



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

**Brandon Lewis MP**

*Minister of State for Housing and Planning*

***Department for Communities and Local  
Government***



Home Office

**Rt Hon Mike Penning MP**

*Minister of State for Policing, Criminal Justice and  
Victims*

***Home Office and Ministry of Justice***

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Ministry  
of Justice

Council Leaders, Police and Crime Commissioners and Police Chief Constables in England

Dear Colleague

We are very concerned by reports that local authorities and the police are not being seen to be doing enough to stop unauthorised traveller encampments.

It is vital that communities see that the law applies to everyone and they should be confident that local agencies are able to deal effectively with issues such as unauthorised encampments that can cause local concern. We are clear that the response to unauthorised encampments requires a locally driven, multi-agency response, supported by local authorities and the police. There are sufficient powers for local authorities and the police to take action; and Ministers have already reminded local councils of the need to act swiftly to stop unauthorised encampments starting in the first place.

Public bodies should not gold-plate human rights and equalities legislation. Councils and the police have been given strong powers to deal with unauthorised encampments and when deciding whether to take action, they may want to consider for example:

- (a) the harm that such developments can cause to local amenities and the local environment,
- (b) the potential interference with the peaceful enjoyment of neighbouring property,
- (c) the need to maintain public order and safety and protect health – for example, by deterring fly-tipping and criminal damage,
- (d) any harm to good community relations,

(e) that the state may enforce laws to control the use of an individual's property where that is in accordance with the general public interest.

In August 2013, the Government sent all Council Leaders a summary of the robust powers councils and landowners have to remove unauthorised traveller sites, protest camps and squatters from both public and private land, as well as tackling the waste from such sites. This summary, which we are re-issuing, is available online; and it is intended to ensure that the relevant authorities, and members of the public, have a clear statement of the action that can be taken to deal with unauthorised encampments; giving more power and a stronger voice to challenge those who claim 'nothing can be done'.

We want to see local authorities, the police and other local agencies working together to address the problem of unauthorised encampments. The summary of powers is attached, and we would be grateful if you would ensure this reaches the relevant operational teams in your respective organisations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**BRANDON LEWIS MP**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Penning', with a horizontal line underneath.

**RT HON MIKE PENNING MP**