

Research on Gypsies and Travellers in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Planning

June 2016

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Planning and Local Context	7
3. Understanding accommodation supply and future needs	8
2013 and 2015 Survey Results	9
Survey Analysis and Further Comments	15
Transit pitches and Travelling Showpeople	15
4. Conclusion and recommendations	17

1. Executive summary

Planning and Local Context

1.1 National guidance to inform local planning authorities' assessments of need is set out in '[Planning policy for Traveller sites](#)' (2015). The definition includes "gypsies and travellers" and "travelling showpeople"; for planning related purposes it excludes those who have permanently ceased from travelling. Other published national guidance has informed this research.

1.2 There is one existing Traveller site in the borough in Hampton containing 12 pitches which is managed by Richmond Housing Partnership (RHP).

1.3 The purpose of this research is to inform the Council's [Local Plan Review](#). Surveys of occupants on the site in Hampton were undertaken in 2013 and 2015 to understand existing and future needs.

1.4 Under the Data Protection Act, the research is anonymised so that no personal information is revealed and no individual respondent can be identified.

Understanding accommodation supply and future needs

1.5 DTZ undertook an initial desktop analysis in 2012 with RHP that estimated there were 37 people living on the site, including 21 children in 8 pitches accommodating families, from two extended families from the Irish Traveller community. They reported fewer young men than women aged 16-26. They commented that at this age Traveller women tend to leave when they marry, which suggested that there should be capacity on the site in future years.

1.6 There are also Travellers that might be currently accommodated elsewhere. There have been relatively few unauthorised encampments in recent years, nor any applications for private sites which would give an indication that there is no additional need/demand.

1.7 RHP hold a waiting list for the site – there were approximately 5-6 in September 2013, 2-3 in March 2015, and 2 in June 2016. Some pitches do become available over time – it is estimated one pitch is vacated each year through natural turnover. A Lettings Policy sets out priorities to those with a Richmond connection and to the site.

1.8 There are other sources of information. In the 2011 Census 95 residents identified their ethnicity as White Gypsy or Irish Traveller, with a higher proportion considered to be overcrowded than in other ethnic groups. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) [report on Gypsy and Traveller Health Needs](#) (2014) refers to the site in Hampton accommodating 51 residents, and of the remaining 33 Gypsy and Travellers living in the borough 18% own their house, 60% live in socially rented accommodation, and 22% live in private rented accommodation.

1.9 Through RHP, in 2013 a questionnaire was undertaken of the families living on the site in Hampton, and then repeated in 2015. In 2013 surveys from eight pitches were completed and in 2015 from seven pitches, which were considered accurate and representative alongside RHP officer knowledge. The survey results are detailed by each question.

2013 and 2015 Survey Results

1.10 All respondents were Irish Travellers, renting accommodation as their main home. In 2015 one of the respondents had moved from the site into bricks and mortar housing. The majority of respondents have lived there for some time.

1.11 Two respondents in 2013 shared their pitches with one other household, but none did in 2015. In 2013 the surveys showed a total of 27 people – 12 adults and 15 children, including 5 pitches accommodating families. There was one young woman aged 16-26 and no men of that age. In 2015 the surveys showed a total of 24 people – 9 adults and 16 children, including 7 pitches accommodating families. There was one young woman aged 16-26 and 2 young men of that age.

1.12 Satisfaction with current accommodation fell between the surveys in 2013 and 2015. In 2013 no respondents were looking for somewhere else to live, in 2015 one respondent was – due to not enough space and looking for better facilities. In 2013 two respondents had someone in their household looking for somewhere else to live, but in 2015 no respondents identified anyone.

1.13 In 2013 future needs were identified as:

- 2013 – five pitch requirements (one male, four female)
- 2018 – one pitch requirement (one female)
- 2019 – one pitch requirement (one male)

1.14 In 2015 future needs were identified as:

- 2015 – one pitch requirement (one female)
- 2017 – three pitch requirements (one female, two male)
- 2020 – one pitch requirement (one female)

1.15 The majority of those looking for future pitches are not willing to live in bricks and mortar and are seeking accommodation in Hampton. The most popular of any factors that would encourage moving into bricks and mortar was the type and design of housing and access to outdoor space.

