

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

9 November 2009

### Report of the Director of Director of Health and Housing

#### Part 1- Public

#### Matters for Information

#### 1 COLDHARBOUR GYPSY SITE

##### Summary

**This report updates Members on the Coldharbour Project Improvement Board's recent actions in seeking to expand the existing provision at the Aylesford site.**

#### 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 As Members will recall the Council's housing and planning officers have been working on a joint project with Kent County Council (KCC) to replace the existing Coldharbour Gypsy and Traveller site in Aylesford. The aspiration is to meet the Borough's identified strategic shortfall in the supply of Gypsy & Traveller pitches.
- 1.1.2 Currently the Coldharbour site consists of eight double pitches, but the Project Board is seeking to expand the provision to 18 double pitches on a wholly new site immediately to the west of the existing one.
- 1.1.3 A final design was formulated after an extensive value engineering exercise along with a consultation process involving the Parish Council. The views of local Members were also taken onboard. Consequently the revised layout retains all the core themes, such as the use of the existing access road, a commitment to return the existing site to greenfield, and the height and position of the northern perimeter fencing.
- 1.1.4 In September KCC submitted a planning application to itself (Members will recall that Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council are not the planning authority in this instance), along with a detailed funding bid to the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA). If the bid is successful the scheme will be 100 per cent grant funded through the Government's Gypsy & Traveller Site Refurbishment Grant.
- 1.1.5 The planning application will be determined by the end of November, and an announcement on the funding bid is expected via a Ministerial announcement within a similar timeframe.
- 1.1.6 Officers will update Members on both matters at further meetings of this Board.

## **1.2 Legal Implications**

1.2.1 None arising from this report.

## **1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.3.1 The Council has made a financial contribution to the costs of managing and procuring the site replacement project.

## **1.4 Risk Assessment**

1.4.1 There has been close co-operation between your officers and KCC in supporting the project to replace the existing Coldharbour site. Should the development not achieve funding support or planning permission, the Council's plans to meet the shortfall in provision of Gypsy pitches identified by the Gypsy & Traveller Area Assessment study (GTAA) would need major review.

Background papers:

contact: Chris Knowles

Nil

John Batty  
Director of Health and Housing