



28 February 2018

Draft new London Plan

Policy H16 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

My name is [REDACTED], I'm an Irish Traveller living on one of the sites in Hackney. I have lived all my life in a caravan, growing up on the roadside in Ireland, moved to London, experienced travelling, being with my family and meeting new people. I liked being on the move but this also came with prejudice and racism which hurt very much. I ended up settling in Hackney in 1995 where my son [REDACTED] was born and I had 4 more kids. I have a good memory of being free. Hackney was very good for stopping places, the council used to supply fresh water, toilets and getting help for kids and healthcare. I now live on one of the council run sites which has been relocated due to the Olympic Games. I have always been interested in speaking up for my community and over the years I got to know London Gypsies and Travellers as I wanted to go back into work. Now I work there as a community campaigner.

My kids grew up but there is no more room for them on our 8 pitch site so they got pushed on the roadside, in temporary accommodation like hostels and they find it very hard to be in bricks and mortar housing. I can't understand why they are not allowed to live the way of life of their parents as they grew up with. There are no sites for the young generation and my kids don't understand why they can't travel. This is all to do with the laws and regulations that affect our culture and our way of life.

For the future I would like to see a big change in the Mayor's London Plan, for our way of life to be accepted and for new sites to be built. My children want to raise their kids in caravans and not have our culture and tradition taken away.

The way the London Plan policy is at the moment, it comes across as councils don't actually have to do anything to deliver new sites. There has to be a rule so that Gypsy and Traveller sites are at the top of the list alongside all other housing. The London Plan should set targets and monitor what is being delivered. Councils should be able to ask for pitches to be included in larger housing schemes done by housing associations and developers. The GLA should use land it owns or land owned by Transport for London for new site provision.

We are Londoners and want to be counted as Londoners. We are a very loving and caring community, we are all about family and living together with our family is central to our culture and our accommodation needs. So we need the London Plan to make sure that new sites are built for the new generations to come.

I would like to attend the Examination in public hearings on the London Plan to be part of the discussion on this policy.