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Dear Colleague,

**Powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments: consultation
launch**


I would like to update you on our work to address the issue of unauthorised development and encampments by travellers. Honourable members raised their concerns about the impact of unauthorised development and encampments with the Secretary of State and my predecessor in debates in Parliament late last year, in particular on the impact on local communities. We heard a clear message that despite an array of enforcement powers already in place, tackling unauthorised development and encampments remains a significant issue.

This is why we committed to consult on the effectiveness of enforcement against unauthorised developments and encampments. I want to seek views on whether there is anything we can do to ensure that existing powers can be used more effectively, as well as whether additional powers may be necessary. I am publishing a consultation on these questions today. I want to hear more about the exact nature of the issue from all those with an interest, including local authorities, the police, local residents and community groups, including of course the travelling community.

The number of traveller caravans on authorised sites has risen from 14,498 in July 2010 to 19,071 in July 2017 – an increase of 32 per cent between counts. For the existing settled communities, it is clear that unauthorised traveller encampments can cause considerable distress, particularly when associated with instances of trespass, damage to property, extensive litter and waste, instances of antisocial and abusive behaviour, and the cost of cleaning up. Living in unauthorised encampments can also bring a range of detrimental impacts, including accommodation insecurity, social exclusion, and poor access to education and health services.

The consultation I am launching, with the support of the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice, asks a series of specific questions relating to: local authority and police powers; court processes; trespass; planning enforcement; the provision of authorised sites, and the impacts on the travelling community.

I am keen to hear views from everyone affected by the issue of unauthorised development and encampments, so Government can understand more about the nature of the challenge and take further action based on a clearer understanding of the issues and their scale. The consultation runs until 15 June 2018 and I encourage everyone to contribute.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dominic Raab', with a stylized flourish at the end.

DOMINIC RAAB MP