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WDC PLANNING
Ref
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**OBJECTION TO SITE GT12.  
 LAND NORTH OF WESTHAM LANE BARFORD AS AN ALLOCATION FOR AND USE AS A GYPSY AND  
 TRAVELLER SITE**

1. We strongly object to the allocation of this site for 8 gypsy and traveller pitches. It is to the west of Barford bypass and has been identified as a preferred option although is unsuitable for this use as it does not comply with Warwick District Council's own criteria and those set out in DCLG Planning Policy for traveller sites, the NPPF and designing gypsy and traveller sites "Good Practice Guide"

2. The site is not deliverable, within the PPTS timeframe of five years as the owner of the land of GT12 has no intention of selling the site willingly to either WDC or travellers directly. Therefore WDC would have to invoke compulsory purchase powers. This alone should be enough to discount this site, the timescale of the CPO is an unknown and a public enquiry could take up to four+ years and with an uncertain outcome. The CPO would be a very expensive exercise for WDC and as a council tax payer we question the viability of such a decision let alone the morality of taking away Mr Morgan's (landowner) human rights not for the common good as would normally be the situation, as in the case of the bypass but for a very small minority of eight families.  
 The site should be rejected on both time and financial constraints and is undeliverable on both counts.

3. The site is outside the development envelope of the village as designated by WDC. We applied for planning to extend Westham House two years or so ago and were refused because of this fact. The intrusion of hard standing, amenity buildings which include kitchens and bathrooms, the storm and foul water drains etc. all outside the designated area for development are all allowable and permitted. A double standard beyond belief.  
 Para 23 of the Planning Policy for Traveller sites clearly states that "LPA should strictly limit new traveller site developments in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas in the Development Plan. LPAs should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of and do not dominate the nearest settled community and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure." GT12 is in open countryside and is outside the envelope of the village separated by the bypass and would dominate the nearest settled community at the end of Westham Lane due to the historical custom of an extended family with many children. The site would not be considered for normal residential development why shouldn't the same criteria apply to G&T sites?

4. Several other sites have been rejected on the grounds of :-

1. Road safety – the junction onto the bypass (a 60mph unrestricted road) which all traffic entering or leaving the site would have to use has proved to be unsafe. There have been 12 notifiable accidents at the three Barford junctions since it opened in 2006. Of these three have been "severe" and there was one fatality in 2013. 29 people have been injured or killed several other accidents have not been reported. Slow moving vehicles towing caravans would only increase the situation.

The access to the village from the site for schooling, shopping etc. is across the bypass where there are no footpaths or crossings. This would be especially dangerous due to the busy and fast moving traffic.

2. Caravans are more susceptible to noise levels again other sites have been rejected although further away from potential noise. When the bypass was built the houses on that side of the village (the west) were paid compensation

as a result due to noise and disturbance. These houses are much further away than the proposed sites leading to uncomfortable living conditions for the travellers. The air quality would also be an issue due to 14,000 vehicles passing every day.

3. The land at GT12 is grade 2 agricultural. The NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should use areas of poorer quality land before higher grade, as grades 1 & 2 constitute only 21% of all farmland in the UK. In the case of sites 02,05,08,09 & 19 this was a relevant factor in their rejection. This seems to have been overlooked in page 20 of the consultation booklet and not even mentioned.

5. Westham Lane is an unadopted single track road (apart from the first 30m or so) the owner is unknown. Access to mains services, gas, water, electricity and sewage is vital to the site. As there are no mains drains, gas, storm water facilities, water mains or electricity on site it is clearly unsuitable and the cost of providing same would again be very high and call into question the viability of the site.

6. We live in a rural economy NPPF emphasises the need to support and encourage the prosperity of local businesses. We have lived at Westham House for 20 years running a successful Bed and Breakfast business and renting apartments within the house. One of the main reasons for our success to date has been the very quiet, peaceful and rural location. About two – three years ago we decided to change the focus of our business as we are of retiring age now. Phase One of our re-development encompassing 4 apartments has been completed. Phase Two was started in April this year and will provide another four apartments. We had invested heavily in this project before the proposal for the G&T sites was made public. We sold one apartment in Phase One before the announcement and lost the sales of two further apartments when “the proposal went public”. We are now in the position of renting the three apartments in Phase One, one tenant would buy if the G&T site does not happen and four further apartments under construction will be ready for sale in October this year. The proposed site has blighted our business and had a huge impact on prospective sales and the rents we could otherwise have achieved. We have lost two sales already, possibly three and are not hopeful that we will be able to sell Phase Two in October. The impact on our business has been catastrophic.

7. The Good Practice Guide states that when possible sites should be developed near to housing for the settled community as part of mainstream residential development. It goes on to say that local authorities should consider G&T sites as part new build developments therefore a better location would be the new larger housing developments proposed to the south of Leamington and east of Kenilworth where the infrastructure could be put in place at the planning stage rather than “trying to make it fit” in established areas.

8. We are very concerned that the proposed residential site is, as stated, residential use ONLY i.e. no business would be allowed to be run from the site. Many travellers traditionally live and work from the same location. A mixed use traveller site would be hugely more detrimental to the surrounding open countryside and neighbourhood than a purely residential one. Is this the next stage? Mixed use “by the back door”?

9. The council are currently preparing the new development plan and have the opportunity to redress an imbalance. We feel that as part of the 20% of land of the whole district that is not Green Belt, we are expected to shoulder the new housing requirements as well as the G&T sites for the entire county. It seems the 80% fulfils none of the requirements whilst the 20% fulfils the lot. Somewhat disproportionate. How about lifting the Green Belt boundaries to make the distribution of development more equal and fairer?

There are many reasons to reject the GT12 proposed site as listed above the council have responsibility to recommend sites that are both viable and deliverable within the timeframe and constraints but GT12 is not one.

