* (40-57)	157	165-168 (197-214)
Purbeck	15	65	6	0	8-12 (40-57)	71	79-83 (111-128)
West Dorset	14	65	7	0	8-12 (40-57)	72	80-84 (112-129)
Weymouth	0	25	2	0	2-3 (11-14)	27	29-30 (38-41)
Bournemouth	0	17	1	25	5-8 (27-39)	43	48-51 (70-82)
Poole	4	10	1	30	7-9 (31-47)	41	48-50 (72-88)
Total	58	407	32	105	53-77 (265-382)	544	597-621 (809-926)

* 100 pitches required in connection with the Great Dorset Steam Fair are excluded from this calculation.

5.2 Policy implications

5.2.1 Dorset County Council has established a member Policy Development Panel, which has developed a Gypsy and Traveller Policy after consultation with various stakeholders (including Gypsy and Traveller organisations). This has been highlighted as best practice on the ODPM website, and the Panel is tasked with implementing the Council's policy objective by identifying suitable locations for transit sites and temporary stopping places.

5.2.2 Further authorised accommodation for gypsies can potentially come from the following sources:

- a) Council sites (new sites, or expansion or intensification of existing).
- b) Private sites with planning permission. A contribution might be made from the stock of non-gypsy caravan sites and mobile home parks, given the number of such sites in the county, and would require a partnership with site-owners and occupiers.
- c) Movement into conventional housing, whether private or socially provided.

5.2.2 Needs of different Gypsy/Traveller groups. The ODPM guidance does not distinguish need between these groups, but we consider that separate sites for English Gypsies and New Travellers (who make up the majority of caravans) appear

to be a practical necessity, reflecting differences in travelling patterns and cultural attitudes. We consider that there are opportunities for different design and management arrangements, for example the possible use of commonhold on New Traveller sites, which allow a measure of communal control and reduce demand upon council management resources. A policy of tolerance to ‘green lanes’ encampments by New Travellers (with appropriate facilities) would allow those households to be offset against the pitch numbers in the table.

5.2.3 Private and public provision. As at 2005, the ratio of council:private authorised caravans in England was 54:46, in the South-West region 52:48, and in Dorset 66:34. While national and regional proportions should not be taken as a target, there seems to be significant scope for more private sites in the study area, requiring a more positive approach by local planning authorities. Long-stay sites can be facilitated through more positive planning policy, which would save public funds; suitable land in council ownership could contribute, by sale as private sites. Long-stay public provision should at the very least aim to make up the pitch reductions since designation (ie about 30 pitches), and this is a small number in the context of overall need. In future planning policy and planning decisions on private Gypsy sites should be more closely monitored than in the past.

5.2.4 Residential and transit pitches. Based upon our research and survey findings, we recommend an approximate ratio of one long-stay to one transit pitch. In arriving at this proportion, we have sought to balance the various needs and preferences expressed in the study. Travelling patterns in the eastern part of the study area may include the same groups moving between local authority areas, and the provision of two or three transit sites in south-east Dorset may meet need for a wider area.

5.2.5 Restrictive policies Over 70% of the study area is covered by severely restrictive national (and even European) environmental designations, particularly Green Belt and AONB. Some district benchmark data is given below.

Figure 11: District benchmark data

District	% land area of Dorset County Council	% Green Belt/AONB	% pop 2001	New housing commitment 2004 (%)	% count caravans (2003/2005 average)	%age UE 2002/5
Christchurch	2	67	11.4	541 (5.8%)	11.1	7.4
East Dorset	14	45	21.6	969 (10.4%)	10.2	10.0
North Dorset	24	39	15.2	2251 (24.1%)	29.8	33.2
Purbeck	15.9	73	11.5	490 (5.2%)	37.7	14.4
West Dorset	42.5	71	23.7	3351 (35.8%)	10.8	21.0
Weymouth	1.6	16	16.6	1754 (18.7%)	0.4	14.0
Total	100		100.0	9356 (100.0)	100.0	100.0

