

OBJECTION FROM COLEHILL PC

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The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Consultation
Dorset County Council
County Hall
Colliton Park
Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Also sent by email

10 February 2012

Dear Sirs

**Dorset Wide Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocation
Joint Development Plan**

Although none of the proposed sites for permanent or transit sites for gypsies and travellers lie within the boundaries of our Parish, it is the case that the proposals for the Uddens site cause great concern to the residents of Colehill, many of whom are regular users of the area as designated. It is also of concern to residents that recent items in the media have given the impression that Uddens is to be a recommended site when in fact the consultation period, due to end on 10th February, has not yet expired. Many now hold the belief that decisions have already been made.

It is therefore on behalf of our residents that we forward to you objections to the Uddens proposal based upon three main grounds.

Firstly it is environmentally unsound. There is a serious groundwater issue, particularly if there are hardstands created. The hydrology indicates an increase of run off into Uddens Water and thus to Moors River (an SSSI) with a potentially serious impact on local river systems which are, to a large extent, considered to be of major importance. In addition the existing heathland and the possible return to such of some of this area would provide valuable ecological links to other areas. The proposal would put paid to this prospect for ever. There is the known presence in the area of adders, smooth snakes and lizards as well as dormice and regular hunting of the area by kestrels, nightjar and other predators. These would be pushed out of the area upsetting the natural balance.

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'Secondly there has, over recent years, been considerable work and expense to upgrade the Castleman Trailway. This has been a priority project as a commuting cycleway and for walking, cycling and horse riding with a direct connection from the proposed site via a footbridge which might well become a no go area if the plan goes ahead. It is used by thousands of people over the year and such a site will, however it is dressed up, be a deterrent to people who would otherwise seek to use it. In addition some people operating in the vicinity of Stapehill Farm keeping horses have grazing for their animals on the Cannon Hill side. This is accessed via this footbridge and serious confrontation can be envisaged. This is quite apart from the access problem that would, of itself, be a magnet for confrontation whether from Uddens Lane or otherwise.

Thirdly, it is the understanding that we have been given that for a transit site to be established certain amenities must be put into place including water, electricity, drainage and toilet facilities. The advice that we have been given indicates that to do so will require new sewerage to be installed as well. This site is at some distance from any sizeable established settlement and thus considerable cost and work will be involved. It is the view of this council that the capital expenditure involved would not be justified.

We realise that sites are needed and that to do nothing is not an option however like the Environmental Theme Action Group, which has expressed views that we would endorse, there are other areas which could meet the criteria without such adverse impact. We urge the consultative committee and council to consider these objections seriously and to appreciate the unease that is felt by our residents.

Yours faithfully

Clerk