

Planning, Design & Access Statement

***'Willow Bee', Allington Lane,
West End, Eastleigh, SO30 3HP.***

Continued use of land as a private Gypsy/Traveller site, provision of a further pitch and day-room and alteration of the site entrance.



Prepared by
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on behalf of Daniel Bowers.

1. Introduction

This statement supports the full planning application by Daniel Bowers for the continued use of land at 'Willow Bee' on Allington Lane as a private Gypsy/Traveller site, together with the provision of a further pitch and day-room and alteration of the site entrance gates and piers.

This statement explains the nature and extent of the proposal and how it responds to the local environment, in its built and socio-economic contexts. It has regard to key national and local planning policies relating to site entrances and design and should be read in conjunction with the other supporting documents.



The approach to the application site from the northeast, on Allington Lane.

2. Context



The approach to the site from the southwest, on Allington Lane.

This rectangular site of **0.21 hectares** lies on the west side of Allington Lane in West End, within Eastleigh Borough Council's administrative area.

Regardless of whether one approaches from the northeast or southwest along Allington Lane, public views of the site are presently blocked by substantial frontage vegetation. The site is contained on its north, east and south boundaries by tall vegetation. Timber frontage gates and fences block views into the site from the east on Allington Lane.

corner of the site. Clear views to the northeast and southwest along Allington Lane ensure that vehicles entering and leaving the site enjoy good visibility and are themselves seen clearly by approaching drivers, riders and pedestrians.

An informal surfaced forecourt area affords access and parking for **four** vehicles in the east sector of the site. Refuse and recycle bins are presently stored inside the site entrance gates and taken to the Allington Lane frontage on the requisite day for collection.

Residents of this locality enjoy safe and convenient access to: 'The Orangery Tea House' café (**1.1km** to the northeast); the 'Itchen Valley Country Park' public open space (**1.2km** to the west); 'Shergolds' farm

Vehicular and pedestrian access is afforded via a gated driveway near the northeast



The entrance to the site from Allington Lane.

shop for provisions (**1.4km** to the southeast); 'Little Owls Woodland Pre-School' (**1.5km** to the northeast); 'Townhill Junior School' (**1.7km** to the southwest); the 'Applegreen' service station (**2km** to the southwest) for provisions the 'Texaco' service station (**2.2km** to the northeast); the 'Tesco Express' convenience store (**2.2km** to the southwest); and the Hedge End shopping centre (**2.45km** to the southeast). The landmark 'Clearwater' appeals (at Ratham Lane, West Ashling, Chichester, West Sussex) established nineteen years ago that, for Gypsies/Travellers, facilities within **2-3 kilometres** are relatively accessible. As this site is less than 2 kilometres from a number of facilities and less than 3 kilometres from a shopping centre, it is evident that this is a sustainable site for such persons. The provision of secure on-site facilities for bicycle storage would help promote the use of that alternative to the private car as a sustainable transport mode, as is recognised at paragraph 109 of the 'National Planning Policy Framework' 2024 ('NPPF') regarding 'Promoting sustainable transport'.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF generates a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the approval without delay of proposals that accord with the development plan. Paragraph 139 ('Achieving well-designed places') provides for the grant of planning permission for development of good design.

Annex 1 ('Glossary') of the 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' 2024 ('PPTS') states that *'For the purposes of this planning policy, "gypsies and travellers" means "Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan..."* Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the PPTS record that *'The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community...To help achieve this, Government's aims in respect of traveller sites are:.... that...decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments'*. Paragraph 23 regarding Policy H 'Determining planning applications for traveller sites' states that *'Applications should be...determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the application of specific policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and this planning policy for traveller sites.'* Paragraph 25 ('Policy H: 'Determining planning applications for traveller sites') of the PPTS states that *'Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.'*

Section 38 of the 'Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004' requires an application to be determined in accordance with the relevant policies of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise; an element of flexibility is provided which enables decisions to be made which may disagree with the development plan. The development plan for West End comprises the 'Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036)' (2022). The policies map of the development plan shows this site within 'Countryside' with no special designations; it does not fall within a Flood Zone.

Policy DM1 of the Local Plan regarding 'General criteria for new development' calls for new development to satisfy eleven criteria. Strategic Policy S5 ('New development in the countryside') states that: *'2. In permitting new development in the countryside the Borough Council will seek to: [a] avoid adverse impacts on the rural...character...and on the biodiversity of the area'*.

