

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Survey
South Norfolk Findings
Final Report Agreed by Gypsy and Traveller Working Group
July 2006

1. Background

- 1.1. Local housing authorities have a duty to carry out housing needs assessments with regard to the housing needs for their areas; this helps inform local authorities in terms of priorities that need to be included in their housing strategies to assist those in housing need to access suitable accommodation. The Housing Act 2004 placed a specific duty on authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.
- 1.2. Draft guidance as to how best to carry out a Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs survey was first published in March 2005, but has not yet been formalised into a finalised version. Because of the need for local authorities to start assessing their accommodation priorities in order to be able to submit for grant funding for sites for Gypsies and Travellers, the Norfolk Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Group (GTLG) in October 2005 decided to undertake a county wide survey, and agreed an accommodation needs survey form with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It was agreed that the survey would be co-ordinated by Norfolk County Council but carried out by the 7 district authorities. This report is limited to the findings of the research within the administrative area of South Norfolk Council.
- 1.3. The wider 2006 Greater Norwich Housing Needs and Stock Condition Survey included Gypsies and Travellers who were living in bricks and mortar accommodation within the Greater Norwich area (Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk council areas). 33 people identified themselves as being Gypsies or Travellers, but only 9.2% (approximately 3) felt a need to move.
- 1.4. This report has been written from the survey results received from Gypsies and Travellers in the South Norfolk area as a separate exercise to any report being prepared by the County in order to support the work of the South Norfolk Gypsy & Traveller working group. Quotations in this report are 'verbatim'.

2. Methodology of the GTLG Research Project

- 2.1. The majority of the questionnaires were completed by professionals who were known to the community. The surveys in the main were undertaken through face-to-face interviewing, or given to the client to complete for themselves or for others known to them. Officers attempted to contact every Gypsy and Traveller known to be residing in the South Norfolk Council area.

- 2.2. It was considered that this would be the most effective way of carrying out the survey. It was felt that contracting the task to independent researchers (as might happen with a needs survey for the settled community) would not be appropriate. There is often a lack of trust and general suspicion from Gypsies and Travellers towards statutory agencies and those working on their behalf. There is also evidence of low literacy levels within this group.

3. Analysis - General Results

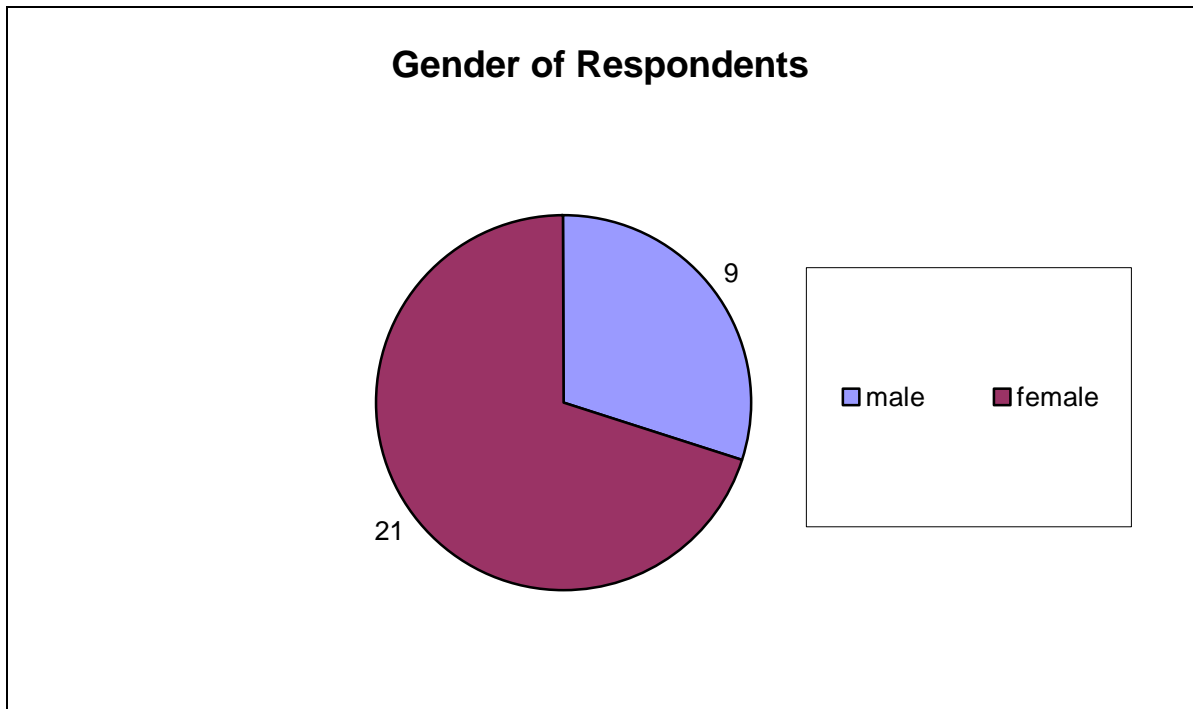
- 3.1. 69 forms have been completed and returned to date in Norfolk of which 30 were from South Norfolk. Officers working across Norfolk, carrying out the surveys tried to contact Gypsies and Travellers from all sectors of the community, including New Travellers, Gypsies and Irish Travellers and those living on different types of sites such as authorised and unauthorised sites.
- 3.2. We know of at least 18 families in South Norfolk who did not fill in forms.
- 3.3. The main groups that were difficult to identify and engage with were those Gypsies and Travellers that had moved into permanent accommodation. Gypsies and Travellers that have moved into social housing are difficult to identify because local authority IT systems and Performance Indicators are based on government BME definitions that at present do not include Gypsies and Travellers. One of the actions from the Norfolk Gypsy and Traveller Strategy 2005-8 is that these definitions will be included within housing application forms. Improvements to IT systems will ensure that Gypsies and Travellers can be identified as part of equality and diversity monitoring systems and may help improve accessibility and customer service for these groups. Four known Gypsies living in permanent accommodation were contacted but none chose to complete a survey form, even when offered support.

4. Definition of Gypsies and Travellers

- 4.1. For the purposes of this research the definition we are adhering to is: Romany Gypsy, English Traveller, Scottish Traveller, Travellers of Irish heritage, Welsh Gypsy and New Traveller. Showmen, those working in circuses, bargees (boat people) and those Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar housing were also included in the survey definition, but no one responded from these groups.