Survey Analysis and Further Comments

1.16 The survey analysis, with comparisons between 2013 and 2015, illustrates a site comprised of long standing, settled residents. Between the surveys there was movement within the site which appeared to stem largely from existing residents and their families, changing the composition of pitches. Following the DTZ research, the 2013 survey identified an immediate need for at least five pitches which had reduced to an immediate need for one pitch in the 2015 survey. The surveys in 2013 and 2015 only identified a limited number of young men who may wish to start to form their own families and look for pitches on the site - in the latest 2015 survey only two males with future need identified in 2017. In recent years there has remained only a limited waiting list for the site.

1.17 Overall this research suggests that the size of the site and the way that it is managed do allow for some natural turnover and that position is likely to continue, with effective site management given one pitch is vacated each year on average.

1.18 While generally there is little desire to move into bricks and mortar, it appears that one respondent in 2015 has moved. Clearly this would depend on individuals circumstances, given the 'psychological aversion' to housing that is recognised in case law. The analysis does confirm the factors that would need to be addressed in

considering any move – complexities including the type of housing available and the support that might be received.

1.19 The analysis shows RHP's management of the site, services available and support to residents are clearly highly valued, and available to beyond those living on the site. The difference in the analysis between 2013 and 2015 does suggest that dissatisfaction with the site environment had increased, and the areas where enhanced support is sought. RHP has already set up a caretaking service to respond to residents needs. It is positive that RHP's services and support are provided to those in extended families living in bricks and mortar.

Transit pitches and Travelling Showpeople

1.20 There are no sites for Travelling Showpeople or Transit pitches in the borough. While there are a number of fairs, circuses and shows held regularly in the borough's open spaces, there is no indication of any need specifically within the borough for pitches to meet their seasonal working needs.

Conclusion and recommendations

1.21 To conclude, the outcome of this initial research suggests that there is no demonstrated need for additional pitches, nor any signals indicating unmet need arising from elsewhere in the borough. There remains the need to continue to protect the existing site through the Local Plan, which will continue to accommodate existing and future needs of the existing Gypsy & Traveller population within the borough. At this stage there are no plans to identify additional pitches.

1.22 Most recently, the Council are aware that RHP is considering reorganisation of the site layout which could formally result in the reduction of one existing pitch. However this is on the basis that the rearrangement would benefit the existing residents and not affect overall the number of residents that the site caters for.

1.23 The research provides evidence for the continued joint working within the Council, RHP, Public Health and other bodies, to support the existing residents on the site. For any Gypsies & Travellers living in bricks and mortar, there may be opportunities for other innovative solutions to improve support to address needs such as providing floating support to those in bricks and mortar to address issues of isolation, managing a home and maintaining a tenancy.

1.24 The need for site improvement works has been identified. A funding bid was submitted in January 2015 for environmental improvements to the existing site (hard landscaping/tree work, replacement fencing, lighting upgrade, CCTV upgrade, gully's/sewage works to address inadequacies) and this remains an ambition to take forward.

1.25 The timing of the publication of this research is alongside a borough Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to inform the Local Plan Review. There will be consultation that may inform further research, and reporting through the Authority's Monitoring Report will continue to keep under review. Under the Duty to Cooperate the Council continues to liaise with neighbouring boroughs, as relevant, although to date discussions have not identified any cross-boundary issues related to Gypsy & Traveller movements. There could be further work with RHP, Public Health, and the Traveller Education Service to ascertain the extent of those living in bricks and mortar within the borough. It is recommended that the survey of families on the existing site in Hampton is repeated again to continue monitoring. In light of recent

changes to Government guidance, it could be explored the extent to which those resident within the Borough may have permanently ceased from travelling however the Council would still need to have regard to the requirements of the Equality Act.

