

# Derbyshire

## Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2008



### Executive Summary of Study Findings

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Opinion Research Services was commissioned by Derbyshire Travellers Issues Working Group (TWIG) to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for Derbyshire.

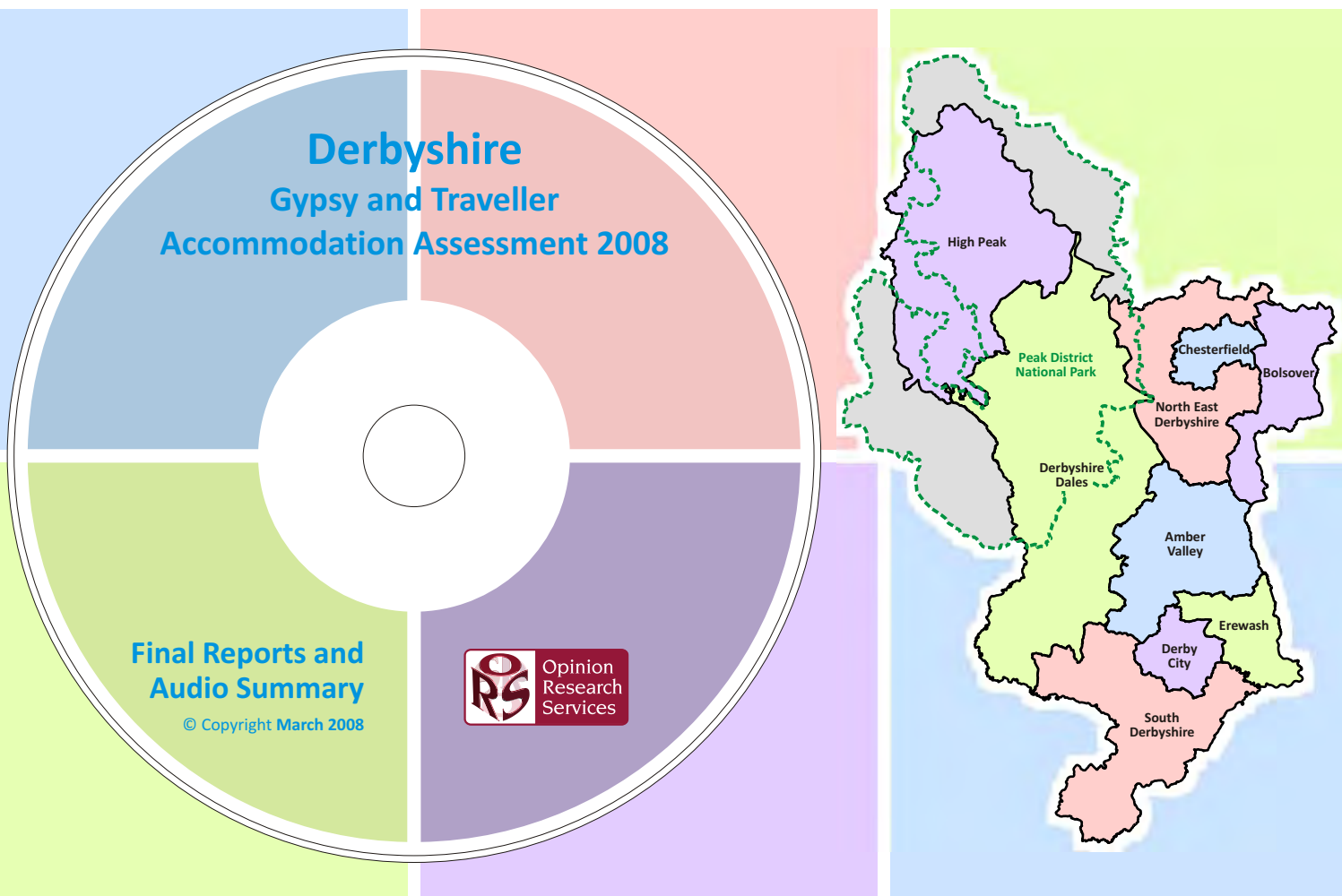
This Study provides good evidence on current Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and future needs, and makes some recommendations based on the findings. Local authorities will themselves decide what action they should take in the light of this Study.