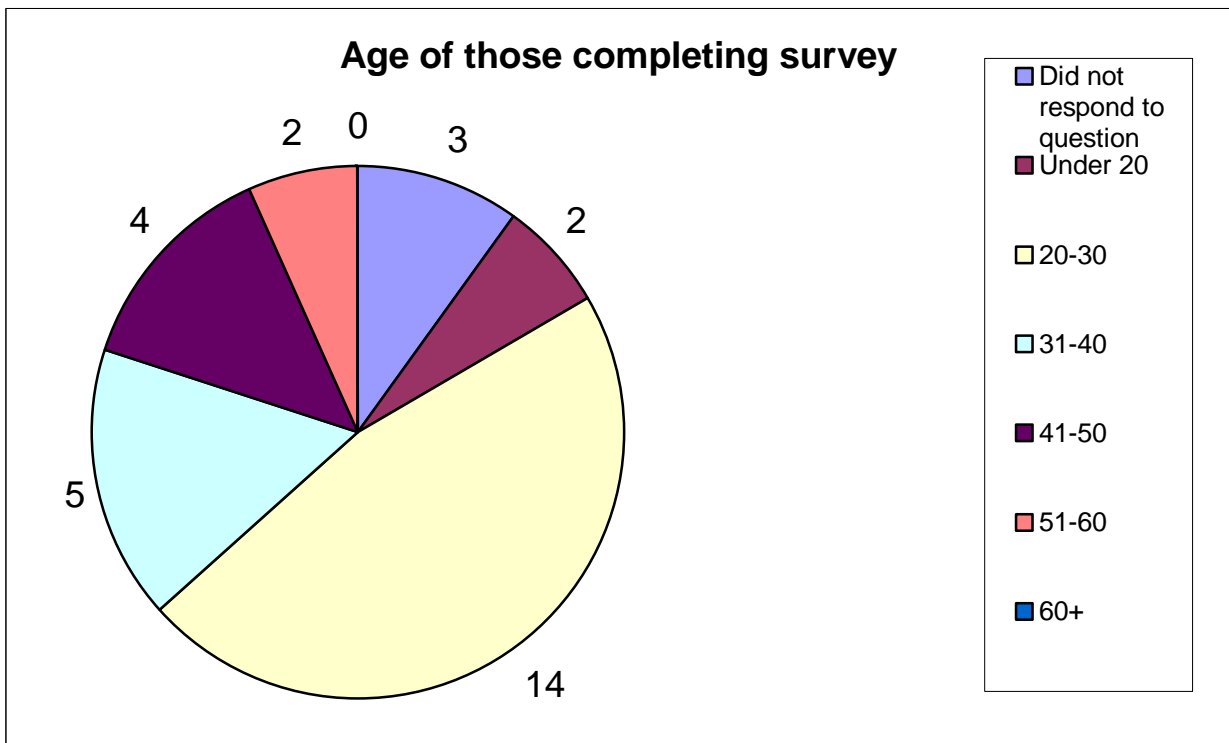
5. Gender of Respondents

- 5.1. Of the 30 who were interviewed in South Norfolk, 21 were female and 9 were male. Interviewers found Gypsies or Travellers that were women, more open to being interviewed than male Gypsies or Travellers. The reason for this may be that women were more available because of looking after children on site for example, and the interviews were in the main, carried out during the day.



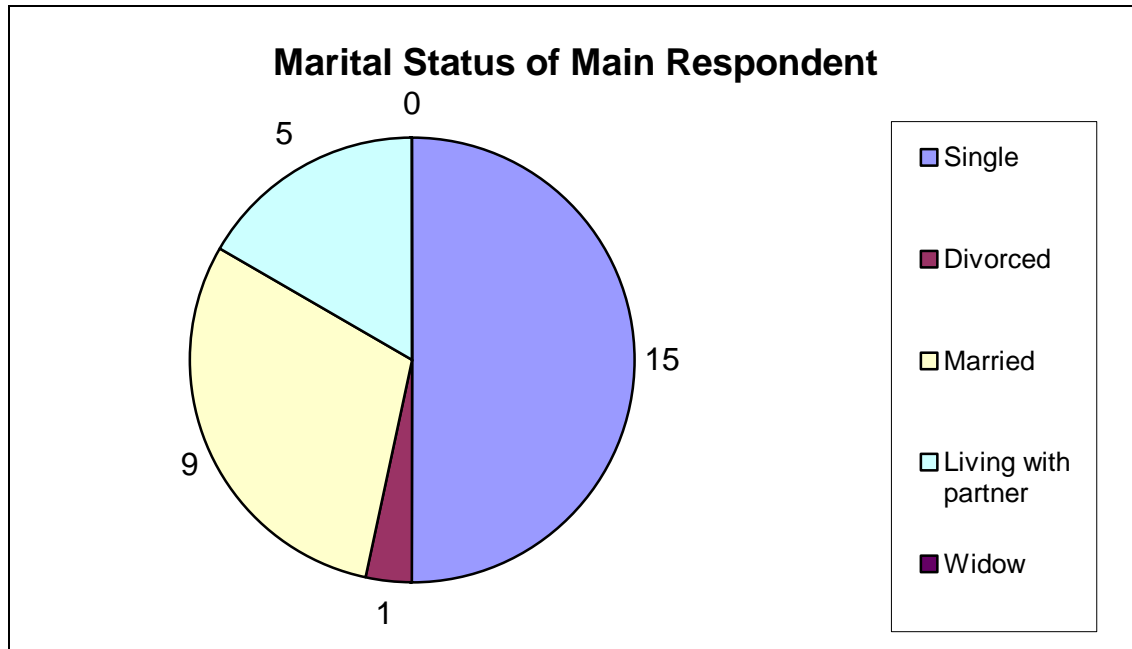
6. Age of those Responding

6.1. Of the 30 who completed the survey in South Norfolk, 14 were in the 20-30 age range, 5 were 31-40, 3 did not respond to the question and no-one over the age of 60 responded.



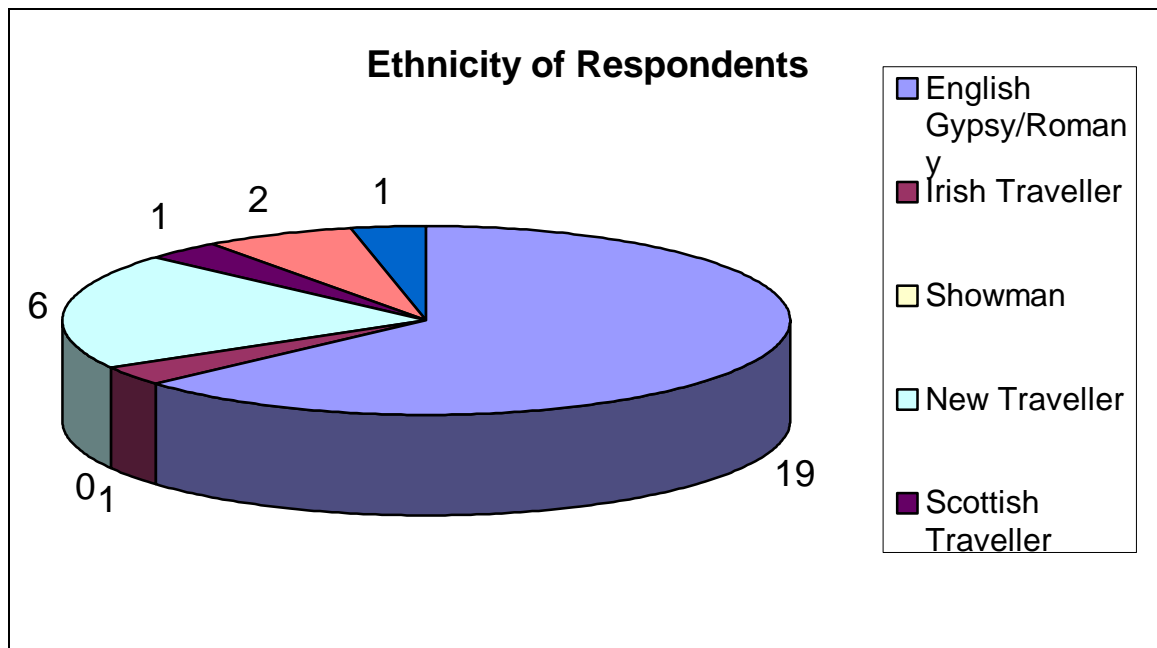
7. Status of Those Responding

7.1. The marital status of those responding is reflected in the majority of young people interviewed. Those who responded who are aged under 30 were less likely to be married than those over 30. One person noted their status as divorced.



