

Statement – Mary Walsh Joint Chair, Whitchurch Village Action Group

Whitchurch Village Action Group Parcel 7100 Woollard Lane Whitchurch

The Green Belt at Whitchurch Village has been under pressure from governments and developers for many years now Locals have told us they wish the green belt to be maintained and protected.

We have taken our awareness stands to many venues – Bristol Balloon Fiesta Bath & West show, WI meetings, Parish Councils, car boot sales, village fêtes. We sent information to the residents of Whitchurch Village. The response has been overwhelmingly in support of maintaining the green belt – over 6000 people have responded to our stands. 69% of Whitchurch village residents replied and told us they wanted to protect the green belt from development.

The Prime Minister, David Cameron has publicly reassured the nation that the green belt will be protected. The national planning policy framework states at Policy E Travellers Sites in green belt Point 14. Inappropriate development is harmful to the green belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Travellers Sites (temporary or permanent) in the green belt are inappropriate development. Local government minister, Bob Neil, has hardened the planning policy to safeguard the green belt by further saying Travellers Sites are inappropriate in the green belt and local opinion must be taken into account.

In your own local authority core strategy spatial options 4 point 3 states – retain the green belt.

Since 1978 this Local Authority has refused planning permission for this site three times deeming it unsuitable therefore why the council would now decide to double the number of pitches on this unsuitable site. The location has not changed although trees have been removed and hedges cut back to give the appearance of a well maintained site it doesn't take away from the fact that this is in the green belt. The Site has never had a permanent building as stated by the Inspector In 1982 upon the expiry of a temporary licence it was still referred to as a green belt land The inspector in 2009 referred to the site as Green Belt We ask when did this become brownfield and who was responsible for change. We therefore dispute that this is Brownfield land and would ask you to amend the scoring accordingly.

My colleague will talk to you about the highways and core strategy observations and in the meantime I would respectfully ask you to remove this site from your options list.