

Diversity impact assessment

Appendix D

TITLE
Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation
DATE
9 June 2026
LEAD OFFICER.
Becs Wilcox, Chief Housing Officer – Housing Services & Dave Harris, Chief Planning Officer – Planning Services
1 Summary description of the proposed change
What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? How does it compare with the current situation?
The proposal is in two parts: 1.A recommendation for Members to approve development of the former Park & Ride Car Park in Wigmore into a permanent, Council managed Gypsy and Traveller site. The Wigmore site is currently occupied by a Gypsy and Traveller family group following unsuccessful possession proceedings by the Council in February 2025 and the granting of planning permission on appeal in June 2025. Development of the site would deliver a permanent Council managed site of up to ten pitches, together with the necessary infrastructure and facilities. This would allow the Council to regularise occupation through licences, introduce a fee structure, and implement formal management arrangements. The intention is for the current family group to occupy the new permanent site, with provision allowed for in the design for future expansion to meet increasing needs. The proposed provision would deliver a good quality, fully compliant site for the current and new occupants to help meet the needs of this cohort. 2.A recommendation for Members to consider the work carried out to identify additional options for Gypsy and Traveller sites; to provide greater certainty that the Local Plan will meet needs. This may include approval for consultation on additional site allocations. The emerging Local Plan provides a planning policy framework for guiding development in Medway up to 2041. It comprises a vision, strategic objectives, site allocations and development management policies. With regard to housing, the Local Plan aims to meet the housing needs of the community and national planning policy for Gypsy and Traveller sites requires Local Authorities to identify and seek to meet accommodation needs. The submission version of the Medway Local Plan 2041 does not meet the full needs of this cohort. Published correspondence between the inspectors, appointed to examine the Plan, sets out actions for the Council to identify a sufficient supply of land to meet the full needs.

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2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment

E.g. Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user.
E.g. Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to:

Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

(insert Yes when there is an impact or No when there isn't)

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age		Yes	Yes
Disability		Yes	
Gender reassignment			
Marriage/civil partnership			
Pregnancy/maternity		Yes	
Race		Yes	Yes
Religion/belief		Yes	
Sex			
Sexual orientation			
Care experience			
Other (e.g. low income groups)			

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4 Summary of the likely impacts

Who will be affected?

How will they be affected?

The current site occupants include a high number of children who are attending local schools, so the establishment of a permanent site would allow them to continue their education in a familiar setting resulting in a positive impact. The provision of a site will also have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of older people, allowing better and more consistent access to local services and support.

Gypsy and Travellers are known to generally marry and start families younger than non-travelling communities, often whilst travelling. Being able to live on a permanent site will allow expectant women and mothers of younger children a safe place from which to access consistent services (GP, midwife, health visitor etc.).

Travellers with physical disabilities will benefit from the provision of a permanent site by the availability of flat, level ground with accessible facilities.

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?

Are there alternative providers?

Can demand for services be managed differently?

The proposed Wigmore site (and potential future provision) will aim to advance equality of opportunity for the Gypsy and Traveller community. With full management by the Council in place, there will be opportunities for resident engagement to foster good relations with the wider communities.

The provision of new sites will help to reduce the occurrence of unauthorised development and encampments, which in turn is anticipated to reduce any potential tensions with the settled community.

6 Action plan

Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date

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7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be: to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate, consider alternatives, gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

The recommendations are for Members to approve the development of the Wigmore site to provide 8 pitches, for 10 touring caravans within the current boundary and the option of expanding the site as a second, future phase.

In addition, for Members to consider further work to be carried out to identify additional options for Gypsy and Traveller sites, to provide greater certainty that the Local Plan will meet the identified needs

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that the recommendation can be implemented, sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned, the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Date of authorisation