Figure 12: Comparative Strategic Planning Data

Table	Area of land ¹	% land area of BDP	GB/AONB ²	GB/AONB As a % of each LA area	Population 2001 ³	% Population 2001	New housing commitment 2004 ⁴	% New housing commitment 2004
Christchurch	5043	1.90	3379	67	44870	6.48	541	3.52
East Dorset	35446	13.36	15951	45	83790	12.10	969	6.30
North Dorset	60922	22.97	23760	39	61900	8.94	2251	14.63
Purbeck	40442	15.25	29523	73	44420	6.41	490	3.19
West Dorset	108153	40.77	76789	71	92350	13.33	3351	21.79
Weymouth & Portland	4175	1.57	668	16	63670	9.19	1754	11.40
DCC Dorset	254181	95.82	150068	59	390990	56.44	9356	60.83
Bournemouth	4617	1.74	730	16	163440	23.59	2697	17.53
Poole	6475	2.44	1900	29	138300	19.96	3778	24.56
Dorset	265273	100.00	152698	58	692730	100.00	15381	100.00

5.2.6 Relationship between housing and caravan accommodation. If even some Gypsies/Travellers currently in public housing would prefer to be in caravans, that could achieve a saving in public funds and release housing stock for others who need it. To allow more caravan provision on that basis would have benefits (eg in terms of best value and cultural diversity policy), and such an approach is supported by the ODPM guidance but it can be problematic and contentious and is particularly difficult to quantify. The ‘best-value’ benefit arises because caravan sites are cheaper (about half the capital cost) than houses to build, allowing public housing stock to be re-allocated. The local authorities should consider providing a safety net allowing return to a public site if rehoused Gypsies/Travellers find they cannot settle. We recommend that:-

- Local authorities and social landlords should plan for a mix of provision to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers
- Housing authorities should ensure that residency requirements in housing policies do not make it difficult for Gypsies and Travellers to be considered as a housing priority.

5.2.9 Pitch size. We also recommend that future pitch sizes on long-stay sites should include some pitches sufficient to accommodate three caravans (including one mobile home), rather than the two recommended in previous official guidance; to provide for larger and extended families (one size does not fit all). Travelling showmen need additional space for storage and maintenance of rides and showground equipment; our survey (consistent with other research) found household sizes in this group larger than English Gypsies and similar to Irish Travellers.

¹ Dorset Data Book 2006, DCC

² Area of GB/AONB in Dorset districts calculated by taking area of district and using proportions in Figure 12. Area of GB for Bournemouth and Poole taken from “Area of designated Green Belt land by local planning authority, 2006”, DCLG

³ Census 2001, Crown Copyright ONS

⁴ Residential Land Monitoring Report, 2004, BBC, DCC, BoP

5.2.10 We propose that the provisions of the Commonhold Act 2002 could be particularly applicable to sites for New Travellers, which would make such sites effectively self-managing and reduce the management costs to local authorities. New Travellers interviewed have requested that new council sites incorporate design principles of sustainability and low environmental impact, which we endorse as a positive approach. There is in Dorset an opportunity to pioneer new approaches to site design following government sustainability priorities.

5.2.11 The estimated pitch numbers outlined above should be subject to regular 5 year review to take account of:-

- Variations in travelling patterns. These changes may be influenced by the economic cycle, changes in housing and welfare policies, the impact of increased site provision (both permanent and transit), and changing cultural preferences of Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- Demand for transfer from conventional housing to caravan pitches.
- Possibility of Gypsies and Irish Travellers being included as an ethnic grouping within the 2011 census.

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APPENDIX A - SUMMARY DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS

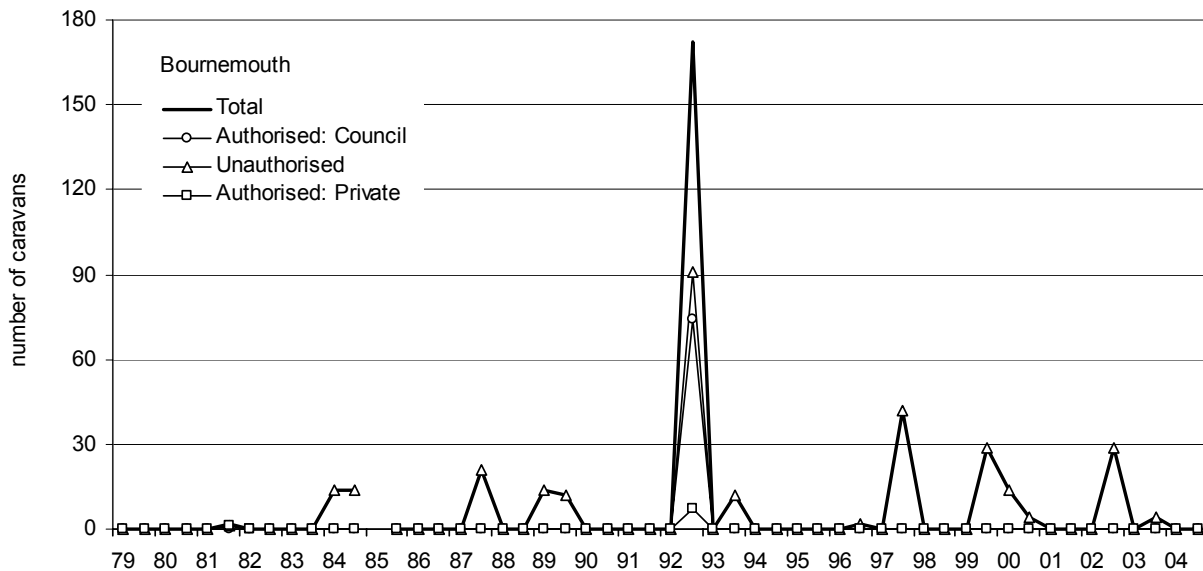
GYPSY/TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT 2006-2011

BOURNEMOUTH

There are no Council sites and no recorded private sites. The official counts show very small numbers of unauthorized, but the district records regular and repeated unauthorised encampments in various parks and open spaces in the Borough (eg Kings Park, Redhill, Iford and Hengistbury Head), sometimes up to thirty caravans. If Dorset Police are to exercise their new powers of redirection, the Borough will need to make transit provision. There is a significant Gypsy population in housing, some of whom would prefer to be accommodated in caravans. The Local Plan (2002) has a policy (6.18) on mobile homes, but no mention is made of Gypsies/Travellers.

CURRENT PITCH SUPPLY	0
PITCH DEMAND 2006-2011 (2026)	48-51 (70-82)
Unauthorised caravan households	17
Overcrowding allowance	1
Transfer from housing	25
Family formation 2006-2011 (2026)	5-8 (27-39)

Number of caravans (January and July counts) by type of site: Bournemouth, 1979-2004.

