

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

# Leisure & Arts Strategy 2008-2013



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## Foreword

I would like to welcome you to the Leisure and Arts Strategy 2008 - 2013 and I hope that you too will be enthused by the vision and themes that will shape and provide our residents with all aspects of leisure and arts throughout our Borough for the next five years.

You will see how we work in partnership with all sectors of the community to enable best delivery of our services to everyone; how important feedback is from our residents in maintaining and improving what we have. Key issues have been identified, prioritised and actions planned to address these issues.

With this Leisure and Arts Strategy, Leisure Services will continue to provide excellent services for all our residents

Cabinet Member for  
Leisure, Youth & Arts

### The Council is responsible for leisure facilities and services that include:

The Angel Leisure Centre, Tonbridge	Sportsgrounds
Tonbridge Swimming Pool	Sports and Arts Development
Larkfield Leisure Centre	Tonbridge Castle and Grounds
Poult Wood Golf Centre	Tourism Services
Leybourne Lakes Country Park	Festival of Music and Fireworks
Haysden Country Park	Summer Playscheme/Activate/Y2 Crew
Tonbridge Cemetery	Youth Forum
Allotments in Tonbridge	Capital Grants
Children's Play Areas	Community Events
Public Open Spaces and Woodlands	Revenue Grants

## Leisure & Arts Strategy 2008-2013

This document describes how the Council's Leisure Services will be provided across the borough up to the year 2013. It sets out policies, key issues and actions to ensure our local community can continue to benefit from a wide range of high quality local leisure and arts opportunities.

This Strategy will help the Council to deliver its corporate priorities, most importantly to promote, encourage and provide opportunities for healthy living, to give priority to meeting the needs of young people, to reduce anti-social behaviour and to achieve a cleaner, smarter and better maintained street scene and open space environment. It sets out a policy framework which the Council's Leisure Services and its partners will use to enable a co-ordinated and integrated approach to provision of leisure and arts facilities and service over the next five years.

It will ensure future decisions on the prioritisation of resource allocation are based on a set of principles and policies that are realistic and clearly understood, and be a key mechanism to make certain the needs and aspirations of the local community are translated into effective facility provision and service delivery within available resources.

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# Major Leisure Facilities in Tonbridge and Malling

**Key**

-  Leisure Centre/ Swimming Pool
-  Castle
-  Country Park
-  Woodland & Parks
-  Golf Course
-  Tourist Information
-  Gokarting
-  Youth Centres
-  Tourist Attractions
-  Arts Centre
-  Sports Ground





## Linking this Strategy to corporate and regional strategies

The Council is committed to work towards improving the quality of life in Tonbridge and Malling. This Strategy cannot work in isolation. It has been prepared to work alongside, and has been influenced by, other Council strategies, plans and corporate priorities.

In addition to the Council's Community Strategy, this Leisure and Arts Strategy is in accord with a number of other strategies and plans of direct relevance including:

- Local Development Framework including the Tonbridge Town Centre Action Plan
- The Open Space Strategy
- The Playing Pitch and Local Play Strategies
- The Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy
- The Leisure Services Business Unit Business Plan
- The Council's Climate Change Strategy
- Local Agenda 21 Action Plan
- The Nature Conservation Strategy
- The Youth Agreement
- The Council's Leisure Best Value Review Improvement Plans
- The Council's Cycling Strategy
- Haysden Country Park Management Plan
- Leybourne Lakes Country Park Management Plan

This revised Strategy is the Council's fourth local Leisure & Arts plan since 1991.

Relevant Regional Strategies and Plans include:

- Mission Possible. Sport England South East Plan for Sport 2004 - 2008
- Our agenda for the arts in the South East 2006-8. Plans and priorities of Arts Council South East
- Every Child Matters: Change for Children
- Children, young people and the arts. South East Regional Strategy
- On Your Marks...Get set...Go! Tourism South East Visitor Plan

## Vision for Leisure and Arts

*A borough where residents and visitors are able to enjoy and have good access to high quality leisure and arts facilities/activities in safety, and a place where the natural, built and social environment is sustained for future generations.*

### Introduction

Leisure and arts are worthwhile in themselves, and contribute to enjoyable and fulfilling experiences for all. Leisure and arts can enrich people's quality of life whether they are participants, observers, volunteers, employees, or supporters. The health benefits they offer are well recognised and the opportunities they provide for community involvement and developing a sense of belonging can help to promote social cohesiveness. Leisure facilities and services also play a key role in addressing crime and disorder and there are close links with the work of the borough's Community Safety Partnership. It is the Borough Council's aim to encourage, develop and make sustainable improvements to the delivery of leisure and arts services in order to ensure that facilities and opportunities are available for the benefit of all residents and visitors subject to the realistic financial constraints within which the Council operates.

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council covers an area of 92 square miles of Kent 30 miles from London. The borough has a diverse character including the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the River Medway Valley and a significant area of the Weald of Kent. Its settlements are equally diverse, ranging from Snodland and Wouldham in the north, to Tonbridge in the south: from Walderslade and Aylesford in the east to Borough Green and Ightham in the west, 29 miles south east of London. The Council serves 107,561 (Census 2001) people of whom 64 per cent live in the two main conurbations of Tonbridge and the Medway Gap (comprising Snodland, Leybourne, West Malling, Kings Hill, East Malling, Larkfield, Ditton and Aylesford), with the remaining 36 per cent scattered in the small towns and villages throughout the Borough's rural area.

## Strategic Framework

Ten themes have been selected to underpin the Strategy, to act as a framework to focus on issues that concern the community. This approach strengthens the links across the leisure service areas, and assists the Service's integration and fit with the Council's corporate priorities. It is important that these themes are embedded in the operational service delivery.

The ten themes
Healthy Living <sup>1</sup>
Young People <sup>1</sup>
Fair Access for All
Caring for the Environment
Tackling Climate Change <sup>1</sup>
Working in Partnership
Public Access and Involvement
Quality and Excellence
Crime and Disorder Reduction <sup>1</sup>
Risk Management
<small><sup>1</sup>Denotes key corporate priorities</small>

## Key aims

The aims incorporate the strategic themes which are identified in brackets following each aim.

