



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP
Secretary of State
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

14 June 2018

PLEASE QUOTE ON CORRESPONDENCE
Our Ref: AJ/Brokenshire/140618

Dear James,

Consultation on Travellers and the Irish Option

We are writing to you as a group of MPs in response to your consultation exercise on future traveller policy and to express our collective view on a proposed way forward. We welcome the consultation, as many of us have experience of this issue from our own constituencies and have received representations from our constituents on the subject.

We know that that the majority of travellers are law-abiding and do not cause any problems. However, a determined minority appear to consider themselves above the law. At one level, this manifests itself in anti-social behaviour but also sometimes crosses into criminal damage, private and public nuisance and the loss of valued enjoyment of public open spaces by the settled community. In addition, some visits by travellers can lead to considerable subsequent clean-up costs, which have to be borne by private individuals, businesses or local authorities, with the burden thus falling on Council Tax payers.

In order to address the issue of unauthorised encampments, we believe that the Government should seriously consider adopting the so-called "Irish Option", of encouraging all local authorities to establish a least one official transit site for visiting travellers and also making acts of deliberate trespass a criminal offence.

This power, which could be exercised with discretion by local police forces, often in consultation with local authorities, would provide a timely method of dealing with unauthorised encampments, on private or public land, in contrast to the current powers which are either very limited in scope (such as "Section 61 notices") or require often time consuming recourse to the courts.



Our constituents have a right to expect that the law should be applied equally and fairly to all and they want to see the authorities given additional powers to deal with unauthorised encampments, which are becoming an increasing problem, particularly in the spring and summer months. We hope that you will give this proposal favourable consideration and, once the consultation has closed, we would very much like to meet with you to discuss our proposals in more detail.

Finally, we are copying this letter to the Prime Minister, as a courtesy.

Yours ever,

Rt Hon Mark Francois MP

Stephen Metcalfe MP

John Baron MP

CC Rt Hon Theresa May MP, Prime Minister

This letter is also endorsed by the following colleagues:

Peter Aldous MP
Sir David Amess MP
Richard Bacon MP
Sir Henry Bellingham MP
Sir Paul Beresford MP
Bob Blackman MP
Andrew Bridgen MP
Mrs Fiona Bruce MP
Dr Alex Burghart MP
Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP
David T C Davies MP
Glyn Davies MP
Philip Davies MP
Steve Double MP
Richard Drax MP
James Duddridge MP
Nigel Evans MP
Michael Fabricant MP
Rt Hon Sir Michael Fallon KCB MP
Ms Vicky Ford MP

James Gray MP
Rt Hon Damian Green MP
Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP
Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
James Heapey MP
Gordon Henderson MP
Kevin Hollinrake MP
John Howell OBE MP
Ranil Jayawardena MP
Ms Gillian Keegan MP
Rt Hon Sir Greg Knight MP
Jeremy Lefroy MP
Jonathan Lord MP
Tim Loughton MP
Craig Mackinlay MP
Mrs Anne Main MP
Mark Menzies MP
Mrs Sheryll Murray MP
Dr Andrew Murrison MP
Rt Hon Priti Patel MP

Mark Pawsey MP
Rt Hon Sir Mike Penning MP
Mark Prisk MP
Mark Pritchard MP
Laurence Robertson MP
Ms Antoinette Sandbach MP
Paul Scully MP
Andrew Selous MP
Henry Smith MP
Rt Hon Dame Caroline Spelman DBE MP
Iain Stewart MP
Rt Hon Sir Desmond Swayne TD MP
Rt Hon Sir Hugo Swire KCMG MP
Robert Syms MP
David Tredinnick MP
Giles Watling MP
Rt Hon John Whittingdale OBE MP
Bill Wiggin MP
William Wragg MP