The research was undertaken to assess the needs of Gypsies and Travellers over the next five years, including the needs of Showmen, and covered Derbyshire County, Derby City and the whole of the Peak District National

Park (including the area of the national park which falls outside the county boundary).

The findings are based on the analysis of 65 interviews with households resident on sites and a further 19 interviews with households living in bricks and mortar accommodation. This information was coupled with a range of secondary data sources and a programme of consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

This document is an executive summary of the study findings. An audio copy of this summary is narrated on the attached CD. A copy of the main report of study findings is also included on the CD, which can be viewed on a personal computer.



# The Gypsy and Traveller Population and Existing Site Provision

*Characteristics of the local population and the sites currently provided in Derbyshire*

There are currently seventeen authorised private sites in the study area and there is also a large site for Showmen in Bolsover District, which is the first of its type in the country. There are three authorised public residential Gypsy and Traveller sites with a total of 55 pitches. Each pitch accommodates a Gypsy and Traveller household who may live in more than one caravan.

In July 2007, 128 caravans were recorded in the county. Interviews were attempted with every household on both authorised and unauthorised sites between June and

**A third of Gypsy and Traveller households in Derbyshire contain six or more members and 40% of the population are aged 16 years or under**

**The majority of the Gypsy and Traveller community still travel. Those who don't travel report this is due to them seeking a more settled lifestyle or because it is difficult to stop at the side of the road**

September 2007, and 65 interviews were achieved. A separate survey was conducted with 19 households of Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Three quarters of those interviewed on-site identified themselves as being either English or Romany Gypsies, with almost all of the remainder being Irish Travellers. Sites tend to form around ethnic groups, though the Woodyard Lane site in South Derbyshire District contains a mix of Irish Travellers and Romany Gypsies.

Almost a third of on-site households contained six or more people, with overcrowding identified as an issue for many Gypsy and Traveller households. The population is very young with over 40% aged 16 or under. This is significant for future population growth as this group grows up and individuals have families of their own.

Many Gypsy and Travellers suffer from health problems - including stress, diabetes and depression - but they currently report that their support needs are being met.

**There are currently three public sites in Derbyshire containing 55 pitches and a further seventeen private sites. In July 2007, a total of 128 caravans were recorded across the county**

35% of respondents on-site reported that they had not travelled during the last 12 months. The most common explanation for this is that they want a more settled lifestyle. However, some have also stopped travelling because of difficulties in camping at the side of the road.



## The Nature and Location of Future Site Provision

*The balance between additional public and private sites and where they should be provided*

It is important to consider the balance between public and private sector site provision.

Evidence from the study shows that private sites are likely to be better maintained and tend to have a higher level of satisfaction among the Gypsy and Traveller population, while requiring lower levels of expenditure than public sites.

Private site applications also tend to reflect where Gypsies and Travellers want to live, and because of this, all applications should be considered on their own merits regardless of existing provision in the local authority area concerned.

**Private sites are preferred by many Gypsies and Travellers and also tend to be better maintained and cheaper to provide. Local authorities have the power to operate exceptions policies allowing the development of private sites in areas where planning permission would not typically be granted**

Government guidance allows local planning authorities in rural areas to include a 'rural exception site policy' in their relevant Development Plan Documents (DPDs) where there is a lack of affordable land to meet local Gypsy and Traveller needs. Such policies should operate in the same way as rural exception site policies for housing.

Alongside private sites, there will also be a continued need to provide public residential sites for those who are unable to afford to buy land for private sites.

A permanent public site of 16 pitches is needed in the Derby City area to replace one unauthorised development of 26 caravans.

