

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

Warwickshire Direct

11 DEC 2014

Leamington

Dear Sirs

Ref: Objection to The proposed Stratford Road Gypsy and Traveller Site

Please take this correspondence as my formal objection to the said site at the proposed location, close to the river Avon and the Severn-Trent Sewage Treatment facility and accessed from the Stratford Road.

I object to this site going ahead on the following principles in no particular order:

Site Access:

Severn Trent Water have thus far stated that they are opposed to the site and in so doing making the access route via their treatment works road to the site currently unavailable. Therefore as I understand the proposed access leading off in the vicinity of the bend in the A429 leading to Longbridge Village and Manor would be the alternative proposed access. This is not a suitable access proposal to the site and would surely fail to meet the safety criteria as set out in DGLC Planning Policy for Traveller sites without significant investment and wrecking of the area. Furthermore I regard the disturbance, ongoing traffic and inevitable consequences that this would impose upon the local residents of Longbridge village to be unfair on an already compromised environment.

Environmental concerns:

It is common knowledge that such proposed sites can present significant environmental challenges in terms of the irresponsible disposal of the waste. A recent example of this behaviour was witnessed in Tapping Way when travellers have on more than one occasion inhabited the road on both sides and left behind the most awful mess to be cleared up at our expense. Being in such close proximity to the River Avon would inevitably result in contamination from the site that does not tolerate thinking about and any amount of fencing or screening will not stop this. Furthermore the amount of proposed landscaping and screening required for this site will cause unacceptable damage to the ecology. Having read through the ecology appraisal (and this is all it is at this stage, an appraisal) I conclude that this reads more in support of denying planning permission for the site than it does in support of going ahead. Scrutiny from someone more knowledgeable than me I believe would support my previous statement and I have had discussions with such people in reference to this.

Residents safety and living conditions:

I can only describe the thinking of the employees of the council who have conceived this proposal as irresponsible, inconsiderate, unprofessional and totally bizarre. The site as we know is in close proximity to both the river and the motorway. Such large developments of this nature will undoubtedly involve many children of varying ages and the proximity of the site presents too much of a hazard for these youngsters for them to be considered to be in a safe environment.

I would encourage you to ask yourselves whether you would wish your own families to live in relatively poorly sound proofed accommodation in which gypsies and travellers accommodate themselves, in close proximity to the motorway. No amount of landscaping and screening will alleviate the incessant noise that the residents will be exposed to. This and the polluted air caused by the traffic will severely compromise peoples health. There is a Commons Committee calling for a ban on developments in such blackspots as the air quality is likely to be unsatisfactory. Furthermore consider how the residents of the site may feel in being dumped into such an unsuitable environment. They are less likely to feel integrated if they are thus disadvantaged.

Motorists could potentially also be at risk of the extraneous waste materials that may find its way onto the motorway.

Inevitably flood risk is an issue. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and the Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide state the case well enough (I will not quote this all here but would encourage you to review this document) against siting such developments as the one in question in such highly vulnerable sites to flooding. I understand that you may suggest that this risk can be mitigated. Having reviewed the evidence I believe that such attempts on your part would fail and be a further waste of community resources.

Impact on established adjacent sites:

Tournament Fields Business Park is supposedly Warwick's premier commercial development. However there is some thousands of square feet still unoccupied and much of the site remains still to be developed. Severn Trent also have designs to develop land for commercial purposes in the vicinity of the proposed site. There is and will remain fierce competition for businesses to occupy such sites and with such a wide range of choice available in other places a gypsy and traveller site will surely place both Tournament Fields and any other proposed commercial development at a disadvantage. This is something that our community can ill afford.

Deliverability:

Paragraph 9 of the The Department for Communities and Local Government ("DCLG") Planning Policy for Traveller Sites ("PPTS") states that local planning authorities should, in producing their Local Plan "identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets". Footnotes 7 and 8 to that paragraph state that: "To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that development will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable." The proposed site is clearly not available now therefore will fail this test as stated above. Furthermore the amount of work and investment required to make this site viable would be far more than some of sites as in the "Preferred Options for Sites" document. I do not believe that the site is economically viable and would be interested to see your costings in regard to this.

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Site sizing:

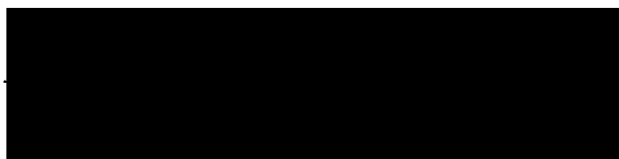
The proposed fifteen "pitches" is far too many for one site. Let us be clear that the terminology of "Gypsies and Travellers" is grossly misguided but for now we are stuck with it. The likely residents of such sites are neither of the afore mentioned. They are simply put, folk that choose and get away with not having to conform in the way that the rest of us have to whether we like the conditions that are imposed upon us or not. A lot more may be said and indeed is well documented on this issue but here is not the place to go into this. However it is widely accepted that less is more when it comes to establishing these sites. A site for fifteen pitches will instantly develop its own isolated community and will grow very quickly, whether you think or say it will or won't this will happen and you know it is inevitable. By accommodating the potential residents into smaller sites will more likely keep the sites to a manageable and more orderly size and have better outcomes for developing community relationships that are sustainable for both the established and the gypsy and traveller communities.

Consultation:

The proposed site was not shortlisted in early 2014 and yet now we find that it is the preferred option. Consultation and transparency has been poor to state it mildly. The drop in sessions were arranged at times times that were inappropriate for a lot of people that would have wished to attend. Furthermore by your own admission the representatives of Warwick District Council had limited knowledge and gave out incorrect and misleading information to attendees. This really is inexcusable given such an emotive issue. How can this happen and who is responsible for this?. I would like the answer. The whole process smacks of panic and poor management. There has been more than adequate time for this issue to be resolved.

Therefore once again I do believe that your proposal will fail as a result of this and no further resources should be wasted in pursuing this particular site.

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

James Hogg