

APPENDIX 4

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Please read the EqIA GUIDANCE and the EqIA flow chart available on KNet.

Directorate:
EE PE

Name of policy, procedure, project or service
Coldharbour Lane, Gypsy and Traveller new site provision

What is being assessed?
Capital project – 26 new pitches at a site near Aylesford, Tonbridge and Malling Borough.

Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer
Bill Forrester

Date of Initial Screening
21st March 2012



Screening Grid

Characteristic	Could this policy, procedure, project or service affect this group less favourably than others in Kent? YES/NO If yes how?	Assessment of potential impact HIGH/MEDIUM LOW/NONE UNKNOWN		Provide details: a) Is internal action required? If yes what? b) Is further assessment required? If yes, why?	Could this policy, procedure, project or service promote equal opportunities for this group? YES/NO - Explain how good practice can promote equal opportunities
		Positive	Negative		
Age	No	high	none	The site will provide utility blocks that promote lifetime home standards enabling residents to stay longer in their own homes Residents have been consulted to ensure increased access for those with highlighted issues. This includes accessible utility blocks, wider pathways and access points. The new site enables residents to preserving their cultural identify as designs have been sensitive to ways of life. Families have been considered when designing the site and share some of the same design considerations as those with disabilities. Wider pathways for buggies, one open planned convenient bathroom, play area in the middle of the site are some of the features that will enhance the environment for residents.	Yes
Disability	No	High	None		Yes
Gender	No	High	None		Yes
Gender identity	No	N/A	N/A		Yes
Race	No	High	None		Yes
Religion or belief	No	low	low		Yes
Sexual orientation	No	N/A	N/A		Yes
Pregnancy and maternity	No	High	High	Yes	
Marriage and Civil Partnerships	No	high	none	Yes	

Part 1: INITIAL SCREENING

Context

The project at Coldharbour lane, Aylesford new site provision for Gypsy and Travellers relates to the following strategies:

National Strategic Priorities

Communities in control: Real People, Real Power – This White Paper looks at who has power, on whose behalf it is exercised, how is it held to account, and how can it be accessed by everyone in local communities.

Consultation Paper – Planning for Traveller Sites (April 2011). The consultation on the Government's draft planning policy for Traveller sites ended on 3 August 2011, and a new Planning Policy Statement for Traveller Sites will be published shortly, following due consideration of the consultation responses.

The Government was also consulting on the draft *National Planning Policy Framework* until 17 October 2011. As part of this consultation, views were gathered on the consistency of the draft Framework with the draft planning policy for Traveller sites, and any other comments about the Government's plans to incorporate planning policy on Traveller sites into the final National Planning Policy Framework. The new Planning Policy Statement for Traveller sites will be reviewed in the light of all comments received and incorporated into the final National Planning Policy Framework¹ Expected to be published in March 2012.

Local Priorities

Bold steps for Kent is Kent's Community Strategy and sets out our ambitions and priorities for the next four years.

- **To help the Kent economy grow** – We must support and facilitate the new growth in the Kent economy by delivering the priorities in our regeneration framework *Unlocking Kent's Potential*, by setting the environment in Kent that supports businesses in locating in Kent and growing and prospering; and by supporting the housing recovery and providing for essential infrastructure.
- **To put the citizen in control** – power and influence must be in the hands of local people and local communities so they are more able to take responsibility for their own community and service needs, such as creating new social enterprises.

¹ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/travellersitesconsultation>

- **To tackle disadvantage** – We will make Kent a county of opportunity where aspiration rather than dependency is supported, particularly for those who are disadvantaged or who struggle to help themselves and their family.

This project aligns to all three priorities: growing the economy by redeveloping the site, putting citizens in control of their environment by giving ownership, and tackling disadvantage by improving standards of living through quality accommodation and environment.

Gypsy and Traveller Business plan is a vision setting out the local strategic foundation upon which this Business Case is built.