8. Ethnicity

8.1. The majority of Gypsies and Travellers interviewed stated their ethnic background as being either Romany Gypsy (19) or "New" (6). Those Gypsies and Travellers that identified themselves under the term "Other" may not be from traditional Travelling groups, but did not identify with the term "New". Responses showed Travellers of Irish Heritage (1) and Scottish Traveller (1). We are aware in Norfolk that Roma Gypsies are our largest minority ethnic population and that this group and Travellers of Irish Heritage are included in the Race Relations Act and Race Relations Amendment Act. The results for South Norfolk are therefore, not surprising. One Traveller said: *"Just a normal person who chooses to live in a vehicle."*

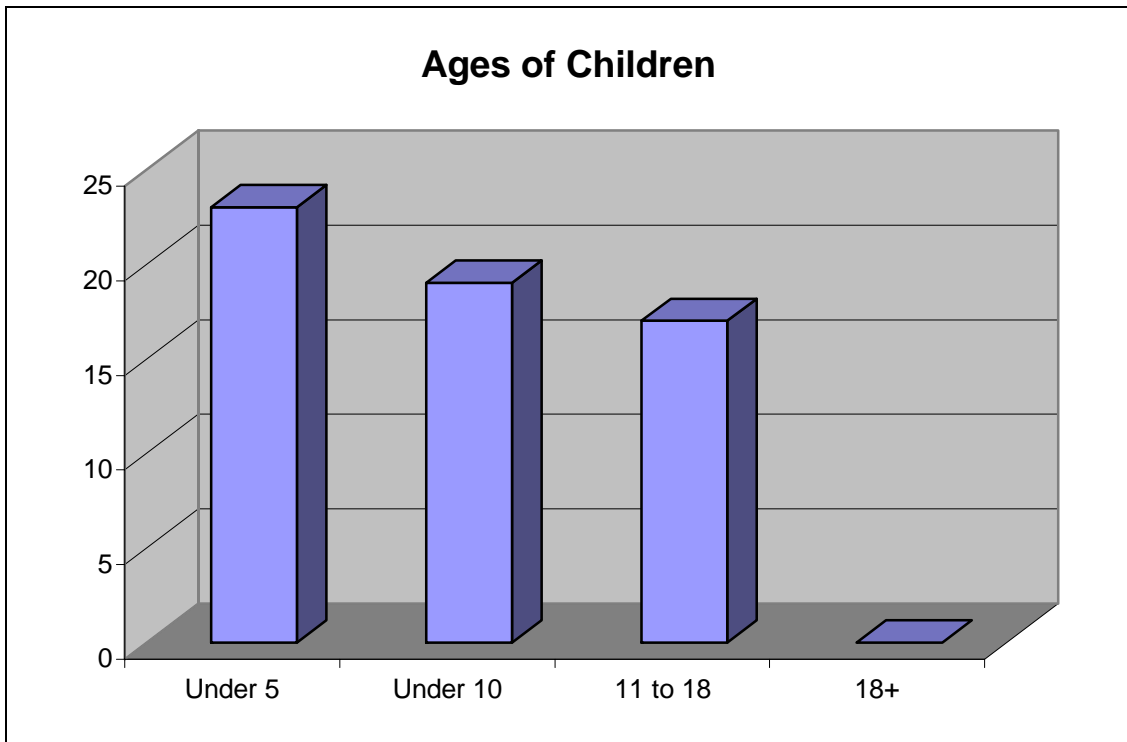
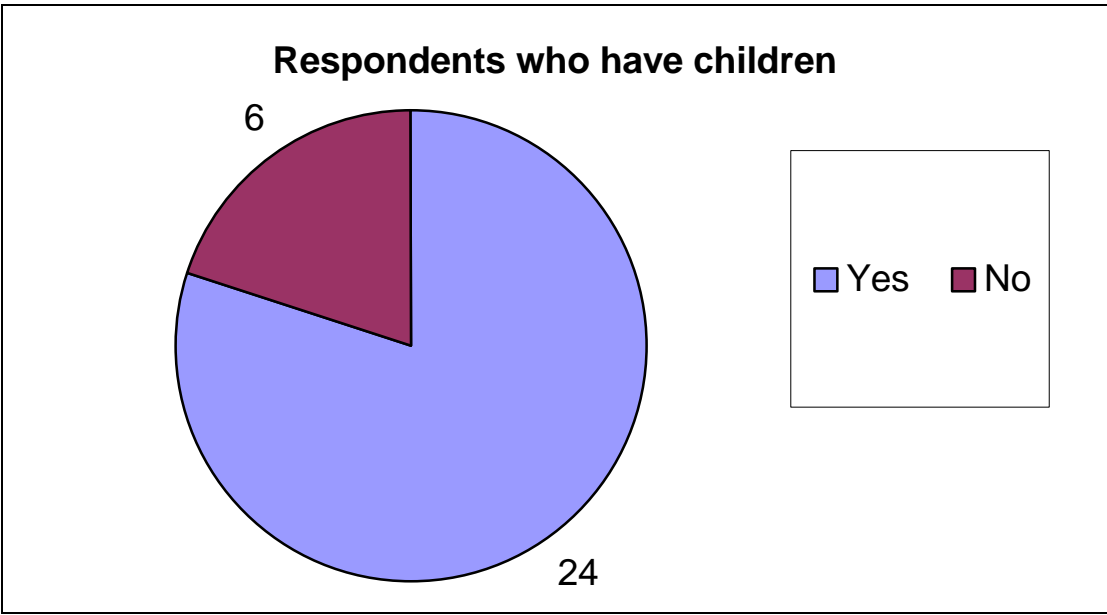


8.2. The Race Relations Act (RRA) recognises Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers as ethnic groups. Further issues relating to definitions are covered within the Norfolk Strategy for Gypsies and Travellers (pages 6–9).

8.3. It should be recognised that not all Gypsies or Travellers within the definition happily live and travel together. In the survey one Traveller was asked “Where do you normally stop over?” (Given some choices of – at the roadside, Gypsy/Traveller site, caravan site) – the response was: *“None of these as we can’t park up with other Gypsies as it is like tribal warfare as they do not see us as real travellers. Not on a roadside as we have kids and dogs....”*.

