

YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS

X MP

3 November 2015

Dear X MP,

Re: Housing and Planning Bill 2015.

I am writing to you as I am concerned to hear about the proposals in the Housing and Planning Bill 2015 to remove the requirement on local authorities to carry out Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments. These are currently a requirement under Section 225 of the Housing Act 2004.

The Bill had its second reading on Monday 2 Nov 2015.

I feel this will have the consequence of producing even less authorised sites for Gypsies and Travellers than are currently delivered, which will increase unauthorised encampments, surely a lose-lose situation for the settled and the Traveller communities.

As the Communities and Local Government Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments Guidance of 2007 states, under the title Why assess Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs?, 'In the past, the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers (especially those who live in caravans or mobile homes) have not routinely formed part of the process by which local authorities assess people's housing needs. The consequences of this have been that the current and projected accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers have often not been well understood.'

Due to the historic reluctance of local authorities to provide authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites statutory requirements such as that mentioned above are essential.

In August 2015 there were also drastic changes made to the key guidance document used to determine Traveller site applications - Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. This has made it much harder for Gypsies and Travellers to obtain planning permission to live on their own land. The result of this, along with the proposal to scrap the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments will lead to more unauthorised encampments. This will not only have a disastrous effect on the Gypsy and Traveller communities in terms of accessing accommodation, healthcare and education, but will also increase community tensions.

If you share these concerns we would request that you submit them to the scrutiny committee on this issue and oppose this amendment at the 3rd reading in Parliament.

To learn more about why the GTAA's were introduced see - Communities and Local Government Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments Guidance of 2007, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gypsy-and-traveller-accommodation-needs-assessments>

I would be grateful if you could get back to me on this issue to let me know your thoughts and what you can do about this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

X