

10 December 2014

Development Policy Manager
Development Services
Warwick District Council
Riverside House
Milverton Hill
Leamington Spa
CV32 5QH

Dear Sir/Madam

Objection to the allocation for and use as a Gypsy and Traveller site

As a local resident, I am writing to you to voice my objections to the proposed development of a permanent 15 pitch gypsy and traveller site, off Stratford Road.

Access:

- The preferred access route is located on a dangerous bend on the A429 Stratford Road close to the M40 Junction 15. Visibility is poor when waiting to right turn and creates a traffic bottleneck.
- There have been over 100 road traffic incidents in the vicinity and is considered to be a traffic black spot.
- Commuters regularly suffer from significant congestion in the lead up to the M40 roundabout.
- The land at the back of a Grade 2 listed building (Longbridge Manor) often suffers congestion due to double parked vehicles and is concern for the current residents and emergency services.
- There is no provision of safe places for turning, articulated lorries occasionally enter the lane, and have to be reversed out onto the busy A429 road under supervision.
- An increase in the traffic will seriously damage an already potholed farm track and would need extensive improvement, for example; widening of the road to allow for two vehicles to pass each other as well as pedestrian right of way.
- Manoeuvring down the farm track would not be easy for a traditional caravan or a 25m mobile home.
- The river frontage would need to be made safe and maintained to avoid accidents. For example; Young children could fall into the open water which would be of more significant risk during periods of high water levels.
- Council refuse collectors refuse to travel along the track, thus this would result in additional rubbish bins being left out at the road junction each week and potentially increase vermin levels.
- The access lane forms part of the network of National Cycle routes, with adults and young children using it – increasing vehicular traffic on this road will increase the danger of injury to such people.

In my view this development would require significant investment to allow access to the site; I ask WDC “will local tax payers be expected to incur the cost of this site by increasing council tax bills?”

Air and Noise Pollution:

- The noise from the M40 is heard loud and clear at all times of the day, especially during wet weather and would carry through the walls of a caravan compared to that of a conventional building.
- This is more important due to the high density of children likely to be living on the site.
- The health and well-being of potential residents would be put at risk, which is supported by following story carried by the BBC News on 8th December 2014: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-30374735>



- The location of the site is a few hundred yards to the North of industrial and Severn Trent sewage works and the odour is very unpleasant at times, especially during warmer periods in the year.

Flood:

- There is a river on the eastern edge of the proposed site.
- The site is unsuitable as it is on a flood plain within Flood Zones 2 and 3, therefore unsuitable for residential accommodation particularly those living in caravans as there is a high probability that flooding will occur.
- In recent years water levels have become very high during storms, partly as a result of capacity issues in the culvert that subsequently carries the water under the A429. As a result the fields have become flooded.

I believe that locating residential accommodation of any kind at the proposed site is unacceptable as it provides sub-standard living conditions that would not be acceptable to the community (based on the location, flood risk, noise and numerous health and safety grounds).

Barriers or high fences would be required in order to make the site safe for children and this may give the impression that the site and its occupants are deliberately isolated from the rest of the community and not favourable to anyone.

Effects on the local community:

- The 15 pitch site will dominate the small collection of homes at Longbridge village, which is the nearest settlement and which I am a resident.
- The disturbance/noise from movement of large vehicles would be vastly different from the current quiet, narrow lane.
- Once the site is occupied it will quickly expand outside of the Council's control, therefore increasing the demand of local amenities such as schools and doctors surgeries.
- It will have a negative impact to the value of the housing within the area.
- The site would require a significant amount of screening/protection from the main tourist route into Historic Warwick, the M40, the River Avon and the Severn Trent sewage works.
- Warwick District Council (thereafter WDC) refers to the Tournament Fields development as being a premium employment site for the area. Attracting new businesses has already proven difficult and the new site could suppress potential demand further due to the perceived negative connotations of the Gypsy and Traveller community. A significant portion of the site still remains undeveloped and/or unoccupied.

Please be aware with the forthcoming general election should WDC wish to proceed with this proposal then you will undoubtedly not be getting my vote.

More importantly, I believe that the consultation process has been flawed due to the speed that WDC are trying to push through this proposal, a lack of engagement with the local community and conflicting or limited information given by WDC representatives at the drop-in sessions, due to the timings held and volume of people seeking answers.

It is disappointing that the Chief Executive of WDC, Planning Officers and Councillor Mobbs failed to attend the public meeting held by the Chase Meadow Residents Association (CMRA) on 4th December 2014.

I am lead to believe that the response from the Council's response was "these meetings only allow people to voice opinions that can't be taken into account in a written consultation..."

Having attended the public meeting held by CMRA, I believe that there has been no opportunity to gain feedback from or to ask questions directly to the Council's planning team. As a result I would welcome responses to the points I have raised within this letter.

I look forward to your reply in due course.

Yours faithfully

