

26th July 2013**For the attention of:**

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

**Ref: Response to Warwick District Council –
Local Plan – Gypsy & Traveller Site Options 2013**

I, Helen Lavery, as a resident of Bishop's Tachbrook strongly object to the proposed Gypsy and Traveller Sites within the Bishop's Tachbrook Parish.

These being referenced within the Warwick District Council Local Plan Gypsy and Traveller Site Options as follows:

- GT03 - Land at Barnwell Farm, Harbury Lane,
- GT04 - Land at Harbury Lane, Fosse Way,
- GT05 - Land at Tachbrook Hill Farm, Banbury Road,
- GT06 - Land at Park Farm, Spinney Farm,
- GT09 - Land to the north east of M40 and south of Oakley Wood Road,
- GT10 - Land at Tollgate House and Guide Dogs National Breeding Centre
- GT15 - Land to east of Europa Way

I strongly object to the above proposed Sites because they do not meet the site requirements set out in Section 7 of the Warwick District Council Consultation Document. Therefore, the Sites do not address the Issues affecting the Gypsy and Traveller Community set out in Section 4 of the Consultation Document.

The above Sites are not in areas that can be integrated into the landscape without harming the character of the area which is stipulated as a Site Requirement within the Consultation Document.

The Sites proposed on the Banbury Road, these being GT10; GT05 & GT09 are all within highly visible areas, this will cause a visual impact on the approach to Historic Warwick. This has a potential to affect tourism within our local area with the Tourist Industry accounting for a large proportion of business transactions within the District.

All of the above Sites pose a further potential threat to Historical Bishop's Tachbrook which is listed in the Domesday Book along with possible damage to listed buildings around the village and local vicinity. These Sites within Bishop's Tachbrook will harm the character of the area and the quality of life for those within the existing community. All of the proposed Sites are on good quality arable land which is needed to feed the population. Overall, there will be an adverse impact on important features of the natural and historic environment. There is a threat of pollution & contamination to the Tachbrook 'Brook'

as Site G15 is close to its banks. The possibility is increased with the chance that these sites will be used as places of work by the Gypsy or Traveller community. This site is also prone to flooding so unsuitable for this purpose.

Furthermore, the Site GT10 is very close to the Oakley Wood which poses a potential threat to the woodland. There is also the likelihood of illegal logging. Oakley Woods Crematorium is in close vicinity of the proposed Site which placing a Gypsy & Traveller Site close by is extremely disrespectful. This area needs to remain a peaceful & respected area. The Guide Dog National Breeding Centre is also close by and I believe there is a concern regarding the threat of disease to the Guide Dogs spread by unvaccinated dogs belonging to the Gypsy Community.

Access from the sites GT10; GT5 & GT9 are directly on to busy roads within 50 mph zones. There is a high traffic flow throughout the day with commuters to and from the M40, Banbury & Gaydon. To place a Site along this stretch of road poses a threat for all road users' safety. There is no safe access to the road network from these Sites which is a specified Site Requirement within the Consultation Document. This is dangerous for large caravans to be turning in and out of the sites and for all other road users. Furthermore, there are no pedestrian footpaths or public transport links.

Due to the remote locations of these sites and having no pedestrian footpaths secondary school children will have to wait for school buses on main roads or be transported to safe bus stops by car or all the way to school. This is not a sustainable solution.

There is a concern that these sites within which the occupancies are potentially unregulated will place unfair burden on our already stretched local infrastructure.

The Croft Medical Centre which although is only open part-time, is useful for the elderly not having to travel into town to visit a doctor. Increasing numbers within the village will cause unavailability of appointments and longer waiting lists.

Bishop's Tachbrook C of E Primary School & Nursery is currently oversubscribed. This places even more undue pressure on a small Village School and the additional support that will be required by Gypsy and Traveller children, children who are noted within Section 4 of the Consultation Document as being educationally disadvantaged; will be difficult for the school to provide without adversely impacting all pupils. It is understood that in these circumstances there is no additional funding provided by the County Council other than that received per capita of children receiving free school meals.

The availability of necessary employment for the Gypsy & Traveller Community within the area is also to be questioned.

There is a concern within the Community about an increase in Crime Rates. Furthermore, a concern regarding a decrease in house prices due to the unsightly appearance of a Gypsy & Traveller Site being located so close by. In addition, the stigma attached to such sites discouraging people to move into the area or even visit the area. This will have a knock-on effect on local businesses within and outside of the Tourist Industry. There is also potential friction between two very different communities possibly living side-by-side. Although this is a controversial topic, this needs to be considered for the safety of all concerned. It is a requirement within the Consultation document that the Sites should be judged for the

suitability and sustainability and a criteria being that they must promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community. These Sites will not do so. Therefore, alternative Sites need to be considered so that the necessities and contentment of all concerned has been fulfilled.

General Points:

The Bishop's Tachbrook Parish is extremely alarmed that 7 sites have been proposed within the local area. This is a disproportionate amount within such a small area compared to the remainder of the proposed throughout the District.

Overall, there are many concerns with the proposal of Gypsy & Traveller Sites within the Local Plan being placed anywhere within the Warwick District. We should be protecting our Greenbelt Land, Countryside and English Heritage. Therefore, more suitable sites within unused industrial areas and brownfield sites should be located as opposed to those that have been put forward.

Why has Greenbelt Land & Agricultural Land been put forward for these Sites? There are many unused industrial estates within the District that could be used for such a purpose and which will prevent such a dreadful visual impact on the English countryside. Althorpe Street Industrial Estate, Leamington Spa would appear a suitable place with many of the units empty and unused. This would also prevent vandalism of the unused units. Furthermore, being within town, there are many schools, doctors, dentists & other local amenities close by for the Gypsy & Traveller community. In addition, the roads are safer in this area with the speed limit of 30MPH and there are pedestrian footpaths and public transport links. The site is also set back and within a built up area, therefore not causing a visual impact or damage to the local character of the area. The Site put forward within the Bishop's Tachbrook Residents Action Group Petition, on Stratford Road, Warwick is also a more suitable and sustainable Site than those proposed within the Local Plan.

There is a concern that although the number of pitches upon the Sites is to be regulated, the occupancy on the pitches cannot be regulated or controlled. A further concern is that the Sites are likely to be operated & managed by the Gypsy & Travelling Community and not Warwick District Council. If the sites are managed in such a way who will regulate the occupancy within the Sites? There will be no way of controlling numbers. There is also a concern if sites are granted for a given number of pitches; the Gypsy & Travelling Community will breach Planning Policy as was the case with Dale Farm. Next to the Dale Farm Site, there was an authorised Traveller's site known as Oak Lane. This has Council planning permission, and provided 34 legal pitches. Given the Gypsy & Travelling Community past record I am shocking the Council are even contemplating that the Sites may be controlled by the Gypsy & Travelling Community and believe this should be considered in depth.

Finally, in my opinion the imagery Warwick District Council have used within the Local Plan Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and within the Frequently Asked Questions documents are unrealistic and portray a false representation of a Gypsy & Traveller Site. The photos used are of a Caravan and Camping Club. This is giving a misleading portrayal and is extremely unrealistic.

Yours sincerely


Helen Lavery