9. Respondents That Have Children

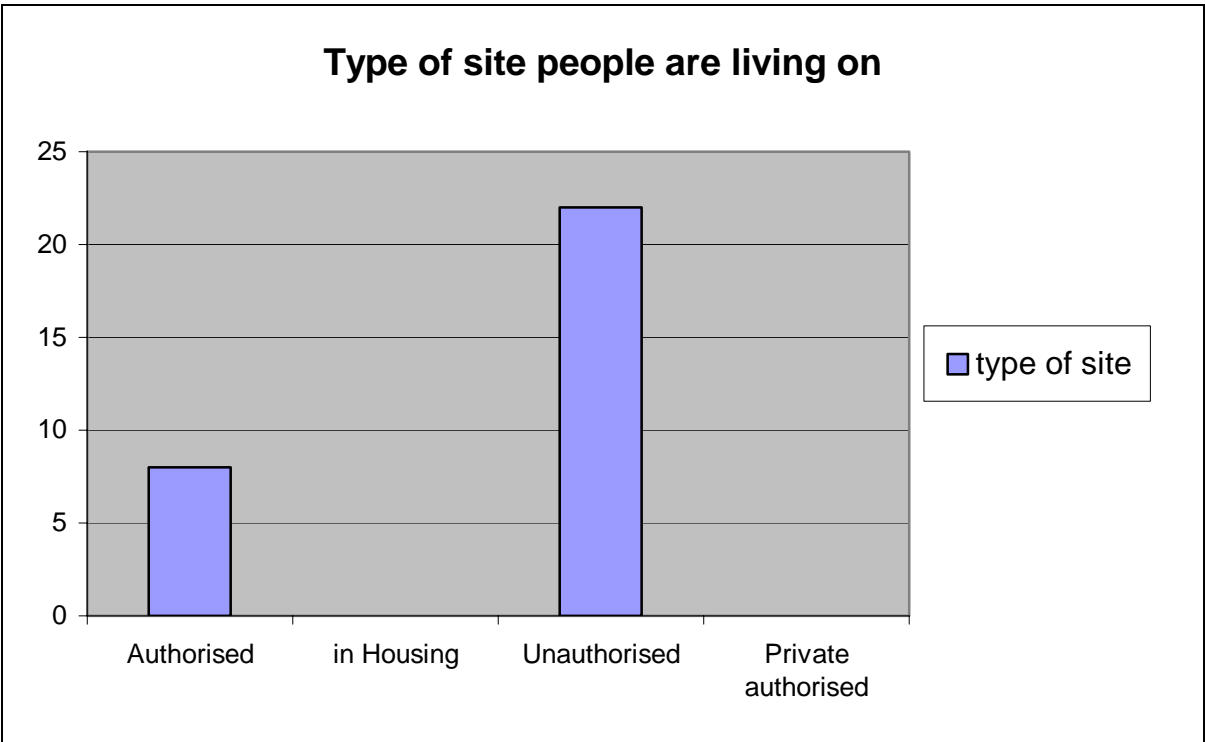
9.1. 24 of those who responded to the questionnaire in South Norfolk had children. In total there were 59 children recorded; the largest family had 8 children, 4 of whom were under 5, contributing to this age range being the largest percentage of those ages recorded. Five of the respondents indicated that their children did not live with them. Bearing this in mind this would give an average of 3 children per household with children.



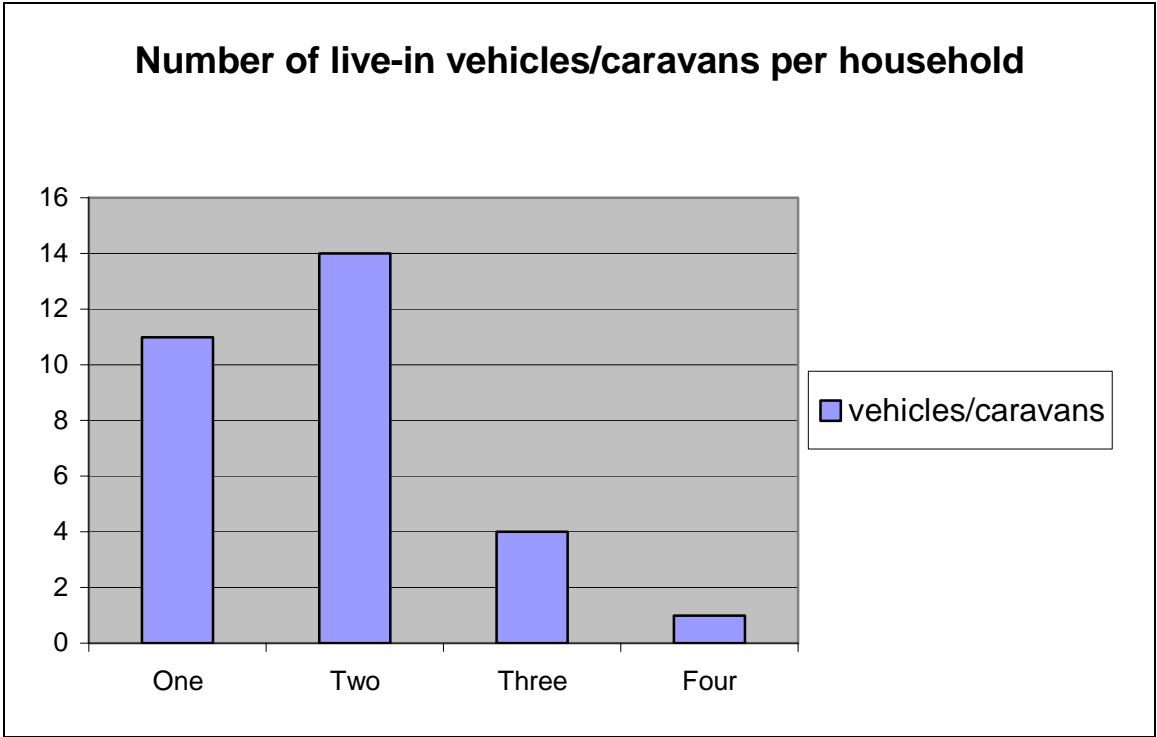
9.2. Although the question was not asked as to whether parents thought their children may wish to continue living in mobile accommodation, if they do, then South Norfolk could see a steady increase in numbers of Gypsies and Travellers within the existing community over the next 10-15 years. This is a key area for consideration and in planning for sites we need to build in the future as well as existing needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