2. Planning and Local Context

2.1 Accompanying the NPPF, the [Planning policy for Traveller sites](#) sets out that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning and make plans to meet need. For the guidance, “travellers” means “gypsies and travellers” and “travelling showpeople”.

2.2 [Planning policy for Traveller sites](#) was revised in August 2015 when the Government changed the definition of “traveller” for planning related purposes so that it excludes those who have permanently ceased from travelling.

2.3 The CLG Guidance [Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments](#) (2007) was not formally withdrawn by Government. The [Housing and Planning Act 2016](#) at section 124 ‘Assessment of accommodation needs’ removed the requirement in the Housing Act 2004 for a separate Gypsy and Traveller assessment, which can now be part of the general assessment of housing needs to include all people residing in or resorting to the district in caravans or houseboats. The Government clarified during [Parliamentary debate](#) on the Bill that this change does not remove the duty on local authorities to assess their housing needs and make provision for sites, and stated they will consider incorporating any necessary elements of the current “Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments Guidance (2007)” in wider planning guidance, to which local authorities must have regard. In 2016 [Review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats: draft guidance](#) was published. These sources of guidance have been used to guide the methodology for this research.

2.4 In the borough there is one existing Traveller site at Bishops Grove in Hampton, now called Priest Close and Chapter Way, which is managed by Richmond Housing Partnership (RHP). This currently contains 12 pitches, and there is no identified capacity for expansion.

2.5 The key purpose of this research is primarily to inform the Council’s [Local Plan Review](#). The Council has liaised with and asked RHP to undertake surveys of occupants on the site in 2013 and 2015 to understand existing and future needs. The involvement of RHP ensured the credibility and acceptance within the local Gypsy and Traveller community. The liaison with RHP and site surveys also invited any information and contacts of Gypsies and Travellers and Showpeople who live in bricks and mortar within Richmond upon Thames.

2.6 The Data Protection Act 1998 covers personal information provided to the Council as part of this research and so the information collected has been anonymised in this report. This is to safeguard the privacy of those who participated so that no personal information relating to specific individuals is made public and no individual respondent can be identified through the description of where or how they live or their other circumstances.

3. Understanding accommodation supply and future needs

3.1 In 2012 DTZ undertook an initial desktop analysis with RHP to estimate the number of people living on the site currently and their household make up. Indeed, this can be hard to pin down at any point in time because some individuals and family units will leave the site for either short or extended periods to travel. The existing Traveller site within Richmond Borough accommodates two extended families from the Irish Traveller community. RHP estimated that at that time:

- There were currently 8 pitches on site which accommodated families with children (6 of these families appear to be headed by single parents). In total from these pitches there were approximately 33 people living in these families of which around 21 were children.
- There were 3 pitches accommodating single adults (3 people)
- 1 pitch accommodated two adults (2 people)
- Overall, there were 37 people living on site – 16 adults and 21 children.

3.2 DTZ reported in 2012 it is also difficult to establish the ages of individuals living at each pitch without a survey of residents. However, RHP believed that at that time there were at least 8 children between the ages of 2 years and 15 years on the site. The figure could have been considerably higher. There were a further 6 young women aged 16-26 on the site. There were fewer young men of the same age. This is relevant because it is the age at which these young people may start to form their own families. In practice, DTZ commented that Traveller women living on sites often tend to leave when they marry – joining their husband's site, although individual family needs may vary. On balance, this suggested there should be capacity on the site in future years if the young women leave to form families. But conversely, they stated there is significant potential for the population of the site to expand in future years, leading to overcrowding, if these young people remain on the site and begin to form their own families. There were 3 people on site (living on 2 pitches) aged over 65.

3.3 There are also Travellers that might be currently accommodated elsewhere e.g. in housing or living outside of the Borough but who wish to join the site. There have been relatively few unauthorised sites or illegal encampments within the Borough in recent years, nor any applications for private sites which would give an indication that there is no additional need/demand. Research has established that there are sometimes negative psychological effects for Gypsies and Travellers moving into housing. This is caused by the transition from living in a close knit community to a single dwelling which can result in social isolation. This can cause stress and depression amongst Travellers. Some Travellers may need a pitch on a site due to their 'psychological aversion' to housing and this is recognised in case law.