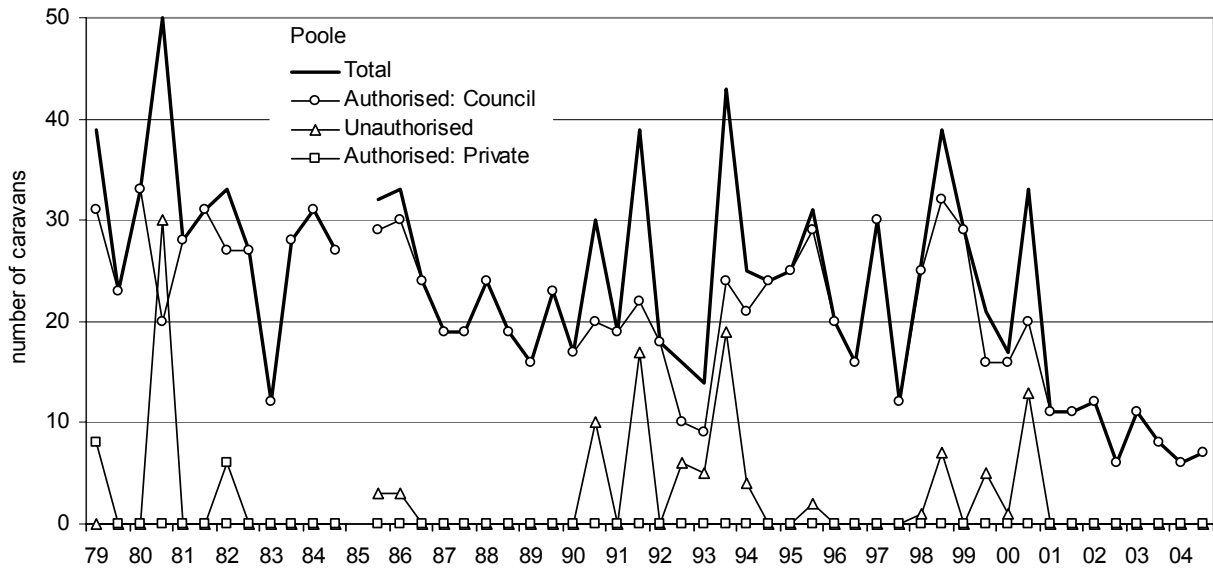


**GYPSY/TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT 2006-2011
POOLE**

An existing council site at Mannings Heath was planned to accommodate twenty-one pitches for gypsies and a warden, but currently has only four occupied pitches. No private sites are recorded in the official counts. There is a significant Gypsy population in housing, a proportion of whom have expressed a preference for caravan pitches. The official counts show small numbers of unauthorised caravans, but council records show regular unauthorised encampments in industrial and commercial locations, public car parks and open spaces (particularly Holes Bay, Fleetsbridge, Mannings Heath and Creekmoor), ranging from six to thirty caravans. If Dorset Police are to exercise their powers of redirection the Borough will need to make transit provision. The Poole Local Plan First Alteration (2004) refers in para.8.69 to retaining the existing site at Mannings Heath. Poole has severe land and Green Belt constraints.

CURRENT PITCH SUPPLY	4
PITCH DEMAND 2006-2011 (2026)	48-50 (72-88)
Unauthorised caravan households	10
Overcrowding allowance	1
Transfer from housing	30
Family formation 2006-2011 (2026)	7-9 (31-47)

Number of caravans (January and July counts) by type of site: Poole, 1979-2004.

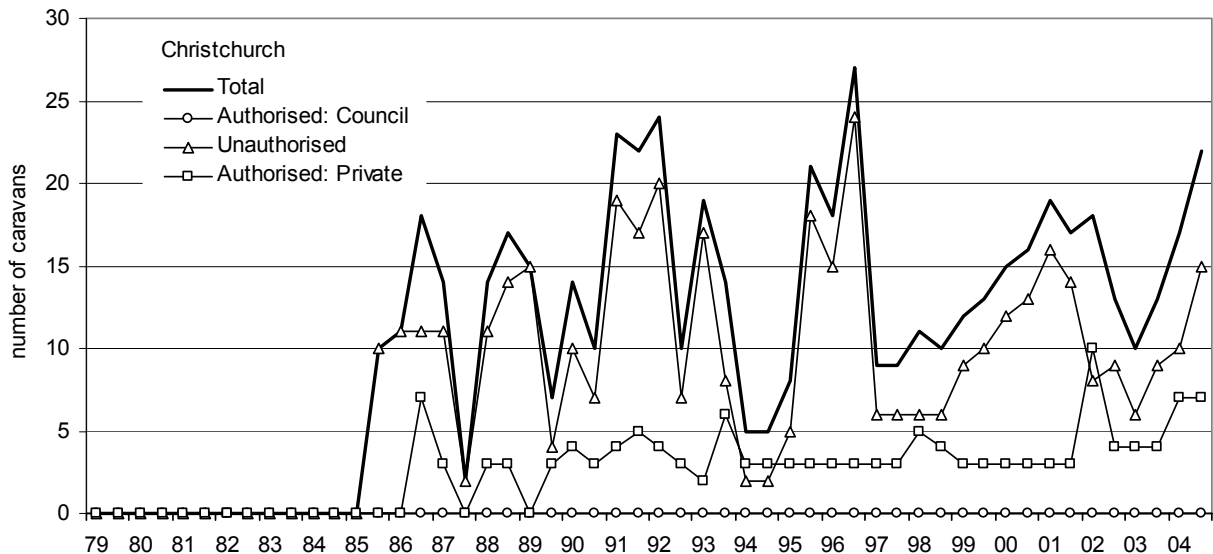


GYPSY/TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT 2006-2011 CHRISTCHURCH

