

My name is Ashton Broad, Chairman of Whitchurch Parish Council and I am presenting a statement agreed by the Parish Council.

In the latest Communities and Local Government Planning policy for traveller sites it clearly states under Policy E: Traveller sites in Green Belt 14.

‘Inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development.’

We therefore have concerns that several of the preferred sites are situated within the Green Belt, which we feel should be preserved at all costs. We do not think that there are very special circumstances to even consider any of the sites within the Green Belt.

We question how the criteria for the sites has been used, as we have found several discrepancies in the marks awarded to individual sites. i.e. points being awarded for safe access to public transport when there are no footpaths. We find it difficult to understand how some sites have been allocated as brownfield when they are clearly in the Green Belt. Is the council able to change a site from Green Belt to brownfield without notifying anyone?

Why has the council used the scoring matrix to then find that many of the sites were unsuitable in the first place? We find it inconsistent that brownfield sites with a high number of points have been excluded from the final list of suggested locations. We would like more information on these rejected sites.

We are also concerned that the previous history of the sites has obviously not been taken into consideration and question whether enough in depth studies have taken place by the council.

There seems to be inconsistency in many of the council’s planning decisions as site GT.1 has been refused by B&NES on four previous occasions in line with other local planning applications in the area, as it is set in the Green Belt and on this basis and on behalf of Whitchurch Parish Council I ask that this site be withdrawn from the list of sites considered as appropriate for public consultation.