

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION  
COUNCIL HELD ON 09 December 2024**

**STATEMENT from Ms Diane MacArthur, Rowsley Local Resident**

“I have read through the report for every proposed site but as a Rowsley resident I am more concerned about the Old Station carpark being used as a temporary or permanent site for the traveller families.

I have a few concerns about the report regarding Rowsley.

1) page 8 point 2.3 there are apparently 31 residents FOR the site to be here. Really? how can that possibly be true! I would want proof of that. Out of the 1751 respondents how many were from Rowsley?

2) page 8 point 2.5 the supply of water was sneakily installed/upgraded by the council before the consultation. That cost should be added to the overall cost of preparing the site at Rowsley to reflect the true cost. It seems to me that figures have been manipulated

3) it is stated page 5 point 1.3 that Derby University analysed the Councils ONLINE survey. So what happened to the responses that were NOT online. I know there were paper copies available to be filled in by people without computers or computer skills.

4) page 6 point 1.8 did Derbyshire Wildlife Trust consider the impact on the nature reserve at Rowsley when assessing their own findings.

It will be truly shocking if councillors choose Rowsley when there are so many issues raised and issues that are not just "perceived"!"

**STATEMENT from Ms Alexia Wyer, Headteacher Rowsley C of E Primary School**

“1) Equalities impact statement:

I don't think that this equalities impact assessment has given enough gravitas to the safeguarding issues of site 1 (Rowsley) for the following reasons:

1a) There is no mention of the noise from the traveller site that can be heard from the school playground. At previous times when this site has been used there have been times when the site can be heard from the school playground. I raise this as a safeguarding concern due to the language heard (swearing) and also shouting and screaming was heard by pupils aged 4-11. This simply cannot be allowed to happen. Our children cannot be allowed to hear screaming, shouting and swearing from a domestic setting.

According to government legislation Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 of which schools, councils and other public places should adhere it states:

Indicators of abuse and neglect

**24. Abuse:** *a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of **witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.***

This legislation along with other safeguarding legislation means that if our pupils can hear domestic abuse then they themselves are victims of abuse. Therefore if they hear shouting and screaming from the travellers domestic setting at Rowsley then they will be victims of abuse and I will be bound by my duty to report this to social care.

1b) There is no mention of the safeguarding risks to pupils walking to school via the public cycle way nor of the risks of having the site so close to a school (within 5 minutes walk). There was also human excrement left on the cycleway. This is not acceptable to happen anywhere but especially in close proximity to a school and on a school route.

I fear that our families on the way to school will experience or witness sexualised behaviours or abuse. This fear is based upon incidents that occurred when this family were last on the site.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 states that:

*560. Consideration should be given to supporting children (and adult students) who have witnessed sexual violence (omitted other forms of sexualised behaviour). Witnessing such an event is likely to be traumatic and support may be required.*

Can it be known that if site 1 is chosen as a site for the travellers and there are any incidents involving the travellers and pupils from my school I will be directing parents to the council. Council members will also be asked to come down to school and explain to parents why their children can hear screaming, swearing and shouting during break times.

This can be shared at the meeting on Monday.

If appropriate please can we share a possible impact of the site on Rowsley C of E Primary School. Several parents have already stated, directly to myself, that they will take their children out of Rowsley Primary should there be a traveller site located

close to the school. These are mostly parents who had older children at Rowsley primary the last time the travellers were here who have said they don't want their children hearing the site and who have raised other safeguarding concerns with us regarding the proximity of the site to our school. A small village school depends on having high pupil numbers. If pupils begin to leave due to the proximity of this site there is a possibility that the school will eventually close due to not having enough pupils."

**STATEMENT from Ms Catherine Al-Mashoor, Matlock-Bath Local Resident**

"I did read somewhere but can't find it now a list of recommendations for the selling off of land by the council- could any of this have been suitable for Traveller sites? Finally I am not sure if you are aware but I understand that one of the travellers based at the Matlock car park site has passed away. We are therefore expecting a number of Travellers to arrive for the funeral, which is fair enough. What will be interesting though is how long they remain..."

**STATEMENT from Mr Ian Baker, Clerk to Nether Haddon Parish Meeting**

"I am unavailable to attend on 9 December 2024, as I will be away on holiday.

On 15th September 2024, I met with the head of the family at the Matlock Bath site.