There is no Council site, and few recorded private sites. A long-standing unauthorised encampment at Dudmoor has failed to win planning permission, but no alternative site has been identified. Christchurch accounts for 11.1% of officially counted unauthorised caravans in the county, and 7.4% of unauthorised encampments on the County Council's database. Almost all are Gypsy and Irish Traveller encampments. If Dorset Police are to exercise their new powers of redirection a transit site or temporary stopping place will need to be provided. There is a significant Gypsy population in housing, some expressing a preference for caravan pitches. The Local Plan (2001) has a criterion-based policy for Gypsy Caravan Sites, but there are severe Green Belt constraints on potential development land. The district Homelessness Strategy makes no mention of Gypsies/Travellers.

CURRENT PITCH SUPPLY	3
PITCH DEMAND 2006-2011 (2026)	60-63 (86-101)
Unauthorised caravan households	30
Overcrowding allowance	4
Transfer from housing	20
Family formation 2006 – 2011 (2026)	6-9 (32-47)

Number of caravans (January and July counts) by type of site: Christchurch 1979-2004.

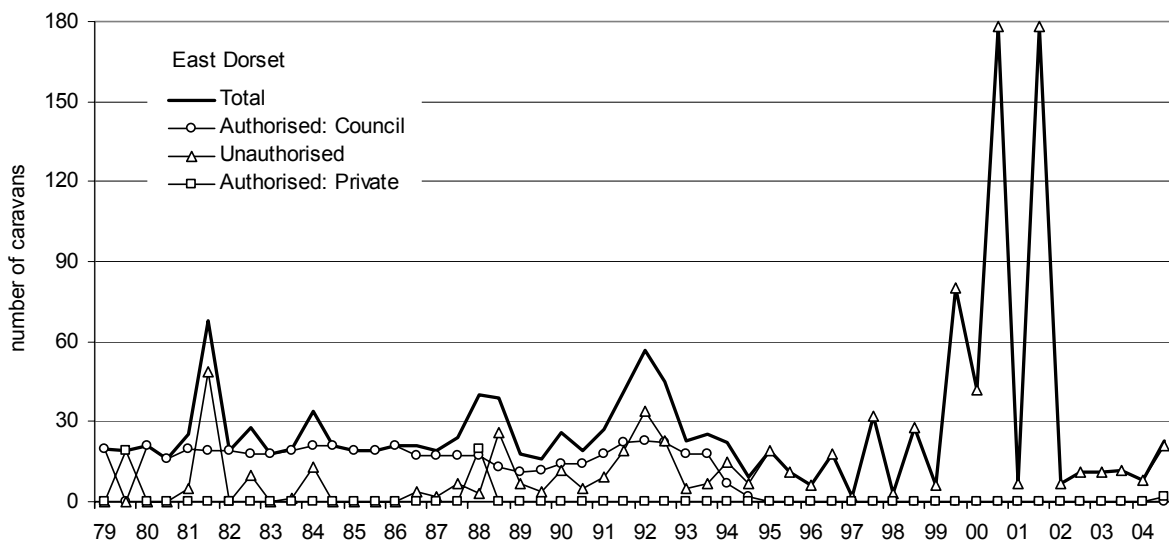


GYPSY/TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT 2006-2011 EAST DORSET

The district formerly had a 16-pitch council site at Mannington Park, which was closed when the statutory duty ended and the occupants were rehoused. A policy (HODEV7) has been retained in the development plan which reserves the site for use (notwithstanding its Green Belt policy allocation), 'should the need arise', but the County Council (which leases the land) is in the process of returning the land to its owner. No private sites are recorded, and there have also been several failed planning applications for small permanent private sites and for a private transit site. East Dorset accounts for 10.2% of officially counted unauthorised caravans in the county, and 10% of unauthorised encampments on the County Council's database. Most are Gypsy and Irish Traveller encampments, but unauthorised encampments by New Travellers occur in rural areas. If the Dorset Police are to exercise their redirection powers, a transit site or temporary stopping place for Gypsies or Irish Travellers will need to be provided, probably in the A31 corridor of the district, and a site for New Travellers. There is a significant Gypsy population in housing, some rehoused from the Mannington Park site, and some have expressed a preference for caravan pitches. The East Dorset Local Plan (2002) has a criterion-based policy HODEV8, allowing gypsy sites, but only outside the Green Belt (which covers the majority of the district).

