

**From:** Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director Growth - Environment & Transport

**To:** Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member – Environment & Transport

**Decision No:** 15/00002: KCC Managed Traveller Site Pitch Fees 2015/16

**Electoral Division:** Dover North, Sevenoaks North East, Malling Rural North East, Canterbury City North East, Cranbrook, Sevenoaks West, Swale East, Malling Central

**Summary:**

This report details the reasons for the proposed pitch fee increase for Traveller sites managed by KCC, to take effect from 1 April 2015.

**Recommendation:**

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Growth is asked to agree:

- The new proposed rents to be applied from 1 April 2015
- 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.

## **1. Background**

1.1 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 a minimum increase by the Retail Price Index (RPI) unless evidence of improvements to the amenity of the pitch can be shown.

1.2 The reference date for the RPI increase has been that up to September of each year, which for 2014 was 2.3%.

1.3 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.

## **2. Financial Implications**

2.1 These recommendations will increase the maximum recoverable income from all sites, except the Three Lakes site, by 2.3%, allowing the service to meet ongoing maintenance costs for each site within the revised income.

2.2 Maintenance and refurbishment work to the amenity blocks and pitches at the Three Lakes site were undertaken during 2014 and are shortly to be completed. These works will cost around £90,000 once finished. It is proposed to increase the pitch fee for each pitch by 2.3% RPI plus an additional £5.50 per week per pitch in recognition of the improved amenity.

### 3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

3.1 The decision meets the following criteria

- it helps to support the independence of site residents
- it helps grow the Kent economy, through the maintenance and other work the pitch fees fund

### 4. Rents Currently Charged and Level of Increase from 1 April 2015

4.1 These increases will enable the costs of managing and maintaining the sites to be more adequately covered by the income received. It is anticipated that by April 2016, the service will be entirely self-funded.

4.2 The above proposed increases will produce the following new pitch fees from 1 April 2015:

<b>Aylesham Caravan Site</b> <b>Snowdown, Dover CT15 4LS</b>	<b>Existing</b> £60.35 per week <b>New</b> £ 61.74 per week
<b>Barnfield Park Caravan Site</b> <b>New Ash Green, Sevenoaks TN15 7LY</b>	<b>Existing</b> £ 51.35 per week <b>New</b> £ 52.53 per week
<b>Coldharbour Caravan Site</b> <b>Old London Road, Aylesford ME20 7NZ</b>	<b>Existing</b> £ 67.08 per week <b>New</b> £ 68.62 per week
<b>Greenbridge Park</b> <b>Vauxhall Road, Canterbury CT1 1YZ</b>	<b>Existing</b> £ 59.81 per week <b>New</b> £ 61.18 per week
<b>Heartenoak Caravan Site</b> <b>Heartenoak Road, Hawkhurst TN18 5EU</b>	<b>Existing</b> £ 57.17 per week <b>New</b> £ 58.48 per week
<b>Polhill Caravan Site</b> <b>Dunton Green, Sevenoaks TN13 2TQ</b>	<b>Existing</b> £ 50.24 per week <b>New</b> £ 51.39 per week
<b>Three Lakes Park</b> <b>Castle Road, Sittingbourne ME10 3NL</b>	<b>Existing</b> £ 56.11 per week <b>New</b> £62.90 per week

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

**Existing £ 58.24 per week**  
**New £ 59.58 per week**

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 2015/16.

## **5. Recommendation:**

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transportation is asked to agree:

- The new proposed rents to be applied from 1 April 2015
- 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.

## **6. Background Documents**

### **Mobile Homes Act**

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

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/cpi/consumer-price-indices/september-2014/stb---consumer-price-indices---september-2014.html#tab-Retail-Prices-Index--RPI--and-RPIJ->

## **7. Contact details**

### **Lead Officer:**

Bill Forrester, Head of Gypsy and Traveller Unit  
03000 413373 Bill.Forrester@kent.gov.uk

### **Lead Director:**

Paul Crick, Director - Environment, Planning & Enforcement  
03000 413356 Paul.Crick@kent.gov.uk