**There will be a continued need to provide public sites for those unable to afford private sites. Derby City require a site of 16 pitches to provide for an unauthorised encampment of 26 caravans. Other public sites should be spread across the county to provide choice to Gypsies and Travellers**



For the remainder of the public site provision, it would be preferable to distribute the sites across Derbyshire and not put them near existing sites. This would provide a greater choice of areas to live for Gypsies and Travellers.

In this context, we recommend that new public sites in the south of the county should be located in Amber Valley Borough or Derbyshire Dales District, and for the north of the county in Chesterfield Borough or High Peak Borough.

The results of the survey refer to the requirements for pitch provision for the next 5 years from a base of mid 2007. The estimated extra site provision that is required for Gypsies and Travellers across Derbyshire is 58 pitches. This is the minimum amount of provision to meet the identified needs of the population.

This is mainly to meet the needs of those households on unauthorised developments and encampments, those who are currently on the waiting list for public sites and the emerging households from young adults in the area.



Nationally the Gypsy and Traveller population is growing by around 3% per annum, and the relative youthfulness of the Derbyshire population means that the number of local households is likely to continue growing.

In this context, it is important to recognise that there will be a continuing need for further Gypsy and Traveller sites into the foreseeable future.

It is also important that greater flexibility is shown on pitch sizes on new sites. This should be relatively easy to achieve on private sites, where the site will typically be occupied by only one family and where there will usually be space to accommodate extra caravans.

When developing new public sites, some larger pitches should be included to accommodate larger Gypsy and Traveller families who require more than two caravans for their household.

Like the Gypsy and Traveller population the key issue affecting Showmen is a lack of space on their existing site. There is also need for at least one new site for Showmen. They would like a new site in Derbyshire, but are unsure where it should be located.

## Future Pitch Requirements

*The number of extra spaces to meet the identified need*

**At least 58 new pitches are required across Derbyshire over the next 5 years. This is to provide for emerging households, those on waiting lists for public sites and unauthorised encampments**

**New sites should be relatively small - typically around 10 pitches and not more than 20 pitches. Gypsies and Travellers should be involved in running any new public sites**

**Given the relative youth of the Gypsy and Traveller population, there is likely to be a need to continue providing new sites in the county for the foreseeable future**

**The Showmen site at Pinxton currently suffers from overcrowding and there is a requirement for a new site to alleviate this**



**Circular 1/06 requires local authorities to have clear criteria under which they will grant planning permission for new private sites for Gypsies and Travellers**

**To provide certainty to Gypsies and Travellers, we would recommend less use is made of temporary planning permission and more are granted permanent planning permission**

Current government guidance requires local authorities to set out the criteria under which they will grant planning permission for private Gypsy and Traveller sites. It also says that the focus should be on the criteria under which a private Gypsy and Traveller site will be granted planning permission.

We recommend that all of the local authorities adopt clear statements about which Gypsy and Traveller sites will, and not may, be granted planning permission in their area.

A relatively high number of private sites have been granted planning permission in Derbyshire over recent years - but many of these have been for temporary planning permissions, typically for a three year period. We recommend that more sites are granted permanent planning permission and that less use is made of temporary planning permissions.

We also recommend greater flexibility within the planning permission provisions to allow for the sale of a site with existing planning permission rather than any new resident having to seek their own planning permission for the same site.

## **Policies and Monitoring**

*Responding to the study findings*

Planning departments should engage with Gypsies and Travellers and also with Showmen, to reduce any difficulties early on in the application process to help ensure that planning applications meet the necessary criteria for approval.

In relation to public sites, we recommend that new sites should be relatively small, with typically around 10 and not more than 20 pitches. Smaller sites are preferable because they are likely to create a better living environment.

We also recommend a significant Gypsy and Traveller involvement in the running of any new public sites in Derbyshire.

Finally, this assessment is only the start of understanding Gypsy and Traveller needs in Derbyshire. It is likely that it will have to be repeated in about 5-years to assess the impact of any changes and maintain an up-to-date understanding of requirements across the county.

