

EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 78

**Town and Country Planning Appeals (Determination by Inspectors) (Inquiries
Procedure) (England) Rules 2000**

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

of

MISS DAWN HEPPELL BA (HONS) MSc MRTPI

**Land east of Little Hatts Recreation Ground, Tickner Close, Botley, Southampton,
SO30 2SW**

Appeal by Mr Sonny James

Planning Inspectorate References:

APP/W1715/W/19/3231762

APP/W1715/W/19/3231763

APP/W1715/W/19/3231764

Eastleigh Borough Council References:

E/15/15959

F/17/81707

DECEMBER 2022

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 My name is Dawn Heppell, I am a chartered Town Planner, employed as a Senior Business Planning Officer in the Local Plan team in Eastleigh Borough Council. I have worked for Eastleigh Borough Council for the past 5 years. Prior to this, I worked for Southampton City Council for 12 years and before this for Hampshire County Council for 3 years.
- 1.2 I have a BA (Hons) degree in Geography from the University of Birmingham and an MSc in Urban Planning from Oxford Brookes University. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.
- 1.3 I provided planning policy comments on the planning application. This proof updates the planning response for the principle of the proposed development and explains the adoption of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) as well as the need and supply of gypsy and traveller pitches in the Borough.

2. Policy and Development Plan Context

- 2.1. The Council listed the relevant policies from both the Adopted Local Plan (2001-2011) and the emerging Local Plan (2016-2036) in its Statement of Case (October 2020). The key policies for Reasons for Refusal 1 and 2 of the planning refusal are Saved Policies 87.H, 1.CO and 3.CO of the Adopted Local Plan (2001-2011) and the corresponding emerging policies DM33, S7 and S8 of the submitted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036). Since the Statement of Case was prepared, the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) has been adopted. The updated relevant policy numbers are DM31, S5 and S6 of the adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036). The key policies for Reasons for Refusal 3, 4 and 5 were Saved Policies 102.T and 25.NC of the Adopted Local Plan (2001-2011), and the corresponding policies DM13 and DM11 in the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036).
- 2.2. At the time of the Planning Policy response, the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) was at an early stage of production, it had not been consulted on and therefore was given little or no weight. It has since been adopted and its policies replace and supersede all the saved policies in the Local Plan (2001-2011). National guidance and the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment continue to apply.

Adopted policy

- 2.3. The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 31st October 2018 and the main hearings in public were held in November 2019 – January 2020. In June - July 2021, the Council consulted on a series of modifications to the emerging Local Plan following discussions in the examination hearings and post-hearing correspondence with the Inspector. The Inspector did not raise any concerns about the Gypsy and Travellers policies during the examination.
- 2.4. The Council received the Inspector's Report on 14th March 2022. This concluded that, with the recommended main modifications, the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) was sound and complied with the legal requirements. The Local Plan (2016-2036) was adopted by the Council on 25th April 2022. On adoption the policies in the Local Plan (2016-2036) have replaced the saved policies in the Local Plan (2001-2011).
- 2.5. The Local Plan (2016-2036) includes a general policy on Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, policy DM31, and specific site allocations to regularise existing unauthorised gypsy sites. The Council is not proposing any additional development plan documents on these issues.

3. Need for and supply of Gypsy and Traveller sites

- 3.1. The GTAA (ORS, 2017) remains the latest assessment of needs in the borough and formed the basis for the adopted Local Plan (2016-2036) policies. It identified a need for 5 additional pitches for households on unauthorised pitches who meet the planning definition and from future new household formation from children living within these households. The GTAA reports that after the base date of the assessment, one unauthorised pitch was granted planning permission and the need from this site has therefore been met.
- 3.2. The GTAA was based on a total of 8 interviews with Gypsies and Travellers. In addition to households that meet the planning definition, the assessment identified an estimated future need for up to 4 additional pitches for households that may subsequently meet the planning definition. However based on the national average,

ORS suggest that this is likely to be 0-1 pitches. This is an unconfirmed need from an additional 11 households where it was not possible to conduct interviews. A need for 6 additional pitches was identified for 4 households who did not meet the planning definition.

- 3.3. The site allocations in the submission Local Plan addressed the revised confirmed need for four pitches. The Inspector's recommended main modifications to the Local Plan deleted two site allocations as the sites now have planning permission and this need has been met. The adopted Local Plan allocates sites for two pitches and provides a criteria-based policy to assess other applications as recommended in the GTAA.
- 3.4. In addition to allocating sites to address this need, the Council has granted the following permissions for pitches on appropriate sites since the base date of the GTAA:
 - a) October 2018 - Lawful Development Certificate issued for the use of a site at Hound Road, Netley Abbey for one caravan, followed by permission for a replacement day room and store (LDC/18/83784 and F/18/84653)
 - b) February 2019 – permission granted for 6 additional mobile homes on a site at Windmill Lane, Bursledon (F/18/83586)
 - c) August 2019 – permission granted for 4 additional static caravans on a site on Allington Lane (F/18/83772) and
 - d) April 2020 - Lawful Development Certificate issued for one mobile home on a site on Grange Road, Bursledon (LDC/20/87280)
- 3.5. These are all permanent permissions with an occupancy restriction to Gypsies and Travellers as defined by Annex 1 of the national planning guidance 'Planning policy for traveller sites'. They collectively provide 12 further pitches and meet the needs identified in the GTAA. Sites a-c above were on or adjacent to permitted or tolerated sites identified in the GTAA.
- 3.6. The borough does not have any public sites and has not identified private sites suitable for expansion or vacant sites. An application for 10 pitches is currently being considered in Allington Lane (F/20/88057).

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. The Council can demonstrate that the needs identified in the GTAA have been met within the borough. The adopted Local Plan policy DM31 sets criteria to assess additional sites which include an identified need for the pitch alongside other site and accessibility criteria.