

Dear Sir / Madam,

**RE: Planning Application 20/01747/F**

**Change of Use of land to a 6no pitch Gypsy and Traveller site to include 6no mobiles, 6no tourers and associated operational development including hardstanding and fencing**

I am writing to object in the strongest possible terms to this latest Widnell Lane gypsy/traveller caravan site proposal. As you will be aware, the area around the site has been inundated with such applications in recent years. Cherwell District Council unanimously rejected all previous applications for adjacent land – therefore we know Councillors will view this application as equally unacceptable. Indeed, refusal is now even more imperative as a result of development of the neighbouring field.

**OVERWHELMING AN ISOLATED VILLAGE**

Piddington is a small, rural community of just 350 people. Granting permission for this application would unacceptably dominate and overwhelm the small village. As Councillors know, a new application (20/01122/F) to build twelve pitches on adjacent land – (rather than the six already approved at appeal) -- is also currently under consideration. If both these applications were allowed, a total of 18 double pitches, providing space for 36 caravans would be constructed. This is totally disproportionate and unacceptable.

Piddington is a Category C village – which according to Cherwell's own policy means this sort and scale of development is not permitted. Approval would contravene The Department of Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy for gypsy/traveller sites which states..."Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan". Allowing the site would go against Cherwell Council's very own Local Plan (2011-2031) which states, "It will be important to identify sites that will enable access to services, facilities and potential employment". Piddington has absolutely no services or amenities. No shop, no pub, no school, no doctor, no Post Office, not even a regular bus service. The Council itself admits neighbouring Arncott is one of Cherwell's least sustainable Category A villages.

**PLANNING INSPECTOR CONCERNS**

In his conclusions to the appeal allowing 6 pitches on adjacent land, the Planning Inspector states, "There shall be no more than six pitches on the site, and no more than two caravans, as defined in the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968 shall be stationed on each residential pitch at any time." His report acknowledges that the site is wholly unsustainable and his stipulations on size reflect clear concerns about the severe limitations of the area. This latest plan to add a second site, extending the overall footprint and demands, cannot possibly be considered acceptable. It further exasperates all the issues the Planning Inspector recognised and must be refused.

**DEMAND AND ALTERNATIVES**

Cherwell District Council has already recently approved a high number of other sites – 13 brand new pitches within the last 18 months. This begs significant questions about actual demand. Where is the evidence that so many new sites are necessary?

**ROAD DANGER**

This site – along with the neighbouring site – would both use a small, narrow unclassified country lane for access. This is entirely inappropriate and would serve to put the lives of village residents and

the gypsy community at risk. With so many caravans, the traffic and access requirements put on this tiny road could have devastating consequences. The narrowness of the road and the poor visibility means it is unable to cope with the large vehicles this expanded site would bring. The country lane has no pavements and no street lighting. It is thoroughly inappropriate for the pedestrians who would be forced to walk in the direct path of oncoming traffic in order to enter or exit the site. In addition, the application presumes all site traffic would use the B4011. This is an extremely fast, busy road - the major route between Thame and Bicester. Access to it from Widnell Lane is already a safety hazard as a result of poor visibility and there are no pedestrian crossings, making it highly unsafe for anyone on foot. People attempting to walk from the site to the nearest Category A villages would be at risk as the large B roads do not have pavements.

#### **EXPLOITING THE SYSTEM**

The history of the neighbouring site suggests the extension proposal is being tabled by developers who know how to exploit the system. The Council is duty bound to reject this sort of action in order to avoid further manipulation efforts from both these and other developers.

Over the past four years, my family and I have attended numerous village meetings and Planning Committees in connection with the previous applications for adjacent land. I want to take this opportunity to convey the united strength of feeling in Piddington against these proposals.

Thank you for your time.

Very kindest wishes,

Mrs K Walker.