

Statement in support of an application for a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development in respect of Irchester Gypsy Site

1. My name is James Wheeler and I am currently employed as Head of Property Service by Northamptonshire County Council ("the Council"). I am familiar with Irchester Gypsy Site ("The Site") through having been directly responsible for its management since 2009. The extent of the site is shown edged red on the plan attached to this statement. Insofar as this statement refers to events before 2009 I am satisfied as to the accuracy of the facts stated from my examination of the Council's files.
2. The Council acquired the land on which the site is situated together with the adjoining country park in 1971 from the British Steel Corporation. I cannot be certain as to precisely when the Site was established on part of that acquisition but in 1984 planning consent was granted for the addition of an extra 8 pitches meaning that the initial site must have been established before that date. In 1991 consent was granted for an additional 2 pitches. Copies of both these consent s are attached to this statement.
3. Since 1991 the Site has been configured with 25 traveller plots, each with an amenity block of traditional brick and block construction with pitched tiled roof. The amenity blocks provided kitchen, dining, washing and toilet facilities.
4. The Council's records show that The Gypsy Council sought and obtained authority from the County Council on 28th April 1994 to manage the site. Their original site-based manager was Ernest Burton but was superseded by Mr Francis Doherty on 13th June 1996.
5. The Gypsy and Traveller site was managed by The Gypsy Council from 1994 until its termination 2008, at which time the management of the site reverted to the County Council.
6. The County Council contracted the management of the traveller site to Mercia Security Ltd (later Mercia Facilities Management Ltd) on 1st February 2010. The contract ran until its termination on 7th April 2014.
7. I am confident from the above information and my own knowledge of the site that it has been in continuous use as a Gypsy site since at least 1984

Signed

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James Wheeler

7/11/14