3.4 RHP hold a waiting list for the site and as at September 2013 there were approximately 5 -7 on the waiting list, for which applications now have to be renewed annually. All of those on the waiting list were related to someone on the site. However, some pitches do become available over time – RHP estimated that one pitch is vacated each year on average through natural turnover. The position remained similar in March 2015 with approximately 2-3 on the waiting list and in June 2016 with approximately 2 on the waiting list. RHP operate a Lettings Policy which sets out priorities to those with a Richmond connection and to the site, with decisions agreed by a Panel.

3.5 From the 2011 Census, 95 residents identified their ethnicity as White Gypsy or Irish Traveller in the borough. This was the joint lowest with Kingston for Outer London boroughs, although as this category was not recorded in earlier Census there is no comparator and this could be an underestimate as some may prefer not to identify themselves or identify themselves within wider Census categories, such as White Irish. The 2011 Census data also provides information on household overcrowding and under-occupation for different ethnic groups in England and Wales, which suggests that in the White Gypsy or Irish Traveller there were higher proportions of households considered to be overcrowded (with a bedroom occupancy rating of -1 or less, having fewer bedrooms than the notional number recommended by the bedroom standard) than in other ethnic groups.

3.6 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) [report on Gypsy and Traveller Health Needs](#) (May 2014) was based on interviews with six matriarchs from the site in Hampton, and refers to the 95 Gypsies and Travellers within the borough identified in the 2011 census, of which the site in Hampton houses 51 of the 95 Gypsies, and of the remaining 33 Gypsy and Travellers living in the borough 18% own their house, 60% live in socially rented accommodation, and 22% live in private rented accommodation.

3.7 The [Government Count of Traveller Caravans](#) happens twice a year, both authorised and unauthorised sites. This reveals only slight fluctuations for Richmond in the number of socially rented caravans on authorised sites within the borough over the last three counts – 13 in January 2016, 15 in July 2015, 12 in January 2015, and nil counts on unauthorised sites.

3.8 Through RHP, in the summer/autumn of 2013 a questionnaire was undertaken of the families living on the site in Hampton. This was then repeated in summer 2015, with identical questions, to gain comparative data over time and assess the current and future situation in more detail.

3.9 In 2013 surveys from eight pitches were completed. In 2015 surveys from seven pitches were completed. Due to individual circumstances it was not always possible for RHP to undertake all surveys during the time of the surveys, however as the majority of pitches were surveyed and together with RHP officer knowledge of those living at the site but not available to survey, it was considered accurate and representative. In analysis therefore it may be regarded as a minimum, such as in terms of numbers of people. It may be that those with comments would have been more likely to respond. In some analysis, comments have been reworded and shown in [brackets] to ensure personal sensitive information is not revealed.

2013 and 2015 Survey Results:

In 2013 and 2015 all respondents were Irish Travellers (**Q1 Ethnicity of respondent**). In 2013 all rented site pitch/plot, but in 2015 one of the respondents was in conventional bricks and mortar housing – rented from a housing association (Note that this respondent has been included in the further analysis below – they stated they were previously a resident on the site and have relatives living on the site, therefore maintaining close links with the existing site) (**Q2 Details of current accommodation**).

Of the caravans/mobile home/chalet on each pitch, these ranged in size from 1 bed to 4 bed (**Q3 Type and size of current accommodation**) in 2013 and from 1 bed to 3 bed where stated in 2015. For all respondents in 2013 and 2015, this was their main home (**Q4 Is this your main home?**).

In 2013 only one respondent had lived there between 1 to 5 years and all the other respondents had lived there more than 5 years. In 2015 two respondents had lived there between 1 to 5 years and all the other respondents had lived there more than 5 years. **(Q5 How long have you lived here?)**

Two of the respondents in 2013 shared the pitch with one other household **(Q6 Is the pitch shared with another household(s)? e.g. extended family members)**, of which one had been doubled up for 3 months and one respondent for 4 years **(Q7 If the pitch is shared with another household, how long have you been 'doubled-up' for?)**. In 2015 none of the respondents shared the pitch with another household, but two respondents raised that visitors or family members sometimes stayed.

