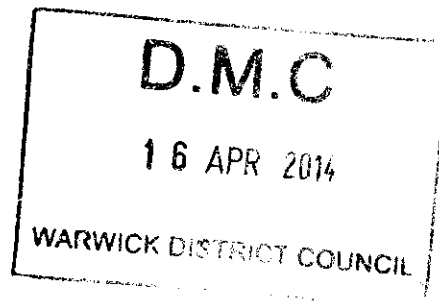


9 April 2014
 Policy Manager, Development Services
 Warwick District Council
 Riverside House, Milverton Hill
 Royal Leamington Spa, CV32 5QH



Dear Sir/Madam,

**Response in respect of Sites for Gypsies and Travellers Preferred Options for sites -
 Site GTalt03 Henley Road/Hampton Road**

1 I wish to register my **very strong objection** to the inclusion of the above site GTalt03 as a potential alternative site for 15 gypsy/traveller pitches. I set out my reasons below.

Impact on the Green Belt

2 The site is in the Green Belt and any development would be contrary to Warwick District Council and Government policy.

3 It is particularly important to safeguard the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy in the public interest and protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development, which would be an unnecessary visual intrusion into the Green Belt and damage its character, openness and attractiveness.

4 Recent Government policy and guidance has indicated that:

- * traveller sites would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt

- * unmet demand whether for traveller sites or for conventional housing is unlikely to outweigh harm to the Green Belt and constitute the "very special circumstances" which might justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

5 An application in 2009 (W09/0157) by the present landowner for putting just one mobile home on the site was refused by WDC and subsequently dismissed by the Inspectorate on Appeal, principally on the ground that the special circumstances put forward by the applicant did not outweigh the potential considerable harm to the Green Belt.

6 In the light of this and the subsequent Injunction Order taken out by WDC to prevent any unauthorised occupation/development of the site, it seems incredible that WDC should now be considering this site for a much larger development.

7 No very special circumstances have been put forward which might outweigh the considerable harm to the Green Belt which inappropriate development would cause. For this reason alone the site should be reclassified as "Red" and unsuitable for further consideration.

Visual Impact

8 The site is in a particularly sensitive, elevated location near to the junction of Hampton Road and Henley Road, which provide a “Gateway” to the small, long established and pretty village of Hampton on the Hill.

9 There would be clear views of any proposed development from these roads and the adjoining footpaths. Without substantial and obtrusive screening which would be detrimental to the open, rural setting, any development would be completely exposed from the allotments which are adjacent to the site and from the public footpath which passes along the western edge of the site from the Henley Road leading to the allotments.

10 Any development of the site or screening would have a significant adverse impact on the open rural aspect of the countryside.

Access to the Site

11 I understand that it is envisaged that access to the site would be from the Henley Road not Hampton Road as stated in the Consultation documentation.

12 The visibility for users of the intended access and frequent fast moving vehicles approaching the access along the Henley Road would be restricted significantly by the nearby brow of the hill and bends in the road.

13 The usage of such access would be substantially increased if any development were to take place, with consequent much greater traffic risks, particularly when slow moving vehicles towing caravans, trailers or horse boxes were involved.

14 In dismissing the Appeal by the present landowner in 2009 in respect of application W09/157 for the development of just one mobile home, the Planning Inspector concluded that the potential increased access onto the major road was a major concern and must be regarded as a significant objection to development.

15 In view of the Inspector’s concerns in that case and the potential hazards arising from the substantially increased use which 5 to 15 pitches would involve, the site should be given a “Red” rating and regarded as unsuitable for further consideration.

Sustainability

16 Hampton on the Hill is not identified as a sustainable location for any new housing development within either the adopted Warwick District Local Plan 2006 or the draft Village Housing Options consultation.

17 Since it is not regarded as a sustainable location for new market housing it should not be considered as sustainable for a gypsy/traveller site.

Access to GP Surgery and School

18 The inclusion of the site as a potential Alternative Site in the consultation process envisages occupiers would use the GP Surgery and Budbrooke School in Hampton Magna. However, the GP Surgery and School may not be able to cope adequately with their needs without undue impairment of services to existing patients and school children, whilst already struggling with numbers due to rising population and facing the impact of an additional 100 homes allocated to Hampton Magna under Warwick District Council’s recent Village Options proposals.

Electricity Power Line

19 A high voltage power line crosses the site. I understand that research has not clearly established whether or not those living under or close by high voltage plains may be subjected to potential harm, either in the short or long term, although many continue to express concerns about the potential health risks.

20 Any development of the site may be constrained by the prohibitive expense of any diversion of the power line or need to severely restrict the number and siting of pitches away from the power line.

Noise pollution

21 The proposed site lies off Henley Road, a busy main road linking Warwick to the east and Henley/Stratford to the west, and the junction with Hampton Road, which is very busy at peak times on each week day, providing access to Warwick Parkway station and Chiltern Rail's frequent trains in particular to/from Birmingham and London.

22 Occupants of the site may be subjected to high levels of traffic noise and poor air quality from the close proximity of the site to these roads, exacerbated by the constant noise, clearly and constantly audible throughout each day and night from the nearby A46 Birmingham/Stratford Road, the M40 motorway and the access to/from these routes at the very busy Longbridge Island.

Surface water flooding

23 The site assessment carried out on Warwick District Council's behalf identified a further negative as to the suitability of the site in relation to surface water flooding along the edge of the site and along Hampton Road, which would expose caravans to the risk of flooding to which they are considered to be particularly sensitive.

Conclusion

24 The inclusion of site GTalt03 as a potential Alternative Site appears to be based largely on the keenness of the land owner to promote the site for this use. It is inconceivable that "keenness to develop" could be regarded as a "very special circumstance" which could outweigh the overriding substantial harm which any inappropriate development would cause to the Green Belt.

25 Any exception to safeguarding the Green Belt made on a context of keenness would present an uncontrollable precedent in respect of future applications for development in the Green Belt.

26 As set out above, there are compelling reasons why the site should not be regarded as suitable for further consideration as a potential site for development of traveller/gypsy pitches.

27 Most importantly, the land lies in the Green Belt. There are no "very special circumstances" which would justify Warwick District Council taking action contrary to its own and Government policy to preserve the Green Belt in the public interest both for the present and future.

28 In the absence of any "very special circumstances", the site should be classified as a "RED" site, unsuitable for further consideration as a possible option.

Yours faithfully

B J Dale