CURRENT PITCH SUPPLY	1
PITCH DEMAND 2006-2011 (2026)	88-92 (123-143)
Unauthorised caravan households	45
Overcrowding allowance	4
Transfer from housing	30
Family formation 2006-2011 (2026)	9-13 (44-64)

Number of caravans (January and July counts) by type of site, East Dorset, 1979-2004.

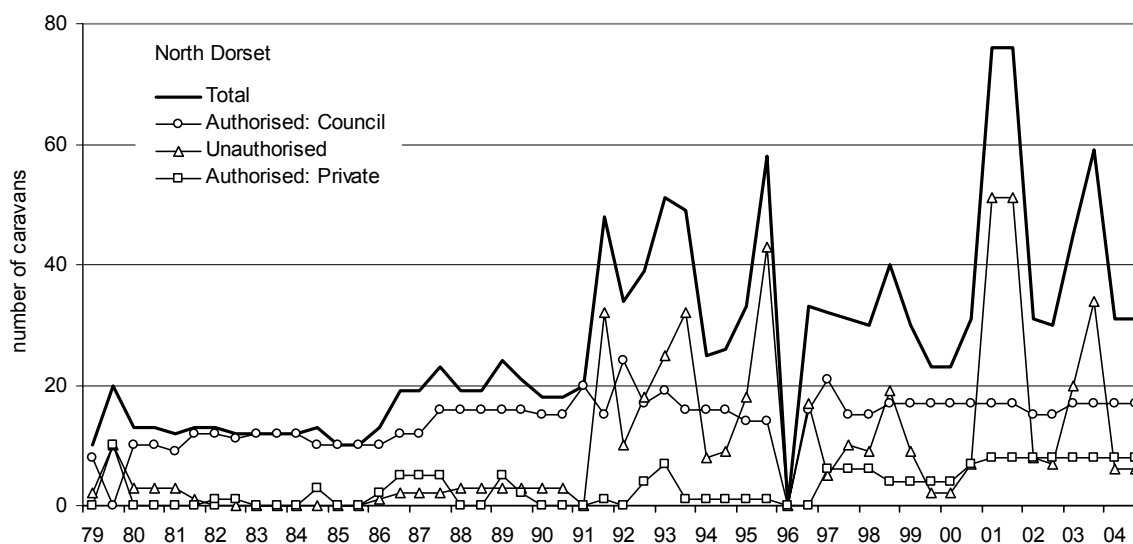


NORTH DORSET

The district currently has two council sites, at Shaftesbury (5 pitches, notional capacity for 10 caravans) and Thornicombe (12 two-caravan pitches, opened in 1975). The County and District have worked in partnership to provide a temporary stopping place for Gypsies redirected by Dorset Police during the Steam Fair using their new powers, and are searching for a permanent location for this site. There are several private sites for family groups currently under planning consideration. Areas on St James' Common (Shaftesbury) are used informally by Gypsies and New Travellers, and defined by the district and county councils following a public inquiry under the Law of Commons Act (after mass encampments by New Travellers in two consecutive years); these areas are frequently occupied for long periods because of the lack of alternative provision. In recent years, unauthorised sites and encampments have increased, as well as short-stay encampments associated with the Steam Fair. North Dorset accounts for 29.8% of officially counted unauthorised caravans in the county, and 33.2% of unauthorised encampments on the County Council's database. The Local Plan (2003) has a criterion-based policy (2.21). Additional to the temporary stopping place for the Steam Fair, a further 5-8 small sites for New Travellers (perhaps 3-4 in the Shaftesbury/Gillingham areas and 2-4 elsewhere in the district) are recommended. 100 pitches needed for the Steam Fair site have been excluded from family formation forward projections

CURRENT PITCH SUPPLY	21
PITCH DEMAND 2006-2011 (2026)	165-168 (197-214)
Unauthorised caravan households	150
Overcrowding allowance	7
Transfer from housing	0
Family formation 2006-2011 (2026)	8-11 (40-57)

Number of caravans (January and July counts) by type of sit: North Dorset , 1979-2004.

