RESPONSE TO MATTER 7

REPRESENTOR ID 254

HEARING STATEMENT
ON BEHALF OF MR M GREGORY

RUNNYMEDE 2030
LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION:
STAGE 2 HEARINGS

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Introduction

This Statement has been produced by Janet Montgomery on behalf of Mr M Gregory (Representor ID 254) in relation to the examination into the Runnymede Local Plan 2030 ("the Draft Local Plan"). It responds to Matter 7 of the Stage 2 Hearing Sessions.

Matter 7 relates to the Detailed Policies for Housing, and this Statement deals specifically with the question raised under paragraph 7.8 – "How will the unmet need for Travelling Showpeople accommodation be addressed within the Plan period? Is it sufficient to rely on the criteria in Policy SL22? Are there any other measures that should be taken in order to meet any shortfall?"

The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government – August 2015 requires local authorities to plan positively for traveller sites. This requires local authorities to not only identify the needs for various groups of travellers and set pitch/plot targets but also to identify suitable sites.

Paragraph 9 of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites states:

“Local planning authorities should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers as defined in Annex 1 and plot targets for travelling showpeople as defined in Annex 1 which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities.”

The recent GTAA Assessment (January 2018) makes an assessment of need for a further 112 gypsy/traveller pitches and **19 travelling showpeople plots** within the Plan period and where 16 out of the 19 travelling showpeople plots need to be brought forward in the period 2015 to 2022. There is a significant need therefore within the Borough for travelling showpeople sites and this is an immediate need.

Paragraph 10 of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites states:

“Local planning authorities should, in producing their Local Plan:
a) Identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years’ worth of sites against their locally set targets.....”

There are no sites identified within any allocation for travelling showpeople’s use within the Local Plan. The Council are failing in their duty to identify and update annually specific deliverable sites to meet the needs of travelling showpeople within their Borough, and the Plan is unsound for this reason.

The Council are not delivering travelling showpeople sites to meet this need under Policy SL22 or under current planning policies. In spite of extensive and ongoing dialogue with the Borough Council over many years, the family being represented (Mr M Gregory and family) have not found a site to meet their needs and the Council have not suggested any site that they could locate to.

There is an ongoing Planning Appeal requesting permission for the use of land that is owned by the travelling showperson for a single showman’s yard at Addlestone Moor where, as part of the appeal papers, the extensive search that has been carried out by the Appellant and the lack of provision being put forward by the Local Authority is fully documented (Appeal reference APP/Q3630/W/18/3206631).

The Council therefore not showing how the unmet need for travelling showpeople accommodation can be addressed within the Plan period is severely deficient in this respect and contrary to the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. It is not sufficient to rely on the criteria in Policy SL22, as this is not delivering new sites. There are no other measures we are aware of that are being taken by the Council in order to meet the shortfall. Essentially, the needs of travelling showpeople are being ignored by the Council in respect of realistic provision of sites.