

Jane Hutt MS
Minister for Social Justice

May 17 2023.

Dear Jane,

Site provision for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers

Ensuring the provision of sites meets the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community is of considerable interest to our committee. We have been concerned by the lack of progress on delivering sufficient culturally-appropriate site provision for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, and that no allocation has been spent (or is forecast to be spent) in the 2022-23 financial year from the Gypsy and Traveller Site Capital Grant, despite an allocation of £3.690m.

Through our work on the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan we have learned that there has been little progress relating to the review of the local authority Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA). With the next round of GTAA's to be completed in 2024, the outstanding analysis is a matter of urgency.

We have been particularly concerned to hear that a lack of resources within the Equality Division and a high turnover of staff may have contributed to these delays and could relate to the reason why no grant funding has been made available.

We would therefore welcome a response to the following:

1. What framework is in place for reviewing the GTAA and when will they be completed? How will the findings be communicated to third sector organisations?
2. What resources are available to carry out these reviews?
3. What impact does the absence of approval of a local authority approval of its GTAA have on its ability to apply for grant funding for new sites or existing site improvements?
4. What progress has been made to review the effectiveness of the GTAA process and possible ways in which it could be strengthened?
5. What progress has been made to deliver the actions on site provision set out in the Anti-racist Wales Action plan, particularly actions to ensure existing legal mechanisms are fully utilised to ensure compliance with existing legislation and a three-year pilot to provide advice to those seeking to develop private sites.

We have heard that the situation is now more serious than when the Local Government and Housing Committee carried out its inquiry into the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers in summer 2022. It is vital that we are in a position to understand and meet the needs of the community.

I would welcome a response by May 31 2023. I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "Jenny Rathbone" in a cursive script.

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee