

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

The need for increased and improved Gypsy and Traveller site provision

July 2025

Introduction

Gypsies and Travellers are an important part of Britain's population, heritage and social fabric, and the Government have a positive legal obligation to facilitate the Gypsy and Traveller way of life¹. However, historic and current failures in the [planning system](#) have led to the chronic undersupply of residential sites and stopping places for Gypsy and Traveller communities. Providing well-designed and managed sites for Gypsies and Travellers supports happy and healthy communities and addresses wider determinants of health, education, and employment.

Amendments

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill presents an opportunity to improve and increase much-needed site provision, which the following amendments seek to achieve. All relate to Part 2, Chapter 2, 'Spatial Development Strategies', in the name of Baroness Whitaker.

[Amendment 145](#)

Clause 52, page 73, line 21, at end insert—

“(5A) For the purposes of subsection (5), an amount or distribution of housing or affordable housing must include Gypsy and Traveller sites, whether provided privately, or by local authorities, or by other registered social landlords.”

Member's explanatory statement: *This amendment would include Gypsy and Traveller sites in the strategically important housing identified in spatial development strategies.*

[Amendment 173](#)

After Clause 52, insert the following new Clause—

“Duties of local authorities: assessment of accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers” ([see amendment paper](#) for full amendment)

Member's explanatory statement: *This amendment, connected with others in the name of Baroness Whitaker, seeks to place a duty on local authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers for the purposes of informing local plans and planning strategies, including spatial development strategies.*

[Amendment 174](#)

After Clause 52, insert the following new Clause—

“Assessment of accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers: guidance” ([see amendment paper](#) for full amendment)

¹ Chapman v. the United Kingdom [GC] - 27238/95

Member's explanatory statement: *This amendment, connected with others in the name of Baroness Whitaker, makes provision for the publishing of guidance related to the assessment of accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.*

Amendment 175

After Clause 52, insert the following new Clause—

“Duty to meet assessed need for Gypsy and Traveller sites” ([see amendment paper for full amendment](#))

Member's explanatory statement: *This amendment, connected with others in the name of Baroness Whitaker seeks to place a statutory duty on local housing authorities to meet the assessed need for Gypsy and Traveller sites within their jurisdiction when delivering their functions related to planning, development and infrastructure.*

Amendment 176

After Clause 52, insert the following new Clause—

“Failure to comply with the duty to meet the assessed need for Gypsy and Traveller sites” ([see amendment paper for full amendment](#))

Member's explanatory statement: *This amendment, connected with others in the name of Baroness Whitaker, seeks to give the Secretary of State powers to direct local authorities to meet assessed need for Gypsy and Traveller sites within their jurisdiction when delivering their functions related to planning, development and infrastructure, if they are failing in this duty.*

Strategic planning provisions

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill places a duty on Strategic Planning Authorities² to prepare a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)³. The Government intends that SDS's will address key spatial issues, including meeting housing needs and should specify the amount and distribution of housing and affordable housing across its area.

Section 12D, 5a of the Bill refers to ‘housing (of any kind)’ but does not specify if Gypsy and Traveller sites are included under this definition. The amendment on this (as above), seeks to ensure that Gypsy and Traveller site provision is included and explicitly referenced within the requirements of Spatial Development Strategies.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments and related guidance

Specific guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments was withdrawn in [2016](#), following the revocation of sections 225 and 226 of the Housing Act 2004⁴. This was replaced by a generalised duty on local authorities ‘to consider the needs of people residing

² Combined authorities, combined county authorities, upper-tier county councils and unitary authorities, also referred to as “principal authorities,” will all be strategic planning authorities.

³ A spatial development strategy will form part of the development plan which local planning authorities (LPAs) must determine planning applications in accordance with.

⁴ These provisions required local housing authorities to assess the need for pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and have specific regard to national guidance which was to be laid before Parliament.

in or resorting to their district with respect to the provision of sites on which caravans can be stationed'. This created a policy vacuum for the assessment of need (save for some [draft guidance](#) issued in 2016, which was less prescriptive).

This has resulted in inconsistent approaches from local authorities, with private companies, who are contracted to conduct most of the assessments in England, developing their own methodologies. These assessments are often subject to significant criticism and result in disparities in need levels across the country.

Meaningful accommodation assessments are absolutely key to the delivery of homes for all communities. The three amendments on accommodation needs assessments seek to reintroduce provisions to conduct Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessments and for statutory guidance to be issued, to ensure assessments are thorough and meet the same standards across the country.

A statutory duty to meet the assessed need for sites

The statutory duty to provide sites contained in the Caravan Sites Act 1968 was revoked in 1994 by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. [Our research](#) in 2023 looked at 100 local authorities, and found that of 149 socially provided sites, 119 were built before 1994, with only 30 built since then (after the statutory duty to provide sites was revoked). This demonstrates that a statutory duty is necessary to ensure the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller sites.

The Bill provides an opportunity to address the national shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites by adopting the amendment to introduce the statutory duty on local authorities to ensure the assessed need for sites is met. Particular attention should be paid to social provision, in line with the Government's commitment to increase affordable homes and the rate of delivery.

Conclusion

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill must work for all citizens, including Gypsies and Travellers seeking to live according to cultural traditions and heritage. Measures to ensure adequate provision of culturally appropriate accommodation, such as a duty to meet the assessed need for Gypsy and Traveller sites, could also assist the Government in fulfilling its promise to deliver 1.5 million more homes by 2029.

Amendments to address the issues outlined in this briefing would allow the Bill to bring greater clarity and accountability to the planning system, while improving regulatory oversight across different forms of socially provided accommodation for all residents, irrespective of their ethnicity or background.