

GMLP2038: Gipsy and Travellers Plans and Proposals

Inspectors' Hearing on 25 July 2023

Statement for consideration from Greening Wymondham Environmental Group

Strayground Lane Wymondham sites GNL5023 10 pitches and GNL5005 2 pitches

Site Assessment document – Addendum 3. Greening Wymondham concentrates on this Document

Throughout this document Officers claim that any adverse effects are of minor impact – this appears to be a subjective judgement. It seems obvious to us that Officers are inclined to support allocation of these two sites because they are aware that the GNLP is held up until this issue is settled.

Looking at selected various headings we would comment as follows:

SA3 – Climate Change and Mitigation

3.11.1 The Railway Line

Comment: There will be children and animals on the sites. Although the crossing is well fenced there is always a risk where children and animals are concerned that there will be an accident.

3.11.2 Fluvial Flooding

Comment: The site is flat, although a bank has been formed along the River boundary. Wherever the pitches are located the site is part of a wetland and there will be a risk of flooding in an extremely wet period. A settlement of 12 pitches with associated hard paving will lead to more run-off and add to the flood risk for downstream sites as well.

SA4 Landscape

3.11.7 Landscape Character

Comment: The assessment states that the site development will be discordant with key characteristics of the surrounding County Wildlife site, described as wet land. . The officers conclude that this will have a minor impact on the local landscape character – we consider that this conclusion is wrong – it will have a significant effect. Strayground Lane as it existed before the unwelcome clearance of Site GNL5023 was of a rural country lane overhung by greenery with glimpses into the river valley and wetland. The only discordant feature being the waste depot on site GNL5005 which is to be re-located within 5 years. Local resident, particularly those who walk out into the countryside along the Lane were hoping that both sites could be restored to wetland as part of the CWS.

The standard response format to this section does not seem to allow for two important issues to be covered;

- 1 The regular use of the Lane by walkers and the effect on local health and wellbeing
- 2 The loss of the opportunity for the sites to revert to wetland. We should be seeking not to damage wetland sites and expand them as part of the Climate Change strategies.

3.11.8 Urbanisation of the countryside. The officers say that the proposed development could potentially contribute to urbanisation but conclude that there will only be minor impact on the local landscape and that it would be acceptable.

Comment: This development for 12 pitches will have a major effect on the countryside here and in our view this cannot be acceptable. Not only in terms of building 12 dwellings but also the traffic generated by 12 families and their associated businesses. (See SA12 below). The intrusion of

SA6 Population and Services

Officers say that local services are outside of sustainable target distances and that this is likely to have a minor impact on access and end users local services

SA8 Health

The site is again outside the target distance for hospital and Doctors Surgeries.

SA10 Education

The site is outside the target distance and would result in a major negative impact on access to education.

All of these services are poorly located to the sites and in addition the road accessing the B1172 is twisty and with poor visibility. We argue that it makes for a very poor location for travellers quality of life.

SA 12 Transport and access to services

Comment: The assessment concludes that the bus stop is outside the target distance and there is poor access to the footpath network. All of these factors would lead to dependence on the car or other vehicle to access Local services. The road network is well connected but this will only make it more likely that cars are used. This will lead to higher vehicle use of the Lane with an adverse effect on other users, such as walkers and add to CO2 emissions.

SA14 Natural Resources

3.11.25 Comment: The sites are described as previously developed land and therefore it is acceptable to that it be re-developed - this is questionable. The larger site was used for authorised landfill and we do not remember there ever being buildings on the site. We had viewed the re-location of the Waste Depot as an opportunity for environmental gain. We would argue that there is a greater negative effect on the extreme loss of potentially valuable soil and ecology if the sites were returned to natural state as part of the Bays River Valley marshland. This possibility is not examined. Are either of the sites contaminated and therefore unsuitable for development for dwellings?

SA15 Water

Comment: Officers conclude that there is potentially minor impact on groundwater contamination and the watercourse. We say there is a major risk that both would be affected adversely, especially in the case of flooding or accidental discharge of site water into the Bays River.

Other Policies

Two other Policy documents need to be taken into account the Neighbourhood Plan – soon to be adopted and the emerging A11 and Wymondham Green Infrastructure Strategy. Both of these documents are reflecting the importance of Strayground Lane as Green Corridors and the importance of a major walking route giving access to the countryside. Such opportunities are in demand by residents as Wymondham has expanded with the population doubling over the last 10 years and will continue to do so.

Conclusion. We consider for the reasons explained that this site should be rejected as a favoured site for Gipsies and Travellers.

Author: Ann Rostron for 15 Members of Greening Wymondham Committee 11 07 23