Their main concern was her grandchildren. She told me when previously at Rowsley, it was like living in a wood and the trees created a damp atmosphere not suitable for caravan lifestyle. The caravans had mildew on the outside and the insides were damp. The family had constantly worn Wellington boots as the ground was constantly wet.

She said Matlock Bath was far from suitable because the children went to school in Ashbourne and the travelling was putting a strain on her daughter who had to drive her children to school and back. She felt travelling in the winter would be difficult especially from Rowsley.

She told me her adult son has disabilities which, last time the family struggled to manage at the Rowsley. site.

I wasn't at all surprised to hear the family had moved to Ashbourne.

I believe the wishes and feelings and needs of the adult child and grandchildren must be considered.

Feel free to read out this email, in my absence."

**STATEMENT from Ms Annemarie Jenkins, Local Resident**

"Good Afternoon,

I am writing regarding the meeting to discuss the choosing of a temporary site for the Traveller families in the Derbyshire Dales.

As far as the published costings are concerned, I see that the estimated cost for Rowsley is approaching £50,000. I cannot believe that this figure includes the cost to members of the community and thus also to the council of the devastating effect of the loss of the one small, very busy car park.

The following would be financially adversely affected:

The businesses. Bill Watkins explained the reluctance of his clients to park even on the road near the carpark when travellers were there causing him to lose business.

The award winning Level centre which caters for some very disadvantaged members of the community, many of whom cannot walk far.

The school, which as the Head teacher pointed out at the public meeting, has parents who are committed to moving their child if the travellers move in because of the appalling noise, language and fumes from burning rubbish.

The Village Hall which relies on users being able to park for larger events.

Users of the trail who feel unable to continue into the carpark because of intimidation. Many of these people bring business into Rowsley during their excursions.

All of these have huge cost implications which the Council should be considering alongside the cost of making the site suitable.

Those are just the financial implications, the social and health and well-being issues have already been passed to the council on more than one occasion.

Children unable to use the trail to go to school.

Young people (girls especially) unhappy to use the bus stop because of some of the actions of one of the family members.

The degradation of the river and its surroundings because of a lack of respect and the dumping of waste.

Lack of parking for visitors and residents who often park there – particularly when there are events in Chatsworth, as access and egress at their property becomes extremely difficult at those times

All these negative implications and the site seems to be only suitable during spring and summer months! While the Council states that these sites are temporary the search for a permanent site has gone on for so long that 'temporary' has become a joke!

It is not just Rowsley residents who feel this site is unsuitable; the families themselves have said that the site is not suitable. I urge the councillors to take on board the concerns of both the Traveller families and the residents of Rowsley when making their decision.

The public meeting in Rowsley was told, by one of the attending officials, that there had been no reports of any trouble at either the car park in Matlock Bath or in

Matlock which is very different to what has happened on previous occasions when the Travellers have been in residence in Rowsley.

It seems that the Traveller family are happy in the Matlock Station car park and the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group have recommended that this become a permanent site. This is a large car park with ample room for both Travellers and members of the public needing to park as can be seen by the fact that they have been there for some considerable time without problems. This must surely be the simplest and most cost effective solution, saving the council and therefore the council tax payer a lot of money.

I also understand that the family from Matlock Bath have found another site which they have cleared themselves ready for occupancy.

Regards,

Annemarie Fell”

### **STATEMENT from Mr Richard Hall, Local Resident**

“Dear Committee

I was surprised on reviewing the papers for the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025 Committee in the lack of planning policy consideration or Planning Officer advice around the different temporary traveller development proposals.

The process is recommending that if a site or sites are taken forward, they should be subject to technical work and a pre app process. Derbyshire Dales Councillors have access to Planning Officers to provide initial advice as part of this round of decision making. Such advice, if supportive, does not mean permission can be automatically granted without appropriate work and submissions, but it would clearly rule out several of these sites, especially Rowsley, due to conflicts with adopted local plan policy. This should be reflected in the reports and agenda documentation to support Councillors in decision making. Indeed, in terms of the permanent site, Rowsley has been currently excluded due to “constraints”. These constraints still apply to a temporary permission as they would to a permanent proposal. Temporary permission in planning has a specific usage/purpose that in case of Rowsley would not be the correct approach.

Surely this information should be presented to the planning team to consider before this committee makes a decision to take which site forward. A scheme and the associated costs need to be deliverable in principle, or this process will go around in circles and waste time, money and create increased stress and mental health issues to those people and organisations potentially impacted.

