



Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref

Jenny Rathbone  
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

26 June 2023

Dear Jenny,

### **Equality & Social Justice Committee – Site Provision for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers**

Thank you for your letter regarding Site Provision for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers and please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

I can assure you of our strong ongoing commitment to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to ensure adequate culturally appropriate accommodation is made available through Local Authority and private sites. The requirements to prepare Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) and report on the need for additional sites and pitches in their area, including both permanent and temporary transit sites, are well established but the process has highlighted the significant challenges faced by Gypsy and Traveller communities.

As you have highlighted, the policy team responsible for this has had very significant gaps in staffing for a year. This has meant we have not been able to engage and encourage projects to come forward in the way we would have wished. We are currently working actively to recruit to all vacant positions in the team and are aiming to have the posts filled as soon as possible.

### **Gypsy and Traveller Site Capital Grant**

In 2021-22 we had a budget of £3.5 million and in 2022-23 we had a budget of £3.690 million for the Gypsy and Traveller Site Capital Grant. However, that budget has reduced to £3.29 million for 2023-24, but that does not reflect a lack of support to the community but rather the low uptake of the grant which is due primarily to a range of challenges faced by Local Authorities with the site developments. The purpose of the grant is for refurbishing existing accommodation, constructing new pitches and improving the sustainability of sites for residents. Applications are received and agreed as part of a rolling programme. We continue to make sure Local Authorities across Wales are aware of the grant; however, despite this, the grant has either not been fully utilised or those grants which have initially

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Jane.Hutt@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Jane.Hutt@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

been awarded have been delayed due to building works having not been completed which would enable the Local Authorities to complete the grant claims.

## **Site Provision**

The duty to identify and meet the need for appropriate accommodation was created within the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. As a result of the duty over two hundred new pitches have been either created or refurbished, many on small, privately-owned family sites. This compares to only a handful of new pitches previously created between 1997 and 2014.

However, while there was good progress when the Act was first introduced, this has not been sustained more recently in every part of Wales. Having introduced legislation and provided significant funding to address the need, we are concerned that in some cases plans have stalled for several years and sufficient progress has not been made to address the site needs of the community.

I understand proposals for new sites, and even for improvements, are often complex and require community engagement and sometimes attract challenges to decisions. This means the timeline for plans for new sites or amendments to existing sites can sometimes take considerable development before planning and grant applications are made.

However, despite those challenges we expect all Local Authorities in Wales to ensure sufficient site and pitches are provided to meet the identified needs of Gypsy communities across Wales. I expect accurate assessment of needs and clear action on how they will address those needs to meet the gap which exists. The current provision for permanent and transit sites falls far short of requirements and that cannot continue.

## **Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessments**

We are currently reviewing the robustness of GTAAs across Wales to meet the site needs across Wales for Gypsy and Traveller communities. Officials are working with Local Authorities and Gypsy and Traveller communities to identify the extent of the requirements and understand the barriers which still exist to prevent progress. I will be writing to each Local Authority with the outcome of those assessments. I have recently met with the WLGA and Council Cabinet leads for Equality to help understand those challenges better and seek agreement to work collaboratively across Wales to ensure adequate site provision is a priority for both permanent and transit sites.

Once this has been completed, I will be undertaking bilateral meetings with Local Authorities to review their GTAAs and understand their progress. I will explore with them the steps required to overcome any barriers which remain, and to seek affirmation of their commitment to ensuring sufficient provision of permanent and transit sites across Wales to meet the needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in line with the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.



**Jane Hutt AS/MS**  
**Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a'r Prif Chwip**  
**Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip**