

By: Oliver Mills, Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services
To: Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board – 18 November 2010
Subject: **RENTS ON PUBLIC SITES MANAGED BY KCC 2011/12**
Classification: Unrestricted.

Summary: Proposed Increases of Rents from 1 April 2011

Background

1. (1) In February 2010, and in keeping with increases in other charges in the Kent Adult Social Services Directorate, GTAB recommended an increase of 2.5% in site rents with effect from 1 April 2010. There were higher increases for two sites to bring them more into line with other rents.

(2) The Rents currently charged on sites managed by the Gypsy & Traveller Unit are:

Aylesham Caravan Site Snowdown, Dover CT15 4LS	£52.79 per week
Barnfield Park Caravan Site New Ash Green, Sevenoaks TN15 7LY	£45.00 per week
Coldharbour Caravan Site Old London Road, Aylesford ME20 7NZ	£41.00 per week
Greenbridge Park Vauxhall Road, Canterbury CT1 1YZ	£52.28 per week
Heartenoak Caravan Site Heartenoak Road, Hawkhurst TN18 5EU	£49.71 per week
Polhill Caravan Site Dunton Green, Sevenoaks TN13 2TQ	£42.00 per week
Three Lakes Park Castle Road, Sittingbourne ME10 3NL	£49.20 per week
Windmill Lane Caravan Site Windmill Lane, West Malling ME19 6PJ	£50.74 per week

2. (1) In addition to the above sites, the KCC Gypsy and Traveller Unit manage the two Maidstone Borough Council sites, at Stilebridge Lane, Marden and Water Lane, Ulcombe, under a management agreement. Consultation will take place with the Borough Council over the rents they plan to charge for 2011/12.

Government Policy: Mobile Homes Act 1983

3. (1) The Government has recently announced that the Mobile Homes Act 1983 is going to apply to all the above sites, probably with some modifications, from February 2011. The raising of rents in future years will definitely be regulated by the terms of the Act. Under the 1983 Act, there is a presumption that any increase or decrease would be no greater than any changes in the Retail Price Increase (RPI), unless the legitimate extra costs of the site operator justify a greater increase. The proposed new rents in this item assume that the Mobile Homes Act may already apply by 1 April 2011, but any rent increases would be amended if the law requires it.

Level of Increase from 1 April 2010

4. (1) Many of the current licensees on the sites are claimants, and therefore the rents are paid by Housing Benefit. Apart from the State Pension, which will increase by 4.6% in April 2011 (based, for the last time, on the Retail Price Index (RPI)), other benefits (including Housing Benefit) will now increase annually by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and the rate of increase to September 2010 (which is the reference point for the April 2011 rise) was 3.1%. Increases in other charges in the Kent Adult Social Services Directorate are generally in line with the appropriate benefit. For Gypsy and Traveller sites this is Housing Benefit. In light of all this, it is recommended that the current site rents are all increased by 3.1% from 2011.

(2) These increases will enable the costs of managing and maintaining the sites to be more adequately covered by the income received.

(3) The above increases will produce the following new rents from 1 April 2011:

Aylesham Caravan Site Snowdown, Dover CT15 4LS	Existing New	£52.79 per week £54.42
Barnfield Park Caravan Site New Ash Green, Sevenoaks TN15 7LY	Existing New	£45.00 per week £46.40
Coldharbour Caravan Site Old London Road, Aylesford ME20 7NZ	Existing New	£41.00 per week £42.27
Greenbridge Park Vauxhall Road, Canterbury CT1 1YZ	Existing New	£52.28 per week £53.90
Heartenoak Caravan Site Heartenoak Road, Hawkhurst TN18 5EU	Existing New	£49.71 per week £51.25
Polhill Caravan Site Dunton Green, Sevenoaks TN13 2TQ	Existing New	£42.00 per week £43.30

Three Lakes Park
Castle Road, Sittingbourne ME10 3NL

Existing **£49.20** per week
New **£50.72**

Windmill Lane Caravan Site
Windmill Lane, West Malling ME19 6PJ

Existing **£50.74**per week
New **£52.31**

Recommendation

5. (1) Members are asked to endorse these new rents being applied from 1 April 2011 and that Licensees (or, if the 1983 Act by then applies, those holding “pitch agreements”) are advised of the increases with the required 28 days notice in advance of that date; and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services be advised accordingly so that he can take their views into account when he takes his decision on this matter.

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Background papers: none