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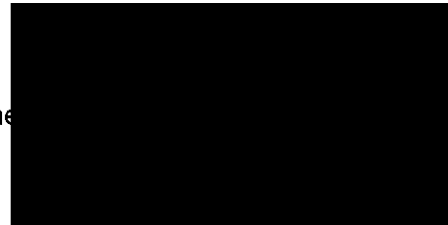
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Sites for Gypsies and Traveller Preferred Options for Sites Response – 2014

Dear Sirs,

The National Farmers Union (NFU) is a professional trade association which represents the interests of approximately 75% of all farmers and growers and has over 180 members in the Warwick District. We have compiled the following comments in response to the consultation entitled 'Sites for Gypsies and Traveller Preferred Options for Sites' which closes on the 5th May, 2014. The NFU has brought the consultation to the attention of members in Warwickshire via County and Branch meetings and has encouraged members to attend the drop in centres and respond individually. The views expressed below are on behalf of the local farming and land management sector in general and not individual members who will naturally respond in their own right. We make our comments in the knowledge that the Council is under a duty to assess the need for Gypsy and Traveller sites in the area and is under pressure to plan for sites within a defined timescale.

The NFU's primary concern is that the site selection and approval process be undertaken using a thorough and well-reasoned assessment not an ad-hoc or random one. We would like to see a higher level of engagement with landowners and farmers especially in the areas that have so far been identified as potentially suitable locations. Every effort must be made to consult with local landowners and listen to their concerns before any decisions are made.

On the subject of compulsory purchase, it is absolutely essential that should the council call upon such powers, appropriate and fully representative values for land and loss of income be used so all affected landowners are fully compensated for any loss to their business. We also feel that it is important to note that any talk of compulsory purchase now and in the future only seeks to undermine such consultation exercises and leads to distrust on both sides.

The consultation document does not currently include sufficient information regarding the process for the selection of the sites, for example we would expect to see more information regarding the sites suitability and facilities. In addition there is very little information relating to how the sites may affect the local infrastructure and the nearest settled communities and businesses.

The local farming community must be fully consulted on all sites and given greater access to information on the site selection process. It is important to remember that farmers are running



businesses on their land (it's not just their place of residence) and they have long term plans for investment and expansion, all of which may be affected by local sites. It is also critical that the site selection process takes into account the practical aspects of running a farm business for example avoiding close proximity to livestock units, blocking rural roads and taking high quality agricultural land out of production.

I hope that the above contribution is considered useful. If you require any additional information or clarification on any of the points raised, please do not hesitate to contact me on:

