

Lynne Neagle MS – Chair, Children, Young People and
Education Committee

John Griffiths MS – Chair, Equalities, Local Government and
Communities Committee

7 October 2020

Dear Lynne and John

**Inquiry into COVID-19 and its impact on matters relating to the Public Accounts
Committee's remit**

As part of the Committee's work looking at the impact of Covid-19 on matters relating to our remit, we held an evidence session with the Welsh Government on 3 August, specifically considering education issues. Following that session, I wrote to the Director General seeking clarification on a number of issues and the detailed response was considered in Committee on 28 September.

Members were content with the response, appreciating that issues have moved on within this sector since we took our evidence.

However, we are concerned with a number of issues, as set out below.

Broadband at permanent Traveller sites

A number of local authorities have permanent Traveller sites with no broadband connections. We are concerned about what action the Welsh Government is taking to ensure local authorities prioritise broadband connections for these sites (detailed on page 3 of the letter).

Absence of permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites

The response makes it clear that not all local authorities have a permanent Gypsy & Traveller site. Members raised concerns that the implications of this are that local



Senedd Cymru
Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN

✉ SeneddArchwilio@senedd.cymru

☎ 0300 200 6565

Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN

✉ SeneddPAC@senedd.wales

☎ 0300 200 6565

authorities are not fulfilling their responsibilities as contained in the Planning Act, which requires all local authorities to have such a site.

Low response rate to service provision to Gypsy and Traveller sites

The letter refers to a survey undertaken in 2018 which asked every local authority with authorised socially-rented Gypsy and Traveller sites about the provision of a wide range of services, including access to basic services such as water, electricity and gas. This survey included fixed telephone and internet services.

We were disappointed to see that only 6 local authorities responded. We therefore fear that only half of the permanent sites have any form of internet access at all. This is of particular concern not only given the wider implications of this for the rights of Gypsy & Traveller communities, but also given that Gypsy & Traveller children are amongst the lowest performing groups of children in Wales.

I have shared the response with you both, alongside our concerns, and ask that you consider the issues and keep under review as part of your Committee's work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Ramsay', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nick Ramsay MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