I live locally in Rowsley Parish, one of children attends the fantastic Level Arts Centre. In addition, we regularly use several of the local businesses that are a credit to the area.

The suggested costs associated with Rowsley also seem far too low and feel lacking in additional costs to the overall process.

The summary (by the University of Derby) is quantitative report, which makes no recommendations, just states the consultation response in numbers. I assume this is because the University of Derby does not have qualified Town Planners or built environment specialists who are credible able to evaluate impact.

As regards the plan from the report and also the layout they have provided. It was made very clear that when the temp permission was in place, the travellers went outside the fence with vehicles and equipment blocked car parking and the cycle way access. They blocked more of the car park. The plan within the site area only shows 4 vehicle spaces. As you can see at the Matlock site vehicles are continually outside the fencing area, with far more than 1 vehicle per caravan, controls have been suggested but this will not be followed.

A scheme at Rowsley will be against local plan policies that are aimed at protecting, among other things, businesses, visitors, they cycleway, the Level Centre and local amenity. If a business or person made a planning application for such development with its defined impact it would not get planning permission.

The plan is not a topographical survey, so the plan does not take account of, for example, the trees crown spread, root systems and slopes accurately. The proposed development would remove at least 80% of the parking capacity for Rowsley, the local businesses, Level, the village hall and the cycle track, that is just development impact illiteracy and time wasting.

I have used my work e-mail, but the comments are mine and not of my business.

Kind regards

Richard”

### **STATEMENT from Cllr Alasdair Sutton, County Councillor for Bakewell Division**

“I would like to express my opposition to a temporary traveller’s site at the station car park Rowsley.

1. Why is it being considered as a temporary site when it has already been removed from a list of potential permanent sites ? Surely a site deemed unsuitable should in all cases remain as unsuitable .
2. Effects on local resident’s and local businesses .
3. Effects on visitors and tourists to the area . The car park is busy and well used throughout the week .
4. The car park features as a key part of Derbyshire County Council’s White Peak Loop .

There has also been rumours that a District Councillor has stated that Rowsley has already been chosen prior to Monday's meeting."

### **STATEMENT from Matlock Bath Parish Council**

We are mindful of the disruption the situation of having travellers on Station Car Park Matlock Bath has caused to residents, businesses and visitors. You will have read and heard our community speak passionately about how it has affected them and the village but what follows is a snapshot of facts and figures of how it has affected income into the village.

As a result of the coach and car parking area of Matlock Bath Station car park being used as a temporary tolerated traveller site for over 2 years, the Parish Council has made the following calculations:

Based on DDDCs own figures from 2019 when 809 coaches paid to use the coach park, the village has lost more than 1618 coaches bringing visitors to the village! Nowhere to park.

These coaches - based on coach company advice could have brought into the village around 61,600 visitors to the village.

Then there are the 22 car parking spaces. These would only have been used at busy times of the year - school holidays, illuminations, summer weekends etc. but we estimate if each car carried 3 passengers then they would have brought another 51,720 visitors to the village. This loss of 113,320 visitors (5.15% of the estimated 1.1 million who visit the village each year) has resulted in a massive loss of income to the businesses in the village as these visitors have not been able to spend their £5, £10, £30 etc. I will let you do the sums but we are talking in millions of pounds.

Based on these figures, we estimate the loss of coach and car park income to DDDC to be £52,605 and the loss of income from the toilets assuming that just a third of those visitors used the Memorial Gardens toilets another £15,109 making a grand total of £67,714

Were any of these effects of making the area a TTTS considered when the action was taken by the Council. Not to our knowledge.

It is difficult to calculate the long-term effect on the village but the Parish Council has received many negative messages, many saying they will never return to the village. The village has been taken off many of the coach company's itineraries.

Derbyshire Dales District Council needs to take account of the results of its actions and make every effort to remedy the problems their actions have caused.

### **STATEMENT from Local Resident**

I think an important point that DDDC have conveniently left out of their most recent report on the proposed Rowsley traveller site is the fact that the site is far, far smaller

than it says it is on their matrix. The Councillors casually informed the public at the meeting in Rowsley Village Hall that the travellers will 'only take up about half' of the site. This is simply rubbish. Even if the whole car park was given to the travellers it'd be too small according to the Council's own 'minimum requirements', so the idea that it can be shared with the public is unrealistic and, quite frankly, a stupid suggestion. The Council are moving the goal posts and wilfully bending their own 'rules' to suit themselves. If the travellers are given the car park, no one else will be able to use it because there isn't enough space (and, whether we like it or not, the majority of people won't want to park on a traveller site anyway).

