



**PROMETHEAN**  
PLANNING

Land North of Girder Bridge,  
Gay Street Lane,  
North Heath  
RH20 2HW

Use of land for the stationing of 6 static caravans for residential purposes and associated landscape works.

Planning Statement

23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

## **Location**

The site amounts to approximately 0.79 hectares and is located to the North of Gay Street Lane from which it is accessed.

The site is bound by a footpath to the west which follows the alignment of the existing access and the railway line to its east.

To the south there is a single dwelling and a number of outbuildings, owned by the applicant, which are also accessed off the track.

The site is 2km north of the defined built-up area of Pulborough. The site is well contained from all vantage points from the road and is only visible from the public footpath and from the railway line.

The surrounding landscape is primarily rural, consisting of various agricultural and equine development, however, with some existing examples of sporadic residential development in the vicinity of the application site in Gay Street Lane and Stallhouse Lane.

## **The Proposal**

The proposal is for the use of the land for the stationing of a six static caravans for residential purposes for a gypsy traveller family, together with the formation of hardstanding and associated landscaping.

The plans include space for the parking of 2 cars for each pitch and a bike and bin store.

## **Relevant policies**

Policy 26 of the HDPF seeks to protect the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside against inappropriate development, seeking to support certain forms of development related to the needs of rural enterprise and sustainable rural development, while seeking to prevent a significant intensification of use and retain important components of rural character.

Policy 23 of the HDPF sets out the criteria for assessment in the determination of planning applications for non-allocated gypsy and traveller development, seeking to ensure that sites are appropriate in terms of ground conditions, vulnerability to flood risk, served by safe and convenient vehicular/pedestrian access, appropriate to local character, appearance and neighbouring amenity.

Policy 23 of the HDPF seeks to support sites located in or near existing settlements, within reasonable distance of local services and community facilities, in particular to schools and essential health services.

Paragraph 22 of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) (2015) confirms that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 23 of the PPTS confirms that applications involving traveller sites must be assessed in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and the application of specific policies contained within the PPTS and NPPF relating to traveller sites.

Paragraph 24 of the PPTS sets out that Local Planning Authorities must consider the following issues amongst other relevant matters, in the determination of applications for traveller sites:

- a.) The existing level of local provision and need for sites;
- b.) The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants;
- c.) Other personal circumstances of the applicant;
- d.) That the locally specific criteria used to guide the application 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;
- e.) That they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.

Paragraph 25 to the PPTS sets out that LPAs should strictly limit new traveller site developments in the open countryside that are away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan.

Paragraph 27 of the PPTS confirms that if an LPA cannot demonstrate an up-to-date 5 year supply of deliverable sites, this should be a significant material consideration in any subsequent determination when considering applications for the grant of temporary planning permission. An exception, however, exists for defined protected landscapes, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and/or areas protected under the Birds and Habitats Directive.

### Need

At this time, the District is subject to a substantial unmet need for gypsy and traveller pitches which has subsisted for a number of years, with no clear pathway for resolution through the adoption of a new local plan.

The previously stated need of 93 pitches for Gypsy Traveller Households stated in the GTAA dated January 2020 has since been updated by Opinion Research Services for Horsham Council and published in December 2023.

The update indicates a need between 2023-2040 (the plan period) for 128 pitches. This follows the result of the Lisa Smith Judgement (Smith v. SoS for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (CA-2021-00171, 31st October 2022) where the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) was updated in December 2023 to revert back to the 2012 PPTS planning definition of a Traveller by reintroducing those who have ceased to travel permanently due to education, ill health, or old age into the definition (now referred to as the 2023 PPTS).

The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2023 (GTAA) does not however reflect the most current national policy definitions of "Traveller" as revised in December 2024.

These changes significantly broaden the scope of who qualifies as a traveller for planning purposes and, as such, materially affect the validity of the GTAA's conclusions regarding accommodation need.

The GTAA assessment predates the critical update to national planning policy in December 2024 with updates to PPTS and NPPF

These updates further expanded the definition to include:

"All other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan..."

This evolution reflects a shift from a mobility-based definition to one that recognises cultural identity and lifestyle, aligning with the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and the findings of Lisa Smith v SSLUHC [2022].