Local Plan Policy DM31 ('Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople') states that: *'1. The Council will meet the need for additional Gypsy and Travellers pitches...as identified in the Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTTSA)'* and provides for the grant of planning permission for Gypsy/Traveller sites where:

- “a. there is an identified need for the pitch or plot provision which the proposal helps to meet;*
- b. the site is able to accommodate both residential use and where necessary the range of economic activities and vehicles associated with residents’ mobile lifestyles without unacceptable impact on local amenities, road safety, heritage, landscape or biodiversity interests;*
- c. the site has safe and convenient access to existing and proposed services and facilities to serve the residents, including education, health facilities and shops;*
- d. the site has or can be viably provided with utility services; and*
- e. the site has vehicular access to and from the strategic road network adequate to accommodate mobile residential units and any vehicles/machinery associated with residents’ working activities.”.*

Paragraph 5.141 of the Local Plan records that: *‘The GTTSAA identifies the current provision in Eastleigh Borough. There are 29 pitches on 17 Gypsy and Traveller sites...By 2036 there is a confirmed need for four permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches....The GTTSAA estimated one additional Gypsy and Traveller pitch...are likely to be needed to address unconfirmed need. This need is unconfirmed at this stage as sites were surveyed but interviews were not able to be completed.’.*

Enquiries by the applicant earlier this year and more recently revealed that there are **no** pitches available on any of Gypsy and Traveller sites in the area. Furthermore, via email dated 10th December 2024, the ‘Cat; (Customer Service) Centre at Eastleigh Borough Council confirmed that *‘...Eastleigh Borough Council does not have any pitches/sites for travellers.’.* Via email on 11th December 2024, Barry Jordan-Davis (Senior Gypsy Liaison Officer) at Hampshire County Council informed our client that: *‘Hampshire County Council only has one site in the north of the County with **seven** on the waiting list.’ and ‘There are **no** pitches in Eastleigh....’* (emphasis added).

In response to the question, *“What is the identified need for gypsy and traveller sites over the plan period?”*, section 9.1 of Eastleigh Borough Council’s recent *“Matter 9: Gypsies and travellers, Nature conservation, recreation and open space and heritage (Policies DM33, DM11, DM12, DM34, DM37)”* document stated that:

“1. As set out in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) published in February 2017 (HOU017), the future need 2016-2036 is: Gypsy and Traveller Pitches • An additional 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches from households meeting the planning definition; • An unconfirmed need of up to 4 Gypsy and Traveller pitches from households who may meet the definition; and • An additional need for 6 pitches for households who do not meet the planning definition.”.

*“...
“2. Of the 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches required 2016-2036, 3 were required to meet the current need from unauthorised pitches and 2 additional pitches were required in 2021-2026 and in 2026-31 in response to new household formation. However, one pitch identified as unauthorised in the GTAA was granted full permission in February 2017, after the base date of the GTAA. On publication, therefore, the requirement in the Borough had decreased to 4 pitches” (emphasis added).*

Notably, the document recognised *‘...a need from...households living on unauthorised yards elsewhere in Hampshire with strong local connections to Eastleigh, as a result of work and family.’*, which have since been authorised. This is also the case for the applicant and his family.

The frontage of this part of Allington Lane is characterised by commercial premises and dwellings in a variety of formats, styles, plot sizes and entrance arrangements. Particular attention is drawn to the entrance of the 'Little Acres Caravan Park' on Allington Lane (92 metres to the southwest of this application site). Planning permission F/18/83772 was granted by Eastleigh Borough Council in August 2019 for that arrangement; the design evidently met the Borough Council's character/design requirements.

The subject site is a rectangular holding of 0.21 hectares that lies on the west side of Allington Lane. The application site forms the eastern sector of the land (**0.14 hectares**) which comprises: a touring caravan near the north boundary (it is occupied by the applicant), beneath a shelter; a storage container to the east; a dayroom to the north of the site entrance; and a residential mobile home (that is occupied by the applicant's daughter Emma-Louise Bowers and her partner Oliver Adams) near the south boundary. Construction of the dayroom commenced **early-April 2024** and was completed in mid-May 2024. The applicant has been residing on the site since **mid-April 2024**. The mobile home was brought onto the site **late August 2024**. Provision is presently afforded for wireless internet, electricity and water connections, together with a septic tank to the northwest of the mobile home.



The present mobile home.

Appeal APP/W1715/W/23/3335998 (EBC ref: F/23/95507) was dismissed in September 2024 to regularise the replacement entrance, hardstanding and frontage fence on the site. In his decision notice Inspector Edwards recorded: *'As the gate, fencing and hardstanding is not related to any of the uses or developments set out under part 1 of the policy...the scheme is unacceptable when having regard to its countryside location and LP strategic policy SD5' and '...the development has an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. In these respects, it would not accord with LP strategic policy S5. Amongst other things, this seeks to ensure development in the countryside avoids adverse impacts on the intrinsic rural characteristics of the landscape.'* Notably however, *'The development is laid out so that a driver can pull off the road in order to open the gates. This is an improvement to the original access, which was a simple verge crossing that required drivers to park on the highway if the gates needed to be opened. Also, the splayed access subject of this appeal also allows reasonable sight of on-coming traffic from both directions, whereas visibility from the original access would have been curtailed due to the lack of splays. In these respects, the development addresses a risk to highway safety.'*