- To offer a high quality and varied programme of leisure and arts opportunities that promote an active and healthy lifestyle thus enhancing quality of life across the borough (Healthy living; Quality and excellence)
- To provide good quality leisure and arts opportunities for young people which are accessible and have been endorsed through consultation with them (Young people; Quality and excellence)
- To ensure that in all forms of public leisure and arts provision, equality of opportunity and principles of equity are upheld to deliver fair access for all (Fair access for all)
- To provide a safe, clean, pleasant and sustainable leisure environment in which residents and visitors can enjoy their leisure time (Caring for the environment; Healthy living; Risk management)
- To act as a catalyst and assist others in the provision and delivery of appropriate leisure and arts facilities and services within available resources (Working with others)
- To provide a responsive service which meets the expressed needs and aspirations of the community and values their involvement in development, design, enhancement, programming and operation (Public access and involvement)
- To provide leisure and arts services and facilities that support crime and disorder reduction and offer safe and secure opportunities for participation for the whole community (Crime and disorder reduction; Risk management)
- To protect and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of the local environment (Caring for the environment; Tackling climate change)
- To increase participation and assist in raising standards of performance in leisure and arts activities responsive to identified community needs. (Healthy living; Quality and excellence)

## Why the Council is involved in leisure

Leisure and Arts are largely a non-statutory service but play an essential role in assisting the Council to meet its key corporate priorities. The Service is provided:

- To enable everyone to appreciate and participate in leisure and arts
- Because leisure and arts are intrinsically worthwhile
- Because healthy lifestyles contribute to people's quality of life
- Because children and young people benefit from play
- Because leisure and arts help tackle the causes of crime and disorder
- Because the high quality indoor and outdoor facilities including open spaces provide excellent opportunities for the whole community
- Because strategic management is required to sustain a range of diverse facilities that offer accessible opportunities to the whole community
- For the enjoyable experiences that can be made available to all and especially to young people, the financially disadvantaged and those most in need
- To improve places for people to enjoy outdoor leisure
- To increase the number of people participating in leisure and arts
- To ensure that heritage is properly and fully valued
- Because people need opportunities to make the natural environment an enriching part of their everyday lives
- So that provision continues to meet the highest achievable standards for health, safety, security and energy conservation requirements



## The value of working with others

In order to be implemented fully, the Strategy adopts a partnership ethos that will assist in co-ordinating the work of public, voluntary and private sectors enabling leisure providers to work together for the good of the local community. No single organisation has all the resources or skills to deliver this Strategy effectively. There is an increasing need for leisure providers to work together to achieve the vision for leisure and arts.

One of the most important roles for Leisure Services is to act as enablers and facilitators working in partnership with a range of organisations, agencies and individuals without whom it would not be possible to provide a sustainable leisure service. The Borough Council has a critical role to play in planning, co-ordinating and supporting the work of others; and as an over-arching organisation it can provide the leadership required.

Leisure Services has developed a number of highly successful partnership arrangements including Parish/Town Councils, Kent County Council Youth Service, Local Schools and Colleges, private sector sub-contractors, West Kent Arts Partnership, Tonbridge Sports Association, Medway Valley Countryside Partnership and Heart of Kent Consortium. (A full list of partners is on page 33.)

### Scale of Leisure Services

Cost of Service £3.7m per annum
Total income £5m per annum
Number of staff employed 136 full-time equivalents
1.35 million visits are made to our indoor leisure centres each year
76 equipped play spaces and 147 outdoor sports sites in the Borough
£200,000 given out each year in grants to Parish Councils and voluntary organisations
17,800 child attendances at borough wide holiday programmes

## Involving the Public

The Council as a whole aims to “improve the public’s access to, and influence over, services provided by the Council...”

Our Consultation Strategy guides our approach to innovation in the way we carry out customer research and consultation. The Tonbridge & Malling Residents’ Panel provides its views about local quality of life and priorities for improvement in the borough.

Leisure Services has consulted users through approved market research in a number of ways including: annual customer surveys, regular meetings of Customer Panels, special research projects involving children and young people, a customer comment system, Mystery Shopper assessments and use of the Residents’ Panel.

Leisure Services are seeking to maintain and extend the comprehensive approach to consultation using a wide range of methods. Increasingly we are using new technology as a way of communicating with both users and non-users of our services. This includes websites that keep the public informed and the extension of on-line bookings and payments.

Comments are invited from the public on this Strategy via the website, by email or by writing to Leisure Services, Council Offices, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4LZ. (see page 30 for details)

## Public Satisfaction

In 2006/07 79 per cent of residents indicated that they were satisfied with parks and open spaces and 64 per cent were satisfied with sports and leisure facilities overall. This result from a National Residents’ Satisfaction Survey that achieved the highest response rate in the whole country ranked TMBC 2nd out of 12 authorities in Kent, 2nd compared to the CIPFA family group and 30th out of 238 districts nationally.

Other consultation findings have shown that:

- 99% of users were satisfied with Haysden Country Park
- 97% of public open spaces and amenity areas were judged to be clean

- 95% of participants were satisfied with activity programmes in the Summer Playscheme
- 94% of users were satisfied with Tonbridge Swimming Pool
- 92% of users were satisfied with Leybourne Lakes Country Park
- 86% of users were satisfied with The Angel Centre, Tonbridge
- 77% of users were satisfied with safety and security of the principal open spaces
- 74% of users were satisfied with Larkfield Leisure Centre
- More than 50% of residents were satisfied with the amount, quality and accessibility of open spaces

In spite of overall high levels of public satisfaction with our facilities and services we consistently aspire to improve and exceed our customers and residents expectations. Sport England National Survey ‘Active People’ records a lower than national average level of active participation amongst the borough’s residents. Key issues for improvement and how we hope to tackle them are outlined later in this Strategy.



### Major achievements resulting from the 2001-2006 Leisure Strategy include

- All indoor leisure sites highly commended under Quest accreditation
- Completed a “best value” review that concluded the Council’s indoor leisure facilities should be managed ‘in-house’
- Implemented access improvements to meet the needs of people with disabilities
- Opened a soft play area at Larkfield Leisure Centre
- Protected Tonbridge Swimming Pool against flooding
- Refurbished the Angel Centre
- Opened Leybourne Lakes Country Park
- Re-roofed Tonbridge Castle
- Achieved Green Flag Awards at Haysden Country Park and Leybourne Lakes Country Park
- Opened the Skate Park at Tonbridge Farm Sportsground
- Opened the Tonbridge to Penshurst cycle route
- Launched the Tonbridge and Malling Youth Website
- Introduced Activate holiday programmes for young people
- Provided community events to help celebrate the Tour de France
- Introduced healthy walking and cycling initiatives



## Structure of the Strategy

The next section of the Strategy is concerned with **Leisure Services** overall, its structure, staffing and service delivery arrangements.

The **overall policy** statement describes the fundamental ideas underlying the direction of the service. It is designed to influence and determine immediate and longer-term decisions.

**Key policies** identify what the service has to do to achieve the overall policy. The themes feature prominently in the key policies to retain the focus on core issues. This is followed by **key issues** which identify the priorities the Service will tackle in the next five years.

## Leisure Service Structure

The Planning, Transport and Leisure Service provides the structural context for an integrated, customer focused service.

The Leisure Service is structured into three service areas:

- **Indoor Leisure** responsible for the Angel Leisure Centre (Tonbridge), Larkfield Leisure Centre, Tonbridge Swimming Pool and grounds maintenance at Poulton Wood Golf Centre
- **Outdoor Leisure** responsible for sports grounds, the Country Parks, children's play areas, public open space and Tonbridge Cemetery
- **Leisure Development** responsible for arts, tourism, youth and play, events, heritage, sports development and the client management of Poulton Wood Golf Centre.

