

Planning Statement



Address: Millers Farm Gravesend Road Culverstone Green
Meopham TN15 7JR

Client:



Proposal: Extension of existing traveller site to provide 6 further pitches for occupation by the grandchildren of authorised occupants of the site.

Prepared by:

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13 November 2025

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of [REDACTED] in support of this planning application to Gravesham Borough Council for the extension of this existing traveller site to provide 6 additional pitches for occupation by the [REDACTED] the authorised occupiers (immediate family) at Millers Farm Gravesend Road Culverstone Green Kent TN15 7JR.

1.2 In addition to the application form and certificates the following documents are submitted;

Application plans:

- Drawing No. 001A Site Plan (4/11/25)
- Drawing No. 002A Existing Block Plan (4/11/25)
- Drawing No. 003A Proposed Block Plan (4/11/25)}
- Drawing No. 004A Proposed Typical unit (4/11/25)

Documents:

- Planning Statement

2.0 Site Surroundings and Proposal

2.1 The application site is situated on the eastern side of the A227 Wrotham Road 360 metres north of its junction with Harvel Road. The land is roughly rectangular in shape having a frontage width of 65m to Wrotham Road and mean a depth of approximately 30m and an area of 0.3 hectares. The site is currently has permission as pitches for the stationing of caravans for residential occupation by three gypsy families. The caravans are positioned on a hard standing area and include 2 residential mobile homes and two a touring caravan. There are a number of small outbuildings including sheds and dog kennel and pen.

2.2 To the south of the caravans, and within the application site is an 'L' shaped former agricultural building constructed of block under a corrugated

metal roof which is used as a utility area and for storage in conjunction with the site.

2.3 The site has a gated vehicular access to the A227 which is set back from the highway in order to allow vehicle to be clear of the highway before entering the site. There is a tarmaced area between the main residential area and barn which used for off-street parking and serves to access a larger area of hardstanding and agricultural land owned by the applicants to the south of the application site.

2.4 The applicants own a further 5 hectares of grazing land to the north and east of the application site which is used for the grazing of horses traded by the applicants and their family. Located in this area are a group of concrete buildings providing 9 stables, a pole barn and a container used for storage.

2.5 The area is rural in character and the site lies approximately 8 miles south of Gravesend Town Centre, being outside the identified confines of the nearby villages of Culverstone Green and Vigo. The site was part of a larger holding of approximately 60 acres known as Rose Farm which was fragmented into lots of varying acreages and sold off at auction separately from the farm house.

2.6 To the north of the application site is a public footpath NS278 which crosses the applicant's agricultural land to Harvel Road.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 The site has a long and complex planning history dating from when Rose Farm was fragmented in 1976. An outline application for a detached farmhouse refused in 1978 and subsequently dismissed on appeal the site. Two applications for an agricultural workers mobile home were refused in 1989 and 1991.

3.2 In the intervening period a mobile home unit was moved onto the site in November 1991 which was occupied by a gypsy family, [REDACTED] which started the site's history as a traveller site. Following enforcement action a retrospective application was submitted for the continued use of land for the

stationing of one caravan/mobile home for use by a gypsy family (GR/91/770) which was refused on 27th February 1992. An Enforcement Notice was served on 13th July 1992 and took effect on 14th September 1992. The notice required:

- a) Discontinuance of the use of the land for the stationing of a caravan for residential purposes.
- b) Removal of all caravans stationed on the land.
- c) Removal of fencing.

3.3 An appeal against the Notice was lodged and following a public inquiry was dismissed and the notice was upheld. The Inspector stated that: "There is no justification to override the strong policy and environmental objections to the development on the basis of the need to accommodate this gypsy family".

3.4 It is not known if compliance was achieved but the site was acquired by the current appellant, JA Vine and his brother, in 1995 who applied to use of the agricultural barn as a rest room/lounge with WC including the construction of a new roof. But the application was subsequently withdrawn. At some time between 1995 and 1999 [REDACTED] moved a residential caravan onto the and following further enforcement action an application for the continued use of land for the stationing of residential gypsy caravans was submitted (2000/0092) This was refused by the Council on 3 May 2000 and was subsequently taken to appeal. In considering the appeal the Inspectorate choose to amend the description to a change of use of land from agriculture and stabling to residential for two gypsy families in caravans, namely [REDACTED] and respective families.

