



Warwickshire Exhibition Centre

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

01927

1st May 2014

Dear Sir,

GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS SITE OPTIONS SITE GT02

We wish to further object to the proposed site GT02 located on the Fosse Way at its junction with the A425.

It is a matter of very serious concern that Warwick District Council specifically named the Warwickshire Exhibition Centre and its business premises, the exhibition hall, whereas other sites were referred to more generally/geographically. The actual naming of the venue and our company has made our land and its potential use as a gypsy and traveller site most public and as a result we have had significant problems arising from this clear identification.

Exhibition companies invariably book 18 months prior to an event and thereafter tie to three-year contracts to secure their specific dates and for continuity. We have had difficulties and delays in negotiations because of the perception that possibly, in two years' time, we may no longer be functioning as an exhibition centre. Equally we have found negotiations with several new clients interested in holding exhibitions at the venue problematic. In two instances we have actually lost business since the organisers concerned considered the possibility of the site to be a major drawback and transferred their interest to another venue.

The Exhibition Centre is enjoying steady growth attracting a number of specialist National and general/trade events and it is estimated that it will contribute in the region of £5 million to the local economy over the next three years in consumer spending, hotel accommodation, restaurants, entertainment and bus/taxi usage etc.. In 2013 total attendance at exhibitions at the Centre was 40,000 and this will rise to 44,000 this year. We provide employment for 10 permanent staff plus 30 temporary staff during events and should the Centre close this employment will be lost. Following the initial announcement re the site we quickly lost two long standing senior staff members and recruitment has proved difficult over the last few months.

It is very probable that if the proposed G & TS site goes ahead external organisers will form the perception that the venue is no longer as secure as it once was and that their visitors will have concerns over vehicle security in the car park. We will as a result lose the support of external organisers thus, in turn, will be unable to sustain the venue just for our associate company's exhibitions. The final outcome will be that it ceases to function as an Exhibition Centre with losses not only of the business and employment associated but also the reputation of Leamington Spa and Warwick district.

The further concern would be that with the closure of the exhibition centre and associated businesses the site will become semi derelict and it would be impossible given the large and very different type of community introduced directly adjacent to the Centre to safeguard the extensive car park from incursions by travellers separate from those on the proposed site. This would give Warwick District Council far greater problems than currently encountered with these communities as we would be obliged to sell to the illegal occupants as the only option open to us, it being unlikely that anyone else would wish to buy. The Council would then be faced with a vast illegal site that it would be difficult to take enforcement against, given that permission had already been granted for a site immediately adjacent.

We trust that councillors and officers will very seriously consider the wider possibilities that would arise should this site be chosen.

Yours faithfully,

