



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

By email

6 February 2020

Dear Secretary of State

We write to you as Co-chairs of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma about the London Plan Policy H14 'Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation'. The policy proposes a definition of Gypsies and Travellers that local authorities should use as a basis for assessing need, which includes those Travellers not meeting the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites definition.

The Planning Inspectors appointed to examine the London Plan recommended that this definition should be deleted as it is not in conformity with national policy. However, the definition of Gypsies and Travellers in Policy H14 would support the Greater London Authority in meeting the requirements under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to 'advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it'. Policy H14 of the London Plan would ensure that all members of these protected ethnic groups would have their accommodation needs equally assessed, instead of the current situation which largely excludes those who do not meet the PPTS definition. Given that most Gypsies and Travellers who do not meet the PPTS definition are older, suffer from a long-term illness or disability or are caring after children and other family members, the London Plan policy would also help address multiple inequalities.

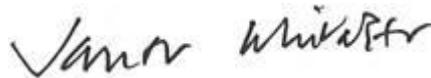
Research published by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in the report 'Gypsy and Traveller sites: the revised planning definition's impact on assessing accommodation need'¹ indicates that only 8 out of the 20 Local Planning Authorities surveyed 'had plans that aimed to meet the accommodation needs of 'non-PPTS' Gypsies and Travellers.' The key findings of the report state that 'it is a 'postcode lottery' as to whether ethnic non-PPTS Gypsies or Travellers will have provision made for them.' This is also true in London, where only 6 out of 35 Local Planning Authorities include

¹ EHRC, 2019 https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/190909_gypsy_and_traveller_sites_-_impact_of_the_revised_definition_-_final.pdf

proposals to provide new pitches on Traveller sites in their Local Plans, however they do not explicitly address the needs of those who do not meet the PPTS definition. The London Plan proposed definition would support a coordinated approach across all the planning authorities.

We understand that you will be writing to the Greater London Authority in due course with your response to the London Plan Intend to Publish and that you can direct changes. We hope that you will consider the positive equality implications that the London Plan Policy H14 definition of Gypsies and Travellers would have in minimising the disadvantages suffered by these groups in terms of accessing culturally suitable accommodation and that you will agree with the GLA keeping this definition in the final Plan.

Yours sincerely



Baroness Janet Whitaker and Kate Green MP
Co-chairs, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies Travellers and Roma