

**From:** Cabinet Member – Environment, Highways & Waste  
Paul Crick, Director of Planning & Environment

**To:** Environment, Highways & Waste Cabinet Committee

**Date:** 10 January 2013

**Subject:** KCC-Managed Traveller Pitch Fees 2013/14

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Summary:** This report details the reasons for the proposed pitch fee increase for Traveller sites managed by KCC, to take effect from 1 April 2013.

**Recommendation:** Members are asked to support the new proposed rents to be applied from 1 April 2013. Members are also asked to endorse that pitch occupiers are advised of the proposed increases with the required 28 days notice in advance of that date, in conformity with the Mobile Homes Act 1983.

## **Background**

1. Pitch Fees for Traveller sites managed by KCC are regulated by the Mobile Homes Act 1983. This only permits an increase once in every twelve months, and only allows an increase by the Retail Price Index (RPI) at maximum, unless evidence of improvements to the amenity of the pitch can be shown.
2. The reference date for the RPI increase has been that up to September of each year, which for 2012 was 2.6%.
3. Under the Mobile Homes Act, site operators must provide a proposed pitch fee increase to each pitch occupier at least 28 days in advance of the increase taking effect. Any pitch occupier can object to the proposed increase, if they have reason to do so.

## **Financial Implications**

4. These recommendations will increase the maximum recoverable income from all sites by just over 2.6%, because of the additional increase on the Polhill site, during 2013/14.
5. This should, providing we continue to be both economic and efficient, allow us to keep pace with cost increases for the year on sites.

## **Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework**

6. The decision meets the following criteria
  - a) it helps to support the independence of site residents
  - b) it helps grow the Kent economy, through the maintenance and other work the pitch fees fund

### **Polhill Site**

7. Works have been carried out to the Polhill site during 2011 & 2012 which considerably enhance mainly the amenity blocks but also the pitches. These works have cost around £14,000. In recognition of that, the proposed pitch fee for each pitch is 2.6% RPI for the ordinary increase plus £2 per week for the improved amenity of the pitches.

### **Coldharbour Site**

8. The proposed pitch fee for the new Coldharbour site was set by decision of this Committee in September 2012. It is £65, to take effect from 1 April 2013, or when the new pitches are first occupied, whichever comes first. Expected completion of the new pitches is currently around late June 2013.

### **Rents Currently Charged and Level of Increase from 1 April 2013**

9. These increases will enable the costs of managing and maintaining the sites to be more adequately covered by the income received.
10. The above proposed increases will produce the following new pitch fees from 1 April 2013:

<b>Aylesham Caravan Site</b> <b>Snowdown, Dover CT15 4LS</b>	<b>Existing</b> £57.00 p.w. <b>New</b> £58.48
<b>Barnfield Park Caravan Site</b> <b>New Ash Green, Sevenoaks TN15 7LY</b>	<b>Existing</b> £48.50 p.w. <b>New</b> £49.76
<b>Coldharbour Caravan Site</b> <b>Old London Road, Aylesford ME20 7NZ</b>	<b>Existing</b> £44.50 p.w. <b>New</b> £65.00
<b>Greenbridge Park</b> <b>Vauxhall Road, Canterbury CT1 1YZ</b>	<b>Existing</b> £56.50 p.w. <b>New</b> £57.96
<b>Heartenoak Caravan Site</b> <b>Heartenoak Road, Hawkhurst TN18 5EU</b>	<b>Existing</b> £54.00 p.w. <b>New</b> £55.40

**Polhill Caravan Site**  
**Dunton Green, Sevenoaks TN13 2TQ**

**Existing** £45.50 p.w.  
**New** £48.68

**Three Lakes Park**  
**Castle Road, Sittingbourne ME10 3NL**

**Existing** £53.00 p.w.  
**New** £54.37

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

**Existing** £55.00 p.w.  
**New** £56.43

11. 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. Maidstone Borough Council will inform KCC shortly of the rents they plan to charge for 2013/14.

**Recommendation:**

12. Members are asked to support the new proposed rents to be applied from 1 April 2013. Members are also asked to endorse that pitch occupiers are advised of the proposed increases with the required 28 days notice in advance of that date, in conformity with the Mobile Homes Act 1983.

**Background Documents:**

Mobile Homes Act 1983

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1983/34?text=>

ONS details of RPI and CPI levels.

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=retail+price+index>

**Contact Details:**

Bill Forrester  
Head of Gypsy and Traveller Unit  
01622 221846