

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 LEYBOURNE LAKES COUNTRY PARK – DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Summary

This report presents an updated Draft Management Plan for Leybourne Lakes Country Park and seeks Member comment prior to formal public consultation.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Outdoor Leisure Performance Plan identifies the need to bring all of the Council's principal public open spaces in line with the criteria of the Green Flag Award - a national standard for parks and open spaces. Key elements of the Green Flag Award criteria include cleanliness, community involvement, health and safety, a welcoming park, marketing and sustainability, all of which need to be incorporated into a Site Management Plan.

1.1.2 Five year Management Plans have already been developed for Leybourne Lakes Country Park, Haysden Country Park, Tonbridge Farm Sportsground and Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground. The existing Management Plan for Leybourne Lakes Country Park expires at the end of 2011, and therefore needs to be reviewed and updated for the next five years.

1.2 Introduction

1.2.1 Leybourne Lakes Country Park, which opened formally to the public in 2004, is well used by the local community for formal sports, walking, children's play, dog walking and picnics.

1.2.2 The Park covers an area of 93 hectares (230 acres) and is located in the parishes of East Malling & Larkfield and Snodland. The Park provides a range of facilities including water sports (canoeing, sailing, windsurfing and scuba diving) and angling as well as being host to a wide range of notable wildlife species.

1.3 Policy Context

- 1.3.1 The Management Plan has been developed to conform to policy guidance contained within the Local Development Framework, addresses themes and actions highlighted within the Leisure & Arts Strategy and follows up on issues raised in the most recent onsite market survey (reported to last meeting of this Board).
- 1.3.2 The Plan has also been developed to take into account the local policy/guidance, listed in Table 1 of the draft Plan, and incorporates a number of the Borough Council's Key Priorities including:
- Involve, safeguard and meet the needs of children and young people.
 - Achieve a cleaner and smarter and better maintained street scene and open space environment.
 - Promote and encourage and provide opportunities for healthy living.
 - Work with partners to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime.
 - Make a positive local contribution to tackling the causes and effects of climate change.
- 1.3.3 When developing the Plan consideration has also been given to the aim of the Country Park, that being to provide a countryside site for the benefit of wildlife and the local community, offering appropriate low intensity recreation.

1.4 Draft Management Plan

- 1.4.1 The draft Plan is intended to provide guidance and direction for the management of the Country Park and be used as a management tool to inform future maintenance and development of the site. The document may also assist in leveraging in external funding.
- 1.4.2 The draft Plan follows the format of the recently adopted Tonbridge Farm Sportsground and Haysden Country Park Management Plans and was developed in accordance with guidance from the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. A copy of the draft Management Plan has been circulated with these papers for Members' consideration and a brief summary of the sections is provided below. Please note that appendix 4 (DDA Action Plan 2011) and the annual action plan have not been included as they have yet to be finalised.
- **Where are we now?** The first section of the Plan describes the current situation, at the time the Plan was written. It is an introduction and tells us what we have at present and what we are trying to achieve.

- **Vision – where do we want to get to?** This section of the Plan describes our vision for the Park and sets out our management aims and objectives.
- **How will we get there?** This section sets out how we are going to achieve our aims. A Five Year Work Programme sets out long-term targets and annual Action Plans focusing on each year will flow from this.
- **Monitoring and review – how will we know when we have arrived?** The final section of the Plan looks at how we will track progress and how the plan might be updated.

1.5 Consultation

1.5.1 Subject to Member comment at the meeting, it is proposed that formal public consultation takes place in the summer of 2011, on the following basis:

- All key stakeholders will be directly notified when the draft Plan is available for comment.
- Copies of the draft Plan will be deposited at the Council Offices at Kings Hill and Tonbridge, as well as Snodland, Larkfield and West Malling Libraries for public viewing.
- A copy will be available to view on the Council's website.
- Posters will be displayed at the Country Park advising visitors on the consultation process.

1.5.2 A list of comments received along with any recommended alterations to the Plan will be reported at a future meeting of this Board for final approval.

1.5.3 Key consultees will be East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council and Snodland Town Council and liaison with both has already been undertaken in regard to potential facility improvements at the Park. Both the Parish and Town Council were keen that the integrity of this countryside site is maintained and that over-development does not occur. It is hoped that these views have been reflected in the draft Plan and the Parish and Town Council will be invited to provide further comments during the public consultation.

1.6 Legal Implications

1.6.1 A copy of the draft Plan has been circulated to the Legal Services Partnership Manager, to ensure that all legal requirements have been taken into consideration.

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.7.1 The draft Management Plan reflects existing capital and revenue budgets associated with the site.

1.8 Risk Assessment

1.8.1 The Council's Health and Safety Officer will be consulted on the draft plan and a Health and Safety Plan is already in place for the site.

1.9 Equality Impact Assessment

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

1.10 Policy Considerations

1.10.1 Biodiversity & Sustainability, Community, Healthy Lifestyles, Young People.

1.11 Recommendations

1.11.1 It is, therefore, **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

- 1) subject to Member comment at the meeting, the draft Leybourne Lakes Country Park Management Plan be circulated for public consultation as outlined in the report; and
- 2) following public consultation, the final Plan be brought forward to a future meeting of this Board for approval.

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: Daniel Gooch

Nil

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	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 additional/improved facilities with free public access for all.
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.