Another point: if the Council go and look at the site now that the leaves have fallen from the trees surrounding it, they'll see that it is no longer screened. In fact, the travellers caravans will be an elevated, prominent eyesore. It'll be the most noticeable thing in the village.

Also, when considering the proximity of the site to residential properties, the adjacent hotels (The Peacock and The Grouse & Claret), and the massive Caravan Club site should also be considered. They all accommodate people overnight. I think this fact has been ignored in the Council's matrix/surveys. The hotels overlook the proposed site and are situated just a few metres away. The travellers site would have a negative impact on people staying in all of these places, and therefore a negative impact on local business.

### **STATEMENT from Mr Kerry Andrews, Level Centre**

In advance of the extraordinary meeting being held on Monday 9 December 2024, I would like this representation from LEVEL Centre shared in advance.

The paperwork issued for the Community and Environment Committee meeting on 21 November 2024 stated the following:

The Gypsy and Traveller Working Group have recommended that at the present time, Council does not take any further action in relation to the Woodyard at Homesford due to cost considerations, Rowsley Car Park due to site constraints, and Watery Lane, Ashbourne due to landowner resistance. However, it is proposed to undertake further assessment of the 3 sites in private ownership and consider any further opportunities that may emerge from Phase 1 and 2 as owners consider their options. Resources will need to be secured to cover the costs of further investigations.

At LEVEL Centre we are dismayed to see that the Old Station Close car park remains under consideration for a temporary site. How can constraints identified for a permanent site not account for a temporary site.

Previously it has been asked what the council deem to be temporary. It was defined as not permanent. This is not measurable. Please define temporary in days, weeks and months.

The public report pack has omitted vital information shared in the consultation about the Old Station Close car park being our Fire evacuation and emergency meeting point. It also fails to acknowledge that there is any other safe public parking this side of the A8 for our vulnerable users.



LEVEL has been misrepresented in the Equalities Impact Assessment and public reports pack. We are not just a visual arts centre. We are a contemporary award winning multi art form venue and charity working across visual, digital and performing arts. We work with learning disabled people, disabled creatives, autistic and neurodivergent young people and the wider community.

I started work for Level in 2021, I am aware that the car park had previously been designated as dual use and from what I have learnt this did not work. 13 years on from the last time the travellers were here, LEVEL is a much loved and well used resource. Our participant and visitor numbers are growing year on year. A dual use car park will not provide sufficient parking for Level or the other nearby businesses.

At the G&TWG meeting in July I raised the question about an Equality Impact Assessment. I am disappointed with the findings and lack of consultation and question if there is a bias as this has been undertaken internally by DDDC and not independently. In item i) it outlines LEVEL Centre as information required but nobody has been in touch. Why is this?

At planning permission Highways and parking outlined that Old station close car park could be used as an overflow car park by Level. Permission to build Level would not have been granted based on LEVEL having just 3 car parking spaces, two of which are disabled bays and a building capacity of over 50 people at any one time.

Our charity, funders and our community are really concerned by the potential loss or reduced parking at Level.

In the July meeting we attended and spoke out, Councillor Nickhead spoke of the fact that public trust in the council over this debate has been eroded after years of mis-management. The current working group have done absolutely nothing to improve this, and have in fact deepened mis-trust in the council's working practices after very valid emails and questions have gone unanswered, and decisions have seemingly been made without consultation of key stakeholders that it will affect.

An artist and parent we worked with told you earlier this year that they have a disabled child who has a propensity to go into 'fight or flight' and abscond - They have to be mindful that they require ease of access when undertaking outings. Parking further away from a venue puts their child at acute risk, should they be triggered or have an adverse reaction. They need - as I imagine other participants and audiences accessing LEVEL - safe and close ease of access.

A freelance facilitator and artist leading sessions at LEVEL Centre relies on this site to park in when delivering sessions and forms part of their income. One of our facilitators has permanent paralysis in their left leg and mobility related disability, so not having access to this car park or difficulty finding a space at reduced capacity is of major concern.