10. Current Living Situation

- 10.1. It was most important for the research in Norfolk, and for us in South Norfolk, to identify the areas in which Gypsies and Travellers mainly live and operate, and the type of lifestyle they have. This information will help give a better idea of where we should be looking for sites and the type of sites that will be need. Those carrying out the research looked to interview all types of Gypsies and Travellers, whether or not they were still travelling. In this way all types of experiences could be recorded and all types of Gypsies and Traveller could have their ideas included.
- 10.2. In the information that came from the surveys we received 22 from unauthorised sites and 8 from the Roundwell site, the only authorised council owned site in South Norfolk. The Roundwell site accommodates 18 pitches which accounted for just over a 44% response rate.
- 10.3. The higher response (66%) rate for those living on unauthorised sites may reflect the relative severity of their housing need.
- 10.4. There are over 20 locations across South Norfolk that have been regularly used by Gypsy and Travellers. The patterns of encampment show that a number of these encampments can be grouped into specific geographical locations linked to traffic routes through the district.
- 10.5. For the purposes of this report these locations have been described as “A11 Corridor”, “Norwich Fringe”, “Waveney Valley” and “Central”. The “Central” group includes encampments across South Norfolk that are not associated with specific routes. Of the responses from the unauthorised encampments, 12% were from families in the A11 Corridor clusters, 42% from the Norwich Fringe clusters, 23% from the Waveney Valley clusters and 23% from the families Central group. The map at the end of this report illustrates the history / patterns of encampments.
- 10.6. Those living on unauthorised sites were living in vehicles and caravans as opposed to temporary constructions or benders/yrurts (types of tents). Vehicles/caravans are more visibly parked up than perhaps temporary structures that can be hidden and may not be visible from the roadsides. The sites on the A140 and Harford Bridge have been included in the figures of unauthorised sites as, although “tolerated”, they do not have planning permission. Gypsies or Travellers living on The Roundwell and the A140/Harford Bridge sites tended to be more approachable, were used to being surveyed and had better access to services.
- 10.7. The Roundwell site receives Supporting People subsidy that enables the site manager to offer housing support to residents. The only other non-statutory housing related support available is from Ormiston Children’s and Families Trust who run the Norfolk Traveller Advocacy Service who are able to offer such support to individual Gypsy & Traveller families regardless of the status of their sites.



10.8. Those living on sites had various numbers of dwellings in order to meet the needs of their households. The majority (19) had at least 2 live-in vehicles or caravans and one had 4 or more. The total number of dwellings occupied by the 30 respondents was 55.



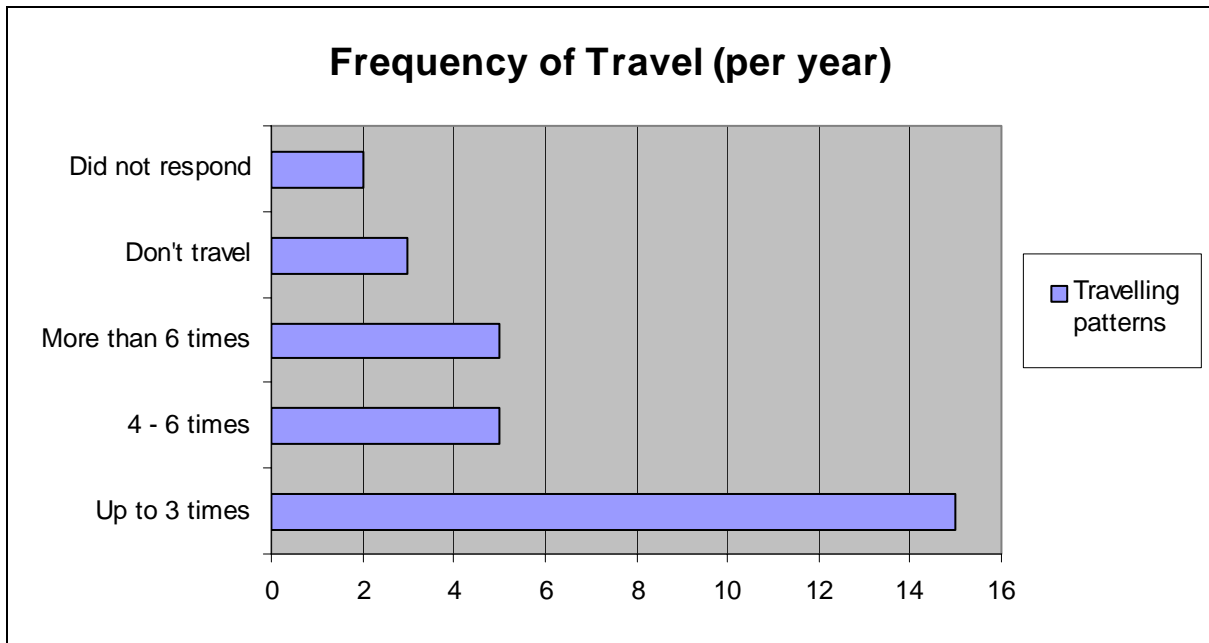
10.9. The majority of Gypsies or Travellers who are based on authorised sites in South Norfolk liked the sites they live on. Those living on the authorised site at The Roundwell, had facilities which included hot water, heating, refuse collection etc. In general those living on the site were happy, although some indicated that they worried about how long they could stay there for. Gypsies or Travellers on that site commented as follows:

- *“Having some little safe place for children to play (a park)”*
- *“Bigger slab. No CCTV on site”*
- *“more grass in yard”*
- *“small garden, grass area”*
- *“plots too small, should be bigger”*
- *“Bigger plots. Nicer fencing. Nice concrete more car/van parking”.*

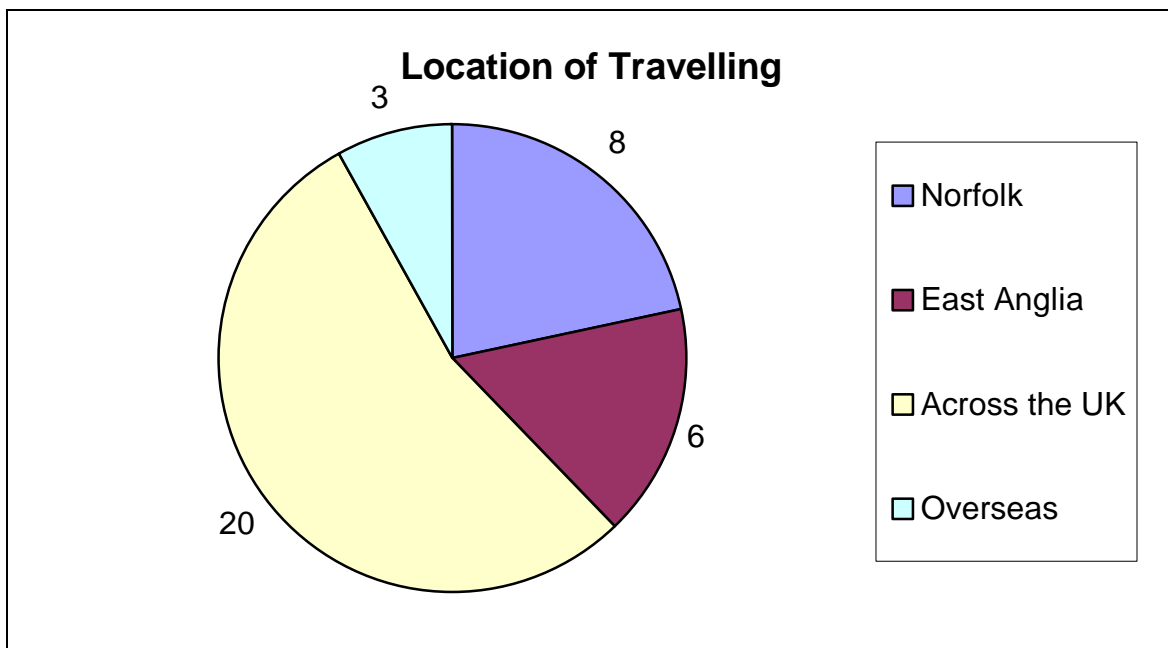
10.10. In contrast those living on unauthorised sites generally did not have access to basic facilities. The majority had no toilet, water or refuse facilities. Some indicated they had heating and this may be because their vehicles or caravans/trailers had bottled gas to heat their caravans/trailers or woodburners (which some indicated). Located mainly in the rural areas respondents indicated that they liked living where they do, but that they would like access to basic facilities such as water and toilets for example. All those living on the unauthorised sites indicated they have been asked to leave.

