

(For Democratic Services use)

Decision Number: 09- (2022/23)

Portfolio Holder Executive Decision Statement

The Local Authority (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

Subject: To seek approval for an increase in the rental charge for pitches at Romani Way Gypsy and Traveller Site, Hever Road, Edenbridge

Details of Decision taken: Approval of a 5% rental increase for all pitches at Romani Way Gypsy and Traveller Site from 1 April 2023.

Reason for Decision: In accordance with the pitch agreement for Romani Way Gypsy and Traveller site, rents will be reviewed annually and take account of the criteria set out in paragraphs 16 to 18 of the pitch agreement (copy attached).

Paragraph 18 of the agreement states that 'it is presumed the fee will increase by no more than the percentage of the RPI'.

Following discussion with Finance and senior management, we would like to propose an increase of less than the current inflationary figure of 10.1%. This proposal takes account of the cost of living crisis and issues that we are dealing with on the site.

Our proposal is to increase the rental charge by 5% which would mean a weekly increase of £4.25 to be introduced from 1 April 2023. The new proposed weekly pitch fee will be £89.18.

Should Portfolio Holder approval be given, all residents of Romani Way will be informed of the increase by letter and advised that, should they be in receipt of Housing Benefit, we will notify them of this change on their behalf and that no action is required.

If any resident does not agree to the proposed increase, they may apply to a tribunal for an order to determine the new pitch fee.

Details of a named Sevenoaks District Council officer is provided should residents wish to discuss the rent increase or need advice or assistance.

All Documents considered: Romani Way Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Agreement; Retail Price Index (Office of National Statistics)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

When completed a copy of this record must be sent to the Democratic Services Section by e-mail and a signed copy by internal mail

(For Democratic Services use)

Decision Number: 09 (2022/23)

Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the Member when making the Decision: The Finance Department set out 3 options for the rent increase at Romani Way. The options ranged from 3% to 7.8%. A middle-ground increase is the preferred option, creating a small extra income for the Council whilst not severely impacting residents at a time when the cost of living is extremely high.

Financial implications: As above, the increase will provide a small extra income for the Council which will provide funds to help maintain the site.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement:

None.

Equality Impacts (Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty)

All residents will be notified of the rent increase and advised that if they do not agree with the increase they may go to a tribunal. A named officer is provided should they need help and/or advice. The rent proposed is significantly less than RPI in order to take account of the current cost of living crisis and outstanding issues on the site.

Local Member (s), other Portfolio Holders and Chief Officer/Head of Service Consulted

Cllr Maskell, PH for Housing and Health
Sarah Robson, Chief Officer, People and Places

When completed a copy of this record must be sent to the Democratic Services Section by e-mail and a signed copy by internal mail


(For Democratic Services use)

Decision Number: 09 (2022/23)

Details of any conflicts of interest

a) declared by any executive member who is consulted by the Decision Taker

b) and any details of dispensations granted by the Chief Executive in respect of any declared conflict

Decision taken by:	Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health
Signed by Portfolio Holder	
Date of Decision	8/12/2022.
Record made by:	Phil Magee
Date of record:	12/12/2022

When completed a copy of this record must be sent to the Democratic Services Section by e-mail and a signed copy by internal mail