3.5 In considering the appeal the Inspector [REDACTED] concluded that there were very special circumstances and that [REDACTED] education carried sufficient weight to allow a temporary permission. He subsequently granted a 3 year temporary permission to [REDACTED] and their respective families; and restricting the number of caravans to two mobile homes. In 2001 permission to enlarge the site and erect a fence around the residential site to distinguish it from the agricultural land was granted. This defined the gypsy site that exists to date.

3.6 In September 2003 the first application for the renewal of the temporary 3 year permission was submitted and was an additional year on 12 January 2004 on the basis of [REDACTED] education was continuing for another year. In December 2004 as an application for a further extension of the temporary permission. It was supported by information that [REDACTED] education was still continuing but also on the basis of the educational needs his [REDACTED] who were now also living on the site with their [REDACTED]. Additional information was submitted on the [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]. A further 18 month period was granted on 3 February 2005 to cease in August 2006. The site was at the time occupied as three pitches although [REDACTED] subsequently moved off.

3.7 A further renewal application was submitted in March 2006 (20060236) by [REDACTED]. The application sought justification for a further extension on the [REDACTED] which were substantiated by medical support, and on the grounds of the grandchildren's education. It was emphasised in the face of the Council's continuing shortage of allocated gypsy sites that it would be impossible to any of the three family units to relocate in the short term. It was accepted that in the light of the Council's continuing investigation for alternative sites under the requirements of the Housing Act. The temporary permission granted under GR/00/0092 was further extended until 1 October 2008, in line with other gypsy sites within the Borough.

3.8 An application to retain the site was submitted in 2009 (20090104) by [REDACTED] for use of land as a private Gypsy & Traveller site for two pitches to accommodate two mobile homes and two touring caravans on a permanent basis. However in the light of emerging policy in the SE Plan it was considered that that a full permanent permission could not be granted and further temporary 3yr. permission was granted.

3.9 The families again sought permission in 2012 (2012099) for the continued use of the land for two pitches to accommodate two mobile homes and two touring on a permanent basis and the erection of a utility building for

gypsy/traveller families. In the light of the policies within the NPPF and PPTS, and in the light of the Council's shortfall in traveller sites, it was felt that a permanent permission could be granted as the applicant had lived on the land since the 1990's and had become integrated into the local community. The permission was granted subject to numerous conditions including restricting the area of the site, limiting it to two mobile homes and two touring caravans and that occupation was limited to [REDACTED] and members of their immediate family normally residing with them.

3.10 In 2017 an application for the continued use of the land as three pitches to accommodate the stationing of three mobile home units, two touring caravans and also included the continued use of the barn as a store and utility room for three gypsy/traveller families was submitted (20171128). It was granted permission subject to a number of conditions. This included that the use hereby permitted shall be for three static caravans and two tourers, and the caravans shall be occupied only by [REDACTED] and members of their immediate families. The third mobile home unit was occupied by [REDACTED] who remain in occupation. The application also included the continued use of the barn as a store and utility room for three gypsy/traveller families (20171128).

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 Section 70 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires that, when making a determination under the Planning Acts, the determination shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Article 35 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, requires that, when issuing a decision, councils must also include a statement explaining, whether, and if so how, in dealing with the application, the local planning authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with a planning application.

National Planning Policy

4.2 National planning policy is enshrined within the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in December 2024 and sets out the Government's most up-to date vision for future growth. Paragraph 7 of the

NPPF explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three overarching objectives of sustainable development: “the economic role, the social role and the environmental role”. Paragraph 10 states “so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”. Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development in more detail and identifies the implications for both plan-making and decision-taking. In terms of plan-making this means “all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development” that meets the development needs of the area.

4.3 In terms of decision taking this means “approving development proposals that accord with an up-to date development plan without delay” and “where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date”, permission should be granted unless the Framework provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed or the harms would be significant and demonstrably outweigh the benefits with particular regard to the Framework’s considerations on sustainability, effective use of land, well designed places and affordable homes. Paragraph 38 highlights that “local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way”. Paragraph 47 states that, “Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.”