It sets out the direction for service development, including empowering and supporting people in managing their own lives so they remain as independent and as active as possible.

Area and Unit Asset Management Plan, 2010 / 2014 sets out Kent's future plans for the Coldharbour Lane Site.

The **Tonbridge and Malling Sustainable Community Strategy Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2012** also highlights objectives to provide improved quality of life for impoverished communities within Tonbridge and Malling.

Aims and Objectives

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in March 2011 offered funding of £930k to KCC to deliver a Value For Money (VFM) scheme at the Coldharbour site which was accepted. The funding contract between KCC and HCA requires work on site to start by March 31st 2012 and 18 pitches to be delivered. KCC acquired the additional land at Coldharbour in April 2011 and a new design has been developed to gain best value for money, provide 26 pitches and bring significant economies of scale.

Planning consent was achieved in December 2011 and the project was given approval to spend in March 2012 for an 26 pitch site. The HCA support our plans to extend the scheme by 8 pitches to 26 at £1.9m providing best value for money as it contributes significantly to the number of pitches needed in Kent.

A sustainable design has been key to the management of the site. The utility blocks are being provided with wet rooms to widen their flexibility and reduce future maintenance costs, lighting is being provided to meet the needs of the community for the footpath between the road and the site and a play area will be provided in the middle of the scheme to ensure parents can see their children playing safely in a dedicated area.

The construction programme is proposed to be 30 weeks long with a start date of April and completion by December 2012.

Beneficiaries

- KCC/ Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council/ HCA
- Residents (Current and future).
- GRT community
- Kent Police.

Consultation and data

Dialogue with Tonbridge and Malling Members has been frequent since the pre-project planning back in 2008. Parish councillors have engaged closely with the design process and have constructively brought forward concerns from the communities in the area. Due to this involvement, the planning consent saw no objections, a first, we believe, in the UK for any Council Gypsy and Traveller new or much enlarged site scheme.

Site residents have also engaged closely with the design and management processes. Several workshops and informal consultations took place which led to a more sustainable and user friendly approach to the design and management of the scheme. The inclusion of a wet room with DDA compliances wider, better quality paths and other such improvements is a direct result from residents having access problems on site.

The Education, Learning and Skills Directorate were originally consulted regarding increased numbers of children on the new site and are satisfied that projected figures do not exceed current or projected local school capacity.

The Kent Messenger were interested in the planning application, however, since planning consent has been granted there has been no further follow up.

Potential Impact

The project will have a positive impact on those current residents and those potential residents on the waiting list. With an better facilities and increased access a greater proportion of the community can stay longer on the proposed site.

Enhancing the environment for residents of the site will increase opportunities for the community. This includes increasing health provision by providing enhanced utility blocks which comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, ensuring residents do not have to move away from the site when health issues arise yet preserving the Gypsy and Traveller culture.

This scheme is therefore for a “site for life” for its residents, and those who follow them.

The scheme has been designed to be sustainable, build capacity, plan for future needs, increase opportunities for residents and improve quality of life. It will support and facilitate economic growth, providing essential quality accommodation that residents can take ownership of - building aspiration rather than dependency.

The current configuration of the site does not permit KCC to make good use of its landholding, and is also proving inadequate in terms of meeting the needs of the existing residents. The new site has been designed with residents to encompass aspects of culture and need.

Enhancing the environment for residents of the site will increase opportunities for the community. This includes increasing health provision by providing enhanced utility blocks which comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, ensuring residents do not have to move away from the site when health issues arise. These utility blocks include separate storage and wet rooms enabling them to be as close to ‘pitches for life’ as possible guided by Rowntree Trust specifications.

By increasing to 26, we will be able to meet more identified need and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, in particular, will be in a far better position to protect Kent residents from unauthorised encampments and resist unauthorised developments and refuse temporary consents when they come up for renewal. Those on such sites are all being invited to apply for the new site pitches. It may also significantly reduce the KCC pitch waiting list. Kent has 202 pitches and Medway 11 and there has been no net addition to available pitches since the 1990’s.

