

## **Question to the Strategic Licensing Committee meeting to be held 14th June 2023 from David Turner**

I note that there is an agenda item at this meeting regarding Statement of Licensing Policy 2024-29.

There is apparently only fleeting reference to “caravan sites”.

Shropshire Council’s website carries details concerning the regulatory framework, viz: The Mobile Homes (Requirement for Manager of Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020 (“the Regulations”) which is “a fit and proper person test for site owners or the person appointed to manage the site”. The purpose of the fit and proper person test is to improve the standards of park home site management. The Regulations apply to all relevant protected sites as defined in section 5A(5) of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, this includes both wholly residential and mixed use (holiday and residential) sites.

The current pressure on the housing market means that more people are looking to park homes for permanent accommodation. And this may result in advantage being taken of vulnerable home-seekers - in some instances.

The Communities and Local Government guidance on the Shropshire Council website displays The Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in England Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 – Section 5

The local authority is required, under Section 25 of the Act, to maintain an accurate register of the site licences in their area. Given the number of different types of sites that local authorities may deal with, it is recommended that the register shows what type of site each is, be it holiday, residential, mixed use or gypsy and traveller. It is recommended as a minimum the information the site register has is:

- Name and address of site (if available the Geographic Information Service mapping code should also be logged).
- Name of the licence holder, the site owner (if different) and any person managing the site on behalf of either of those persons.
- Type of site.
- The number of pitches
- The licence conditions (if any)

Other authorities including Cornwall, have refused site licences on the grounds of that the applicant is effectively a shell company with few or no assets

My questions are:

1. Is there a regime of inspection by Shropshire Council. If so, where can it be viewed?
2. How many times in the past five years has action been taken in respect of non-adherence to the rules? If any, what sanctions have been imposed?
3. In the past five years, has Shropshire Council given consideration to the financial status of applicants?
4. In the past five years has Shropshire Council refused a licence application?

### **Response from the Transactional Management and Licensing – Team Manager**

The Statement of Licensing Policy specifically relates to the Licensing Act 2003. There is no reference at all to caravan sites or caravan site licensing in the draft Statement of Licensing Policy 2024-2029 because this is not a matter the Policy is concerned with.

*1. Is there a regime of inspection by Shropshire Council. If so, where can it be viewed?*

Answer

A project to inspect every caravan site with a licence in the Shropshire Council area has recently been completed by the Licensing Team. The outcome of this was a risk rated list of all licensed sites which determines how frequently they will be inspected in the future, which is dependent on their risk rating. The inspection regime is part of the Council's management of caravan site licences and is not ordinarily public information, or information which any relevant legislation requires to be public. A freedom of information request could be submitted to request this information if required and it would be considered in line with the Freedom of Information Act.

*2. How many times in the past five years has action been taken in respect of non-adherence to the rules? If any, what sanctions have been imposed?*

Answer

This information is not readily available. To identify what action has been taken would require a manual process whereby each record would have to be looked at individually therefore, it would be a very lengthy and time-consuming process for officers to provide this information.

*3. In the past five years, has Shropshire Council given consideration to the financial status of applicants?*

Answer

No

4. *In the past five years has Shropshire Council refused a licence application?*

Answer

No