

Date: 11th August 2011

Our ref:

Your ref:



**Epping Forest
District Council**

**Directorate of Planning &
Economic Development**

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Mr Eric Pickles
The Secretary of State for Communities
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Dear Mr Pickles

CLG Consultation - Planning for traveller sites

The above consultation was considered at the Planning Scrutiny Panel and Council meetings of 14th and 28th June respectively. Our full response will be sent to meet the extended deadline of 3rd August. One of the recommendations agreed at Council was "That a meeting be requested with the Minister to discuss the experience of our previous consultation in connection with the Direction, with the intention of modifying the content of the final version of the Planning Policy Statement." This letter is the formal request for that meeting.

The previous Government served a Direction on this Council in September 2007 requiring the preparation of a separate DPD on traveller pitch provision ahead of the Core Strategy. You revoked the Direction last year, and all work on the DPD ceased immediately after that decision. Traveller pitch provision will be considered as part of the broader housing agenda in the Core Strategy which is currently under preparation. This Council is determined that all sectors of the community receive fair and equal treatment in planning matters.

We carried out a public consultation exercise between November 2008 and February 2009 as part of the background work for the DPD, and it is the experience of that which we would like to discuss with you in relation to the draft PPS as included in your consultation. The draft DPD was supposed to be submitted to the Secretary of State by September 2009 but this proved impossible because of the volume and complexity of responses received to our consultation.

We can speak with considerable authority about many of the problems inherent to this controversial issue and we would hope that our recent experience will help to ensure that the final version of the PPS will include practical advice and deliverable policies.

We would also hope to address related issues which are not included within the consultation. These include the role of Neighbourhood Plans in pitch provision and, more controversially, the potential impact of traveller sites on nearby property prices.

If you are agreeable to the meeting, I think this Council should be represented by the Leader, Planning Portfolio Holder and the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny and at least one officer with experience of the consultation. I await your reply.

Yours sincerely

John de Wilton Preston

John de Wilton Preston
Director of Planning and Economic Development