

Sites for Gypsies and Travellers June Public Consultation Exercise.
Land north and west of Westham Lane (area of search) Barford GT12

I am [REDACTED]

Also living at [REDACTED] are my wife [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We have owned the land since 1977 and lived there for 23 years.

We are concerned at the possible siting of one or more Travellers sites on land lying to the north of Westham Lane. We consider that there are very strong grounds for stating that this is not the right location. Our reasons are as follows: -

1. Environmental impact.

The area of search is open arable land which lies on a level plateau except where it falls to areas prone to flooding. The vista from south to north is across the river Avon to Sherbourne and its beautiful Gilbert Scott church. It would be impossible to design a site which would "enhance the environment" as required by para 24 (b) of the Government Planning Guidance. A site would not "protect the local amenity and environment" ---- 9(b).

2. Planning.

The area of search is open green field land. There is no way in which a planning consent would be granted for residential development on this land. Indeed Mr Tym Morgan was refused planning permission to build a house next to his buildings despite farming a viable holding and having real security concerns which were realised when serious damage was caused to his buildings and diesel and small tools were stolen. The thieves came with bolt cutters to open the main doors and a key for the fork lift truck which they used to force up the roll up door on the lean-to. The owners of Westham House were refused consent to add to the flats at their property despite the fact that the proposed development would not have been visible outside the boundaries of their own property. To grant consent for a Travellers site would be discriminatory and unfair to those who have been refused perfectly reasonable applications.

Any site within the search area would lie outside areas allocated for development in the Local Plan, would certainly not respect the interests of the settled community and would dominate the settled community thereby breaching the guidance in paras 10, 12 and 23.

3. Infrastructure.

There are no public services west of the bypass. Any water supply would have to be brought from Wellesbourne Road, along the whole length of the eastern half of Westham Lane and then under the bypass and across farm land to the site. Mains drainage would have to be by septic tank. This is not straight forward. We struggled with our own system for some years until an expert advised that the outfall was below the water table. We have had to instal, maintain and replace a pump. The water table is high in the area --- particularly over the past 12 months. It is more variable where the substrata is gravel.

4. Access.

There is no satisfactory access on to the bypass. Traffic travels at speed along the bypass. The fact that traffic could travel at speed was a highly relevant factor in assessing the Cost Benefit Analysis when the bypass was built. The initial scheme which proposed safer junctions for access to the village was rejected by the Department. The County Council rejected a request from the Parish Council that available funds be spent in reducing the

speed limit on the bypass to 50mph. Slow moving mobile homes/caravans turning off or onto the bypass would be hazardous. Pedestrian access would be just as hazardous. At the north end of the search area there isn't even a pavement. There is no central reservation for pedestrians. We have direct knowledge of the hazards. Mr Hunt from No.5 Westham Lane has cycled daily to shepherd stock on our land. When the bypass was opened he judged it too dangerous to cycle down so he drove. He collided with a vehicle as he crossed. That vehicle turned over. There were no human fatalities but a dog in the vehicle was killed. I am not at all certain that that incident was recorded in the statistics. Mr Hunt now cycles to us crossing at Westham Lane. He waits until he can see no traffic in either direction but frequently a car is virtually upon him before he has completed the crossing. He has been hooted at and abused. It beggars belief that the study concludes that there is good pedestrian access to the village for the school and buses. It should also be noted that considerable development is proposed for Wellesbourne which can only increase the traffic. At peak times, when children would need to go to the village, it is common to have to wait several minutes to exit Westham Lane safely. Westham Lane itself is a private road --- resurfaced at the cost of the residents a few years ago. It is narrow and not well suited to the traffic that would be generated by a travellers site.

5. Agriculture.

The whole of the search area is classified as grade 2. Only a tiny percentage of land in Warwickshire is of that quality. If required, it is capable of irrigation for intensive vegetable cropping as is the case with other land in the valley which runs to Wellesbourne. The land is well farmed by Mr Morgan and is viable despite a relatively small acreage for an arable holding. It would be wholly wrong for any site to be located on "the best and most versatile land". Our land and that immediately adjoining is farmed entirely for livestock production. It is a fact that dogs form an important part of the travellers community --- indeed Best Practice advice suggests the provision of kennels with pitches. It is also well known that travellers dogs are kept reasonably free. That represents a danger to livestock producers. Although livestock owners are within their rights to shoot dogs causing a nuisance to stock, such action would bring about open warfare rather than the harmonious relationship the policies aspire to.

In summary it seems to us that the location of a site within the search area would have a disproportionate effect upon the existing small community that lies to the west of the bypass and adjoins the search area. For all the reasons stated above it is difficult to contemplate a more inappropriate location for a Gypsy and Traveller site.