One of our participants who has Down's Syndrome attends Level weekly, and we have played a big part in their recuperation from a severe mental health condition. This has impaired their walking ability, so a reduction or no parking represents a big concern for them and their parents.

These are a very small sample of concerns from our community.

As mentioned at the time, the online public consultation was not accessible for many users of our centre. This is why we wanted an equality impact assessment to be undertaken *independently* (to avoid any potential bias), understanding the type of visitors and participants that use Old Station Close car park regularly. We are very disappointed in the generic mitigations outlined, which read similarly throughout for each point. There is a lack of understanding of users of the car park in terms of protected characteristics, which we will go into more detail about at the meeting.

The diagram in the public pack for Rowsley indicates potential for dual use of the space. The car park area includes land that is currently covered by trees and other foliage, meaning that the actual area is much smaller than the plan suggests. Are you intending to cut down natural habitats if this site was to proceed? The Council recently put out a public call out for land to be used for biodiversity development on 28th November. Are the council seriously considering cutting back land for use for the development of a dual use travellers site while also asking landowners to submit more land? The car park is in heavy use daily, as well as Old Station Close itself - has a survey been undertaken to assess the amount of parking that is required on a daily basis to confirm whether the dual use remaining car park space is viable? Our findings would suggest it is not, considering that on a very regular basis cars are parked well into the area that the Council is suggesting for the traveller site. This is very pertinent, when there is no other public parking available in Rowsley, or this side of the busy A6. Many of our participants are unable to travel by public transport, and those that do have seen a reduction in services over recent years - a nationwide problem, particularly in rural areas. As part of our environmental responsibility, LEVEL asks visitors how they have travelled to the centre, and overwhelmingly, the majority travel by car using Old Station Close car park to park in.

In the public report pack Table 1.10 sets out the costs for upgrade of the site to the standards required. We are concerned that Rowsley being listed as the cheapest site to upgrade may skew opinion. We would like to point out that this is purely down to the much smaller size of Old Station Close car park in comparison to the other five sites. We do not feel that this represents a proper benchmark or reflection of site suitability. We would like to see a breakdown of all the costs for all the sites rather than one global figure. We know, although the council dispute this, that a new tap and water pipe was installed on Old Station Close car park earlier this year. Are these figures included? This is doubtful, as the Council seem to have no record of this work happening. This has already been a cost incurred for the Rowsley site.

As you can see, there are many issues and concerns that are unresolved surrounding the Old Station Close car park. This is just a brief outline. LEVEL is supported by some major national initiatives and funders, such as BBC Children in Need (with a recent visit from Pudsey Bear and recognition from Vernon Kay on his social media feeds), the National Lottery, Arts Council England and many more. This should be enough to demonstrate the importance of the work being done at LEVEL with learning disabled and disabled participants. We are supporting people in areas that the council cannot fund. With more Day Centres closing, more home schooled children, isolation and loneliness on the increase, our centre is going from strength to strength and the car park is a vital part of this. Not being able to fulfill our deliverables could mean a cut in our own funding which would have a detrimental effect on the people and communities we serve. It could even lead to closure.

## **STATEMENT from Stuart Allen, Chair of LEVEL Centre**

My name is Stuart Allen and I am the Chair of the Board of LEVEL Centre, an award winning charity. In advance of the extraordinary meeting being held on Monday 9 December 2024, I would like this representation from myself as Chair of the Board shared in advance to everyone listed above.

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the council's proposal to still list Old Station Close car park as a possible temporary traveller site, despite having ruled it out as a possible permanent site due to various constraints. It is a parking facility that is vital for LEVEL to deliver essential services to some of the most vulnerable people in our community and region. I believe there are significant issues with the robustness of the equality impact assessment conducted.

I question whether the equality impact assessment adequately considers the range of individuals and groups who rely on the car park and the services facilitated by LEVEL. The centre plays a crucial role in supporting learning disabled and disabled people, home schooled young people, young people who are autistic and or neurodivergent, disabled creatives and the wider community. Many of our participants and visitors rely on the proximity and accessibility of the car park to access our programmes, all of which meet wider council agendas in supporting loneliness, isolation and wellbeing. The possible changes to Old Station Close would disproportionately affect these individuals, potentially leaving them without their only weekly social interaction if their parents, carers or support workers are unable to park safely.

It is not evident that meaningful engagement with those directly impacted has been carried out. The community groups and individuals most affected by this proposal should have been central to the equality impact assessment process for site 1, yet it appears that their views and concerns have been insufficiently sought or reflected in the proposal. The equality impact assessment has used paperwork that did not include a specific question on equality impact, or

have a specific agenda item on this at the public meetings. How can an equality impact assessment be created when a tailored question has not been asked?

At the time of the consultation we explained that the majority of our users would struggle to complete the online form yet the equality impact assessment has used this resource to inform the assessment. The entire process has not been conducted in an accessible way, which could be deemed ableist, including scheduling an extraordinary council meeting with the agenda and paperwork issued only one week in advance. If you are a parent or carer of someone with additional needs, finding time in a week to write a representation, respond and/or attend in person as well as find caring support is simply impossible.

We request that you confirm the steps taken to involve LEVEL and these stakeholders, and share how their feedback was incorporated into your decision making - particularly with regards to the equality impact assessment. I am fully aware that LEVEL, whilst listed in point i) other stakeholders likely to be impacted as "information required", have not been contacted or liaised with on the equality impact assessment.

I am troubled by the inconsistency in the council's stance regarding the car park's potential change of use. It has been stated that the site is not suitable for permanent change of use, yet it is still being considered for a temporary change. This raises significant questions about the rationale and consistency of the council's approach. If the site is unsuitable for permanent use for a traveller site, what has changed to make it acceptable for temporary use? A detailed explanation of this decision-making process would be appreciated.

The potential loss of this car park or even a reduction in use will have far-reaching consequences for LEVEL and the vulnerable members of our community. I urge the council to revisit the equality impact assessment with greater rigor, ensuring it genuinely reflects the impact on those most at risk. The assessment presented has been based on the findings of the consultation, public meetings, traveller inbox and other submissions. How is this equitable when no specific equality questions were asked enabling the public and businesses to respond. I request that a more transparent and inclusive consultation process be conducted before any final decision is made.

Previous dual use did not work and there is no confidence that such a proposal could work again. LEVEL has 3 bays of which 2 are disabled parking bays. For a building that was built and the Highways team acknowledging Old Station Close as an overspill car park as we simply do not have enough spaces, I ask what has changed as our venue can host 50 people at any one time.

The public pack report completely omits a huge health and safety concern. This is a vital fire and emergency evacuation meeting point.

Lastly, presenting the cost table and showing Old Station Close as the cheapest site skews opinion. It is the smallest site and this should not impact decisions on suitability.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these points. I look forward to your response and hope the council acknowledges the significant impact and implications for our community.

Stuart Allen

Chair of the Board

LEVEL Centre

## **STATEMENT from Tim Simcox, T C Harrison Group**

I am writing on behalf of T. C. Harrison Group Limited, to submit representations for your consideration in relation to the above referenced matter, to be considered at the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024. These representations will also be presented verbally by a representative of T. C. Harrison Group during that meeting, as follows:

The recommendations before the Council, as made by Robert Coggins, Director of Housing, relate to the outcome of a public consultation exercise to determine which, if any, of six potential sites previously identified are to be progressed as temporary site(s) for use by Travellers.

T. C. Harrison Group have engaged in previous consultation exercises relating to temporary and permanent traveller sites. We have been consistent in our view that DDDC should focus its resource on the identification and delivery of a permanent traveller site, and that prevarication over temporary sites will only be to the further detriment of the families involved.

As noted within Mr. Coggins' report, T. C. Harrison Group were respondents to the latest consultation, and commissioned a technical response produced by a planning consultancy. The response demonstrated that, for several reasons, the site at Old Station Close, is completely unsuitable for habitation and should be disregarded from consideration.

We are not alone this evening in requesting that Members note the responses received to the public consultation exercise in accordance with point 1), and in doing so, **Reject** all six potential sites previously identified as suitable for use by Travellers. We also implore members to **Reject** the recommendation in point 2), and instead focus valuable time and resource on identifying a permanent solution.