4.4 Paragraph 78 makes it clear that LPA’s need to identify and update annually a supply of specific sites to provide a minimum of 5 years supply. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF acknowledges that some residential development (sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas) will be located beyond the settlement boundary and not well served by public transport. Paragraph 110 states that “The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”

This paragraph acknowledges that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.

4.5 Chapter 13 of the NPPF refers to the protection of Green Belt land where Paragraph 142 explains “The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.” Paragraph 143 sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

4.6 Paragraph 153 states that inappropriate development, is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 153 does go on to say that: “..local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. ...‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.” Paragraph 154 sets out that Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of number exceptions applies that would not effect the openness of the Green Belt.

4.7 Other forms of development are accepted provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

These are: mineral extraction;

- a) engineering operations;
- b) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- c) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- d) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds);
- e) and development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.”

4.8 Paragraph 155 sets out that: “The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where:

- a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
- b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed (Including Gypsy/ Traveller Needs);
- c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework (Including Paragraph 13 of the PPTS);
- c. Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157. The NPPF should be read in conjunction with the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2024 (PPTS) and forms a material consideration for development of the type proposed.

4.9 From the outset it is important to record the definition of Traveller, as set out at annex 1 of that document. That definition is: 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, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such. Emphasis is added to the expansion of the definition beyond its 2023 revision. The PPTS now applies to all Gypsy and Traveller households irrespective of whether or not they do travel, ceased to travel, or simply are ethnically Gypsies and Travellers with a preference for residing within a Caravan. Paragraph 3 of the PPTS states 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.” Paragraph 4 sets out the Government’s aims in respect of Traveller sites in that

- a) that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning;
- b) to ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites;
- c) to encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale;

- d) that plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development;
- e) to promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those travellers who cannot provide their own sites;
- f) that plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective;
- g) for local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies;
- h) to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply;
- i) to reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions;
- j) to enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure;
- k) for local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.

4.10 Paragraph 9 states that LPAs should set pitch targets which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. Paragraph 10 states that LPAs should identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites. Paragraph 13 of the PPTS states that LPA's should ensure that their policies ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. Local planning authorities should, therefore, ensure that their policies:

- a) promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community;
- b) promote, in collaboration with commissioners of health services, access to appropriate health services;
- c) ensure that children can attend school on a regular basis;
- d) provide a settled base that reduces both the need for long-distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment;
- e) on the health and well-being of any travellers that may locate there or on others as a result of new development; avoid placing undue pressure on local infrastructure and services;
- f) do not locate sites in areas at high risk of flooding, including functional floodplains, given the particular vulnerability of caravans;

i) reflect the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability.”

4.11 Paragraph 14 states that “When assessing the suitability of sites in rural or semi rural settings, local planning authorities should ensure that the scale of such sites does not dominate the nearest settled community.” This section of the document does not rule out the principle of providing Traveller sites in rural or semi rural locations such as the application site; particularly as it would be an extension to an existing site and where the use of land within this area for Travellers has previously been found acceptable.

4.12 Paragraph 16 sets out that “Inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development unless the exceptions set out in Chapter 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework apply.” It is clear that the NPPF exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt now apply to Traveller sites. Paragraph 18 sets out that “The Golden Rules, set out in chapter 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework, do not apply to traveller sites.” Paragraph 25 of the PPTS sets out the material considerations that should be taken into account when determining applications for Gypsies and Travellers. These relevant considerations are set out below:

- a) the existing level of local provision and need for sites the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants other personal circumstances of the applicant
- b) that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites
- c) that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.

4.13 Paragraph 27 sets out that when considering applications, local planning authorities should attach weight to the following matters:

- a) effective use of previously developed (brownfield),
- b) untidy or derelict land sites being well planned or soft landscaped in such a way as to positively enhance the environment
- c) increase its openness promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as ensuring adequate landscaping and play areas for children not enclosing a site

with so much hard landscaping, high walls or fences, that the impression may be given that the site and its occupants are deliberately isolated from the rest of the community.

4.14 Paragraph 27 sets out that if a local planning authority cannot demonstrate an up to-date 5 year supply of deliverable sites, the provisions in paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework apply. This paragraph also states that Local planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to particular proposals using planning conditions or planning obligations.

