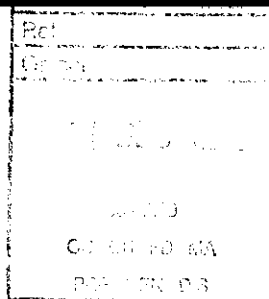


Gary Fisher,
 Development Policy Manager,
 Development Services,
 Warwick District Council,
 Riverside House,
 Milverton Hill,
 Leamington Spa,
 Warwickshire CV32 5QH



December 11th 2014

Dear Mr Fisher,

**Gypsy and Traveller Site, Stratford Road, Warwick
 Preferred Options Site Response**

As one of those directly affected by the District Council's proposal to locate a permanent Gypsy and Traveller Site alongside the 16th century Longbridge Farm, my wife and I wish to object in the strongest terms possible and offer the following comments by way of justification. We fully acknowledge and respect the Council's duty to provide adequate provision for the gypsy and traveller community but believe this site to be entirely unsuitable and wholly incompatible with the Government's guidance on planning policy.

In determining the actual need for a site located between a sewage treatment plant, a river and a busy motorway, officers have claimed that they have "regular contact with a number of families wishing to purchase a site in Warwick District and are able to gauge acceptability and suitability from their comments about the sites...for further consideration." This is obviously very important, since ensuring that the views of the gypsy and traveller community are fully understood by the local residents most affected by a particular development will surely be the best safeguard of future community cohesion. However, when information on the families' opinions of the proposed site was requested, officers stated that the Council had "no record of conversations with the Gypsy and Traveller families who are advising on their particular requirements."

Therefore, we would conclude that the Council is proceeding with this proposal without any evidence that the site would actually be acceptable to members of the gypsy and traveller community.

Our cottage is situated on the Council's preferred access route to the proposed site, just over 300 metres from the location itself and, as Tracey Darke has already confirmed during the 'drop-in' session held at Chase Meadow Community Centre on November 10th, this development would have "significant impact on local residents". Of particular importance is the issue of the access road.

It is proposed that this should be off the National Cycle Network Route 41, behind the Grade II listed Longbridge Manor, where it joins the unlit section of the A429 on a bend that is already marked with hazard chevrons. This is a narrow road with no pavements. The current access to the proposed site is an even narrower farm track that passes close to the side of our cottage.

On one side is the steep bank of the un-named brook and, on the other side, a line of mature trees, most of which are 50cms or less from the edge of the track. At a typical width of around 3 metres, the present access track is just over half the minimum width of 5.5 metres recommended in the Government guidelines.

Warwickshire Police are already well aware of the hazards caused by parking along the unlit National Cycle Network Route 41, following a meeting held at Longbridge Manor on July 1st 2011 attended by residents, management of Forever Living Products Ltd and local police, and have warned that obstruction notices will be issued as the narrow width of the road could prevent access by emergency vehicles.

The District Council's own ecology report recommends that "all mature trees be retained and protected during and following any future development of the site". However, construction of an access road of sufficient width and distance from the bank of the brook would necessitate the felling of between 48 and 53 mature trees.

For its part, Severn Trent Water has stated that, in its opinion "the single track is, in its current state, not suitable to accommodate high volumes of traffic and will undoubtedly need significant works to upgrade it. As this would involve multiple land owners, none of whom are currently supporting the Gypsy and Traveller site, this must put into question the actual deliverability of this proposal."

As others objecting to the proposal have also noted, the noise pollution report was acknowledged by its author to have been deficient and inadequate, by virtue of its timing, the very short period covered by the observations and the highly favourable and unrepresentative conditions prevailing while measurements were taken. As residents can confirm, the actual noise impact for the site will be infinitely greater than reported and the proposal should go no further without fresh measurements being taken.

Also as covered in detail by other objectors, the steps that would need to be taken to mitigate the health and safety risks to families and their children by the choice of location of this site would themselves cause it to fail to meet the Government guidelines and potentially present a very unattractive feature in the local landscape.

On other aspects of the criteria for choosing sites, the Nature Conservation and Ecology reports identify some of the wildlife that would potentially be adversely affected by the construction and operation of the proposed site. To those listed, we can add kingfishers along the brook, both tawny and barn owls, together with ground-feeding green woodpeckers. Also, under Flooding, the statement that the brook does not flood is factually incorrect, flooding having last occurred in 2007 when it affected all properties at the western end of the farm track. Naturally, any widening and hard surfacing along the track for use as an access road will have inevitable consequences for the brook.

Finally, we come to the last two criteria by which the Council will assess the suitability of sites for use by gypsies and travellers, namely *availability* and *deliverability*. Severn Trent Water's opposition to the proposal has already been referred to but the Council's consultation response document nevertheless claims that the site is 'available'. However, this cannot be correct since the landowner has made absolutely clear his unwillingness to sell. On this basis and with Severn Trent Water refusing to provide any of its land to facilitate such a development, the delivery of the proposal would appear to be impossible.