As such:

Households with a cultural tradition of nomadism or caravan living, but not currently travelling, were likely excluded from the needs calculation.

The GTAA's pitch and plot requirements are based on a narrower pool of qualifying households. The broader definition would likely increase the number of households considered to be in need.

Continuing to rely on the GTAA 2023 without adjustment risks under-provision of sites, potential legal challenge, and non-compliance with national policy.

The December 2024 definition is now a material consideration in planning decisions and local authorities are required to:

- Reassess accommodation needs using the updated definition.
- Ensure Local Plan policies and site allocations reflect the broader scope of traveller identity.
- Engage with communities who may now qualify under the expanded definition.

The GTAA 2023 is now outdated in light of the December 2024 policy revision.

As such the stated need for 128 pitches for households that met the planning definition is likely an underestimate and the number is likely higher.

In terms of the Council's current policy position, Policy 22 and 23 of the HDPF are considered to hold great weight, allowing speculative gypsy and traveller sites to come forward in principle.

Paragraph 28 of the PPTS (updated December 2024) outlines that if a local planning authority cannot demonstrate an up-to-date five-year supply of deliverable sites, the provisions in paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework apply.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework when taken as a whole.

This constitutes a major consideration weighing heavily in favour of the proposal provided that the development does not significantly depart from the criteria laid-out in Policy 23 of the HDPF and the PPTS.

## Location

The application site is 150m from an application site for 4 pitches in Stallhouse Lane submitted under DC/24/1573.

This site is on the other side of the railway line and is further from Pulborough than the application site.

In their assessment of the suitability of that site as a location the LPA stated:

*The site is located 2.4km from the nearest built up area boundary (Pulborough) (3.8km from the town centre). Stall house lane is an adopted unlit highway with no dedicated pedestrian footpath.*

*Future occupiers would benefit from indirect access to larger settlements, although it is noted that the nearest bus stop is 0.7 km from the nearest bus stop. This would provide an alternative means of transport.*

*Given the context of the site in reasonable proximity of clusters of other residential properties it is not considered that a reason for refusal on the grounds of unsustainable location could be justified.*

*The current application closely reflects others including DC/23/2098 and more recently DC/24/0356. The principle of development was established as acceptable under these applications given the context of the site in relation to clusters of other residential properties and transport links such that the proposal would not be considered to be in an unsustainable location.*

*Subject to all other material considerations below, the development is considered to be acceptable in principle.*

Given the site is in closer proximity to Pulborough and exhibits many of the same characteristics, the site constitutes a suitable location for development of this character, with reasonable access to a range of local services and facilities.

It is therefore considered that the site constitutes an acceptable location for the proposed development in relation to HDPF Policies 23 and 26

### Landscape impacts

The proposed development would comprise six plots each with a modest area of hardstanding and amenity curtilage accessed via an access track running to the west of the site.

The development would be heavily landscaped with native hedging proposed between pitches and existing trees along the site retained.

The trees along the existing access track / public footpath will all be retained and protected and all scrub around the boundaries of the site will be retained.

As a result the development will have limited visibility from the public footpath and with the proposed pitches located to the eastern part of the site there will be a substantial distance from the footpath which will lessen their impact.

To the immediate east of the site is the railway line which is raised from the site and so provides a visual barrier from the east toward the site.

As a result it is considered that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable harmful visual impact on the landscape character.

Strategic Policy 23: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation states that any planning applications for non-allocated sites must not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and the amenity of neighbouring properties, and is sensitively designed to mitigate any impact on its surroundings. (our underlining added)

The resulting impact is limited and certainly could not be considered to meet the threshold of 'unacceptable harm' as set out in the policy.

It is therefore considered that the proposal maintains the local landscape character and is therefore compliant with the provisions of policies 25, 26, 27, 32 and 33 of the HDPF (2015)

### Amenity:

The application site is situated 40m north of the property known as Girder Bridge

The distance between the site and neighbouring occupiers would prevent any unacceptable harm in terms of potential overbearing, overshadowing or loss of privacy.

The proposed and existing pitches on the site would be sufficiently spaciouly arranged to avoid any overly cramped development and to satisfy a minimum standard of necessary amenity.

### Highways and Access

The site is accessed via an established access from Gay Street Lane.