Local Development Plan

4.15 The relevant Development Plan is the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and the saved policies of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994. The following policies were taken into consideration in the determination of this application and are the main concerns within this statement:

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development
- CS17 – Sites for Gypsies and travellers
- CS19 – Design and Development Principle

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact on the Highway Network

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015);

6.0 Planning Considerations

6.1 It is our opinion that the main issues in the consideration of this application are whether the proposal would comply with the PPTS, affect the openness of the Green Belt, its impact on the character and appearance of the area, the established need for traveller sites and whether it would have any impact on neighbouring amenities.

6.2 In respect of planning for Traveller sites, Policy CS17 sets out the Council's position on provision for Traveller Sites. In this regard its key policy is to meet the needs of Travellers resorting to the Borough by safeguarding existing traveller sites with permanent planning permission and identifying sufficient sites for Travellers to meet the need identified in the most up to date needs assessment. It emphasises that this can be achieved by investigating opportunities to extend existing permanent sites, particularly within the urban area. However in Gravesham such sites are limited and generally have little scope for expansion.

6.3 In terms of the level of need for new pitches, the Council has carried out Traveller Accommodation Assessment in conjunction with adjoining authorities which identified a significant shortfall. We attach the Council's own investigations on the need for and supply of Gypsy sites:-

6.4 Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers is a specific type of accommodation that Councils have a duty to provide under the Housing Act (2004). The guidance in Policy B of the 2024 PPTS requires Local Planning Authorities to set their own target for the number of pitches to be provided in their areas, using a robust evidence base and to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets, and a supply of specific developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6 to 10 and where possible for years 11 -15. The identified need for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the borough is derived from the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) 2022. This GTAA updates and assesses need for pitches in the Borough, over the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2040, taking account of the proposed occupants of new pitches permitted since 2017. This covers the remaining 6 years of the Local Plan Core Strategy plan period (2022 – 28) and will inform the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan period (2025 – 2040). The Council is aware that the need identified in the 2022 GTAA does not take account of the updated planning definition of Gypsies and Travellers in the 2023 or 2024 PPTS as it pre-dates these changes. It is acknowledged that the need therefore within the Borough, will be greater than the need for pitches for Gypsies and Travellers that solely met the pre-2023 PPTS definition. The Council is currently in the process of understanding the implications of the revised 2024 PPTS definition and is engaging with the consultants who undertook the 2022 GTAA on the matter.

A summary of pitch need over the plan period 2022 – 2040 is set out below. This shows that there is a need to provide 20 pitches between the period 2022 to 2028 for those Traveller households who met the 2015 planning definition.

For completeness the need is broken down into 5 year periods, taking into consideration the needs of those Traveller families who did not meet the planning definition, or where it was undetermined whether or not they met the definition. From this it is clear that the need for new pitches is likely to increase. An extract from table 6 of the Five year Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Supply Statement 2024 -2029 illustrates the overall 5 year housing land requirement for the period April 2024 – March 2029 for those traveller households who met the 2015 planning definition and the overall traveller household need (i.e. those that did not meet the pre-2023 definition).

Since April 2024, planning permission has been granted on appeal for 4 pitches (APP/K2230/W/24/3336250 and APP/K2230/W/24/3336645). From this it is clear that in April 2024, the council could not demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable pitches.

Therefore, there is a significant shortfall in past delivery and future supply. Consequently there is a demonstrable unmet need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches within the Borough and this should be afforded significant weight.

Gypsy and Traveller Status

6.5 It is our contention that whilst it is a rural site it is one that has been accepted by the local Parish Council to have been assimilated into the community and they have always supported the applicant's proposals. We see no reason why they should not support the current proposal. The additional units have been placed immediately to the rear of the approved residential site without any adverse impact on the existing occupiers. Whilst it would result in the increase in the size of the traveller site; all units would have access to the existing amenity space and the utility area within the barn. The units would be occupied by the grandchildren of the authorised occupiers and the children of the occupier of Unit 3. This would accord with the limitation on family occupation imposed when the original permission was granted. It is our contention that the proposal offers an excellent opportunity to provide additional pitches to meet the council's deficit without conflict with policy.

Impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

6.6 The NPPF explains that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. In this instance we have emphasised that that we are satisfied that 'very special circumstances' exist in this instance to justify the additional traveller pitches. Whilst acknowledging that inappropriate development in the Green Belt should be regarded as harmful to its openness and should only be permitted if the harm caused is outweighed by other considerations or 'very special circumstances'. The NPPF emphasises that there are exceptions to the 'general rule' and it is our contention that the provision of additional traveller pitches where there is a defined shortfall is a valid exception – as outlined above. We are satisfied that the units would be appropriately designed to be in keeping with the existing built development on site and the locality generally and consequently would have only a limited adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the purpose of including it within the Green Belt.

6.7 Turning to visual impact whilst it is accepted that the proposal will result in further development on the site the proposal is of a design that complements the appearance of the main buildings. The caravans would be positioned immediately adjacent to the existing caravans such as to appear 'as one' with them. They would be located within an area that has already been screened by an existing fence with 3m planting area. This is already screened by the established hedging fronting Gravesend Road (A227).

6.8 Overall the proposals are considered to be appropriately designed for their Green Belt location and will have little impact on the visual amenities of the area or street scene generally. The proposal is in full compliance with the design principles outlined in the NPPF (December 2024) and the Council's own criteria contained in Policy CS17. The proposal is associated with an established residential use and we are satisfied that there is no conflict with Green Belt policy contained within the NPPF or saved policies of the Council's UDP. The proposed scheme is supported by Policy CS17 and the PPTS and is an extension of an existing site and does not constitute inappropriate development and we are satisfied that very special circumstances exist that outweigh any visual harm that may be perceived.

6.9 The development is low key and is not be readily visible outside the site which has a well established hedge to the Wrotham Road frontage. The residential site is enclosed from the surrounding agricultural land by fencing and supplementary planting which screens it from the surrounding land. The

site is clearly previously developed land and the proposal has no greater impact on the openness of the area. The footprint of the proposal is relatively small and its bulk and massing is such as it will not be seen from any vantage point to which the general public have a right of access we feel that its impact on the openness will be limited. We are satisfied that there is no conflict with the NPPF which seek to enhance and preserve landscapes and bio-diversity.

6.10 We are satisfied that the proposal would provide further pitches of traveller accommodation in line with PPTS and Policy CS17 of the Council's Core Strategy and will contribute to the council's shortfall.

Impact on the character of the Area:

6.11 The additional caravans would be in keeping and character of the site and is proportionate to the other buildings on the site. The bulk and massing of the individual units would be keeping with the current buildings and of a more modern design. We feel that there will be a significant improvement in the visual attractiveness of the site and will not materially impact on the natural beauty and landscape value of the area. The site is well screened from the road by the existing hedge and closes boarded fencing and is accessed from the existing crossover and concrete hand-standing that serves the authorised site. The whole site will be re-fenced with post and rail fencing to the open grazing land to the north and east and a new mixed natural hedge will be provided inside the plot. The residential use of the site is already established and the impact of residential paraphernalia on the openness of the site and countryside is in place and there would no greater impact on the area.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

6.12 There are no immediate neighbours that would be materially affected by the proposal as it cannot be seen from adjoining properties the nearest of which is some 50m away. The additional units are further away than the existing units and is largely screen by them. We are satisfied that the amenities of neighbours would not be prejudiced by the proposal. We are satisfied that there is no conflict with the NPPF and would be of a good design in keeping and character of the area and will appear visually attractive relative to the current uses.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 It is our view that the proposal would not impact on the current use of the site as gipsy/traveller pitches and that the proposal would make a valuable contribution to the Council's current shortfall in pitches for travellers. The site

has an existing permission as traveller pitches and the proposal is for an additional caravan for occupation by an immediate family member. The site has integrated into the local community and is an accepted part of the locality. To deny the application would only necessitate the family moving the unit from the site and the family would be forced back onto the road which would only lead to conflict and result in a disruption of the children's schooling. The proposal Gravesham Borough Council 13 Millers Farm Wrotham Road Meacham Kent TN15 7JR Planning Permission would permit the expansion of an existing permanent traveller site and ensure that the site remains within the same family group. 7.2 The proposal would make a positive contribution to the enhancement of the existing built development, and is considered to visually more pleasing than the old garages which it replaced. 7.3 There would be no adverse impact on the amenities of any nearby residents nor would it have any significant impact on the vitality and viability of the rest of the surrounding area. It is our view that the application should be supported and permission for the proposed development be granted.

James Barron BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI