

Written representation from Cllr Warters in relation to agenda item 6 - Gypsy and Traveller Action Plan – Annual Update

I was shocked when CYC first came up with the £5 million spend on Gypsy Caravan Sites to placate the Local Plan Inspectors at the time of the Local Plan examination when the clear inadequacy of CYC current and proposed arrangements was highlighted.

Shocked not just with the apparent ease with which £5 million could be found in such tight financial times but with how yet more significant sums are to be directed towards the Osbaldwick Gypsy Caravan Site - a site so bad that closure ought to be the preferred option.

The situation around the Osbaldwick Site is well known indeed York Labour Party and York Central MP submissions into the Local Plan consultations were clear that there should be no further expansion of the Osbaldwick Site.

Aside from the expediency of getting the Local Plan approved what changed those views?

The simple fact is the previous expansion of the site over a decade ago using £673,500 of public money was a disaster, as I stated to the previous Labour Executive involved in this waste - the money might as well have been piled up in West Offices Car Park and set fire to!

Part of that funding was for an area of grazing land, with shelters, water and feed troughs that was very quickly trashed and still gypsy horses are illegally tethered on private land and on public highway land surrounding the site, the only area an expanded Osbaldwick Site can spread out into is this land?

Similarly there was supposed to be landscaping and secure fencing around the site as part of that earlier expansion neither of which ever got done and formal complaints to CYC Planning Enforcement as to those conditions being ignored by CYC have been met with complete indifference and the usual “the LPA can not issue enforcement proceedings against itself”.....farcical.

As part of the previous expansion the then CYC Chief Executive and the then Head of Housing committed to the site never being expanded again if planning permission was granted for the then additional extra six

pitches which in itself was a departure from good practise on site size and management.

The previous expansion was supposed to bring about a permanent on site management presence and improvements in behaviour which never materialised indeed in the intervening years the well publicised 'difficulties' over establishing the site office highlighted the thoughts of the occupants to supervision of their activities.

Again the intervening years have seen this 'out of sight out of mind site' deteriorate even further with again well publicised drug raids, violent acts, continual illegal tethering of gypsy horses on private and highway land, massive fly tipping for CYC council taxpayers to fund clearance works including of course the 100+ tons of fridges/freezers dumped on adjoining land that CYC council taxpayers funded a £50,000 clear up of.

Not one penny piece should be spent on expanding this site as the Labour group acknowledged previously, even at Local Plan inquiry ALL parties acknowledged the inadequacies of this site.....thanks to the GTT for exposing the thoughts of the previous Director of Housing with emails obtained by FOI which were very revealing.

The Osbaldwick Gypsy Caravan Site should be left as it is, no new tenants accepted, those who still wish to remain there allowed to until the passage of time sees the site emptied upon which time it is closed.

The funds CYC are looking to borrow along with s106 Gypsy site provision funds from other developments used to set up and equip a new stand alone Gypsy Caravan Site at a relatively un controversial location on CYC Land - which BOTH Executive members know exist at a CYC farm holding.

All involved in this process know the money will be wasted if spent on the Osbaldwick Site.

Related to the Osbaldwick Site and a previous eviction I wish to question especially now CYC have raised the call for land for temporary stop over sites, just what the intention is of CYC in relation to the A166 Noddle Hill, Dunnington unlawful in planning terms Gypsy Caravan site that is illegally occupying the public highway and has done so for SIX YEARS now.

Are CYC intending making that site permanent?

If not when will CYC have the illegal occupation of the public highway cleared, the removal of caravans, removal of the illegal waste transfer station for scrap metal and the cessation of public money being spent on water provision, site toilet and rubbish clearance?

I note with interest in paragraph 49 the mention of CYC producing yet another behaviour contract for the sites this time termed a 'site licence agreement' - why?

Since the Osbaldwick site was taken over from Ryedale DC management after local government reorganisation in 1996 CYC have failed to carry on the good site management whereby the site caused no issues in the surrounding area, was tidy and a pleasant place for the occupants to live in to the situation we have seen since of an out of control site referred to as the worst in North Yorkshire.

I look forward to the deliberations of the two Executive Members in relation to these matters.

Councillor Mark Warters.
30th May 2025.