The access track is laid to hardstanding and would only require minor improvements to ensure it is suitable for more regular use. There is no intention to widen the track, only to improve it where it is rutted and contains potholes.

Visibility in both directions at the access on to gay Street Lane is sufficient due to the geometry of the road.

Whilst the proposal would constitute an intensification of the use of this track, this would be modest within the context of the public highway network and would not be considered a material detriment to highway operation.

Policy 41 of the HDPPF seeks to ensure that the proposed development is supported by adequate parking, including for vehicles, electric-vehicles and cyclists.

The proposal would provide two vehicular parking spaces for each additional pitch with sufficient hardstand provided for vehicles to turn within the site.

The proposed layout provides that each pitch would benefit from hardstand providing a space for 2x cars, a refuse store incorporating an EV charging point and storage for 2x cycles.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, and therefore is not contrary to the Local Plan or the National Planning Policy Framework.

## Ecology and trees

The proposal would not result in the removal of any trees other than one category C oak tree.

All remaining trees along the access track and along the boundary of the site are to be protected and retained.

A detailed Arboricultural Method Statement accompanies the application

The site comprises a mixture of scrub habitat with areas of ruderal habitat and modified grassland.

The scheme has been designed so as to avoid impact on any protected species. The scrub around the edges of the site will remain to avoid potential for impacts on dormice habitats.

Further dormice surveys have been undertaken and the consistently negative results suggested that dormice were highly unlikely to be present within the site's woody habitats during the survey period.

One further survey will be carried out in May 2026. Should the May survey also return a negative result, works could proceed under a precautionary non-licensed method of works.

If future survey work were to confirm dormouse presence, a European Protected Species licence from Natural England would have been required, accompanied by an appropriate mitigation strategy.

Reptile surveys were undertaken between July and October 2025 following Froglife (2016) and CIEEM (2021) guidance, using 30 artificial refugia placed across unmanaged grassland.

Seven presence/likely absence surveys and eight population-estimate surveys were conducted during suitable weather conditions.

Three reptile species were recorded: slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and a single adult grass snake *Natrix Helvetica*

Given that the development footprint would adversely affect reptile habitat, a full mitigation and translocation strategy is proposed.

With these measures implemented, impacts on slow worm, common lizard and grass snake were assessed as negligible, with populations expected to remain viable within the wider landscape and capable of recolonising enhanced habitats after construction.

Further details are provided in the accompanying ecology reports.

An amber risk of offence regarding great crested newt was identified. Habitat suitability index (HSI) survey and environmental DNA surveys of ponds were recommended, however access was not possible.

As a result the applicant has committed to the District Level Licensing scheme with Naturespace and details of this accompany the application.

The scheme provides for ecological enhancement with the planting of additional native hedge planting and provides Biodiversity Net Gain in excess of the 10% mandatory requirement as detailed in the accompanying BNG metric and report.

## Foul water Drainage

The applicant proposes foul water disposal by a highly efficient package treatment plant.

In the absence of mains drainage this is considered to be an appropriate means of foul water disposal which would avoid harm to the quality of the soils.

The new package treatment plant will be a Rewatec Solido Smart 2-8 Person Sewage Treatment Plant manufactured by Premier Tech Aqua, 2 Whitehouse Way, South West Industrial Estate, Peterlee, Co Durham, SR8 2RA.

The package treatment plant will be installed and fully operational prior to occupation of the development. The package treatment plant will be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and instructions, and in accordance with the Building Regulations.

The package treatment plant will be serviced by a qualified British Water accredited engineer on an annual basis in accordance with the manufacturers servicing and maintenance guide to ensure it is operating efficiently and effectively.

This would include a desludge to ensure a solids build-up doesn't compromise the treatment chamber if the sludge level reaches 70% of the permitted maximum.

The annual service would include an assessment of the activated sludge volume in the reactor in accordance with the manufacturers servicing and maintenance guide.

The annual service would include checking of all working parts including:

- Air blower strength/efficiency
- Air filter check/change
- Final water quality
- Mechanical component checks/replacements
- Air pipe checks
- Diffuser checks
- Health of bacteria

The runoff from the treatment plant will be taken to a soakaway drainage field.

