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Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

David Lamb
Development Management
East Herts District Council
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
Hertford SG13 8EQ

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

20th December 2024 (by email)

Dear David Lamb,

Application no. 3/24/1940/FUL

Land at Mentley Lane, Puckeridge, SG11 1US

A partially retrospective planning application for the material change of use of land to a caravan site for 6 Gypsy and Traveller pitches (each containing a mobile home, touring caravan and a day room caravan) associated access, hardstanding, landscaping, waste water treatment plants and boundary fencing.

I write with reference to the above application to which CPRE Hertfordshire objects for the following reasons.

1. The site lies within the area specified as Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt as designated by Policy GBR2 in the adopted East Herts District Plan. Notwithstanding the nature of the proposals as Gypsy and Traveller pitches, we are concerned at the magnitude of the application and the potential harm to the countryside in this location by reason of the unauthorised development which has already occurred and it is regrettable that enforcement against this activity has not already taken place.
2. The Planning Statement notes that only six sites are proposed but this is misleading. Each site comprises three separate caravans which together comprise a substantial development of up to eighteen semi-permanent vehicles together with hard-standing and infrastructure including a waste-water treatment plant.
3. This significant proposed development lies well outside the settlement boundary of Puckeridge and constitutes a significant encroachment onto open countryside with impacts on the rural character of the area. Local residents note several concerns with regard to access, traffic dangers and the impact on local footpaths.
4. CPRE Hertfordshire notes the comprehensive report prepared by the Planning Policy Team which indicates the requirements for Gypsy and Traveller site applications to follow a criteria based process of evaluation according to District Plan Policy HOU9. In

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this case, the proximity of the local wildlife site (Puckeridge Lime Kiln) and the isolated nature of the site in terms of accessibility and sustainability should also be taken into account.

5. The Planning Policy Team report also notes the provision made for Gypsies and Travellers in the District Plan and related issues to future demand and provision. CPRE Hertfordshire believes that provision for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation should be subject to District Plan policy and allocations. It is particularly important, given the sensitivity of the issues surrounding such provision, that it is not subject to individual planning applications, especially on the scale of this proposal.
6. It is most unfortunate that development has already taken place which has already led to degradation of the countryside in this location. We urge the Council to refuse permission for this potentially damaging proposal in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt and to take appropriate enforcement action against unauthorised development.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Berry
Planning Manager

NOTE: We would request that this letter is published on the Council's website as a document relating to this application and should be grateful if you would notify us of the date of the appropriate meeting if it is to be determined by planning committee.