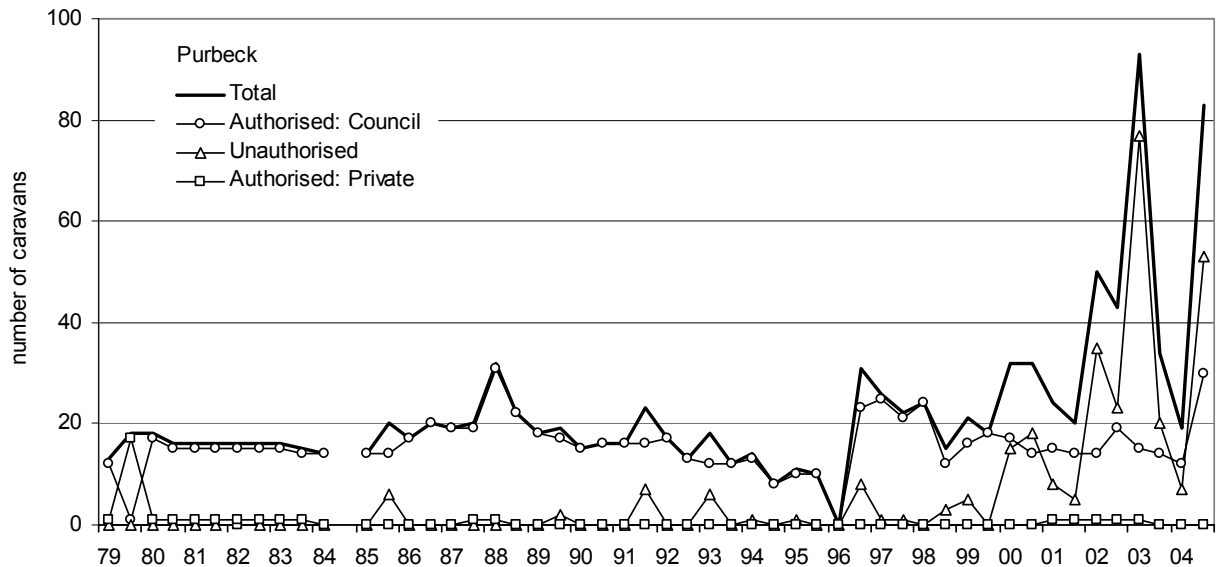


GYPSY/TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT 2006-2011 PURBECK

There is one council site (15 pitches) at Wareham, where capacity is indicated as 15 caravans but numbers have been as high as 30. No private sites are recorded. Unauthorised caravan numbers have grown since the mid-1990s and have exceeded 50 several times since 2000. Purbeck accounts for 37.7% of officially counted unauthorised caravans in the county, and 14.4% of unauthorised encampments on the County Council's database, mainly several long-term unauthorised New Traveller encampments. There are occasional Gypsy or Irish Traveller encampments at Lytchett Minster/Holton Heath and Swanage. There is no information on housed Gypsies, and there is no evidence of housing applications from Gypsies/Travellers; housing policy documents make no mention of Gypsies/Travellers. The Purbeck Local Plan (2004) has a criterion-based policy on Gypsies/Traveller sites (MN8), allowing them only outside the Green Belt or AONB (which policies cover 78% of the district). We recommend three or four sites for New Travellers in rural areas, and possibly a temporary stopping place for Gypsies or Irish travellers in the east of the district.

CURRENT PITCH SUPPLY	15
PITCH DEMAND 2006-2011 (2026)	79-83 (111-128)
Unauthorised caravan households	65
Overcrowding allowance	6
Transfer from housing	0
Family formation 2006-2011 (2026)	8-12 (40-57)

Number of caravans (January and July counts) by type of site: Purbeck, 1979-2004.

