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Alison Wilson
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The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
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Ur faidhle/Your ref: PE1364
11 January 2012

Dear Alison,

Thank you for your letter of 12 December 2011 on behalf of the Public Petitions Committee, regarding update of the 'Guidelines For Managing Unauthorised Camping By Gypsies/Travellers in Scotland'.

The Scottish Government continues to work with local authorities and the police to help strike an appropriate balance between the needs and legitimate expectations of members of the settled community, local businesses, landowners and the Gypsy/Traveller community.

In support of this, Officials commenced a review of the existing Guidelines in October 2011. The group, involving housing, equalities and police division, has met on two occasions and has undertaken a desk based review to identify areas for amendment and update. It is clear that the existing guidance is out dated and requires change and officials are now considering the best way to do this.

Any revision to the Guidelines for Managing Unauthorised Camping will take cognises of new "Operational Guidance - Management of Unauthorised Encampments," which was issued by the Association of Chief Police officers in Scotland (ACPOS) in October 2011.

Officials have written to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), to set up a meeting early in the New Year to agree an approach to update the Guidance and to link into any other work that is being progressed. Following this, a wider liaison with stakeholders, including the petitioner, who have an interest in this review will be undertaken.

I hope that the Committee finds this helpful in considering the petition.

MICHAEL MATHESON