

Mr Richard Howitt MEP  
East of England Region  
Via Email

31 August 2011

Dear Richard

**Re: Dale Farm Evictions**

First, may I apologise for the delayed response to your letter, dated 8 July 2011.

I can confirm the HCA has continued to offer our support to work with Basildon Borough Council to resettle the Gypsy and Traveller community at Dale Farm. As landowner, the HCA has confirmed:

- 1) We are willing to place any of our land in Basildon at the Council's designation as a Gypsy and Traveller site(s).
- 2) We are willing to identify and invest capital to establish the pitches on such land.

DCLG asked the HCA to join an Alternative Sites Working Group set up to attempt to solve the issue that you have raised in your letter. This first met in November 2009 and then on numerous occasions until 3 August 2010. Its objective was to identify a group of six or so sites which could be made available for development of up to 12 – 15 pitches in a mix of locations both within and outside the Basildon Council area.

The membership of the core group consisted of representatives of Basildon District Council, Essex County Council, the Government Office for the East of England, together with the former leader of Reigate and Banstead Council and chairman of the Local Government Association Task Force on Gypsies and Travellers.

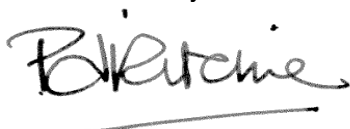
With regards to the 'land south of the A127', which you refer to in your letter, it is not clear to which site you are specifically referring. However, I am aware of two planning applications submitted for Gypsy and Traveller pitches on HCA land in Basildon. In both circumstances the HCA has confirmed the above statement to the Council. One application has been refused planning permission and has

gone to Planning Appeal. The other application is currently on hold due to discrepancies with the plans provided.

Under the Localism Agenda the HCA will consider supporting a planning application on HCA land where the local authority has made a formal request for us to do so.

I hope this letter addresses the points you raised, please contact myself or Terry Fuller, Executive Director for the East and South East should you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely



**Pat Ritchie**  
Chief Executive