I am writing regarding aspects of the matters concerning travellers as detailed below:

7.1 With regard to Policy SL22, what is the current balance between the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and the existing and planned supply for the period to 2023/2024 and to 2030? To what extent is this figure dependent on authorised sites being returned to occupation by households that meet the planning definition? What is the potential for modest expansions of authorised sites and redevelopment of previously developed land to assist in meeting Gypsy and Traveller needs? How will the Council seek to address any unmet needs including for transit sites over the Plan period?

7.2 In relation to Gypsy and Traveller households that do not meet the planning definition, and taking account of the Council’s evidence in RBCLP-02, can it be demonstrated that their housing needs have been assessed and will be provided for within the Plan period?

7.3 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 other measures that should be taken in order to meet any shortfall?

I am content that these questions get to the heart of many capacity issues, however I would also like to raise the following points:

1. What is the provision for ‘Transit Sites’ within Runnymede and adjacent boroughs? Recently the head of Surrey Police claimed their absence hindered effective policing of illegal encroachment on public and private land.
2. Is the modest provision of pitches within developments an appropriate policy, has it been endorsed by the travelling community?
3. What is the status of the land provided as pitches? Is it subsidised, or otherwise a ‘social’ provision? If that is the case how does that compare with the provision for the rest of the community? Is the provision for both communities comparable and equitable.
4. On what terms is the pitch occupied? Can the occupier have a ‘right to buy’? Is the policy viable as a long term means of addressing traveller issues?

Note: I have been unable to search for Policy SL22 in the Runnymede website. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2018 was my available resource.

Please bring these issues to the Inspectors attention and inform me which day these matters will be determined.
Yours sincerely

Nigel Eastment
Chairman, Ottershaw Park Estate Company Ltd.