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4th December 2014

WDC PLANNING
Ref
Officer
08 DEC 2014
SCANNED
CC CR PD MA
PRE GEN DIS

Dear Sir / Madam

Further to the late addition of the proposal to locate a Gypsy and Traveller site on the Stratford Road, I am writing to formally object to this proposal.

There are a number of assessment criteria within the proposal, which this site clearly is unsuitable for.

Access

The Council's Consultation document completely fails to address the issue of Access to the proposed site simply stating 'Advice expected from WCC soon'. Unless Severn Trent Water are willing to provide access to the site across their land (which they have so far indicated they are not willing to permit) then the current narrow farm track leading to the site from Longbridge would be totally inadequate. The Government's own guidelines on planning Gypsy and Traveller sites set some very strict guidelines around access, particularly for Emergency Vehicles stating that:

'In designing a site, all routes for vehicles on the site, and for access to the site, must allow easy access for emergency vehicles and safe places for turning vehicles' and 'To increase potential access points for emergency vehicles, more than one access route into the site is recommended. Where possible, site roads should be designed to allow two vehicles to pass each other (minimum 5.5m). Specific guidance should be sought from the local fire authority for each site'. The current farm track would therefore appear to be totally unsuitable. In addition, accessing the site from Longbridge would place the main entrance to the site next to a Grade 2 listed building (Longbridge Manor) which is itself located on a dangerous bend in the road with poor visibility for motorists. I believe thus far the Council have failed to provide any proposal for how these obligations would be met for this site.

Air, Water and Soil Quality

The Council's own Sustainability Assessment identified this as an area of significant concern (flagged as red) with a 'potential major negative effect'. The council have suggested these could be mitigated, but have failed to provide any detail regarding these mitigants. Clearly a site located very close to a sewage works and a busy motorway is likely to have issues with all of these criteria, and therefore is not suitable for a permanent residential development, particularly one where children will live. At warm times of the year, there is a strong stench from the Severn Trent sewage works, and the proximity of the proposed site to this will have a significant detrimental effect on air quality.

The government's own guidelines on planning Gypsy and Traveller sites state that:

'It is essential to ensure that the location of a site will provide a safe environment for the residents. Sites should not be situated near refuse sites, industrial processes or other hazardous places, as this will obviously have a detrimental effect on the general health and well-being of the residents and pose particular safety risks for young children. All prospective site locations should be considered carefully before any decision is taken to proceed, to ensure that the health and safety of prospective residents are not at risk'.

Flood risk

Again the Council's own 'Sustainability Agreement' identified this as an area of concern (flagged as yellow) indicating a 'minor negative effect'. Nevertheless they have confirmed that the site is on a designated flood plain within flood zones 2 and 3.

The government's own guidelines on planning Gypsy and Traveller sites states that 'Caravan sites for permanent residence are considered "highly vulnerable" and should not be permitted in areas where there is a high probability that flooding will occur (Zone 3 areas)'.

The Consultation Document states that the Council has a technical report endorsed by the Environment Agency saying that the risk of flooding can (once again) be 'mitigated' and this will 'eradicate the threat completely' but the report is quite high level and simply sets out possible options but fails to establish whether the flood risk can definitely be eliminated without negative impact to other areas. Nor does it detail the cost of all this mitigation work and whether this is viable.

Given the Government's own guidelines the Council will need to prove definitively that the risk of flooding can be completely eliminated (as well as explaining who will pay for all the necessary work) or clearly the site is not suitable.

Effect on the local Economy

In the Council's own Sustainability Assessment this section is graded as '?' and the supporting commentary states that 'the effect on the economy is uncertain at this stage'. Furthermore the Consultation Documentation makes no mention of the potential effect of the site on the local economy in its criteria at all. Given that the Tournament Fields business park remains largely undeveloped after almost

10 years and the likely effect on future demand if a Gypsy and Traveller site is opened opposite to it, this clearly suggests that the Council is trying to avoid the whole issue of the negative effect on the local economy that the proposed site could have. In addition, the proposed site is highlighted for use partly as employment land and partly as a Gypsy and traveller site. Again, there is no evidence to support a Gypsy and Traveller site not having a negative impact in being able to attract businesses onto this site.

This seems totally at odds with the claims that the Council have made over the years for the positive effect that Tournament Fields would have on the local Warwick economy. Such a move to locate a Gypsy and Traveller site in this location is far more likely, due to perception or otherwise, to have a negative impact in attracting businesses to the Warwick area and economy, and should be of real concern to the Council.

I also find it somewhat underhand that the 'drop in' sessions you have organised are at extremely inconvenient times for a significant proportion of people on the Chase Meadow estate who have full time jobs and family commitments.

Furthermore declining to attend the session that had been setup on the 4th December at Aylesford School, due to be attended by Chris White MP and a more significant number of opposing residents, does little for the Council's credibility in this matter.

Yours sincerely