## Service Delivery Arrangements

The three service areas are delivered in a variety of ways to reflect the most efficient, effective and economic approach.

Some services are provided directly by the Council; some in partnership with others; indirectly through financial support; or by external contractors working on behalf of the Council. Each service area identifies service delivery arrangements that apply. The Council's indoor leisure facilities are delivered 'in house' by the Leisure Services Business Unit.



## Staff

Leisure Services employs 136 (full time equivalent) staff at its leisure facilities and the Council Offices at Kings Hill.

The Council overall, and the Leisure Services' Business Unit, maintain accreditation to the Investors in People Standard (IiP) which ensures that our staff are skilled, competent and able to make a full contribution to the success of the Service. Continuous professional development is a requirement for all staff. Customer ratings confirm our reputation for quality of service.

## Overall Policy Statement

Leisure Services will work in partnership with others to improve the quality of life, health and well being of residents and visitors to the borough, its environment and economy through the provision of high quality, customer focused and cost effective leisure and arts facilities and services.

## Key Policies

The purpose of the key policies is to identify service-wide priorities that enable common issues to be tackled by the three main service areas. The ten cross cutting themes feature in the key policies. (Themes are shown in brackets following each policy)

- **Work in partnership** with others to deliver leisure and arts services in accordance with this Strategy, the Council's corporate priorities and Performance Plans and other relevant strategies and plans. (Working in Partnership)
- Ensure there is an adequate supply of **high quality, affordable and accessible** leisure and arts facilities and opportunities to meet identified needs within the borough. (Quality and Excellence; Fair Access for All)
- Deliver **high quality**, customer focused and cost effective leisure and arts opportunities within approved levels of resource for people of **all ages and abilities** and in particular meet the needs of **children and young people**. (Fair Access for All; Young People)
- **Care for, protect and enhance the natural environment** to encourage greater biodiversity and take actions that secure a future for our local environment in the light of **climate change**, at the same time balancing this with encouraging sustainable use. (Caring for the Environment; Tackling Climate Change)
- Work with others to provide leisure and arts opportunities that **minimise the risk of crime**, reduce the potential for anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime. (Crime and Disorder Reduction)
- Promote **equality of access** for all ages and abilities, especially for **young people, older people, people with disabilities and the financially disadvantaged**. (Fair Access for All)
- Encourage the whole community to develop and maintain active and **healthier** lifestyles from childhood to old age. (Healthy Living)
- Support actions that value heritage and enhance the vitality of **Tonbridge Town Centre** contributing to strengthening the local economy. (Quality and Excellence)
- Promote and improve **community safety** by providing opportunities for participation in leisure and arts activities within a **risk controlled** environment. (Risk Management)
- Increase the local resident and business **community's involvement** in how the Council runs leisure services. (Public Access and Involvement)
- Manage **health and safety** and **access** issues in response to legislation and identified best practice. (Risk Management)
- Extend the **community's awareness** of leisure and arts opportunities through the use of new technology. (Public Access and Involvement)
- Implement, review and develop **approved grant aid schemes** and **optimise income** from all potential sources. (Working in Partnership)
- All leisure and arts activities and events run by the Council to offer a Leisure Pass discretionary rate that reduces the costs to participants. (Fair Access for All)



## Key Issues

In no order of priority, these are key issues for the Service for the next five years. Key actions needed to address these key issues are identified within the relevant service sections later in the Strategy.

- **Sports Participation** – the need to increase active adult sports participation in the borough as highlighted by the Sport England Active Sport survey.
- **Energy Consumption** – the reduction in utility costs at the Council's leisure facilities in line with corporate targets.
- **Capital Investment** – the need for ongoing investment in the Council's leisure facilities to retain and increase usage levels, and meet customer expectations.
- **External Funding** – the need to maximise opportunities to secure funding for the Council from external sources including the Big Lottery Fund, Primary Care Trust and developer contributions.
- **Value for Money** – the need to deliver services as cost effectively as possible in light of growing pressures on the Council's budget.
- **Community/Sports Facilities in Tonbridge Town Centre** – the replacement and enhancement of the existing Angel Centre facilities as part of the Council's potential town centre development proposals, including the provision of gallery space for community and touring exhibitions.
- **All Weather Pitch Provision** – seek solutions in partnership with others to address the identified deficiency within the borough of full size floodlit all weather pitches with community access.
- **Activities for Young People** – the provision of activities for young people, and in particular teenagers to encourage healthy living and reduce crime and disorder.
- **Risk Management** – the continued delivery of the Council's leisure facilities and services in accordance with the corporate Risk Management Framework.
- **Partnership Working** – retention and development of partnership arrangements with other providers in the public, private and voluntary sectors to maximise resources.



- **Health and Safety** – providing services in the interests of health and safety of the public and employees.
- **Continuous Improvement** – the ongoing need to meet customers' expectations/ needs and manage the Service as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- **Information Technology** – the increased use of new technology in the operation and delivery of leisure services including the development of websites and on-line bookings and payments.
- **Fair Access for All** – ensuring the Council's leisure facilities and services continue to be available to all members of the community, particularly in relation to concessionary charges for the financially disadvantaged and target groups and compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- **Schools/Colleges** – working with schools/ colleges to maximise opportunities for community use of facilities outside of school hours.
- **New Legislation** – meeting new legislative requirements as and when they arise.
- **Leisure Services Business Unit** – Maintaining high quality facilities with the continued achievement of a sustainable budget in light of competing facilities.
- **Income Generation** – optimising income from all potential sources and contributing to strengthening the local economy.

- **Quality of Service** – delivering high quality services as recognised by external assessment including Quest accreditation and Green Flag Awards.
- **Communicating with Customers** – talking to our customers, keeping them informed of developments/performance and listening to them in order to meet their identified needs.
- **Children's Play Areas** – maintaining and developing children's play areas to meet required standards, addressing gaps in provision identified in the Local Play and Open Space Strategies.
- Closely uphold and promote **corporate child protection policies** and **OFSTED** national standards.
- **Implement policies, standards and action plans** in the Open Space Strategy, Playing Pitch Strategy and Local Play Strategy.
- Maximise the benefits of the **2012 Olympics** to the borough, generating a legacy in sports, arts, tourism and volunteering.
- **Maximise benefits for the arts** through partnerships with others.
- **Maximise resources** by grant aiding others, including Parish/Town Council's and voluntary organisations.
- Meet the needs of **hard to reach groups** including the provision of outreach services to identified locations in the borough.

- Ensure the **health benefits of active lifestyles** are promoted and delivered in partnership with the Primary Care Trust (PCT)
- Increase awareness of **local history and heritage**, developing historical initiatives that link into lifelong learning.
- Assist in maintaining the **Heart of Kent (HOK)** consortium to maximise tourism benefits to the borough through economic spend and job creation.
- Assist the Police and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) in tackling the **reduction of crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour**.
- Manage the borough's **open spaces** to **encourage sustainable use** for recreation whilst preventing environmental damage.
- Work in close liaison with **parish and town councils** to assist the delivery of leisure and arts services at a local level.
- **Local Children's Services Partnerships** - the establishment of two LCSPs in the borough to provide integrated working from planning to delivery, with a focus on improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Increase the take up and use of the **Leisure Pass** offering discounts to the financially disadvantaged.
- Increase participation in **healthy leisure and arts** activities by **older people**.
- Maintain high calibre staff through training and development.



