



**East Hampshire  
Conservatives**

14a Butts Rd, Alton  
Hants GU34 1ND

**NEWS  
RELEASE**

25 February 2010:  
immediate release

**Michael Mates and Damian Hinds:  
Statement on Traveller sites**

Michael Mates MP (East Hampshire) and Damian Hinds, Conservative PPC for East Hampshire, have issued a joint statement on the issue of Travellers and the illegal occupation of land. Their statement follows recent occurrences in the constituency and the Conservative Party's announcement of new policies to address the problem.

Michael Mates said:

"The problem of travellers buying land and then undertaking unauthorised development has grown in recent years. In effect, two different sets of planning rules now operate – one for those local residents who wish to build new homes or extend existing ones and another, less restrictive, for travellers.

"Part of the difficulty is that Labour's Human Rights Act has made it more difficult to evict trespassers from both private and publicly owned land. My party's proposal for a new British Bill of Rights, replacing the Human Rights Act, is designed to address just that sort of problem. But we need to go further: that is why David Cameron has promised to create a new criminal offence of intentional trespass – like that which operates in the Republic of Ireland – that would enable to police to remove unauthorised encampments without landowners having to go to court".

Damian Hinds said:

"Conservatives do not share Labour's belief in a top-down planning regime, and if elected to government we will re-design the system to allow much more local discretion and give communities more control. Part of that will be to end the broad blanket obligation on councils in John Prescott's 2006 "guidance" on provision of traveller sites.

"Of course, everyone must have a place to live and there must be provision for Britain's traditional travelling community. But this is best done in a fair and reasonable way, working with local communities, and with the rules applied equally to all".

ENDS

Note to editors:

1 The recent Conservative green paper on planning set out detailed policies on traveller sites. It can be found at:

[http://www.conservatives.com/News/News\\_stories/2010/02/New\\_homes\\_and\\_jobs\\_through\\_Open\\_Source\\_Planning.aspx](http://www.conservatives.com/News/News_stories/2010/02/New_homes_and_jobs_through_Open_Source_Planning.aspx)