There will be excellent value for money due to the works being undertaken while the appointed contractor is on site, thus obtaining the economies of scale from the existing contractor’s preliminaries etc. reducing unit costs, a benefit for KCC, T&MBC and the HCA.

The Police, as both neighbouring landowners (as Kent Police Authority) and architectural advisors, are in support of the new design. The proposed land transfer to the Police will secure the land to the north of the site eliminating the risk of misuse to the area and providing a capital receipt which will help bridge the shortfall.

Adverse Impact:

As there will be an increase in pitch numbers there is the potential for either a positive or negative impact in respect of religion or belief. New or existing residents accommodated on the site could have grievances with others who may have alternative religions or beliefs. To mitigate any risks of conflict there is a allocation process that deals fairly with applicants for the site and management take a positive approach to community cohesion.

Positive Impact:

Coldharbour Lane will ensure capacity for the future with a sustainable approach to design for the management of the site. Residents will benefit from good facilities, enhanced environment and a vibrant community. It will promote community cohesion and social integration.

The site will provide increased access and build capacity providing opportunities for those currently on unauthorised pitches or who are in unsuitable accommodation.

Demonstrates that we are meeting the PSED's with regard to Race by supporting the preservation of the Gypsy and Traveller culture, the largest BME group in Kent and ensures that needs are taken into consideration through the design of the site.

JUDGEMENT

Option 1 – Screening Sufficient NO

Following this initial screening our judgement is that no further action is required.

Justification:

Option 2 – Internal Action Required Yes

There is potential for adverse impact on particular groups and we have found scope to improve the proposal

See the Action Plan at the end of this document

Option 3 – Full Impact Assessment YES/NO

Only go to full impact assessment if an adverse impact has been identified that will need to undertake further analysis, consultation and action

Equality and Diversity Team Comments

The Equality and Diversity Team to make any comments following their review.

Sign Off

I have noted the content of the equality impact assessment and agree the actions to mitigate the adverse impact(s) that have been identified.

Senior Officer

Signed: _____ Name: _____

Job Title: _____ Date: _____

DMT Member

Signed: _____ Name: _____

Job Title: _____ Date: _____

Part 2: FULL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name

Of the policy, procedure, project or service

Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer:

Date of Full Equality Impact Assessment:

Scope of the Assessment

Set out what the assessment is going to focus on, as directed by the findings from your initial screening

Information and Data

State what information/data/research you have used to help you carry out your assessment

Involvement and Engagement

Provide details of all the involvement and engagement activity you have undertaken in carrying out this assessment and summarise the main findings

Judgement

Set out below the implications you have found from your assessment for the relevant diversity groups. If any negative impacts can be justified please clearly explain why.

Action Plan

Provide details of how you are going to deal with the issues raised in judgement above and complete the Action plan at the end of this document

Monitoring and Review

Provide details of how you intend to monitor and review progress against the above actions

Equality and Diversity Team Comments

The Equality and Diversity Team to make any comments following their review.

Sign Off

I have noted the content of the equality impact assessment and agree the actions to mitigate the adverse impact(s) that have been identified.

Senior Officer

Signed:

Name:

Job Title:

Date:

DMT Member

Signed:

Name:

Job Title:

Date:

Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Protected Characteristic	Issues identified	Action to be taken	Expected outcomes	Owner	Timescale	Cost implications
Pregnancy and maternity	Families may wish a bath for younger children	Aid families to acquire appropriate accommodation on site	Mobile homes to be the main accommodation type on site	Head of Gypsy and Traveller Unit	July 2013 and ongoing when site opens	nil
Religion and beliefs	Social inclusion and community cohesion	Allocations policy to reflect social and site responsibilities	All residents feel part of the community	Operations Manager G&T Unit	Before site opens Jan 2013	nil