10.11. Out of the 30 respondents, 3 indicated they did not travel and 2 did not fill in a response to this question. The reasons noted down for not travelling were poor health and age.

10.12. Of the 25 that did travel either permanently or sporadically, most travelled in the spring and summer only and for periods of under 3 months. Most of those that travelled did so around Norfolk and East Anglia, 3 indicated that they travelled abroad. The types of site provision being used during nomadic travelling tended to be the roadside and, to a lesser extent, caravan sites. Although it was difficult to ascertain from the data received through the survey, it is likely that those who have caravans (trailers) are more likely to be able to access general caravan holiday parks than those that may have live in vehicles such as trucks or buses for example.



10.13. The main reasons for travelling were to visit friends and family, go on holiday or attend horse fairs. Reasons given other than those highlighted in the survey, were working at festivals, “solstice” and because of being moved on. This has potential implications for cross authority working.

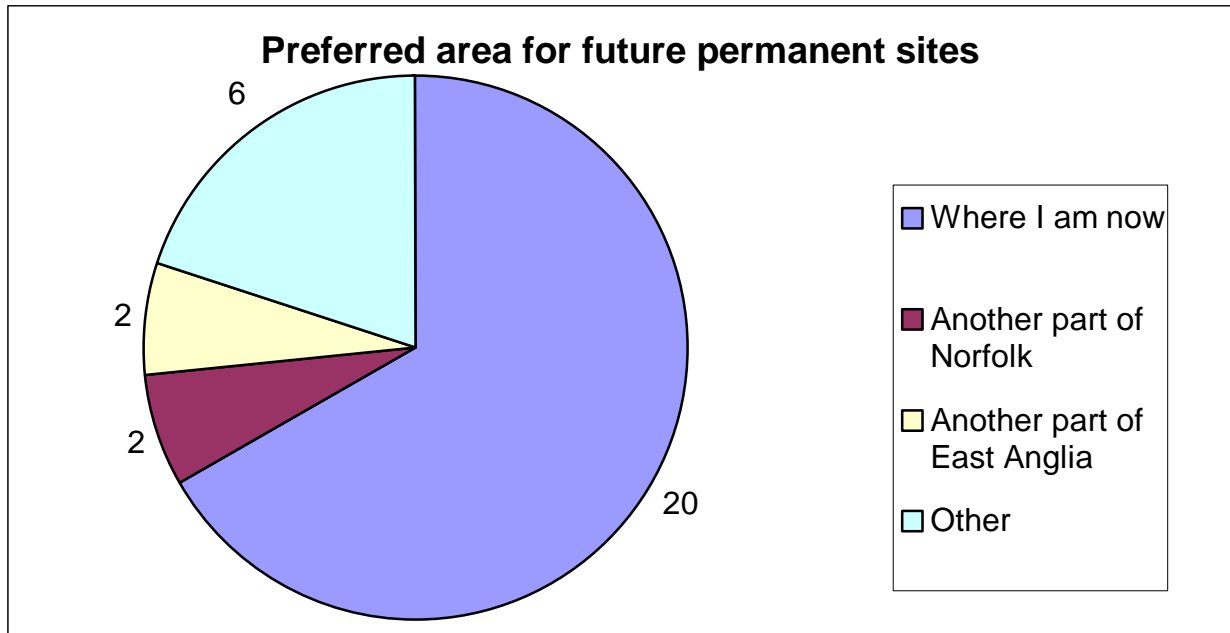


11. Future Site Provision

11.1. Our main focus for carrying out the survey was to find out the types and numbers of sites and in what areas Gypsies and Travellers need them, in order that this can be used in future site provision in South Norfolk.

11.2. The question was asked as to whether respondents felt there was enough site provision in Norfolk or in general. From the 27 who responded to this

question, 26 felt that there was not enough site provision. Although the following chart gives some indication from the questions asked in the survey, it is the comments that have been written that are of more interest in terms of future strategic housing and planning use.



11.3. Of the responses from the unauthorised encampments, 12% were from families in the A11 Corridor clusters, 42% from the Norwich Fringe clusters, 23% from the Waveney Valley clusters and 23% from the families Central group.

11.4. Most indicated that they wished to remain where they are. Those that did indicate a preference to move indicated: other parts of the Norwich fringe not in South Norfolk, elsewhere in South Norfolk, Essex, Lincolnshire and abroad. Only one person indicated that they wished to move to a house and that if they did they would need land enough to accommodate their lifestyle. Comments received are as follows:

- *“Anywhere with stability”*
- *“travilers feel that no matter what they say nothing is going to change and if you want an example look at harlston. Now you can see what we are up against”.*
- *“We like it here and are generally accepted by locals. Have had no trouble its quiet and safe and I have a garden for vegetables our families are close by and work commitments”.*
- *“on common land or set aside”.*

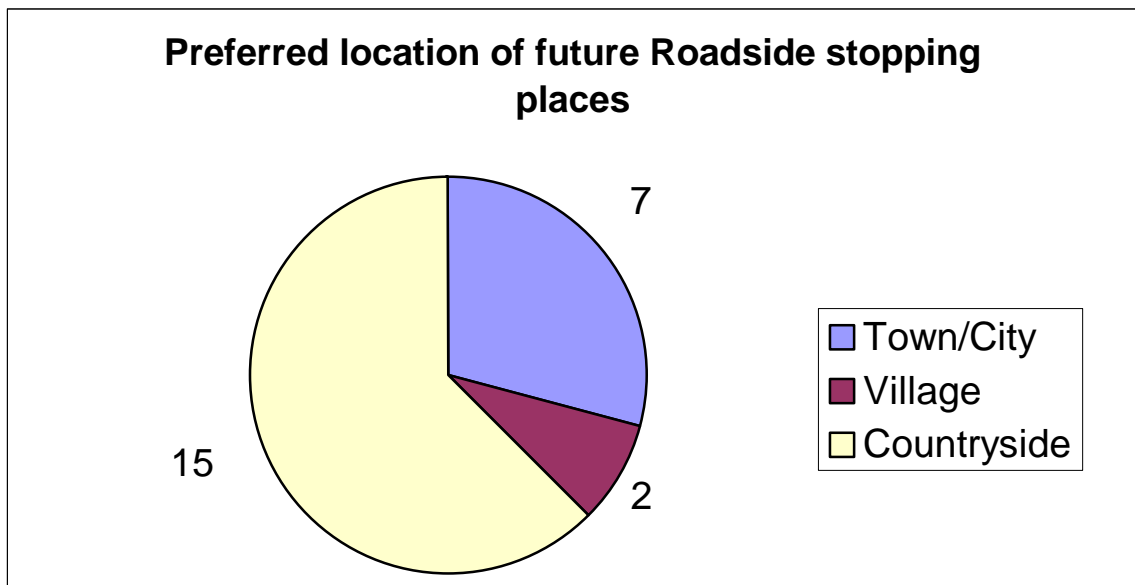
11.5. Out of the 30 people completing the survey for South Norfolk, 20 wanted to stay where they are at present. This included respondents from those living on both authorised and unauthorised sites. The indication is that even when living on unauthorised sites and being told to move, people are

there because that is the area in which they choose to live. Comments received are as follows:

