

Maria Miller MP
Chair, Women and Equalities Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

28 February 2018

Dear Ms Miller,

Tackling inequalities for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities inquiry

I would like to take this opportunity to write on behalf of the Local Government Association (LGA) regarding your Committee's inquiry into inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities.

We have been following the progress of this inquiry with interest as we know that some of our councils work closely with GRT communities and noted that you felt the LGA should have given evidence to the Committee on this. Unfortunately, whilst we seek to contribute to a range of parliamentary inquiries and of course take them very seriously, we felt that on this occasion the LGA did not have enough technical knowledge on this issue to provide a fulsome response to your inquiry.

Engaging with and supporting GRT communities is also a local issue, that different councils take different approaches on, based on local levels of need. As a membership organisation we have sought to provide practical support to local authorities in this area as appropriate.

We have previously worked with the Planning Advisory Service to inform council officers and elected leaders of the role of planning in working with GRT communities. Currently, we are working with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to develop a toolkit to support elected officials in seeking out early interventions to address offensive speech in their work and communities that we intend to promote to our stakeholders to encourage best practice across councils working with GRT communities.

I know that your Committee has received evidence from a number of councils for this inquiry and I hope that the information you have been provided has been useful. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the above if you would consider that helpful. Should this be agreeable, perhaps one of your clerks could contact our public affairs team (catharina.paul@local.gov.uk or 020 7664 3329) to arrange this.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Simon Blackburn
Chair of the LGA Safer and Stronger Communities Board