

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

23 May 2011

### Report of the Chief Leisure Officer

#### Part 1- Public

#### Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

#### 1 MYSTERY SHOPPER REPORTS

##### Summary

This report provides Members with the results of the 2010/11 mystery shopper visits to the Council's main leisure facilities. The report identifies a number of key areas for improvement, which are being addressed at each facility.

#### 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Members may be aware that over the last few years mystery shopper visits have been undertaken at the Council's main leisure facilities.
- 1.1.2 The visits are undertaken by Right Directions Ltd, as the company's report format is closely allied to the Quest award criteria.
- 1.1.3 The mystery shopper rates the facility against a range of criteria including cleanliness, housekeeping, maintenance, customer care and supervision.
- 1.1.4 The accepted "pass mark" for the mystery visits is 60%, and this has become recognised across the leisure industry as an acceptable standard. However, in recognition of the desire to continuously improve our services a performance target of 82% is included in Leisure Service Performance Plans for the indoor leisure facilities and 75% for Poulton Wood Golf Centre and the results are reported annually in the Council's Corporate Performance Plan. The industry upper quartile now starts at 80%.

#### 1.2 Results

- 1.2.1 Members will note that the pass mark of 60% was achieved for all visits, and the overall average for all the facilities provided by this Council was 82.25%. This is an increase from an average score of 81.1% in 2009/10.
- 1.2.2 The scores for each facility in 2010/11 are listed below:

Facility	Visit 1 – Score (%)	Visit 2 – Score (%)	2010/11 Average Score (%)
Larkfield Leisure Centre	86	89	87.5
Angel Centre	77	84	80.5
Tonbridge Pool	86	92	89
Poult Wood Golf Centre	80	68	74

1.2.3 By using Right Directions Ltd the Council can compare performance against overall Quest Award ratings. The current Quest database of all registered sites shows:

- the 'pass mark' is 60%
- the industry mean is 74%
- the upper quartile score is 80%

1.2.4 Members will note from the above that the 2010/11 average scores for this Council's three indoor leisure facilities are all within the upper quartile of performance.

1.2.5 Whilst Poult Wood Golf Centre is measured against the same criteria as the indoor sites, Members should note that the criteria is designed for leisure centres and adapted for the Golf Centre which, in some areas, makes the scoring more challenging. Despite this, the Visit 2 score for Poult Wood was disappointing and a number of improvement actions have already been implemented following the report. An additional follow up mystery shopper visit has also been ordered.

1.2.6 Within each report, feedback is also provided on the key strengths of each facility. A summary of the key strengths is attached at **[Annex 1]**.

### 1.3 Improvements

1.3.1 Detailed reports are received for each facility after each visit and copies can be made available on request. The reports have been analysed, and a number of improvement actions have been identified for each facility. Where practicable, improvements will be implemented without delay, with others being considered within relevant Service Improvement Plans.

1.3.2 A summary of the key areas for improvement identified by Right Directions Ltd are detailed below:

- Larkfield Leisure Centre

Repair the railing in the Leisure Pool

Improve ventilation in the Changing Village

Ensure implementation of the barefoot policy in the Changing Village

Provision of light sensors in infrequently used areas of the Centre

- Angel Centre

Improve storage of equipment and keep circulation areas clear  
 Ensure all staff are in uniform and have name badges  
 Receptionists to promote membership options and benefits  
 Redecoration of some facility areas  
 Ensure site inspections are regularly conducted and site notices are up to date

- Tonbridge Swimming Pool

Provide recycling bins around the Centre  
 Undertake deep clean of roof beams and ducting above Pool  
 Improve street signage to the Pool from Castle Street

- Poult Wood Golf Centre

Ensure all deep cleaning is kept on top of  
 Environmental provision and information throughout the building  
 Information on feedback to customers  
 Response time to customer comments  
 Cleanliness – carpets and corridors dusty (new carpets being fitted at the time)

1.3.3 The results will be displayed on the customer information boards in each facility reception area; will be discussed at the facility customer panels and will also be published in the Council's Corporate Performance Plan.

## **1.4 Legal Implications**

1.4.1 None.

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

1.5.1 The cost of the Mystery Shopper visits (£250 per visit) is met from the Leisure Services market research revenue budget. The reports are felt to offer good value for money in monitoring the performance of the Council's leisure facilities, and identifying improvements for the future.

## **1.6 Risk Assessment**

1.6.1 It is essential that the Council regularly monitors performance of its leisure facilities, and implements customer improvements to maintain and increase levels of attendance. The Council's leisure facilities are operated in an increasingly competitive market, and need to focus on service delivery arrangements.

## 1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report.

## 1.8 Conclusion/Recommendation

- 1.8.1 It is encouraging that for all the visits undertaken, the scores for each of the leisure facilities achieved above the accepted “pass mark”, that on average this Council is performing very well compared to others, and the overall average score for all the facilities has increased compared to the previous year.
- 1.8.2 The mystery shopper programme is considered to be a very useful means of measuring performance and identifying areas of improvement. This year’s results will be considered carefully within the relevant Service Improvement Plans for each facility.
- 1.8.3 It is, therefore, **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that the 2010/11 Mystery Shopper results be noted, the identified areas of improvement be addressed, and the results be considered within the relevant Service Improvement Plans for each facility.

The Chief Leisure Officer confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Martin Guyton  
Stephen Gregg

File Reference: MG264/5/6

Robert Styles  
Chief Leisure Officer

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The mystery shopper programme may assist in highlighting any discriminatory practice.

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation of impacts</b>
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	Yes	Implementing the recommendations of the reports may include positive steps related to promoting equality.
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

*In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.*