

Harbury Parish Council Response

Sites for Gypsies & Travellers – Preferred Options for Sites WDC Local Plan Consultation

Harbury Parish Council gave a detailed response to Warwick DC's initial consultation in July 2013 and summed up:

“As all three proposed sites would place considerable strain on local resources and facilities, while also adding to the accident risk, it would appear that GT02, GT03 and GT04 are not suitable sites for travellers.”

In response to the latest consultation on WDC's preferred site options, Harbury PC raises the following **objections** to the selection of sites GT04 and GT02.

Preferred Option Site GT04: Land at Harbury Lane/Fosse Way

Road Safety

Harbury Lane is a busy road with a 50mph speed limit as vehicles travel to the M40, Leamington Spa and Warwick. The Fosse Way has a 60mph speed limit with a continual stream of traffic throughout the day. The stretch of road between the A425 and the B4100 is an accident black spot with a high casualty rate. The junction with Harbury Lane is particularly dangerous owing to the speed and volume of traffic using this crossroads. The latest statistics obtained from WCC Road Safety Intelligence Unit bear this out as follows:

Fosse Way from A425 to B4100

41 reported accidents in last 5 years to 31 Dec 2013
68 casualties

Harbury Lane/Fosse Way Crossroads

6 accidents in last 3 years to 31 December 2013
8 casualties

(2 further accidents with casualties in the last month not yet recorded on stats)

An increase in vans, lorries, trailers and caravans as travellers enter and exit the site will only exacerbate the problem. There is a bus service but we do not believe that it will prevent the extra traffic as travellers will want to get to schools and medical facilities as quickly and most conveniently as possible and therefore it is inevitable that they will use their own vehicles for this purpose. The potential risk to travellers and the local population makes this site unsuitable.

Conclusion: This site does not offer safe access to the road network.

Flood Risk

GT04 is not a sustainable or appropriate site as the surrounding area is at risk of flooding as noted on the Environment Agency website.

Conclusion: WDC should research this site and obtain a full flood risk assessment.

Impact on Landscape and Heritage

GT04 would have an impact on the historic landscape and setting of Chesterton Windmill which is a heritage asset of international value. It is adjacent to the Roman Fort at Chesterton.

Conclusion: This site would have a detrimental impact on the historic landscape.

Access to Education

The consultation document states that 'the nearest school with places is likely to be Bishops Itchington Primary School. This does not take into consideration the 115 houses which have already been granted planning permission in Bishop's Itchington or the 200 proposed houses for the former cement works site between Bishop's Itchington and Harbury. It is therefore unlikely that there will be any spare capacity at either Harbury or Bishop's Itchington schools. As a consequence, any school age children from GT04 would have to travel into Leamington Spa to attend school.

Conclusion: There are no suitable educational facilities close to the proposed site.

Access to Health Care

The consultation document states that 'GP surgeries are located at Bishops Tachbrook(2.7 miles), Whitnash or Harbury(2.6 miles)'. The nearest and most convenient medical facility to this site is at Harbury and the surgery is already struggling to cope with demand as it has more than 6000 registered patients. Without significant extra resources to physically expand the medical facilities there is no way the surgery could accept additional patients.

Conclusion: There are no suitable medical facilities close to the proposed site.

Availability

We are informed that the board members of Leamington FC, which owns the site, do not support the sale of this site for this purpose which would mean that WDC would have to use compulsory purchase powers in order to bring this site forward.

Conclusion: This site is not available and not viable.

Alternative Option Site GT02: Land abutting the Fosse Way close to its junction with the A425

Harbury Parish Council has concerns that in common with GT04, the site at GT02 does not provide adequate access to either education or health care. As previously stated, the assumption that there will be places available at Bishop's Itchington Primary School for children from outside that village is incorrect and there is no capacity for additional patients at Harbury Surgery. Furthermore, the landowner is not willing to sell this site which means WDC would have to use compulsory purchase powers. We therefore believe that this site is not viable.

In Summary

Harbury Parish Council believes that of WDC's preferred options, there are more appropriate sites than GT04 and GT02, which satisfy the criteria for convenient access to shops, schools and medical facilities. GT04 and GT02 do not satisfy the criteria for the reasons stated above and should therefore be disregarded.