

Dear Sirs,

Response to Warwick District Council's consultation on its Preferred Options for permanent sites for the accommodation of Gypsies and Travellers

GTalt03: Land at Henley Road/Hampton Road, Hampton on the Hill (Amber).

We formally lodge our objections to the classification of GTalt03 for the following reasons:

1. GREEN BELT and PREVIOUSLY UNDEVELOPED SITE

The site referenced as GTalt03 is identified as Green Belt in the Draft Local Plan. As such it has not been allocated for housing allocation nor is it within the boundaries of the village growth envelope for Hampton-on-the-Hill. Classification as Green Belt that has previously been undeveloped ought to be deemed as 'inappropriate development' for the purposes of accommodation of Gypsies and Travellers and the site classified as 'red'.

DCLG March 2012 'Planning policy for traveller sites' Policy E: Traveller sites in Green Belt states:

"Inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development."

For the purposes of the planning process the fact that persons identified as Gypsy/Traveller own the site does not detract from the legal assumption that the classification of the site is 'inappropriate development'.

In addition the site in the last five years has been the subject of two planning REFUSALS by the WDC Planning Committee in 2009 and 2011. The site has also been DISMISSED by the Planning Inspectorate at an appeal hearing in 2009, and following that in 2010 the WDC took out an Injunction to prevent any development.

The conditions that applied then are still valid and relevant today.

We note that WDC has stated that "*(t)he Council does not intend to own or manage Gypsy & Traveller sites itself. Experience of other Local Authorities shows that the best way for sites to be provided and run are by Gypsies and Travellers purchasing and setting them up for themselves.*" Again, WDC's intention not to own or manage sites and its preference for sites to be provided and run by Gypsies and Travellers does not override the site's classification as Green Belt; such preferences/unofficial criteria are not contained in the Government's 'Planning policy for traveller sites' or the National Planning Policy Framework.

In addition, we note that the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for Warwick District, undertaken by Salford University in 2012, identified a need for 31 permanent pitches to be provided over a 15-year period, 25 within the first five years and in addition 6-8 transit pitches over the full 15 years. WDC has already identified sufficient 'green' sites to meet this identified need without consideration of site GTalt03.

2. Co-Existence with the Local Community

It has been suggested that GTalt03 has the capacity of 15 pitches; this equivalent to 45-60 individuals (excluding visitors and/or transient gypsy/travellers) on the site, can be accommodated by a village of approximately 200 individuals.

Such a change to the local community, representing an increase in population of 25-30%, would be disproportionate and the site would dominate the local community.

The development of the 1.66ha site will also substantially change the character of the area. Given the physical and aesthetic nature of the proposal and the fact that the site is highly and clearly visible from both the Henley Road and the Hampton Road - such a development will permanently and substantially change the characteristics of the village. The impact of the site would be accentuated by the ground which is not level being between 1-2m higher than the Hampton Road; making the site eye level to people entering and leaving the village.

The site does not lend itself to the integration and inclusion of the gypsy/traveller into community.

3. Access

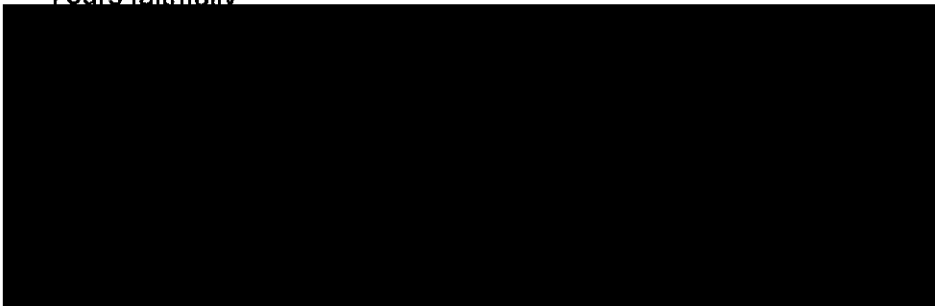
Highways Safety has been recorded on two separate occasions as reasons for refusing planning on the site: once on appeal on 27 November 2009 by the Planning Inspectorate (APP/T3725/A/09/2107108) and on a separate application for planning on 17 December 2010 (W10/1221).

In both circumstances the refusal related to a single dwelling, not the current proposal for 15 pitches which could conceivably house a minimum of 30 adults (plus visitors and/or transient gypsy/travellers) owning anywhere between 15- 30 vehicles which it would be reasonable to assume would create an additional 30- 60 vehicle movements through any access road on a daily basis. This clearly poses a serious risk to both the occupants of the site and other road users.

We note that WDC has suggested that "*(a)ccess is achievable along the Hampton Road with the required visibility splays*". Given the narrowness of the road, the steep incline onto the site and the possible numbers of vehicle movements we would suggest that this is not a viable option and that WDC is not sufficiently considering Highways Safety in its proposal.

We therefore request that the site GT alt 03 be reclassified as a red site and removed from any consideration in this consultation.

Yours faithfully



Mr Richard Money