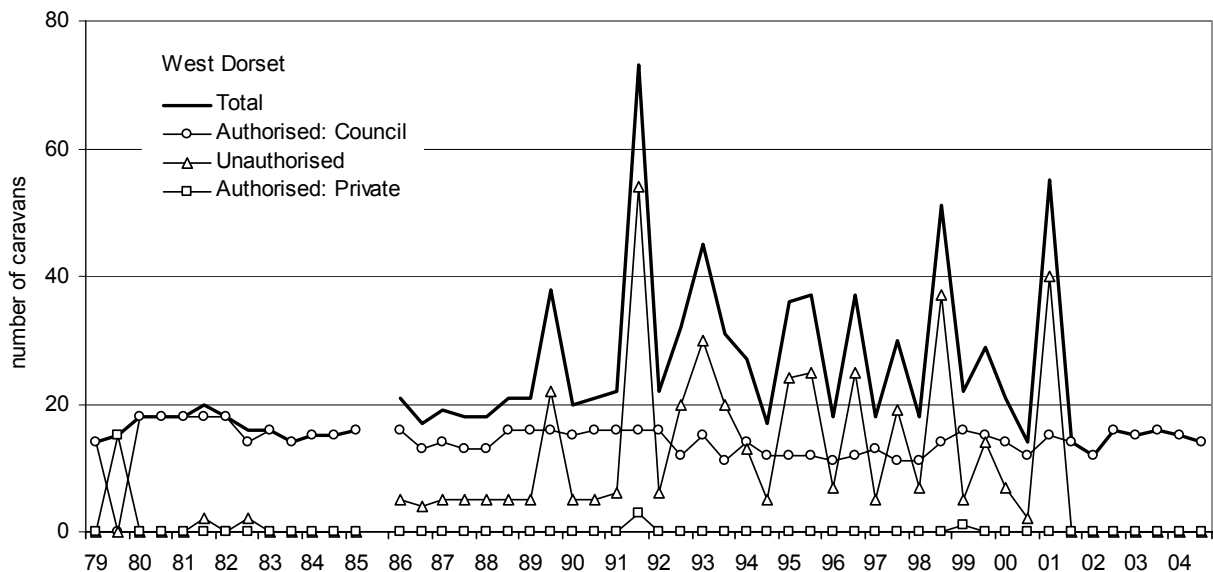


**GYPSY/TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT 2006-2011
WEST DORSET**

There is a 14-pitch council site at Piddlehinton, which has been refurbished. No private sites are recorded, although several applications for private sites have failed to obtain planning permission. Unauthorised caravans have been high in the summer months, with the district accounting for 10.8% of officially counted unauthorized caravans in the county and 21% of unauthorized encampments on the County Council’s database. Although most unauthorized caravans are New Travellers, there have been occasional unauthorised encampments by Gypsies or Irish travellers at Dorchester, Sherborne, Bridport and Lyme Regis; a mass encampment of New Travellers occurred during the summer of the solar eclipse at Batcombe Picnic site. There is no information on housed Gypsies. The Local Plan (2004) includes a criterion-based policy (HS9) on gypsy sites, both permanent and short-term, outside the AONB; the Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008 makes no mention of Travellers. We propose three or four sites for New Travellers in rural West Dorset, and up to three temporary stopping places for Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

CURRENT PITCH SUPPLY	14
PITCH DEMAND 2006-2011 (2026)	80-84 (112-129)
Unauthorised caravan households	65
Overcrowding allowance	7
Transfer from housing	0
Family formation 2006-2011 (2026)	8-12 (40-57)

Number of caravans (January and July counts) by type of site: West Dorset, 1979-2004.



**GYPSY/TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT 2006-2011
WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND**

There are no Council sites, and no private sites recorded. The district accounts for 0.4% of officially counted unauthorised caravans in the County Council area, but 14% of unauthorised encampments on the County Council's database, almost all by Gypsies or Irish Travellers for relatively short durations in the summer months. One New Traveller encampment in recent years was connected with the eviction of an unauthorised site in West Dorset. There is no information on housed Gypsies. The Local Plan Review and Housing Strategy 2005/2008 do not refer to Gypsies/Travellers.

CURRENT PITCH SUPPLY	0
PITCH DEMAND 2006-2011 (2026)	29-30 (38-41)
Unauthorised caravan households	25
Overcrowding allowance	2
Transfer from housing	0
Family formation 2006-2011 (2026)	2-3 (11-14)

Number of caravans (January and July counts) by type of site: Weymouth and Portland,

