

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

1 March 2011

**Report of the Chief Leisure Officer and the Cabinet Members
for Leisure, Youth and Arts and Finance**

Part 1- Public

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

1 SCOTCHERS FIELD PUBLIC OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

Summary

Following public consultation, this report brings forward proposals for improvements to Scotchers Field Public Open Space, Tonbridge, for Members' consideration. The proposed improvements are funded in full from developer contributions.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 A Capital Plan scheme for improvements to Scotchers Field, Tonbridge was considered at Cabinet on 1 February 2011, with a recommendation to Council to transfer the scheme from List B to List A of the Capital Plan, for progression in 2011/12. A copy of the List C Evaluation for the scheme, reported to the Finance & Property Advisory Board on 5 January 2011 can be found at **[Annex 1]**.

1.2 Proposed Improvements

- 1.2.1 Following previous comments from residents and local Members the following improvements were considered appropriate for the site:

Play Area - Whilst it is recognised that the play area is a small local facility, with a wider variety of play equipment provided at the nearby Tonbridge Farm Sportsground, there is the potential for some improvements. It is proposed that the play area be extended and that 3/4 additional items of play equipment be provided. In regard to the new equipment, it is proposed that this is aimed at a younger age range (toddler to junior) and the following items are proposed - cradle swings, wide slide, springers. It is also proposed that the larger tree branches, overhanging the play area, are removed.

Ball Games - Whilst the open space does provide opportunities for casual ball games, it is proposed that a fixed "Goal End" be provided to accommodate casual football, netball and basketball.

Landscape and General Improvements - Currently the Open Space is maintained as amenity grass with limited natural diversity. It is proposed to plant trees and adopt a varying management regime for the cutting of the grass in some areas.

- 1.2.2 A site plan highlighting the proposals can be found at **[Annex 2]** and an example Goal End can be found at **[Annex 3]**.

1.3 Public Consultation

- 1.3.1 Public consultation on the proposed improvements outlined in sub-section 1.2 was undertaken between 19 October and 10 November 2010. Consultation letters were sent direct to 146 local residents and advisory posters were erected on site.

- 1.3.2 A good level of response was received (50%) with a total of 73 replies and the following support for each individual element of the improvements was recorded:

Children's Play Area - 82% in favour

Landscaping - 75% in favour

Goal End - 62% in favour

- 1.3.3 The above figures do not take into account non-returns. In the consultation letter sent to residents it specifically stated "If I do not receive any comments I will assume you are in support of the Council's proposals." If you then include the non-returns as support of the proposals, the figures in support would increase to:

Children's Play Area (91%)

Landscaping (88%)

Goal End (81%)

- 1.3.4 Local Members have been fully involved in the development of the proposals, and support the proposed way forward in light of the comments received during the public consultation.

1.4 Proposed Way Forward

- 1.4.1 Taking into account that the majority of local residents support the full range of proposed improvements, it is suggested that the works on site be progressed. It is anticipated that, subject to Cabinet approval, the Children's Play Area improvements and Goal End be progressed prior to this year's school summer holidays, and the landscaping works be implemented in autumn/winter 2011.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 The works will be progressed in accordance with the Council's approved procurement procedures.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 The proposed works will cost £44,000, and can be funded in full by developer contributions held by the Council. The improvements will have an impact on the Council's Capital Renewals provision as highlighted in section 6 of the Capital Plan List C Evaluation at **[Annex 1]**.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 All play equipment will be installed and maintained to relevant British and European standards.

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

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

1.9 Policy Considerations

- 1.9.1 Asset Management, Biodiversity & Sustainability, Healthy Lifestyles, Young People

1.10 Recommendations

- 1.10.1 It is **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that the improvements to Scotchers Field Public Open Space be progressed in accordance with the proposals outlined in the report, funded in full by developer contributions.

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: Darren Lanes

Nil

Robert Styles
Chief Leisure Officer

Martin Coffin
Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth & Arts
David Aikman
Cabinet Member for Finance

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	N/A

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	Yes	The proposals aim to extend and provide new facilities with free public access for all.
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?	N/A	N/A

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.