

Unauthorized encampments

The government has recently set out its plans for new legislation concerning Police, Sentencing and the courts. This draft legislation contains revision to the law over illegal encampments. As constituents have been asking for changes to the law in this area I reproduce below the Ministerial statement:

“Unauthorised Encampments

While the vast majority of travellers are law-abiding citizens, illegal sites can cause distress and misery to those who live nearby. The Bill will introduce a new criminal offence where a person resides or intends to reside on any public or private land without permission and has caused, or is likely to cause, significant harm, obstruction, or harassment or distress. We have taken steps to ensure that those exercising their rights to enjoy the countryside are not inadvertently impacted by these measures. In addition, the Bill amends the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to broaden the list of harms that can be considered by the police when directing people away from land; and increase the period in which persons directed away from land must not return from three months to 12 months. Amendments to the 1994 Act will in addition allow police to direct trespassers away from land that forms part of a highway.”