



PINS NOTE 16/2013r1

To: All Inspectors (England)

Date of Issue: 5 July 2013

Currency: review at 6 months after issue

Last updated: 21 January 2014 – to include reference to the WMS of 17 January by Brandon Lewis MP reiterating policy on Green Belt and drawing attention to future consultations on further policy changes to strengthen Green Belt protection and change to 'travellers' definition.

Ministerial statement on traveller sites in the Green Belt

Action

1. Inspectors should be aware that on 1 July 2013 a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament was issued, primarily relating to traveller sites in the Green Belt. A further [Written Ministerial Statement](#) was published on 17 January 2014, which re-emphasises to LPAs and Planning Inspectors the intended Government Policy set out below, extends the period for possible recovery of relevant appeals and refers to further changes Ministers are currently considering for future consultations:

- i) further improvements to planning policy and practice guidance to strengthen Green Belt protection from inappropriate development; and
- ii) changes to the definition of 'travellers' to apply only to those who actually travel and have a mobile or transitory lifestyle

2. Inspectors should particularly note that:

- The Minister's view is that the single issue of unmet demand, whether for traveller sites or for conventional housing, is unlikely, in itself, to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- Until [notified otherwise](#)¹, the Secretary of State will consider for recovery appeals involving traveller sites in the Green Belt. Not all appeals will be recovered.

¹ This was previously for a period of 6 months until December 2013.

- The Secretary of State remains concerned about the extent to which planning appeal decisions are meeting the Government's clear policy intentions, particularly as to whether sufficient weight is being given to the importance of Green Belt protection.
- On 1 July 2013 the Government cancelled the 2005 planning guidance document Diversity and Equality in Planning - A good practice guide.

3. In the light of this statement, Inspectors will need to consider on a case-by-case basis whether the contents of the statement are likely to have a significant effect on the outcome of their decision, and whether in the interests of natural justice they should provide the parties with the opportunity to comment on the statement, before issuing their decision.

4. Reference to the parties should only be necessary in limited cases where either the cancelled guidance was a key issue or where the case was being argued solely on the basis of unmet need justifying development in the Green Belt. This decision is for the Inspector, taking into account the particular facts of the case.

5. In relation to Local Plans, Inspectors will need to consider whether the statement has an actual effect on the examination, with regard to the key issues in the Plan. Inspectors should only refer back to the parties where this is necessary in the interests of fairness.

6. Please contact XXXX if you have any queries on this Note.

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Chief Planning Inspector