The information given on the composition of households surveyed **(Q8 Please describe the composition of your household(s))** in 2013 showed:

- 5 pitches on site which accommodate families with children (4 of these include families headed by single parents). In total there are approximately 21 people living in these families of which around 15 are children.
- 1 pitch accommodating a single adult (1 person)
- 1 pitch accommodates two adults (2 people)
- 1 pitch accommodates three adults (3 people)
- There are more than 27 people living on site – 12 adults and 15 children.
- 14 children between the ages of 2 years and 15 years on the site.
- 1 young woman aged between 16-26 on the site, and no young men of that age range.

In 2015, the composition of households showed:

- 7 pitches on site which accommodate families with children (6 of these include families which appear to be headed by single parents).
- There are more than 24 people living on site – 9 adults and 16 children.
- 11 children between the ages of 2 years and 15 years on the site.
- 1 young woman and 2 young men aged between 16-26.

In terms of satisfaction **(Q9 How satisfied are you with your current accommodation?)** in 2013, seven respondents were satisfied or very satisfied, with one respondent very dissatisfied. In 2015 only two respondents were satisfied or very satisfied, with three respondents neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and two respondents dissatisfied.

In 2013 no respondents were looking for somewhere else to live **(Q10 a) Are you looking from somewhere else to live?)** although one respondent indicated this was not at present - as may need something cheaper, depending on the benefit changes **(Q11 a) What are your main reasons for wishing to move?)**. In 2015 only one respondent was looking for somewhere else to live – not enough space and looking for better facilities.

In 2013 two respondents had someone in the household looking for somewhere else to live **(Q10 b) Is someone else in your household looking for somewhere else to live?)** with the main reasons identified as not enough space (x 2 respondents), getting married (x 1 respondent), and looking for better facilities (x 1 respondent) **(Q11 b) What is someone else in your household's main reasons for wishing to move?)**. In 2015 no respondents identified anyone in the household looking for somewhere else to live.

In 2013 future needs were identified (**Q12 Please provide details for you and members of your household likely to require their own pitch/plot in the borough in the next 5 years. Please include other family members you anticipate joining you on the site (e.g. extended family living elsewhere) in the next 5 years.**) as:

- One pitch requirement now (female), not registered on a site waiting list or a housing register, willing to live in bricks and mortar and in any location.
- Four pitch requirements estimated for 2013 (one male, three female including two with other adult(s)/families), two of whom were not registered on a site waiting list or a housing register/two of whom were registered on both, all not willing to live in bricks and mortar and seeking accommodation in Hampton.
- One pitch requirement estimated for 2018 (female with family), not registered on a site waiting list or a housing register, not willing to live in bricks and mortar and seeking accommodation in Hampton.
- One pitch requirement estimated for 2019 (male with family), not registered on a site waiting list of a housing register, not willing to live in bricks and mortar and seeking accommodation in Hampton.
- A total of seven pitches identified in the 2013 surveys, covering the period 2013 to 2019.
- Two respondents indicated future needs but did not provide specific details - one respondent stating would like children to move on, and one respondent stating too early to say as daughters are too young.

In 2015, the future needs were identified as:

- One pitch requirement estimated for November 2015 (female), registered on a site waiting list with RHP and a housing register, not willing to live in bricks and mortar and seeking accommodation in Hampton.
- Three pitch requirements estimated for 2017 (one female with other adults, two male), all registered on a site waiting list with RHP/other and on a housing register, all not willing to live in bricks and mortar and two seeking accommodation in Hampton, one not specified.
- One pitch requirement estimated for 2020 (female), registered on a site waiting list with RHP and a housing register, not willing to live in bricks and mortar and seeking accommodation in Hampton.
- A total of five pitches identified in the 2015 surveys, covering the period 2015 to 2020.

