

Vale of Glamorgan Council
Holton Road
Barry
CF63 4RU

Date: 8 October 2018

Our ref: 31095/02/JCO/EB0/16593431v21

Your ref:

Dear Sir / Madam

Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee: Land at Hayeswood Road, Barry - Preferred Site for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

This Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of a consortium comprising 24 individual businesses operating from Atlantic Trading Estate in Barry. It relates to the identification of land at Hayeswood Road as a preferred location for a Gypsy and Traveller site and the Council's stated intentions to acquire the site from Welsh Government and to facilitate the delivery of the above scheme.

Whilst we will be speaking at the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee on 10 October 2018, this statement is submitted in order to set our clients grave concerns regarding the Council's proposals and should therefore be treated as a holding objection.

Should the Council resolve to move forward with these proposals, a formal planning application will need to be submitted, preceded by mandatory public consultation. At both these stages, we will, if necessary, submit a comprehensive objection, detailing the evidence-based legitimate planning considerations.

In the interim however, there are major concerns amongst local businesses that need to be communicated to the Council immediately. Our clients have asked us to present their concerns, which are set out below.

- 1 It would appear that the evidence base the Council is relying upon both in respect of demonstrating the need for the development and the assessment of alternative sites is highly questionable.
- 2 The Cabinet resolution from site acquisition to seeking to obtain planning permission appears at face value to circumvent open dialogue and scrutiny. The process the Council has followed to date certainly raises questions about predetermination and even at this early stage we consider that any eventual planning permission could be at risk of Judicial Review.
- 3 Whilst the Council has attempted to present an objective assessment of potential alternative sites, this less than robust assessment seems to be based on a desktop study that has discounted a number of alternative sites without a rigorous evidence base for doing so.
- 4 The identified need of 20 pitches over the Plan period informed by the 2016 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), is also questionable. The 2016 GTAA sets out the findings of dialogue with the current occupants of the "tolerated" site at the former Civic Amenity Site on Hayes Road and unequivocally states that none of the residents wished to live on a formal public Gypsy and

Traveller site. Previous iterations of the GTAA over the years also confirm this position. The Council's proposals are therefore contrary to the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the Vale of Glamorgan and raises further questions about which members of the local Gypsy and Traveller community the proposals seek to accommodate.

- 5 Our clients would like to make the Committee aware that due to the impending infrastructure proposals in South Cardiff (including Eastern Bay Link Phase 2), the current Gypsy and Traveller site at Rover Way is expected to close. Although an alternative site has been suggested at Shirenewton, Rummney the occupiers of the site have reportedly rejected this as they would prefer to stay in the area. The perception of the business owners at Atlantic Trading Estate is that, if approved, the site may end up housing the displaced Rover Way Gypsies, which they are concerned about. Our clients have been in contact with businesses in Rover Way and we are advised that there is evidence concerning the significant adverse impacts on those businesses which our clients intend to raise with the Council, separately.
- 6 Our clients implore the Council to consider the impact of the proposed development on the 24 thriving businesses operating out of Atlantic Trading Estate, many of which are looking to grow and to invest, resulting in significant job creation. As a consequence of this proposal, all of those plans have either been abandoned or are on hold, pending the outcome of the Council's deliberations on this matter. In addition, they are further concerned that that any plans to regenerate this area further will not succeed due to the negative connotations associated with a Gypsy and Traveller site leading to an inevitable, irreversible decline in investment the area.
- 7 Our clients appreciate that the Council has a statutory responsibility to allocate a suitable site to accommodate the Gypsy and Traveller community. However, there is an inescapable stigma attached to Gypsy and Traveller sites and the perceptions are entirely negative. Our clients therefore urge the Council to consider the impact of the proposed development, not only on businesses, employment and growth, but also on the occupiers of the residential properties that back directly on to the proposal site – their fears about safety and security, property values and their quality of lives must be of concern to members.

In conclusion, our clients consider that the Council's proposals for the Hayeswood Road site are ill-considered and comprise an unneighbourly form of development. Our clients strongly suggest that the Council should abort its plans. At the very least, our clients urge the Council to put the proposals on hold and to re-visit the evidence base seeking to identify genuine need and appropriate sites that would serve the stated needs of those members of the gypsy and traveller community seeking accommodation in the Vale of Glamorgan. The proposals as they stand are ill-informed and will, result in abortive time and costs for the Council.

Yours faithfully

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Occupiers of Atlantic Trading Estate