



Development Policy Manager
Development Services
Warwick District Council
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RE: Objection to proposed Gypsy & Traveller site GT02

I would like to register my objection to the inclusion of the proposed Gypsy & Traveller site referred to as GT02 as an alternative site in the consultation for the preferred options. I feel that GT02 is an inappropriate site that should have been discounted as part of the first consultation. I disagree entirely with its green rating and its inclusion in the alternative sites list.

Below are the reasons I feel this development would be inappropriate and why it should be disregarded as a potential site:

Business Impact

The GT02 site is across the Fosse Way from the Warwickshire Exhibition Centre (WEC). Following the inclusion of GT02 in the first consultation, the WEC suffered a loss of income from being associated with the proposed site. The owners of the WEC have publicly stated that they would almost certainly have to close down, were GT02 to be approved. This would result in a devastating economic impact on the local community. The WEC is one of the largest employers in the local community and all of those jobs would be lost. It would also result in a significant loss of revenue for a large number of other local businesses from trade generated by exhibitions at the WEC. Local hotels, B&Bs, pubs, restaurants and petrol stations would all suffer, increasing the impact and loss of jobs caused by the development of GT02.

I also fundamentally disagree with the notion of using compulsory purchase powers to forcibly take land away from a business, then hand that land over to another business (the Gypsy & Traveller site). I find it hard to believe that such a move would be legal and it certainly wouldn't be in the best interests of tax payers to spend potentially vast amounts of money on legal costs pursuing compulsory purchase of the land. It would also likely take a long time and mean the Council would not be able to acquire the land in the required timescales.

The negative impact on the local economy that would result from the development of GT02 and indeed has already been felt even from the site being proposed would be contrary to the objectives of the Local Plan, particularly the objective to facilitate the growth of the local economy and in particular the rural economy.

Transport

The comments on GT02's transport links in the review of the sites from the first consultation were generally positive. They commented that the Fosse Way is a popular route with Travellers and that there are bus services that run on the A425. Whilst this may be true, the Fosse Way is also popular with lots of other people, particularly motorcyclists, who ride quickly along that stretch, causing noise that might distress residents and animals and in particular any horse-drawn vehicles. That stretch of the Fosse Way is also a high-risk crash route, with regular serious accidents occurring in the vicinity. Large, slow moving vehicles turning across the road would not be a welcome or safe addition to the area.

Whilst there are bus stops on the A425, there is no pedestrian access to the stops, meaning that to use the service you'd have to walk in the road on the busy A425. Once at the bus stop, if you could find the unmarked spot, you'd have to wait in the overgrown grass at the side of the road. It's perhaps because of this that in the four years I've lived here, I've never seen a bus stop there, or anyone wait for a bus there.

There is no pedestrian access to or from GT02, making access to local amenities difficult.

Visual Impact & the Environment

The land making up the GT02 site is located in a valley. It is looked upon from Radford Semele, Ufton and the Fosse Way, meaning that any site constructed there would be highly visible. The Council's own report on Local Plan sites, the Landscape Sensitivity and Ecological & Geological Study, produced by WCC Ecological Services & Habitat Biodiversity Audit and WCC Landscape Architects in November 2013 determined that the site has a *high-medium* sensitivity to residential development and a *high* sensitivity to commercial development. A traveller site would be a commercial development and would be unsuitable according to the Council's own findings.

There are a number of protected wildlife species local to the GT02 site, including grass snakes and adders, deer, newts, badgers, bats and several species of protected birds, including owls and Honey Buzzards. This is all documented in a Forestry Commission report from January 2013 of the woodland adjacent to the site (Site survey 42856).

Community Integration

It would not be possible for the residents to integrate with the small local community. The sheer numbers of them would completely overwhelm the community of a few residences in the area. It would also be impossible to integrate a new site visually, due to the considerations mentioned above. A new site would result in urbanisation of the area and would doubtless lead to further development, destroying the characteristics of the area.

Over seven hundred objections were made for GT02, more than any other proposed site. These objections were seemingly disregarded in the previous consultation as "generic" and made as a result of a campaign by the landowner. I know that many of these objections were not generic, but well considered arguments against the proposal. The large number of objections was partly due to a local campaign, but this was not run by the landowner, but by local residents. The landowner of WEC was involved in some of the campaign, but he did not instigate it. The campaign was set up to raise awareness, as the vast majority of local residents knew nothing about the plan or the consultation.

It's clear that GT02 is not an appropriate site for development of a Gypsy & Traveller site and I believe it should be dropped from consideration entirely.

Yours Sincerely