### Surface water Drainage

The site is not within a flood zone as identified by the Environment Agency.

Surface water will be discharged by infiltration. This will be designed following infiltration testing in accordance with BRE365, at the location and depth of proposed devices.

Infiltration devices will be located 5m from structures and boundaries, in addition to avoiding Root Protection Zones.

The proposed permeable surfacing will be constructed of MOT Type 3 sub base to a depth of 300mm overlaid with a permeable pea shingle, or similar.

The applicant expects a detailed drainage design will be required prior to commencement of the development and is happy to accept a drainage condition requiring further details.

### Sustainability statement

The proposal seeks to utilise sustainable design and construction techniques, for example, energy conservation and efficiency, water efficiency, reducing waste, re-using materials and recycling materials to ensure the most efficient use of limited resources.

The application seeks to meet these aims in the following ways:

- Provision of an electric vehicle charging point for each plot
- Improvements to the biodiversity of the site through substantial additional planting to the boundaries including enhancing existing hedgerows.
- Provision of separate waste and recycling bins along with suitable covered storage.
- Water limiting measures will be provided to ensure the water neutrality.

## Factors weighing in favour of the application

The following factors weigh in favour of the application:

- i) The proposal complies with Policy 23 and the presumption in favour of the plan applies.

Strategic Policy 23: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation states as follows (our comments in red):

*The following criteria will be taken into consideration when determining the allocation of land for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and any planning applications for non-allocated sites:*

- a. *There must be no significant barriers to development exist in terms of flooding, poor drainage, poor ground stability or proximity to other hazardous land or installation where conventional housing would not be suitable;*

*The site is outside of a flood zone with no known drainage issues, no contamination issues or hazards such as overhead lines. The site is level and accessible.*

- b. *The site is served by a safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access. The proposal should not result in significant hazard to other road users;*

*The site has a safe established access*

- c. *The site can be properly serviced and is supplied with essential services, such as water, power, sewerage and drainage, and waste disposal. The site must also be large enough to provide adequate vehicle parking, including circulation space, along with residential amenity and play areas;*

*There is power and water on the site and connection to private drainage can be achieved. The site is located in a residential lane with other dwellings so waste collection services will be readily available with bins being brought to the gate on to Gay Street Lane. Sufficient parking and turning is available on site as well as sufficient amenity space for the families.*

- d. *The site is located in or near to existing settlements, or is part of an allocated strategic location, within reasonable distance of a range of local services and community facilities, in particular schools and essential health services;*

*The site is located in close proximity to the nearest built-up area boundary of Pulborough. Future occupiers would benefit from indirect access into the larger settlement, which provides services and facilities, with public transport access to larger settlements.*

- e. *The development will not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and the amenity of neighbouring properties, and is sensitively designed to mitigate any impact on its surroundings.*

*The application site is well screened on all boundaries. It would not impact the amenity of local properties, none of which are adjacent to the site.*

*The site is not a protected or sensitive landscape and whilst any development will result in some change to the character of a site, the changes are not considered to be harmful.*

*The resulting impact is limited and certainly could not be considered to meet the threshold of 'unacceptable harm' as set out in the policy.*

- ii) The identified need for Gypsy Traveller pitches is not being met and issues with water neutrality make it even more difficult for the LPA to meet this need. Therefore, where a suitable site comes forward that meets the requirements of Policy 23 and can demonstrate water neutrality they should be granted.
- iii) The LPA cannot demonstrate a five-year supply.
- iv) There is a clear failure of Policy. The LPA have failed to deliver on their allocations so did not meet the identified need for 128 pitches (even though that was an underestimate.)
- v) The likely location of any new Gypsy Traveller site in Horsham will be in the Countryside. The PPTS accepts that gypsy sites will be in the countryside. Simply because a site is within the countryside is not an automatic assumption that it will be harmful to the character of the area. The application site has no statutory or local landscape designation, it is not within the Green Belt and is not a National landscape or National Park. The site is therefore exactly the type of area in which sites are likely to be found. The proposal results in limited impact on the landscape character of the area.

Overall, therefore, the limited impact considered to arise for the development proposals would be far outweighed by the significant benefits as identified above.

It is, therefore, considered that planning permission should be approved.