The factors that would encourage living in bricks and mortar identified in 2013 and 2015 were (**Q13 Are there any factors that would encourage you/someone else in your household to move into/remain in bricks and mortar housing?**):

	No of respondents	
	2013	2015
Space for touring caravan/trailer/additional vehicles	2	1
Type and design of housing e.g. prefer a house to a flat	3	3
Private outdoor garden space	2	3
Easier access to education, health and other services		2
Support to maintain community links and avoid isolation	1	2
Assistance with repairs and/or adaptations to the property		1
Assistance with form filling, welfare and financial advice	1	1
<i>Other (as specified):</i>		
Peace and quiet		1
I would like a house but would feel scared		1
On one level only bungalow or house		1
Near family who live on site. Very important		1

Bungalow house with garden		1
Near to the site and family and friend. Travelling community.		1

Note that in 2013 there were four respondents and two respondents in 2015 which identified no factors that would encourage them to live in bricks and mortar.

In relation to feeling part of the community (**Q14 Do you feel you are part of the wider community?**) in 2013 six respondents felt they were part of the wider community, one respondent felt they were sometimes (because they were brought up in a house) and one respondent felt they were not part of the wider community. In 2015, two respondents felt they were part of the wider community, four respondents felt they were sometimes (because if people know they are a traveller they have been blanked or experienced racism) and one respondent felt they were not part of the wider community (because they don't really mix).

To promote cohesion respondents in 2013 and 2015 identified the following factors (**Q15 What would you like to see more of to promote cohesion?**):

	No of respondents	
	2013	2015
Community events	6	4
Links through schools	1	4
Cultural events	1	4
<i>Other (as specified):</i>		
More events for children		1
Exercise class		1
If the site was nicer and more environmentally welcoming		1
[Support in education to stop bullying]		1

In both 2013 and 2015 there were two respondents in each year that didn't know or didn't identify any factors to promote cohesion.

In terms of the existing forms of support currently accessed (**Q16 What forms of support do you/someone else in your household currently access?**) these were identified in 2013 and 2015 as:

	No of respondents	
	2013	2015
Assistance with form filling, welfare and financial advice	8	4
Healthcare through GP and visiting clinics	7	3
Education and training	5	3
Community events and activities e.g. children's holiday club	2	4
<i>Other (as specified):</i>		
[Health body]	1	
[Landlord] Customer Support Advisor	1	
Caretaking service		1

In 2013 it was noted by a couple of respondents that assistance with form filling etc. was through their landlord for example explaining letters. In 2015 it was noted by some respondents that their landlord provided support, and that in some areas such as healthcare and education the support was not very good, for example not listed to or slow responses.

In 2013 seven respondents said they did not find it difficult to access services, while one respondent said that did have difficulty because they get asked too many questions that they don't know how to answer (**Q17 Do you find it difficult to access services i.e. health, education, housing, police, benefits advice?**). In 2015 five respondents said they did not find it difficult to access services, while two

respondents said they did find it difficult to access services sometimes, one because people are racist and one because they considered their GP was not listening.

In 2013 six respondents had children (or grandchildren) in school placements (or starting soon)/access to other learning and development opportunities, with two respondents having no children in school placements/access to other learning and development opportunities, of which one specified because they did not have children (**Q18 Do your children have school placements and access to other learning and development opportunities?**). In 2015 three respondents had children in school placements (or starting soon)/access to other learning and development opportunities, with five respondents having no children in school placements/access to other learning and development opportunities, of which two specified because it was too early and two because children had left school/are older. One noted that when grandchildren stay [for an extended period] the education services are slow to get them into school.

In 2013 there were seven respondents and in 2015 three respondents who did not identify any other forms of support that they would like to have access to (**Q19 What forms of support would you/someone else in your household like to have access to?**). Respondents in 2013 and 2015 identified the following forms of support that they would like to have access to:

	No of respondents	
	2013	2015
Assistance with form filling, welfare and financial advice	1	1
Healthcare through GP and visiting clinics		
Education and training		
Community events and activities e.g. children's holiday club		1
<i>Other (as specified):</i>		
Support to keep the site nice and safe for our children		1
Support to do the site up as it is very depressing living here		1

In both surveys additional support was identified that would improve quality of life and well being (**Q20 What additional support would improve you and your families' quality of life and well being?**). Comments in 2013 raised:

- Cleaning of the site; caretaking services and maintenance on the site;
- Streets/roads at Chapter Way maintained and cleaned like the surrounding ones;
- More presence on the site with maintenance and repairs;
- The cleaning of the pathways and roads on the site;
- The cleaning of pathways and roads on the site;
- The management of visitors and ASB.
- One respondent said they didn't know.

Comments in 2015 raised:

- Better quality of living. Better facilities on site;
- Caretaker and handyman. Better fences, gates. It's depressing at the moment, all concrete wall and open lands adjacent with foxes and rats. Would like more greenery. The gates are not safe for children;
- Regular cleaner/caretaker, maintenance man to keep the site tidy;
- The site needs major improvements. Needs planting and greenery. Control of the fly tipping on site. Better gates and walls. The present walls are grey ugly concrete and the gates are cattle gates. Very depressing. Would like the parking to be controlled as I cannot access my plot from the access road as vehicles are parked in the way. I do not want to move to a house/flat. I

like living on the site as friends and family are here but I feel ashamed as the site is so depressing and uncared for.;

- I think the site needs major improvements;
- Fix pitch, sewage
- One respondent did not comment.

Respondents in 2013 and 2015 identified the following forms of communication as the best ways to keep informed (**Q21 What's the best way to keep you/someone else in your household informed about services for gypsies and travellers?**):

	No of respondents	
	2013	2015
Visit by RHP officer / support worker	7	3
Visit by health / education worker	1	
Electronic communication e.g. email		
Postal communication e.g. newsletter	1	3
Community / Voluntary group		
Site notice board		1
<i>Other (as specified):</i>		
[Health body]	1	
Prefer face to face or phone		1
Phonecall		2
Letter		1

One respondent in 2015 noted literacy issues so postal communication would not be a good way.

There was an opportunity to record any other comments (**Q22 Any other comments of relevance**). In 2013 one comment was made:

- Want to remain here; have no interest in moving or living in bricks and mortar. Would like to see another site built to home future family as I want to see my family grow up around me.

In 2015 three comments were made:

- Need to improve the site as the environment is very depressing surrounded by concrete walls and gates that look like they belong on a big farm.
- The maintenance and cleanliness of the site needs improvements. Need more security for plots i.e. better gates that are safe. The concrete walls are ugly and depressing. We used to have nice brick walls and it was more homely and prettier. Planting in communal areas to make it look prettier. Hedges would be nice and grass. Fencing off open areas of land adjacent to site where rats + foxes live so near to us.
- Speak to [landlord] about having cooking and cultural activities in Chapter Way. Childcare facilities being available. More activities during school holidays.

Contact details were requested if the respondent knew of any others who are in bricks and mortar and who may wish to be interviewed as part of the Council's research (**Note for Interviewer – leave contact details if the respondent knows of others who are in bricks and mortar who would be happy to be interview**) however in both 2013 and 2015 no additional contacts were identified through this means.

Survey Analysis and Further Comments:

3.10 The survey results, and the ability to compare between 2013 and 2015, continue to illustrate a site comprised of long standing, settled residents, from the two extended families of Irish Travellers.

3.11 The survey results show that in the period between 2013 and 2015, there was movement within the site which appeared to stem largely from existing residents and their families. The composition of some pitches had changed, for example relatives had moved on, or a child now had their own pitch [when each survey is viewed in its entirety, with personal details]. Following the DTZ research, the 2013 survey identified an immediate need for at least five pitches which had reduced to an immediate need for one pitch in the 2015 survey. There were identified in the surveys only a limited number of young men who may wish to start to form their own families and look for pitches on the site, in the latest 2015 survey only two males with future need identified in 2017.

