Proposed Retention of Gypsy Residential Site at Checkley

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

I. The site

The site is former garden land to Rose Cottage. It comprises a small paddock of about 0.1 ha and is enclosed by mature hedgerows and timber fencing.

It is located to the south of Uttoxeter Road in the village of Checkley.

2 The proposal

Permission is sought to retain a single family Gypsy site with three touring caravans and associated facilities, which received temporary planning permission for three years on 19 September 2011 through the appeal procedure (appeal ref. 2149915). The permission was renewed by the District Council for a period of three years on 6th January, 2015 (application ref. 2014/0572).

It should be noted that the brick built amenity block on the site benefits from permanent planning permission.

3 Occupants and Traveller Status

The occupants have been in residence on this site now for over 10 years and are well established and integrated in the local community. The adults are registered on the electoral role and pay Council Tax.

The occupation of the site continues as at the last renewal of permission in 2015, with the addition of a 3 month old baby. The Price family who occupy the site (in 3 caravans) now comprise Mr David Price, his wife Johanna, their unmarried son, their two married sons and wives and their 6 grandchildren.

The children range from 3 months to 9 years old and all but the recently arrived baby attend the local school.

All the occupants of the site are registered with the local GP. Mrs Joanna Price continues to suffer health problems and regularly attends Hospital at Stoke on Trent.

All the adults travel independently to secure roofing and other building work, frequently travelling, mainly to London, Wales, Merseyside and as far as Scotland, and they use their touring caravans for accommodation whilst travelling. All members of the family also trade at traditional fairs.

The occupants of the site thus fall within the definition of Gypsies and Travellers as set out In Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015.

The application is supported by the Staffordshire Count Council Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Teacher (letter attached).

4 Planning Policy

The Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire Moorlands and Stafford GTAA . identifies a shortfall of 6 pitches for Staffordshire Moorlands with a further requirement of two pitches beyond 2019. Therefore the Council is in breach of its requirement to provide for a five year supply of pitches. The Inspector conducting the hearing into the Core Strategy expressed concern about this situation.

Policy H3 of the Core Strategy sets out 6 criteria which will be applied in determining applications for Gypsy sites. This site accords with all the stated criteria as indicated below:

- The site has safe and convenient access with good visibility of approaching traffic .
- The site is large enough to provide for parking, storage, play and residential amenity.
- The site is reasonably accessible to shops, schools and other community facilities on foot, by cycle and by public transport.
- The use of the site is not detrimental to amenities of adjacent occupiers.
- The site provides adequate levels of privacy and residential amenity for occupiers.
- No features of natural, historic or archaeological value are affected.

The emerging Local Plan was subject to consultation earlier this year and, at this stage can be given only limited weight. It sets out the following criteria for consideration of Gypsy and Traveller Sites.

- Safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access to the site should be provided;
- The site must be large enough to provide for adequate on site facilities for parking, storage, play and residential amenity;
- The site is reasonably accessible to shops, schools, health facilities and other community facilities on foot, by cycle or public transport;

- The site should not be detrimental to amenities of adjacent occupiers;
- Adequate levels of privacy and residential amenity for occupiers should be provided;
- Sites or features of natural, historic or archaeological value should not be harmed by the proposal.
- There will be a presumption against the development of gypsy and traveller accommodation in the Green Belt unless there are very special circumstances.

This site has safe access, it is large enough to provide adequate facilities, it is reasonably accessible to community facilities with good access to public transport, it is not detrimental to residential amenity, it provides privacy and residential amenity for its occupiers, it does not affect any designated features and it is not in the Green Belt.

Accordingly, the proposal is compliant with both the Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan policy.

In regard to national policy, the government has issued planning policy guidance in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015. This proposal fully accords with this guidance.

Thus the reasons for limiting the permission to a temporary period no longer apply and permission is now sought on a permanent basis.

A grant of permission will assist the Council in addressing the shortfall in provision of Traveller sites.