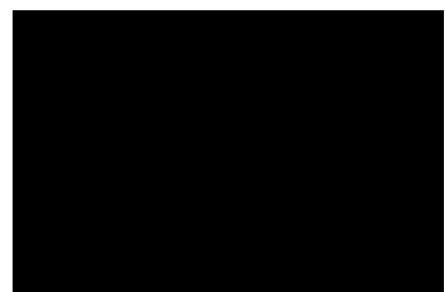
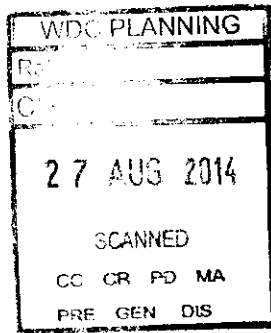


13295.



Mrs Lorna Coldicott,
Senior Planner,
Warwick District Council,
Milverton Hill,
Leamington Spa,
CV32 5HZ.

Dear Mrs Coldicutt,

I am amazed to learn that WDC have cut straight across the prolonged consultation process in the selection of a suitable site to permanently accommodate Gypsies and Travellers in our area. They are proposing that land bordered by the Stratford Road, M40 motorway and River Avon should be considered.

I am opposed to this area of land being considered for a permanent Gypsy and Travellers site. My reasons are laid out below:

Loss of farmland.

According to the Council's own site assessment, part of the area in question is designated grade 2 farm land. In response to other potential sites I note that the Council have stated that "ideally grade 2 land would not be used for development". These meadows are currently being grazed.

Proximity to STW sewage treatment plant.

The draft Local Plan notes "This site was previously unsuitable due to a Cordon Sanitaire in place around the sewage works. However, due to modern working practices and equipment, the Cordon Sanitaire could now be reduced in area." How convenient! Local residents are keenly aware that, under the right climatic conditions, we have to keep our windows closed because of the smell from this plant. The Travellers' site would be considerably closer.

Proximity to River Avon.

Whilst the site itself appears to be generally above the conventional 'flood plain', it is highly susceptible to exceptional flood levels (that are becoming more common). The site adjoins the river so would be the first to be affected under these circumstances. There are also potential safety issues, particularly for children, with the closeness of reed beds and a fast flowing river.

Proximity to M40 motorway.

The furthest point of the site boundary is only some 550m from the hard shoulder.

Most of the site is much nearer and will be subject to persistent, mind-numbing, traffic noise. Again there are, potentially, significant safety issues, particularly for children, with ease of access to the adjacent motorway.

Proximity to private dwellings.

A number of dwellings that could be considered 'executive homes' are in close proximity to the site; e.g. houses on Earls Meadow, Longbridge Manor. There are hotels and restaurants; e.g. Warwick Hilton, Holiday Inn, Porridge Pot. Home Farm is indicated as being totally surrounded by the site!

Potential for unauthorised extension.

It is not currently known where the permanent Travellers' encampment would be located within Site B, but the space requirement for 15 pitches is very small in relation to the overall area. Therein lies the problem. What is to stop additional space being taken over (illegally) by further groups of Travellers – if only in transit? Such a scenario would be very tempting, particularly given the benefits of the many local amenities listed in the Council's site assessment.

History of illegal encampments.

Travellers have often set up camp in the Warwick area.

'Tournament Fields' has been 'invaded' several times; this is directly across the Stratford Road from Site B. Earlier this year 'Tapping Way' was also illegally taken over; another location close to Site B. What is the relevance of this? It points to the familiarity, perhaps even popularity, of this area to sections of the Traveller community. The establishment of a permanent base, as noted in the previous paragraph, has the potential to expand to larger gatherings and could also lead to more frequent attempts to set up these illegal camps, exacerbating the issue further, with a detrimental effect on the neighbourhood and even interruption of traffic on the Stratford Road.

I would ask that the points above are taken into account and the issues considered as part of the assessment of the unsuitability of this parcel of land for the purpose being suggested.

Yours sincerely,



John and Jenny Stephens