3.12 The latest position from RHP in June 2016 is that there is one void, all of the other pitches, except one with a single adult, are occupied by families. Of those occupied by families all of the pitches apart from one are currently registered as single mothers, however it should be noted that the fathers of the children are regularly on-site and the trend continues for family compositions to increase. There are currently a total of 42 people living on the site – 17 adults and 25 children. There has remained only a limited waiting list.

3.13 Overall this research suggests that the size of the site and the way that it is managed do allow for some natural turnover and that position is likely to continue, with effective site management given one pitch is vacated each year on average.

3.14 While generally there is little desire to move into bricks and mortar, it appears that one respondent in 2015 has moved. Clearly this would depend on individuals circumstances, given the 'psychological aversion' to housing which is recognised in case law. The analysis does confirm the factors that would need to be addressed in considering any move – complexities including the type of housing available and the support that might be received.

3.15 The analysis shows RHP's management of the site, services available and support to residents are clearly highly valued, and available to beyond those living on the site. The difference in the analysis between 2013 and 2015 does suggest that dissatisfaction with the site environment had increased, and the areas where enhanced support is sought. Since the time of the surveys, RHP has acted on the request of residents and a weekly caretaking service is now provided. One of the main concerns was the open area at the back that had been used for dumping, which has been gated off and there has not been any fly-tipping since. This illustrates that RHP has listened and responded to residents needs to provide supportive management. It is positive that RHP's services and support are provided to those in extended families living in bricks and mortar, who trust RHP to help them around health and wellbeing, benefits, training and education.

Transit pitches and Travelling Showpeople:

3.16 There are no sites for Travelling Showpeople or Transit pitches in the borough. Merton Council previously led discussions in 2012 and 2013 with south London authorities, finding that Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs including patterns of working movement were met across south London and

adjoining south eastern areas. While there are a number of fairs, circuses and shows held regularly in the borough's open spaces, there is no indication of any need specifically within the borough for pitches to meet their seasonal working needs.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

4.1 The outcome of this initial research suggests that there is no demonstrated need for additional pitches, nor any signals indicating unmet need arising from elsewhere in the borough. There remains the need to continue to protect the existing site through the Local Plan, which will continue to accommodate existing and future needs of the existing Gypsy & Traveller population within the borough. At this stage there are no plans to identify additional pitches.

4.2 Most recently, the Council are aware that RHP is considering reorganisation of the site layout which could formally result in the reduction of one existing pitch. However this is on the basis that the rearrangement would benefit the existing residents, the pitch that would be lost is very small and it would then be used to address overcrowding as it will enable a larger family to be accommodated, and not affect overall the number of residents that the site caters for.

4.3 The research provides evidence for the continued joint working within the Council, RHP, Public Health and other bodies, to support the existing residents on the site. For any Gypsies & Travellers living in bricks and mortar, there may be opportunities for other innovative solutions to improve support to address needs such as providing floating support to those in bricks and mortar to address issues of isolation, managing a home and maintaining a tenancy.

4.4 The need for site improvement works has been identified. A funding bid was submitted in January 2015 to the GLA's Traveller Pitch Fund (funding to be spent by March 2015) for environmental improvements to the existing site (hard landscaping/tree work, replacement fencing, lighting upgrade, CCTV upgrade, gully's/sewage works to address inadequacies). Although funding has not been obtained, this remains an ambition to take forward.

4.5 The timing of the publication of this research is alongside a borough Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to inform the Local Plan Review. There will be consultation that may inform further research, and reporting through the Authority's Monitoring Report will continue to keep under review. Under the Duty to Cooperate the Council continues to liaise with neighbouring boroughs, as relevant, although to date discussions have not identified any cross-boundary issues related to Gypsy & Traveller movements. There could be further work with RHP, Public Health, and the Traveller Education Service to ascertain the extent of those living in bricks and mortar within the borough, although often any records are confidential and will be difficult to access for research purposes. It is recommended that the survey of families on the existing site in Hampton is repeated again to continue monitoring. In light of recent changes to Government guidance, it could be explored the extent to which those resident within the Borough may have permanently ceased from travelling however the Council would still need to have regard to the requirements of the Equality Act.