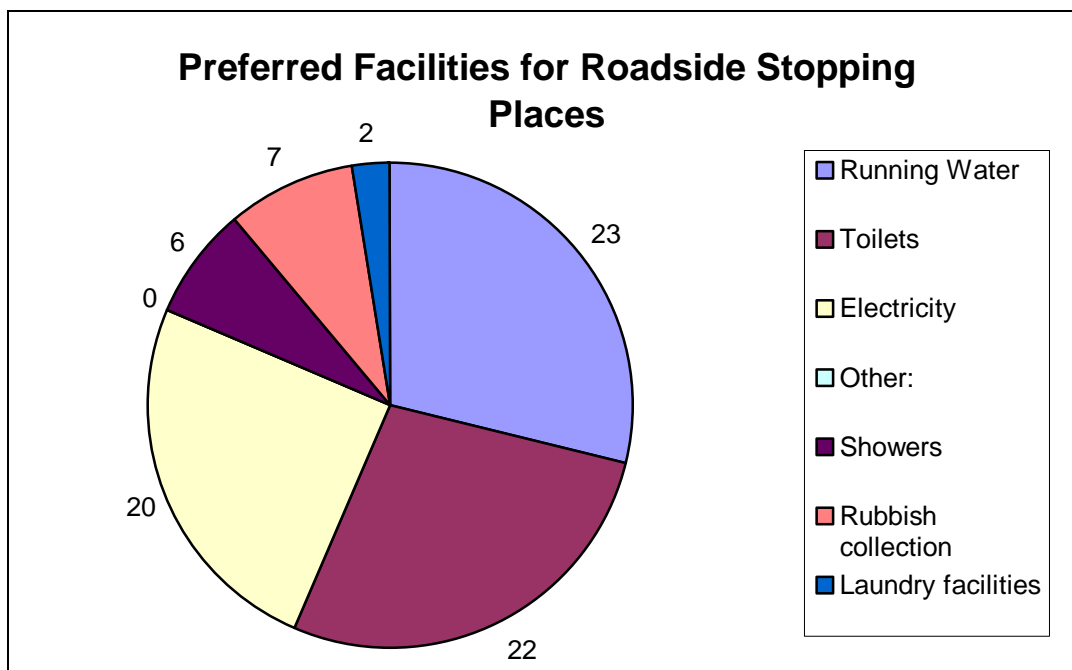
- *“I’ve lived in South Norfolk for 25 years, its home”.*
- *“There are none for alternative travellers and for our needs – anywhere preferably countryside”.*

11.6. Some Gypsies or Travellers also indicated that they required some storage space that was secure for equipment such as circus props and PA equipment. Additional space in terms of land was also highlighted for livestock such as horses, chickens and goats. Gypsies and Travellers highlighting the need for permanent sites showed that they would in the majority prefer to own their own sites, but that in all but one case could not afford to do so. Those respondents who indicated that they would be content to rent said that a reasonable rent for a permanent pitch, with all facilities, would be £25-£50 per week.

11.7. In terms of roadside stopping places the majority of the 30 who responded highlighted the need for roadside stopping places. Sites that are currently being used as short stay or roadside stopping places were noted as being A140, Bowthorpe school, Ipswich layby, Roys in Earlham and the Roundwell Pub.



11.8. Some Gypsies and Travellers indicated that these types of sites should be close to services, but not too close to local residents in case they upset them, but that these should be spread evenly over Norfolk. One person indicated the need for a roadside stopping place in North Norfolk. Others indicated fringes of Norwich and outskirts of Thetford.



11.9. All those that responded to the question about whether there was a need for more roadside stopping places and requesting the need for more sites recognised the responsibility to pay for such provision. There were a range of figures the lowest being £3.50 plus electricity and £10 per week with no facilities, up to £25-£35 where facilities were available. Comments with regard to short stay stopping places were:

- *“Short stay stopping places spread evenly across the county”.*
- *“I live a low cost, low impact lifestyle and do not claim any benefit”.*
- *“...be who we are. If there is nothing done we will only keep doing and stoping where we can”.*

12. Access to Services

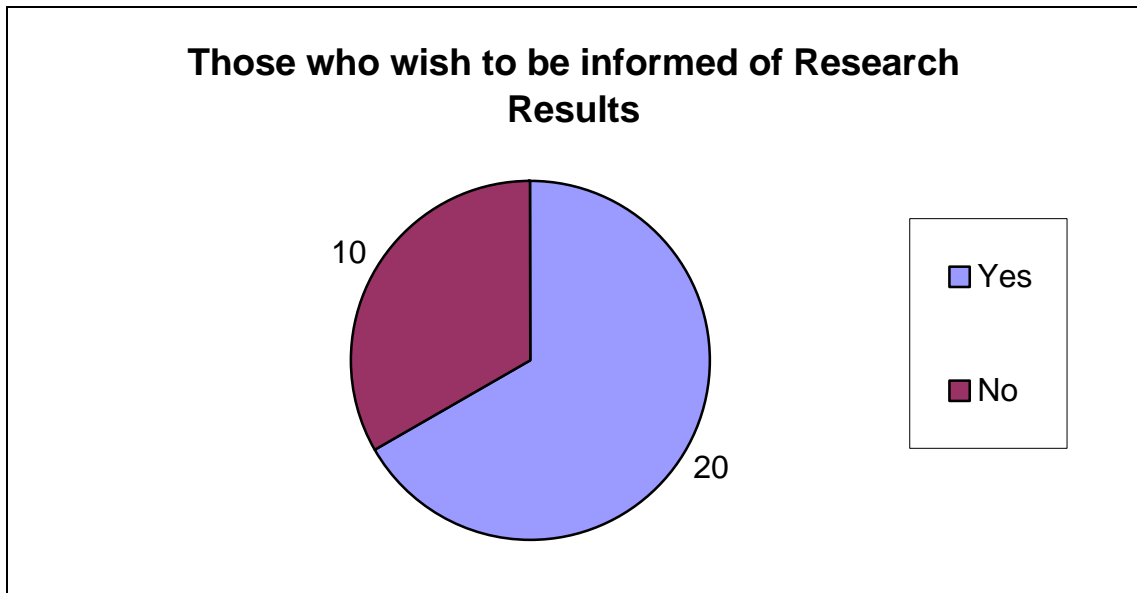
12.1. It is important when looking to identify future sites that we consider access to facilities such as healthcare and education. Of the 30 respondents the majority were registered with a doctor (22), 6 respondents indicated they used a care of address because of having no fixed address (NFA). 6 indicated that they were not registered at the doctors because of being on an unauthorised site or moving frequently. Those who had children of school age indicated that their children attended local schools.

