

Thankyou for the opportunity to speak again on behalf of the residents of the Stanton Wick, Stanton Drew and Pensford areas. In this statement I will focus on the fundamental flaws in the process of site selection and analysis and crucially emphasise that many of these were known before or during 9<sup>th</sup> May. I submit that the local community, when belatedly asked, has engaged, has made representations and has asked questions many of which remain notably unanswered.

1. There was a shameful lack of consultation with the settled community at an early stage whereas consultation with of Gypsy Traveller representatives on specific sites commenced in February 2012.
2. There were multiple errors in the documentation and in particular the Detailed Assessment tables; the impact on Pensford Conservation Area and the limited local services were omitted.
3. The selection criteria matrix was spectacularly mis-scored
4. There was no debate on 9<sup>th</sup> May in cabinet. It seemed that decisions were entirely predetermined.
5. The council failed to consider the following:
  - 5.1. it failed to apply or give reasons for not applying policy contained in National Planning Policy March 2012 in breach of its statutory duty. In particular the Detailed Site Assessment Report and Sustainability Appraisal Report have failed to consider or apply national policies on promoting co-existence, avoiding undue pressure on local infrastructure and avoiding domination of the settled community. The subsequent 'stock take' proposal response in July 2012 openly concedes that national policy when proposing preferred options in May was ignored.
  - 5.2. it failed its own policies with the proposal to put the majority of permanent pitches on a contaminated former mining site in the middle of countryside distant from essential services.
  - 5.3. it failed to give due weight to protection of the Green Belt. If in its view very special circumstances apply then it has failed to give any justification or proper analysis of these.
  - 5.4. it failed to give due consideration to other reasonable sites ( for example some currently tolerated traveller sites, MOD sites)
  - 5.5. failed to halt the process in the face of clear evidence of its flaws and replace it with a robust process
  - 5.6. failed to consider an Updated Needs Assessment with neighbouring authorities as required by Coalition government reforms
  - 5.7. failed to consider comments from other statutory ecology bodies such as Environment Agency and English Heritage and failed to consider the requirements of Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations
  - 5.8. failed to consider the costs involved in developing the site, Cllr Ball has rather belatedly stated £3.6 million but it could be more
  - 5.9. failed to consider fully the ecological impacts and effects on historic assets
6. It is our contention that the Council did
  - 6.1. act completely irrationally by adopting selection criteria that then shortlisted sites that performed badly against the criteria. It is simply incredulous that a site scoring 17<sup>th</sup> appeared in the shortlist of 7. It would seem the site was

selected for other reasons none of which were apparent but just may include political convenience.

6.2. refuse to reconsider sites that were rejected on 9<sup>th</sup> may even though the sites performed far better than the Stanton Wick site

In May we received pointed criticism that we were self appointed experts. I am not an expert. I am a local resident of the area who cares for my community and believes this has been a poorly managed, unfair, unjust and barely credible process. In the relentless pursuit of a flawed process despite adverse comment from many quarters the council has committed a litany of errors, has acquitted itself poorly and deservedly attracted huge criticism.