Turning specifically to the Old Station Close site, our concerns can be summarised as follows:

- **Technical Detail/ Due Diligence** – DDDC do not appear to have undertaken the appropriate level of due diligence on any of the proposed sites and technical information provided to date is of poor quality. There are discrepancies in site areas, red line boundaries drawn incorrectly, and arbitrary caravan sizes used to inform critical dimensions on proposed site plans. There is a complete lack of transparency in relation to the site design, and 'site preparation' costs, and this information should be placed in the public domain.
- **Planning Consent** – It has been suggested by Dr Siobhan Spencer of Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group that any temporary site should be subject to an 18-Month planning consent, and a sites licence. It is noted within Mr Coggins' report that "*Provision of any selected sites would also be without prejudice to receiving any necessary planning permissions*". The temporary site proposals appear contrary to DDDC's own planning policies, and it is suggested that both time and resource are focused on a permanent solution that is policy compliant.
- **Environmental Impact** – It has been previously noted that there is a potential impact on the adjacent river. There are concerns on the adequacy of drainage attenuation in this area. No formal survey work has been commissioned to our knowledge, but it is clear that any works within the site would result in ecological disturbance, contrary to ecological policy objectives. Dr Siobhan Spencer has previously suggested that a number of trees would need to be felled in order to make the site suitable for habitation, resulting in an unacceptable loss of biodiversity.

**Drainage** – Replacement of the existing surfacing with concrete caravan pitches would result in additional non-permeable hardstanding. It is not clear whether additional surface water drainage, or attenuation has been included within the 'Site Preparation' costings.

- **Highways Impact** – It is not clear from the proposed site layouts whether suitable turning facilities could be provided to facilitate safe access to the site for the family, whilst retaining use of the wider car park for vital public parking provision. The loss of car parking in this area will undoubtedly result in increased instances of on-street parking along Old Station Close, to the detriment of highway safety and disruption to the local businesses in respect of large vehicle deliveries and visitor parking. It is also unclear whether any thought has been given to access to the site by emergency vehicles (such as ambulances or fire appliances) when the car park is full.
- **White Peak Loop** - Derbyshire County Council have formally objected to the proposed site at Old Station close, as the Car Park forms a critical element in the extension of the White Peak Loop, which has been allocated funding for the 2025/2026 financial year.

Derbyshire County Council have suggested that, as a minimum, a five-metre corridor should be maintained to allow the construction of the White Peak Loop during the 2025/2026 financial year. Locating a temporary site within the would result in either:

- o Prevention of the continued delivery of the White Peak Loop (and therefore the safe and easily accessible route for waling, wheeling, cycling and horse riding), to the detriment of local tourism, and economy, or
- o Result in noisy construction work being undertaken directly next to a family who have, quite frankly, faced enough disruption and upheaval in recent years.

**Flood Risk** – Within the consultation response compiled by TCH, it was noted that part of the site falls within Flood Risk Zone 2. This has not been mentioned within Mr. Coggins' summary report. DDDC will need to include flood mitigation measures, and carefully consider how vulnerable family members will be kept safe from harm in the event of flash flooding. We have all witnessed the speed and unpredictability of floodwater, and this was sadly evidenced by the loss of former Derbyshire High Sherriff Annie Hall in the floods of 2019. It is not clear whether any flood mitigation works have been included within the 'Site Preparation' costs.

**Fire Risk** - DDDC claim to have given due regard to advice on fire safety, provided by Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service. The proposed plans detail caravan pitches based on arbitrary dimensions, and it is not clear whether the separation distances could still be achieved with the actual caravans that will be populating the site. It is also unclear whether any detailed tracked vehicle analysis has been undertaken to determine whether caravans can manoeuvre safely, and whether emergency vehicles, such as fire appliances, can access the site.

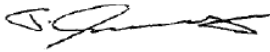
**Accessibility** - Whilst the site is close to existing businesses, it is remote from high frequency public transport routes with very limited shops and services in Rowsley. The site is therefore considered to be fundamentally unsustainable and unlikely to meet the specific needs of the families concerned, as listed in the Committee report.

- **Traveller Consultation** – It has been stated anecdotally that the family in question do not wish to reside in Rowsley. Do DDDC really want to use valuable time and resource in placing a vulnerable family in a location that is dark, dingy, with high flood risk and floods,

In summary, we implore Members of the Council to listen to those who have responded, re visit the decision of November 2022, and permanently dismiss the six previously identified sites from consideration. The progression of temporary solutions will only further delay and divert valuable resources away from finding a permanent solution.

T. C. Harrison Group fully support the move towards a permanent site and agree that DDDC should continue working with ARK Consultancy to identify and deliver a permanent site.

Yours Faithfully,



Tim Simcox  
Group Finance Director