

Bourne End Village Association

LA3 with specific reference to the traveller site

After a long drawn out dialogue with officers of Dacorum's planning team it is clear that the aim of the developers, to produce a traveller site **isolated** from the site of LA3, has their support. We oppose this isolation although we are not opposed to the positioning of the traveller site. The isolation flies in the face of national government's agenda, national policy, local policy, the rationale on which the land was removed from the green belt, and the vision for the development as presented to the public.

Theresa May's first statement as Prime Minister focused on social justiceⁱ. The sentiments met with cross party support. They reinforce the specifics in the government policy 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015'ⁱⁱ. This policy addresses the long standing issues associated with locating traveller sites; in particular, the resentment of imposition from the existing settled community, and the resentment felt by travellers, excluded from the mainstream resources. The local planning authority is required to ensure that their plan includes 'fair, realistic and **inclusive** policies'ⁱⁱⁱ. This policy is reflected in Dacorum's own policy CS22.^{iv}. The thrust of both policies is to support the view that traveller sites should be included within

new developments. The travellers should have equal access to facilities as all other residents. As a recognised ethnic group this accords with the requirements of the Equalities Act of 2010.

The initial plans for the development put forward by Dacorum Borough Council are consistent with this agenda. A number of the Local Allocations include traveller sites, LA3 being one of them. The vision for LA3 is of an '*inclusive community*', and its design has a primary school, health centre and shops as well as local transport at its centre^v. It was on this basis, that consultation took place on the 900 houses and a traveller site within it. This plan was tested by a planning inspector for its robustness in its processes and consultation, based on the main principles of the development not for its detailed conformity to policies. This is because planning detailed proposals were not included.

What now emerges from the developers is a more detailed plan which, through a combination of factors, serves to exclude rather than include the travellers. It also imposes it directly on the existing small settled community. The plan produces an isolated traveller site by putting a barrier around it and separating its access onto inadequate and dangerous single track lanes. This divorces it from the facilities planned for the development, and indeed any facilities. Aside from public consultation, this also becomes clear from the developer's website^{vi}. While we concentrate here on the social impact, any detailed planning will inevitably reveal

environmental issues in the form of disparity with the core strategy in relation to minor rural roads and in relation to hedgerows.

This has happened because the developers have taken the Draft Master Plan produced by the council as definitive, allegedly with council support. What has appeared as ‘potential’, ‘indicative’ or ‘assumed’ in that draft have been taken as firm proposals that have been subjected to consultation and agreed.

We call upon our councillors to ensure that the government policy and the adopted local council policy take precedence in the planning. These policies are for the benefit of local residents, the traveller community and the remaining green belt and should take precedence over, for example commercial interests.

Bourne End Village Association Planning Group

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ⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/statement-from-the-new-prime-minister-theresa-may>

ii https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457420/Final_planning_and_travellers_policy.pdf

iii Planning policy for traveller Sites 2015 p.1 4g (see above)

iv [http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/chapter-14-providing-homes-\(pdf-110kb\).pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/chapter-14-providing-homes-(pdf-110kb).pdf?sfvrsn=0)

Referred also 19th July 2016 (section 3.4) <https://democracy.dacorum.gov.uk/documents/s5603/SPAE-19-07-2016-Planning%20provision%20for%20Gypsies%20and%20Travellers%20including%20LA5%20report.pdf>

v See vision statement page 20 Local Allocation LA3 Draft Master Plan <https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/la25-la3-master-plan-draft-oct-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=4>

vi The main website can be accessed here - <http://www.westhemel.co.uk/> The section on phase one shows no evidence of the traveller site whatsoever.
<http://www.westhemel.co.uk/phase-one.aspx>