



The Planning and Development Manager
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Civic Offices
London Road
Basingstoke
RG21 4AH

17 July 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Reference: 17/02123/FUL

Address: Land at Dixon Road, Taylors Lane, Sherfield-on-Loddon, Hampshire

Proposal: Change of use of land for the stationing of a caravan and a mobile home for residential purposes, for 1 no. gypsy pitches, together with the formation of hardstanding and utility/dayroom

I am writing as the Member of Parliament for Basingstoke, on behalf of my constituents who are residents of the Taylors Farm/Sherfield Park development, which is the main residential area adjoining the land for which the planning application has been lodged. I wish to register my very strong objection to this planning application, for the reasons which I outline below.

The land off Dixon Road falls within the area designated in the adopted Local Plan as part of the strategic gap, or buffer zone, between Chineham and Sherfield-on-Loddon. This means that it is an area that should not be developed for residential use, so as to prevent coalescence of the two settlements. This application for residential use is therefore contrary to local planning policy.

The land was previously forestry, and some 500 trees were unlawfully felled by the landowners, without the necessary licence under the Forestry Act. Following an investigation into the unlawful tree felling by DEFRA, the Crown Prosecution Service decided to prosecute the four owners, the first such prosecution for more than four years, an indication of the clear public interest in doing so. The landowners pleaded guilty to this offence, and were given a conditional discharge by the judge.



The Forestry Commission also issued a Restocking Notice, which the landowners failed to comply with. The Forestry Commission subsequently issued an Enforcement Notice, which they also failed to comply with. In September 2016 the landowners were prosecuted for failure to comply with the Enforcement Notice and pleaded guilty. This in turn breached the terms of their conditional discharge for the original illegal felling offence. The Magistrate therefore resentenced the defendants for the original offence, as well as for being in breach of the Enforcement Notice. The landowners were subsequently given a substantial fine for this criminal activity.

My constituents and I remain very concerned about the way in which the landowners have been able to flout the law in this way, and believe that granting any form of planning consent for residential use would in essence be condoning the illegal activity that has taken place, and would give a financial benefit to those who have clearly already been found to have broken the law in respect of this land.

There are significant access and highway issues that need to be taken into account. Access to the land is via Dixon Road, which is a narrow lane, owned by the Ministry of Defence, and which opens onto the A33. In both cases, the main road access is onto a road already designated by the Borough Council's own recent Transport Study as highly congested and in need of remedial works.

Any traffic generated by this proposed development would have an added impact on the already congested road, and traffic turning right, towards Basingstoke, would be a potential danger.

Policy CN5 in the adopted Local Plan sets out the Borough Council's policy regarding provision of accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People. This Policy makes it clear that the Council will make provision for 16 additional gypsy and traveller pitches, to meet the assessed needs of gypsies and travellers in the Borough. It also makes clear on which allocated greenfield sites the pitches will be provided.

Policy CN5 also makes clear that proposals for accommodation sites for Gypsies and Travellers will only be permitted where, *inter alia*, there is an identified need for pitch provision, there is no adverse impact upon the natural environment, there is safe and reasonable access onto the highway, and there are adequate on-site facilities for parking, storage, play and residential amenity, and



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appropriate essential services. The Policy also makes it clear that sites that are contaminated, or close to power lines should be avoided. In the case of Dixon Road, there is potential contamination from the proximity to Bramley MOD Training Camp, and there are power lines directly overhead, and a pylon. The site is therefore unsuitable under the terms of the Local Plan.

In view of the very considerable arguments against the use of the land at Dixon Road for the stationing of a caravan and mobile home for residential purposes, I very strongly urge the Borough Council to refuse this application.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small mark above the 'i' in Miller.