12.2. In terms of accommodation support, when asked the question should they ever wish to apply for housing would they need assistance to do so, 10 indicated that they would require assistance. This level rose to 23 when

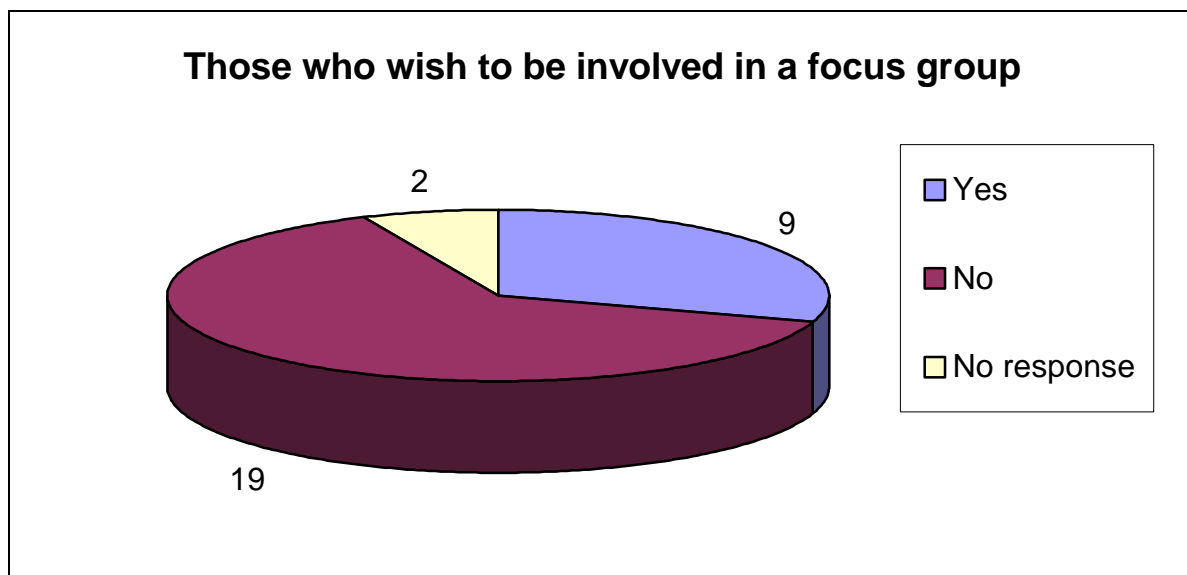
asked the same question with regard to needing help with planning applications if they wished to purchase their own land.

13. Future Involvement

13.1. 20 people from the 30 surveyed wish to be informed of the results of the survey.



13.2. 9 people from those surveyed wish to be involved in a focus group. This is extremely encouraging in order that further work can be carried out and it may be that some individuals may have good ideas as to how to progress the identification of sites.



14. Findings of this Survey Compared with Historical Information.

- 14.1. South Norfolk Council has carried out a bi-annual count of caravans within the district for a number of years. The count is taken on a specific date. The figures reflect a snapshot in time. They need to be used with caution as a particular event may “skew” the figures. However, they are helpful in giving both indication of the numbers of Gypsy and traveller households within the district and the location of the encampments. The numbers gathered through the bi annual count are not dissimilar to the evidence gathered from the needs survey.
- 14.2. The following table indicates the number of **caravans** (rather than households) on unauthorised encampments on specific dates over the last three years. The numbers are broken down into the geographical areas in which the caravans were counted. The map at the end of the report shows the history/ patterns of encampments.

	A11 Corridor	Norwich Fringe	Waveney Valley	Central Area	Total Caravans
July 2003	0 (0%)	19 (42%)	19 (42%)	7 (16%)	45 (100%)
Jan 2004	0 (0%)	19 (42%)	13 (29%)	13 (29%)	44 (100%)
July 2004	1 (3%)	11 (31%)	13 (36%)	11 (31%)	36 (100%)
Jan 2005	4 (9%)	25 (57%)	10 (23%)	5 (11%)	44 (100%)
July 2005	24 (32%)	32 (42%)	14 (18%)	6 (8%)	75 (100%)
Jan 2006	2 (4%)	29 (57%)	11 (22%)	9 (18%)	51 (100%)

15. Conclusions

- 15.1. Everyone has a housing requirement, but many people are able to satisfy their own requirements in the private housing market since they are able to afford to purchase a home of their own. These households can be regarded as housing demand – housing demand takes account of preference but is controlled by the ability to pay.
- 15.2. In the settled community, a proportion of households are unable to attain housing of at least a minimum standard without some form of assistance, either through the provision of a home in the social rented sector or

through subsidised access to the private sector. These households can be regarded as housing need – housing need takes account of those without adequate housing who are unable to resolve their situation without assistance.

- 15.3. The evidence shows a need for between 32 and 44 pitches to address current accommodation requirements.
- 15.4. In the 'need' sector, Gypsies and Travellers require the provision of somewhere to live, similarly to those in the 'need' sector of bricks and mortar. In the 'demand' sector, the planning system provides the capacity for someone with adequate finance to acquire a suitable plot and build a home to meet their requirements. For Gypsies and Travellers, the planning system is a barrier, because at present no suitable sites are identified.
- 15.5. 30 Gypsies and Travellers in South Norfolk were surveyed. These Gypsies and Travellers were living in a variety of ways such as on unauthorised sites, authorised sites and who were nomadic living either on roadside short stay stopping places or rural pieces of common land or land owned by private landowners in rural locations.
- 15.6. Most of the Gypsies and Travellers want to remain as, and where they are (including unauthorised sites) but have more places to be able to stop, especially in rural areas that would be close to local services. There was also an indication by those that use roadside stopping places that additional provision with the opportunity to be provided with basic facilities would be helpful and they would be willing to pay for such amenities.
- 15.7. Those responding to the survey indicated that there was a need for additional permanent sites. In the main, those living on unauthorised sites thought that the Council should be looking to provide permanent sites in the same locations.
- 15.8. In terms of roadside stopping places there were no roads other than the A140 highlighted, it seems appropriate for further provision on the A140 for South Norfolk bases people and those travelling through.
- 15.9. This survey highlights that it is not only site provision that is needed now, but that numbers are possibly growing if those children identified in the survey i.e. 59 decide to also remain in non bricks and mortar accommodation. The indications are that those that were surveyed are from South Norfolk and intend to stay where their families have traditionally lived.

16. Recommendations

- 16.1. The above conclusions would support the following provision to meet the current and predicted need over the next three to five years. In common with other areas of housing provision it is important to keep the provision under review to ensure future housing need is addressed. (As with the

settled community we anticipate there is likely to be a growth in Gypsy and Traveller households)

- One permanent site to accommodate 6-8 pitches in the Waveney Valley area.
- Two permanent sites each accommodating 6-8 pitches in the area around the Norwich by-pass.
- One permanent site to accommodate 6-8 pitches in the Wymondham to Norwich area.
- Three road site sites for temporary stopping along the A47, A140 and A143/A1066 routes for up to 4 pitches per location.

16.2 No recommendation has been made as to the possible tenure of the sites. There is a range of possibilities from owner occupation to private management to management by RSL/s that could be considered.

