



For Gypsies,  
Travellers and  
Roma

# Response of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma to the National Planning Policy Framework Consultation

March 2026

## Introduction

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma promotes the rights of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities in Parliament and with the government, and promotes inclusive policies and laws to tackle prejudicial attitudes. The APPG welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Government's consultation on proposed changes to national planning policy.

## Context

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people face some of the [starkest inequalities](#) and worst outcomes across a range of areas, including accommodation, education, health, employment, and access to services.

The UK Government have a positive obligation under Article 8 outlined by the European Court of Human Rights in 2001 to 'facilitate the gypsy way of life'. However, the under-provision of culturally appropriate accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller communities has remained a longstanding issue, particularly since 1994, with the repeal of the statutory duty on local authorities to provide Gypsy and Traveller sites.

[Research](#) conducted in 2023 found there were 149 socially provided sites across the 100 local planning authorities, and of these sites, 119 were built before 1994, and only 30 since then (after the statutory duty to provide sites had been revoked). According to the Government Caravan Count figures, between [January 2014](#) and [January 2024](#), there was a decrease of 102 permanent pitches. Furthermore, [research](#) conducted in 2024 revealed that just 9% of local authorities had transit provision in their area. Many sites are in environmentally inferior and unhealthy locations with many in a state of disrepair and in desperate need of repairs and refurbishments.

Ensuring fair and effective planning outcomes is essential to addressing the persistent inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities. While several proposals represent positive steps, others risk exacerbating existing



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disparities or creating new barriers to the adequate provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites. Those of particular concern are outlined below.

## Merging Planning Policy for Traveller Sites into the National Planning Policy Framework - Question 4

We note the proposal to incorporate PPTS into the wider NPPF. Gypsies and Travellers have long been recognised as requiring specific consideration within planning policy, reflecting the distinct cultural and practical characteristics of their accommodation needs. Any merger must therefore retain clear and explicit guidance to ensure that local authorities continue to meet their responsibilities effectively. Without such clarity, there is a risk that existing inequalities will deepen.

## Unauthorised Development - Questions 31 & 32

We are concerned that current and proposed approaches to “intentional unauthorised development” disproportionately affect Gypsies and Travellers. The proposal to apply “substantial weight” against retrospective applications risks preventing decision-makers from considering individual circumstances, including situations of homelessness or lack of lawful alternatives. This risks discriminatory outcomes and should be reconsidered to allow for balanced and fair planning judgments.

## Sites Outside Settlements - Question 39

Gypsy and Traveller sites have historically been located in rural areas for cultural, economic and practical reasons. The proposed requirement to demonstrate unmet need or personal hardship in order to gain permission outside settlement boundaries represents a significant restriction. This change would limit the ability of families to secure suitable accommodation and undermine long-standing planning principles that support lawful site development in rural locations.

## Strategic Need for Sites - Question 48

We support the expectation that local planning authorities identify need for Gypsy and Traveller sites alongside housing need. However, we remain concerned that, in practice, assessments frequently fail to identify the need for socially provided sites, despite strong evidence of demand. To ensure equitable provision, the policy should include strengthened wording and, ideally, statutory requirements obligating authorities to identify and plan for social site need.



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## Accommodation Assessments - Question 51

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments vary significantly in quality and methodology, and in many cases underestimate accommodation need. To ensure consistency and accuracy, we recommend the introduction of clear national guidance. Such guidance should require meaningful engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities, consideration of those currently living in housing, and assessment of both permanent and temporary stopping places and transit provision, as well as both privately owned and local authority owned sites.

## Equalities Considerations - Questions 224 & 225

Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised ethnic groups under the Equality Act 2010. The proposed reforms, therefore, carry important equality implications. Elements of the consultation risk undermining equality of opportunity, including the absence of robust measures to ensure social site provision, the disproportionate effect of unauthorised development policies, and the introduction of new barriers to rural site development. We urge the Government to ensure full compliance with its Public Sector Equality Duty.

## Conclusion

The APPG welcomes the intent to strengthen elements of national planning policy. However, several proposals require further consideration and amendment to avoid worsening existing inequalities. With appropriate changes, the reforms present an important opportunity to advance fairness, clarity and consistency in planning for Gypsy and Traveller communities. We encourage the Government to consider the recommendations set out in this submission.