Via email dated 26th November 2024, Ian Myers (Planning Enforcement Officer) of Eastleigh Borough Council recorded that: *'The reference within HCC's comments on the refused planning application F/23/95507 and the Planning Inspector's comments on the refused appeal APP/W1715/W/23/3335998 to the current means of access from Allington Lane onto the Willow Bee site being an improvement on the previous/existing access are of an advisory nature only. Matt Grantham clarified that his comments reflected the access only and not the form that access has taken. His assessment and comments are intended to advise specifically that the positioning of the new access on the right hand side of the front boundary of the site is an improvement on the old one more on the left hand side of the front boundary of the site, and the visibility splays provided by the new access are better.'*; and *'...as there was no demonstrable planning need for the means of access in its current state, it was refused...if the means of access were to be included in an application for the change of use of the site as a*

whole for your client's intended use, it could be reasoned that there was more of a demonstrable planning need for it...The primary concern is the bulk and starkness of the gateway and walls...we would likely look for it to be softened aesthetically...'

The views expressed by both the Inspector Edwards and Officers of the Borough Council have naturally been afforded attention is the preparation of this proposal.

The applicant, Daniel Bowers and his family are proud of their Romany Gypsy background. A 'Report of Romany Gypsy Status of Daniel Bowers' accompanies this application. While the applicant and his family previously resided in bricks and mortar accommodation, they have never been truly at ease with that arrangement and wish to return to their inherent Gypsy lifestyle and reside on the site together as a family unit.

It is submitted that this private Gypsy/Traveller site accords with the character of its surroundings, has not compromised *any* key sustainable development principles of national or local planning policy and would assist in addressing the acknowledged pitch requirement.

3. Amount, Layout, Scale & Appearance

In light of the favourable presumption set down in the development plan and the established character of the area, it is proposed that this private Gypsy/Traveller site be retained in its present arrangement and that a further mobile home be stationed on the land (comprising **two** pitches) to provide accommodation for the applicant and his family. It is also proposed that: a further day-room be erected near the northwest corner of the application site; the existing septic tank be replaced by a sewage treatment plant; the timber entrance gates be replaced, to match the frontage fence; and the entrance piers be clad with timber, to match the frontage fence.



The present dayroom and storage container.

Respect for the character of the area has been accorded priority in the formulation of development proposal, from concept stage. Although the site is largely screened from Allington Lane, it is proposed that native hedges be planted outside the frontage fences and inside the north and south boundaries, to soften the appearance of the development yet further. The applicant would be content to stain/paint the fence panels brown and the mobile homes brown/green, if so required.

In this configuration, the development would achieve more efficient use of this site in a manner that accords with the character of its surroundings and not result in detrimental impact to the amenities of neighbours.

4. Access

The site would continue to be served by the existing access, refuse and parking arrangements. As the site enjoys unhindered access to Allington Lane, no difficulties are anticipated with emergency services reaching the pitches or structures. The view is taken that pedestrian and vehicular traffic associated with these proposals would not cause danger or inconvenience to users of the public highway or be materially harmful to the amenities of neighbours.

5. Trees & Ecology

No trees or protected species have been or would be harmed by these proposals.

6. Biodiversity Net Gain

As the proposal constitutes retrospective development, the view is held that Biodiversity Net Gain ('BNG') does not apply in this instance.

7. Crime & Anti-social behaviour

No special measures are considered necessary for the prevention of crime or anti-social behaviour.

8. Contributions

The applicant recognises that it is Eastleigh Borough Council's customary practice to seek financial contributions whenever new residential development is proposed and would welcome clarification of the facilities on which the monies from this proposal would be expended, to pave the way for the requisite arrangement to be entered.

9. Nutrient Neutrality

In their 'Nutrient Assessment & Budget' of 16th January 2025 (copy enclosed), Aqua Callidus Consulting stated that the development would result in a nitrogen output of **3.57 KgTN/yr** and a phosphorus output of **0.68 KgTN/yr**. It is intended that the required number of nitrate and phosphorus credits be purchased in due course.

10. Conclusion

It is submitted that the requirements of the development plan are *satisfied* by this proposal since it has not detracted from the existing street-scene; is in keeping with the character of its surroundings; it incorporates materials and design elements sympathetic to local character; there is an identified need for the pitch/plot provision which the proposal helps to meet; the site is able to accommodate both the residential use and the range of economic activities and vehicles associated with the residents' mobile lifestyles without unacceptable impact on local amenities, road safety, heritage, landscape or biodiversity interests; the site has safe and convenient access to existing services and facilities to serve the residents, including education, health facilities and shops; the site is provided with utility services; the site has vehicular access to and from the strategic road network adequate to accommodate mobile residential units and any vehicles/machinery associated with residents' working activities; and respects privacy, outlook and sunlight; and takes into account the prospect of criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.

Development of this site in the manner proposed would achieve more efficient use of this land without harm to the character or appearance of the locality or the amenities of neighbours. It is contended that this proposal comprises an acceptable form of development that accords with the development plan and no other material considerations suggest otherwise.

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