## Measuring Performance

Performance is measured in a number of ways, namely: financial performance; customer satisfaction; usage; national and local performance indicators, and specific industry related schemes.

**Financial performance** – Leisure Services is monitored against budget heads throughout the financial year. In addition, income generation and cost reduction measures are used to improve financial performance where there will be no detriment to the service offered.

**Customer satisfaction** – is tested on a regular basis through on-going consultations with residents and users of the facilities and services. The Residents' Panel, which is a representative sample of all our residents, complete surveys on a wide range of issues three or four times a year; periodically these surveys focus on leisure and arts services. Face-to-face interview surveys take place with customers on an annual basis at the key indoor and outdoor facilities, and these aspects of the service include regular meetings with customer panels. Targeted specifically to the youth market, the Youth Forum meets six times a year and is encouraged to express satisfaction/dissatisfaction with leisure and arts issues and to offer ideas for improvement.

**Usage** – The indoor facilities track usage on a daily basis and detailed reports are evaluated. Bookings for facilities, **usage** by societies and clubs of outdoor as well as indoor facilities are maintained for scrutiny; casual use is observed for example at equipped play areas, and parish/town councils report use of their facilities.

**Performance Indicators (PIs)** – a range of PIs, some established by Central Government and others developed locally, are used to demonstrate how our services are performing. The PIs set by the Government are reported as required to the Audit Commission and are detailed annually in 'Spotlight' the Council's published Corporate Performance Plan. Results from the 2006/07 survey:

**National Indicator BV 119a Satisfaction with sports/leisure facilities and events 64 per cent**

**National Indicator BV 119e Satisfaction with parks and open spaces 79 per cent**

Local PIs are used where they help to give a more balanced and complete picture of our performance. These are reported in 'Spotlight' on an annual basis, the most recent results are included in the three leisure service areas.

**Specific service related assessment schemes** – are used where, for example, the Quest scheme provides an independent quality accreditation for indoor leisure facilities and Green Flag awards for open spaces, especially parks.

Each of the three leisure service sections includes details of the performance measures specific to their aspect of service.

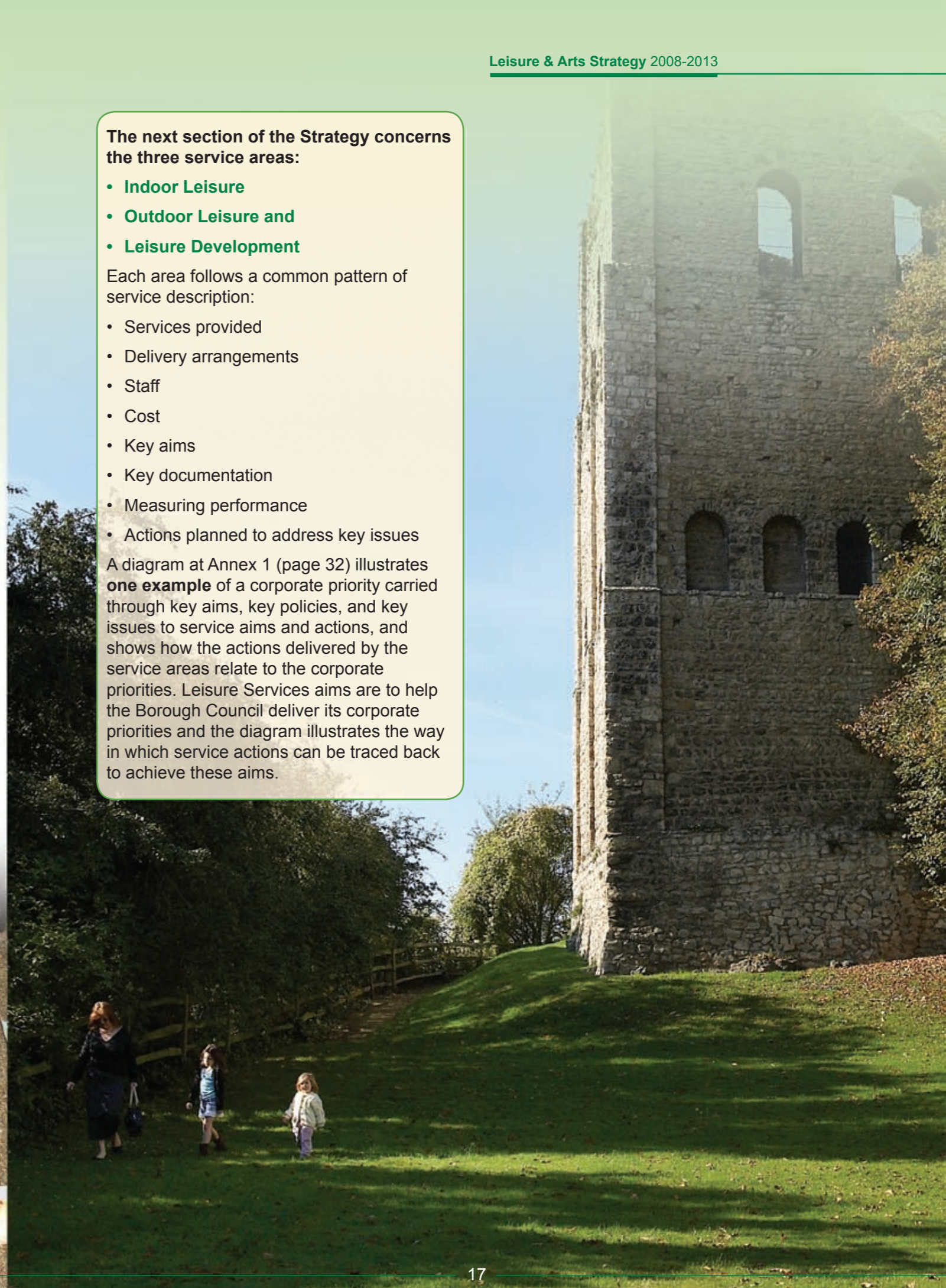
The next section of the Strategy concerns the three service areas:

- **Indoor Leisure**
- **Outdoor Leisure and**
- **Leisure Development**

Each area follows a common pattern of service description:

- Services provided
- Delivery arrangements
- Staff
- Cost
- Key aims
- Key documentation
- Measuring performance
- Actions planned to address key issues

A diagram at Annex 1 (page 32) illustrates **one example** of a corporate priority carried through key aims, key policies, and key issues to service aims and actions, and shows how the actions delivered by the service areas relate to the corporate priorities. Leisure Services aims are to help the Borough Council deliver its corporate priorities and the diagram illustrates the way in which service actions can be traced back to achieve these aims.





## Indoor Leisure

### Services provided

Management and operation of the Council's indoor leisure facilities:

- Larkfield Leisure Centre
- Angel Centre, Tonbridge
- Tonbridge Swimming Pool

### Delivery arrangements

The indoor leisure facilities are managed and operated 'in house' by the Leisure Services Business Unit (LSBU). The LSBU is also responsible for the ground maintenance contract at the Council's Golf Centre (Poult Wood).

A Best Value Review of Leisure was undertaken in 2005 which explored opportunities to provide the services through a number of different management arrangements. The review concluded that the service would be provided in the most economic, efficient and effective way by remaining an 'in house' part of the Council.

The LSBU does however enter into a number of key partnerships for services that may be better provided by specialist private sector organisations. Examples include catering, bar and vending services, contract cleaning, retail and beauty therapy services.

### Staff

The LSBU employs 107 full time equivalent staff and over 200 additional coaching, seasonal and casual staff.

### Cost

The overall annual cost of the indoor leisure section is £1.99m.

### Key aims

The LSBU operates the indoor leisure facilities with key aims that relate to the Council's corporate priorities. These include;

- Providing healthy lifestyle opportunities for the entire community and visitors to our facilities
- Freedom and equality of access to all
- Providing sporting and leisure opportunities for young people
- Providing clean, healthy and safe facilities that involve the community in their design, programming and operation
- Operate facilities on a quasi-commercial basis as appropriate, recognising the need to allow equal opportunity to those least able to pay

### Key documentation

The LSBU has an annual Business Plan that contains a range of objectives relating to staffing, business development, marketing, healthy lifestyles and many other key areas of service delivery. This is monitored and managed on a quarterly basis and through a rolling action plan.

The LSBU also has an Integrated Management System that ensures key issues such as health and safety, building maintenance and emergency procedures are planned, controlled and managed effectively.



### Measuring performance

#### Financial performance –

Facilities and services provided will be monitored on an annual basis against budget heads with a view to improving returns to the Council without detriment to the services offered.

#### Customer satisfaction –

See under local performance indicators below

#### Usage –

1.35 million visits per annum

#### Local Performance Indicators –

##### Percentage of users satisfied overall with:

LP804 Larkfield Leisure Centre (06-07) **74%**

LP805 Angel Centre, Tonbridge (06-07) **86%**

LP806 Tonbridge Swimming Pool (06-07) **94%**

LP807 Poult Wood Golf Centre (06-07) **91%**

##### Mystery shopper (07-08) ratings:

LP808 Larkfield Leisure Centre **76.5%**

LP809 Angel Centre, Tonbridge **71%**

LP810 Tonbridge Swimming Pool **77%**

LP811 Poult Wood Golf Centre **70%**

The LSBU is also recognised as an Investor in People, ensuring that staff are trained and developed effectively to provide continuity and development of services.

#### Service related –

The Council's facilities are assessed under Quest, the UK National Quality Scheme for Sport & Leisure. The national database shows nearly 800 registered sites and all three of the indoor facilities are in the 'highly commended' category and the upper quartile nationally. Larkfield Leisure Centre and the Angel Centre ranked in the top 2 per cent nationally and our facilities fill three places in the top five assessed sites in Kent.

Viewpoint is a customer comment card available to every user on each visit made to any facility.

## Actions planned to address key issues

The actions required by the Section to address Leisure's key issues are identified for the next five-year period. The themes embedded in the actions are shown.

- Evaluate enhanced replacement facilities for the Angel Centre as part of the overall Tonbridge town centre development plans (*Quality and excellence*)
- Renew the irrigation system at Poulton Wood Golf Centre (*Caring for the environment; Tackling climate change*)
- Implement energy saving initiatives at the leisure centres (*Caring for the environment; Tackling climate change*)
- Evaluate capital developments including;
  - Provision of improved studio facilities at Larkfield Leisure Centre (*Quality and excellence*)
  - Provision of toilet facilities in Larkabout at Larkfield Leisure Centre (*Young people; Quality and excellence*)
  - Replacement of maintenance building at Poulton Wood Golf Centre (*Quality and excellence*)
  - Upgrade of CCTV (*Crime & Disorder Reduction*)
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) access improvements at the leisure centres (*Fair access for all*)
- Maintain and improve Quest quality score at all indoor sites (*Quality and excellence*)
- Maintain Investors in People recognition for the LSBU (*Quality and excellence*)
- Work in partnership with health providers to continue the development of the GP Referral Scheme including outreach work (*Healthy living; Working in partnership*)
- Evaluate initiatives, implement actions and set targets for increased sports participation (*Healthy living; Fair access for all*)
- Extend and develop the programme of activities available to young people (*Young people*)
- Develop online opportunities to book and pay for activities and improve e-communications with customers (*Public access and involvement*)
- Improve market research and develop services in liaison with customers and other stakeholders (*Public access and involvement*)
- Maintain and develop the risk register for indoor leisure (*Risk management*)
- Annually review the LSBU Business Plan (*Quality and excellence*)



- Monitor market and performance trends and respond to initiatives to improve financial performance (*Quality and excellence*)
- Annually review concessionary charges for target groups (*Fair access for all; Young people*)
- Seek external funding opportunities to increase the service to target groups (*Fair access for all; Young people*)
- Renew partnership agreements and sub-contracts in accordance with corporate policies (*Working in partnership*)
- Market facilities to encourage use by schools and colleges (*Young people; Working in partnership*)
- Promote and encourage use of the facilities by athletes on the scheme Free Admission for National Sports people (FANS) (*Quality and excellence; Young people*)
- Comply with corporate child protection policy and OFSTED national standards in the delivery of activity programmes. (*Young people; Risk management*)
- Work with the Community Safety Partnership and investigate relevant new initiatives that will assist crime reduction (*Crime and disorder reduction*)
- Monitor performance indicators for indoor leisure and take action, where necessary, to improve performance (*Quality and excellence*)
- Progress plant condition surveys at each of the indoor leisure facilities (*Risk Management*)
- Develop programmes and market facilities to encourage older people to participate in activities (*Healthy living*)

# Outdoor Leisure

## Services provided

Management and operation of the Council's outdoor leisure facilities:

- Leybourne Lakes Country Park
- Haysden Country Park, Tonbridge
- Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground
- Tonbridge Farm Sportsground
- Swanmead Sportsground
- Frogbridge Sportsground
- Tonbridge Castle Grounds
- Tonbridge Cemetery
- Allotments in Tonbridge
- Over 40 other Council owned public open spaces and woodland sites totalling an area of 60 hectares

## Delivery arrangements

The service is delivered through a combination of direct site staff, external contractors and volunteers.

## Staff

A team of eight staff oversee the day to day management and development/ improvement of the borough's outdoor facilities and also provide a vital role in advising and reacting to public enquiries.

## Cost

The overall annual cost of the outdoor leisure section is £1.24m.

## Key aims

The outdoor leisure section operates with key aims that relate to the Council's corporate priorities. These include:

- Provide and promote a wide range of outdoor healthy lifestyle opportunities for the community and visitors to the Borough
- Ensure sufficient accessible, clean and safe high quality open spaces are available to meet the needs of the whole community



- Give particular emphasis to the provision and support of good quality formal and informal outdoor facilities for participation in, and appreciation of play and sports by young people
- Involve the community in the design, maintenance and operation of parks, play areas and open spaces to meet local needs and aspirations for a sustainable and safe environment
- Identify, protect and enhance the biodiversity of the borough's open spaces and promote increased awareness and understanding of the natural environment

## Key documentation

Service delivery is guided by a number of key outdoor leisure strategies and policies including:

- Playing Pitch Strategy – An assessment of pitch provision across the borough.
- Local Play Strategy – A review of play provision across the borough.
- Open Space Strategy – A review of all public open space through the borough including parks, recreation grounds and woodlands.
- Water Safety Policy/Site Specific Water Safety Polices – Strategies and policies developed in liaison with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to ensure public safety.
- Disability Discrimination Access Audits – Site specific audits to promote access for all.
- Site Management Plans (Haysden/ Leybourne) – five-year plans to guide future site maintenance and management.

## Measuring performance

### Financial performance

Facilities and services provided will be monitored on an annual basis against budget heads with a view to improving returns to the Council without detriment to the services offered.

### Customer satisfaction

A rolling programme of face-to-face surveys conducted at key sites indicates the following satisfaction levels:

Haysden Country Park	99%
Leybourne Lakes Country Park	92%
Tonbridge Castle Grounds	95%
Tonbridge Farm Sportsground	81%

### Usage

A comprehensive assessment of usage was undertaken in conjunction with the development of the Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategies.

From the Residents' Panel Survey 86% had visited a park or country park 62% had visited Tonbridge Castle Grounds. The majority of outdoor community use sports facilities are used to capacity.

### Performance Indicators

National Indicator BV 119e Satisfaction with parks and open spaces	79%
LP814 (06-07) Percentage of residents who visited one or more public open spaces during previous 12 months	86%
LP817 (06-07) Percentage of users satisfied with principal public open spaces	81%
LP813 (06-07) Percentage of users satisfied with safety and security of principal public open spaces	57%
LP816 (06-07) Percentage of public open spaces & amenity areas which are clean	91%
LP818 (06-07) Number of conservation/ volunteer hours carried out assisting on-site maintenance	1,660
LP815 (06-07) Number of our principal public open spaces that have a management plan in accordance with GreenFlag Park award criteria	2
<b>Service related</b>	
LP827 (06-07) Number of principal public open spaces with the Green Flag Park award	2





## Actions planned to address key issues

The actions required by the Section to address Leisure's key issues are identified for the next five-year period. The themes embedded in the actions are shown.

- Retain the Green Flag Award (GFA) for Leybourne Lakes Country Park, and Haysden Country Park (*Quality and excellence; Caring for the environment*)
- Secure Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status for Haysden County Park and explore the creation of further LNRs. (*Caring for the environment*)
- Work with Parish/Town Councils and improve the provision and quality of outdoor leisure facilities across the Borough in accordance with the Council's Open Space Strategy action plan (*Working in partnership; Quality and excellence*)
- Develop site specific management plans for Tonbridge Farm Sportsground, Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground and Tonbridge Castle Grounds (*Quality and excellence; Caring for the environment*)
- Achieve the GFA for Tonbridge Farm Sportsground, Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground and Tonbridge Castle Grounds (*Quality and excellence; Caring for the environment*)

- Carry out Disability Discrimination Act Audits for Tonbridge Farm Sportsground and Tonbridge Castle Grounds and implement identified improvements (*Fair access for all*)
- Maintain and develop children's play areas in accordance with required standards and meet gaps identified in the Local Play Strategy. (*Young people*)
- Implement improvements to Tonbridge Farm Sportsground including improved children's play facilities, CCTV and lighting. (*Quality and excellence; Young people*)
- Install a children's play area at Leybourne Lakes Country Park (*Quality and excellence; Young people*)
- Install a new Ball Court at Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground (*Quality and excellence; Young people*)
- Evaluate capital developments including:
  - Tonbridge Farm Sportsground – Flood Protection (*Risk Management*)
  - Tonbridge School – all weather pitch provision (*Young People, Working in Partnership*)
  - Tonbridge Cemetery – Path Improvements (*Risk Management*)
- Seek developer contributions to enhance open space provision across the borough prioritising areas of deprivation and identified deficiency (*Fair access for all; Healthy living*)

- Work with local schools/colleges to provide more all weather floodlit pitches available for community use (*Working in partnership; Caring for the environment; Young people*)
- Improve and monitor cleanliness standards at the Council's outdoor leisure sites throughout the borough (*Healthy living, Caring for the environment*)
- Evaluate the design of outdoor leisure facilities in terms of safety and security and crime reduction (*Crime and disorder reduction; Risk management*)
- Implement action plans in the Playing Pitch strategy that will increase active sports participation (*Healthy living; Young people; Fair access for all*)
- Renew the sewerage system and improve toilet facilities at Haysden Country park to increase efficiency (*Healthy living; Tackling climate change*)
- Maintain and develop the risk register for outdoor leisure (*Risk management*)
- Maintain close working relationships with Tonbridge Sports Association and achieve optimum use of all outdoor sports facilities managed by the Council (*Working in partnership*)
- Inspect and repair memorials as part of a five-year maintenance plan at Tonbridge Cemetery and two closed churchyards in Tonbridge (*Risk management*)
- Work proactively with schools to increase community use of the outdoor facilities they have available (*Working in partnership; Public access and involvement*)
- Continue improvements to the outdoor leisure information section on the Council's website (*Public access and involvement*)
- Introduce byelaws and Dog Control Orders (*Risk management*)
- Maximise opportunities and increase income generation at outdoor leisure sites. (*Quality and excellence*)
- Establish user panels for Tonbridge Farm Sportsground and Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground (*Public access and involvement*)

- Carry out casual user surveys at the Council's principal open spaces on a planned rolling programme that will monitor the effectiveness of the Open Space Strategy, identify satisfaction and future needs (*Public access and involvement*)
- Consult stakeholders and monitor the effectiveness of the Open Space Strategy (*Public access and involvement; Quality and excellence*)
- Review the Ranger Services at key outdoor sites (*Risk management; Crime and disorder reduction*)
- Comply with corporate child protection policy standards in the delivery of outdoor leisure (*Young people; Risk management*)



- Promote healthy walks and healthy cycling activities that will increase participation in active recreation (*Healthy living*)
- Manage open spaces so that greater biodiversity is encouraged in a sustainable environment (*Caring for the environment*)
- Maintain and improve a healthy, safe and secure environment at the Council's public open spaces (*Healthy living; Risk management*)
- Work with the Community Safety Partnership and investigate relevant new initiatives that will assist crime reduction (*Crime and disorder reduction*)
- Monitor performance indicators for outdoor leisure and take action, where necessary, to improve performance (*Quality and excellence*)
- Maintain and develop the volunteer service at the Council's country parks (*Public access and involvement, Working in partnership*)
- Maintain the existing management arrangements with the Tonbridge Allotments Association (*Working in partnership*)

# Leisure Development

## Services provided

Management and operation of a range of developmental activities and services:

- Arts Development
- Sports Development
- Youth and Play Development
- Tourism
- Client Management of Poulton Wood Golf Centre
- Events
- Heritage

## Delivery arrangements

This section has a team of professional officers focused on working with a number of key partners to deliver many of its services and activities. Examples include David Copsey Golf Stores and Par4 Catering at Poulton Wood Golf Centre, Heart of Kent Tourism Consortium, the West Kent Arts Partnership, Kent County Council Youth Service, local Parish/Town Councils and a number of community groups and organisations.

## Staff

A team of seven staff, work within the section.

In addition, over 100 casual staff are employed during the Summer and Easter holiday periods to operate activity programmes.



## Cost

The overall annual cost of the leisure development section is £460,000.

## Key aims

The development section operates with key aims that relate to the Council's corporate priorities. These include;

- Develop and promote sports and play activities with an emphasis on young people, healthy lifestyles and social inclusion.
- Increase participation in sports activities and encourage elite performers.
- Enable the whole community, including those most in need, to more fully enjoy cultural and heritage activities.
- Increase tourism in the borough.
- Provide a mixed arts programme across the Borough.
- Maintain, improve and develop the quality of arts events and performances.

## Key documentation

Service delivery is guided by a number of documents including:

- **Sport England Game Plan** – a strategy for delivering objectives to 2020.
- **Tourism South East Strategy** – regional framework covering the next 20 years.
- **Heart of Kent Tourism Strategy 2006-2011.**
- **West Kent Arts Partnership Action Plan 2007-2010.**
- **Arts Council England** – agenda for the arts in the South East 2006-2008.
- **The Local Play Strategy** – a review of play provision across the borough.
- **Children & Young People's Plan** – multi-agency plan for Kent following the 'Every Child Matters' framework.
- **Management Contracts for Poulton Wood Golf Centre** – contracts for the operation of the clubhouse and golf professional services.
- **Youth Agreement** – Joint agreement with KCC Youth Service outlining targets and improvements.

## Measuring performance

### Financial performance

Facilities and services provided will be monitored on an annual basis against budget heads with a view to improving returns to the Council without detriment to the services offered.

### Customer satisfaction

See under Local Performance indicators.



## Local Performance Indicators

LP803 Number of tickets sold for Tonbridge Castle Festival of Music and Fireworks (07-08)	4,293
LP812 Number of "Applause" performances (07-08)	7
LP819 Percentage of participants satisfied with Y-2 Crew activity programme (07-08)	96%
LP820 Percentage of participants satisfied with Activate (07-08)	93%
LP821 Percentage of participants satisfied with Summer Playscheme (07-08)	96%
LP822 Percentage of participants who are leisure pass holders Y-2 Crew (07-08)	12%
LP823 Percentage of participants who are leisure pass holders Activate (07-08)	12%
LP824 Percentage of participants who are leisure pass holders Summer Playscheme (07-08)	16%
LP825 Average number of people attending T&M youth forums (07-08)	20
LP826 Average number of visits to the T&M Youth Website (07-08)	450 per month

### Service related

Sport England Active People Survey (National average 21%) (2007)	20.1%
Volunteering in sport (National average 4.7%) (2007)	6.1%
Summer Play Scheme OFSTED (2007)	Satisfactory/Good
Cambridge model (Tourism) (2006)	£81m Spend in borough
Visitor Attraction Quality Attraction Standard awarded by Visit Britain for the Castle Gatehouse annually. (2007)	100%

## Actions planned to address key issues

The actions required by the Section to address Leisure's key issues are identified for the next five-year period. The themes met by the actions are shown.

- Implement the Local Play Strategy Action Plan (*Young people*)
- Increase the involvement of children and young people in the Council's decision making process in liaison with the Youth Forum (*Young People*)
- Work with local schools/colleges to present art pieces and performances within community areas (*Working in partnership*).
- Maximise the benefits of the 2012 Olympics to the borough, generating a legacy in sports, arts, tourism and volunteering. (*Public access and involvement*)
- Increase levels of adult sports participation in the borough focused on areas of lowest participation including older people (*Healthy living; Fair access for all*)
- Work with the newly formed Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs) for Malling and Tonbridge to address identified priorities for children and young people. (*Working in Partnership, Young people*)
- Develop and manage the Y2 Crew Summer Scheme and increase partnership funding (*Young people; Crime and disorder reduction*)
- Evaluate the replacement/upgrade of floodlighting at Tonbridge Castle (*Tackling Climate Change*)
- Provide gallery space for local and touring exhibitions in Tonbridge in partnership with others (*Quality and excellence; Working in Partnership*)
- Develop the Council's website and Youth websites to include online booking and payments for activity programmes and events including Activate and Summer Playscheme and online booking for accommodation (*Public access and involvement*)
- Develop e-communications and text messaging with residents and young people to advise of opportunities (*Public access and involvement*)
- Develop initiatives to promote healthy living (*Healthy living*)
- Refurbish bar/restaurant at Poult Wood Golf Centre (*Quality and excellence*)
- Improve market research and develop services in liaison with customers and other stakeholders (*Public access and involvement*)
- Deliver Big Lottery Fund Children's Play Initiative projects and seek external funding from the Children's Plan for projects with young people. (*Working in partnership, Young People*)
- Explore and develop opportunities for new partnerships in leisure and arts (*Working in partnership*)
- Develop tourism and heritage initiatives that support lifelong learning (*Quality and excellence*)
- Deliver the e-enabled quantitative research project to young people in the borough (*Young people*)
- In partnership with others develop an annual medieval fair and Christmas Festival for Tonbridge (*Working in Partnership*)
- Continue to develop and extend the programme of activities, especially to young people (*Young people*)
- Reduce the cost to the Council of the Festival of Music & Fireworks (*Working in partnership*)
- Assist local clubs and groups to deliver leisure opportunities through the administration of the capital and revenue grants schemes (*Working in partnership*)
- Maintain Ofsted registration for all Playscheme sites and adhere to national standards (*Quality and excellence*)
- Work in partnership with sports and arts groups and young people to achieve development and improvements in service provision (*Working in partnership; Quality and excellence*)
- Work with the Community Safety Partnership and investigate relevant new initiatives that will assist crime reduction (*Crime and disorder reduction*)
- Monitor performance indicators for leisure development and take action, where necessary, to improve performance (*Quality and excellence*)
- Maintain and develop the risk register for leisure development (*Risk management*)
- Develop and promote the Leisure Guide and support marketing initiatives for arts, heritage, young people and tourism (*Public access and involvement, Working in partnership*)
- Ensure all Council run courses, activities and events offer Leisure Pass concessionary rates (*Fair Access for All*)
- Develop a programme of activities that promote healthy living in outreach areas (*Healthy living; Fair Access for All*)
- Promote and support at least one major cycling event every year (*Healthy living; Tackling Climate Change*)
- Maintain Sports Coach of the Year and Young Achievers award in partnership with Kent Young Achievers Award (*Working in partnership*)

## Implementation and monitoring

The Council's Leisure Service will take the key role in implementing the strategy and will act as enabler and facilitator working in partnership with a range of agencies and organisations to deliver benefits beyond those possible if limited to the Council's own resources. Availability of resources, both those of the Council and of its many partners, will influence implementation.

Spotlight, the Corporate Performance Plan published annually, is the mechanism for tracking our actions, targets and achievements against the priorities identified in this strategy. The Strategy will be monitored and updated continually through the Annual Monitoring Reports with the next comprehensive review being undertaken in 2013.

As a Service Plan this strategy must be considered in the context of the Council's Performance Plan and corporate priorities. It must remain flexible and able to respond to changes in legislation, funding, and local needs or as a result of reviews or other improvement initiatives.

This is a consultation document on which comments are invited from the public via the website [www.tmbc.gov.uk](http://www.tmbc.gov.uk) by email [leisure.services@tmbc.go.uk](mailto:leisure.services@tmbc.go.uk) or by writing to Leisure Services, Council Offices, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4LZ.

Responses are required by xxxxx 2008.

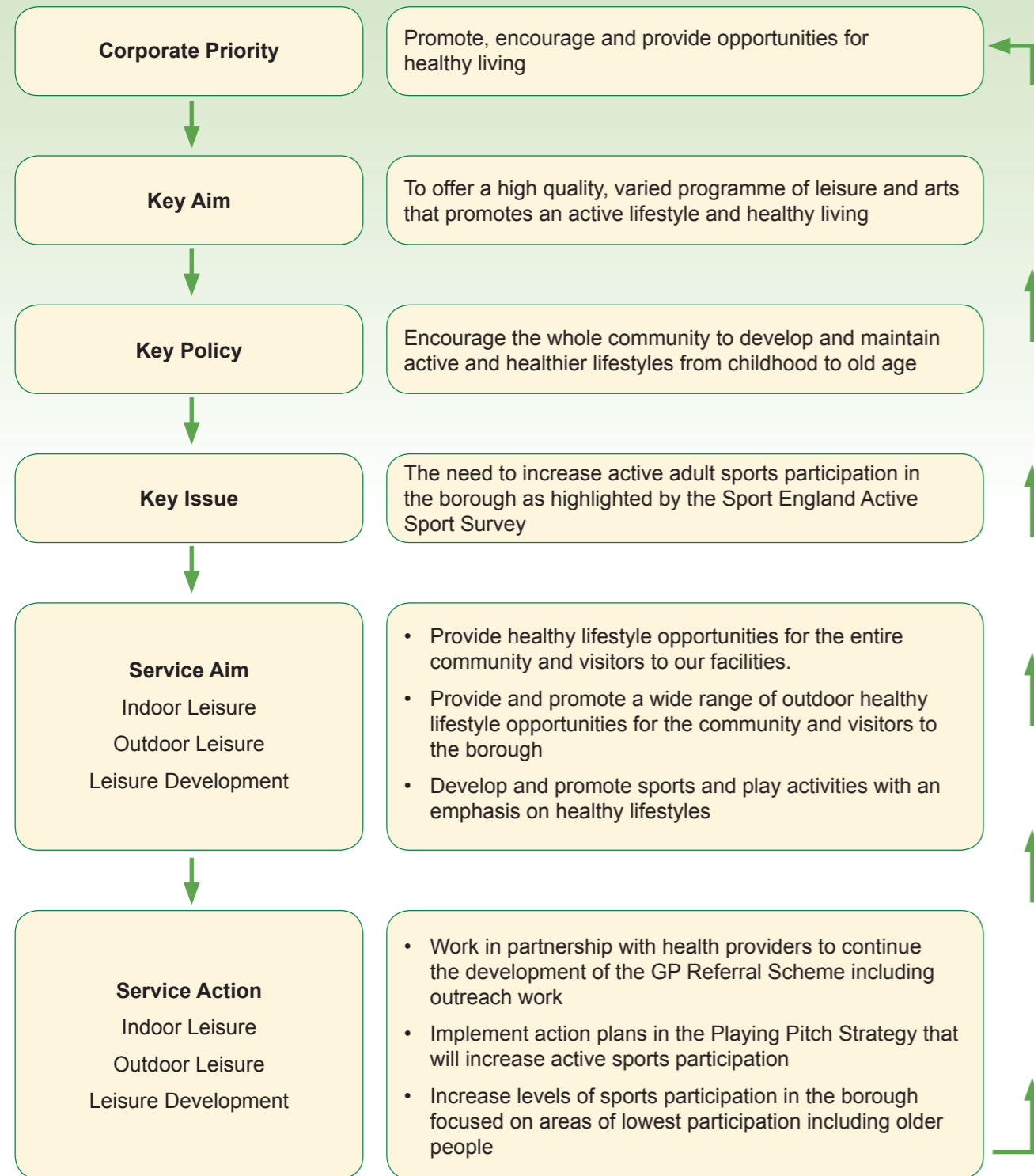
## Annexes





## ANNEX 1

### The consistent development of corporate priorities to service actions



The diagram above illustrates one example of a corporate priority carried through key aims, key policies, and key issues to service aims and actions, and shows how the actions delivered by the service areas relate to the corporate priorities. Leisure Services aims to help the Borough Council deliver its corporate priorities and this diagram illustrates the way in which service actions can be traced back to achieve this aim.

## ANNEX 2

### Existing Partners

Current partners include:

- Arts Council South East
- Big Lottery Fund
- Community arts groups
- Countryside Commission
- David Copsey Golf Stores
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Fields in Trust (formerly NPFA)
- Heart of Kent Tourism Consortium
- Kent County Council
- Kent District Councils
- Kent Police Authority
- Kent Tourism Alliance
- Kent Trust for Nature Conservation
- Kent Wildlife Trust
- Local Children's Services Partnerships
- Local Colleges (e.g. Hadlow College, West Kent College)
- Local GP Surgeries
- Local Parish/Town Councils
- Local Play Partnership
- Local Secondary and Primary Schools
- Malling and Tonbridge Local Children's Services Partnerships
- Medway Valley Countryside Partnership
- Mid Kent Water Fisheries (Leybourne Lakes)
- Musical Associates
- Natural England
- Parish/Town Councils
- Par4 Catering
- Private sector contractors, consultants and operators
- Russett Homes
- South East England Tourist Board
- South East Leisure Contractors Association
- Sport England
- Tonbridge allotments and Gardens Association
- Tonbridge Civic Society
- Tonbridge Historical Society
- Tonbridge Lions
- Tonbridge School
- Tonbridge Sports Association
- Tourism South East
- West Kent Arts Partnership
- West Kent College
- West Kent Primary Care Trust
- Youth Forum

