

Sue Essex AM

Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services
Y Gweinidog dros Gyllid, Llywodraeth Leol a Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Our ref: SE/00008/06
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31st January 2006

Dear Gwenda

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE-GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE REPORT ON SERVICE PROVISION FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

Thank you for letter of 5 December addressed to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, enquiring if proposals are in place for extending the proposed biannual Gypsy - Traveller count to include those groups encamped on unauthorised sites. I am responding as the Minister with policy responsibility for Gypsy Traveller accommodation in Wales.

Following recommendation 3 of report EOC (2)-09-05, the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration agreed that the Assembly Government should re-start the twice-yearly Gypsy Traveller counts. In addition, the Minister also agreed that the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) should extend their current survey to cover Wales. Working closely with the ODPM, the local authorities across Wales will have overall responsibility for collecting the survey data. The first survey is anticipated to take place in July of this year.

The survey will collect information on: publicly funded sites with planning permission; privately funded sites with planning permission; unauthorised sites without planning permission (unauthorised developments); and unauthorised encampments.

The categories of Gypsy Traveller identified by you in your letter as socially excluded through their occupation of unauthorised sites and encampments will be counted in the proposed surveys.

In addition, the Assembly Government are currently looking at requiring housing authorities to undertake Gypsy Travellers' accommodation needs assessments. The aim of the assessment is to identify Gypsy and Travellers' specific accommodation needs and the type of



accommodation they require whether accommodation on: private sites; social residential sites; housing and transit sites.

I will keep you informed of developments in relation to the biannual surveys.

B&V wishes

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