

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD**

**26 February 2013**

**Report of the Chief Leisure Officer and the  
Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth & Arts**

**Part 1- Public**

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

**1 TONBRIDGE RACECOURSE SPORTSGROUND – USER SURVEY RESULTS**

**Summary**

**This report informs Members of the results of the 2012 user survey carried out at Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground, and brings forward potential improvements for consideration.**

**1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 A user survey was carried out at Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground during the summer of 2012, as part of Leisure Services' ongoing market research programme. The survey consisted of 400 face to face interviews conducted at various locations within the Sportsground. A previous survey was undertaken in summer 2009.

1.1.2 The survey covers three main areas:

- Characteristics of market and patterns of use, including diversity;
- Customer assessment of the existing facilities;
- Meeting customer needs in the future.

1.1.3 The survey enables the Council to assess the impact of significant capital improvements undertaken at the site since the last survey in 2009. Works on site have included the replacement/upgrading of the majority of the children's play equipment, replacement of the crazy golf course, refurbishment of the tennis courts, an extension of existing picnic facilities, the provision of a skate park, ball court and outdoor gym and other general site improvements.

**1.2 Survey Results**

1.2.1 A copy of the report's Executive Summary can be found at **[Annex 1]** and a full copy of the survey report can be made available to Members on request.

1.2.2 I am sure Members will be extremely pleased to note the survey indicated that 99% of visitors were satisfied (4 or 5 out of 5) with their visit overall with 83% recorded as very satisfied (5 out of 5). This represents a significant improvement since the last survey undertaken in 2009 where figures were 72% and 33% respectively.

1.2.3 In addition to the improvement in overall satisfaction, a number of key areas have also seen notable increases in satisfaction levels and are summarised in the table below (% relates to those who used the facilities and represent users who rated either a 4 or 5 out of 5)

Area of Satisfaction	2009 Result	2012 Result	Direction of Travel
Overall satisfaction	72%	99%	+27%
Condition of Paths	88%	95%	+7%
Safety and security	96%	98%	+2%
Children's play area	77%	97%	+20%
Cleanliness	63%	94%	+31%
Picnic Tables	72%	93%	+21%
Tennis Courts	88%	96%	+8%
Crazy Golf Course	73%	94%	+21%

1.2.4 The main reasons respondents gave for using the Sportsground involved engaging in activity, with 22% using the skate park and 20% using the play facilities. Other high uses were to exercise the dog, to sit and relax, to hang out and for a family day out.

1.2.5 Users travelled from a wide catchment area; however, the majority lived within five miles of the Sportsground (73%), almost half within two miles. A little over a quarter (27%) lived five miles or more away, of which almost one out of ten visitors (8%) lived 20 miles or more from the grounds.

1.2.6 Although the rating for safety and security at the site has always been high, a number of very positive comments were received with users highlighting improvement over the past years. Generally these were made by females and included comments such as:

"Very little vandalism here and I feel very confident about being here with the little ones"

"I feel really safe with the children here"

"Really good facilities and a good feeling of security now which I didn't have before"

"I'm impressed with what's been done. It used to be poor but there's hardly any trouble here now"

"I feel much safer here now so I stay longer"

“I’ve been impressed by the turn around in security”

“I feel very safe and there’s very little evidence of vandalism”

- 1.2.7 The comments above are very encouraging and Council presence on site was enhanced last year by the introduction of a new Seasonal Tonbridge Ranger (six month post).
- 1.2.8 Dissatisfaction was extremely low with only 12 of the 400 users surveyed scoring any identified feature with a 1 or 2 out of 5. Due to this low level of response no trends in dissatisfaction were noted with the highest concern being a request for cheaper parking closer to the play area with this comment being made by three users.
- 1.2.9 Users were also asked if they thought the Sportsground should be improved in any way with 57% saying “No” and 43% saying “Yes”. In regard to potential improvements the most frequently requested were the provision of toilets and refreshment facilities.
- Refreshment Facilities – 93 requests were made for improved/enhanced refreshments facilities with the sportsground. Members will be aware that a scheme to extend the existing Games Kiosk is currently in List A of the Council’s Capital Plan. The scheme is subject to developer contributions being secured though does aim to enhance the level of catering on site, including the provision of hot and cold food and drinks.
  - Toilet Provision – 82 comments were received and typically related to the proximity of the existing toilets being too far from the children’s play area. The closest public toilets are located approximately 100 metres from the play area and it is proposed that, in the short-term, signage be erected to direct visitors to these facilities. Whilst public toilets are available within a relatively short distance, it is also proposed that opportunities be investigated to provide toilet facilities alongside/within the Capital Plan project for the extension to the Games Kiosk mentioned above.

### **1.3 Legal Implications**

- 1.3.1 None.

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

- 1.4.1 The current Capital Plan Scheme to extend the existing Games Kiosk and recommendations arising from this report are subject to developer contributions being secured.

### **1.5 Equality Impact Assessment**

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

## 1.6 Policy Considerations

1.6.1 Asset Management, Healthy Lifestyles and Community.

## 1.7 Conclusion/Recommendations

1.7.1 The market survey results have highlighted that Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground is appreciated and highly valued by the local community. Overall satisfaction levels are extremely high and significant increases have been noted since the previous survey undertaken in 2009. The results clearly reflect the positive impact of investment made to the Sportsground by the Council, and it is important that the existing facilities continue to be well maintained and looked after in the future.

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

- 1) the 2012 market survey results for Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground be noted; and
- 2) the opportunity be taken to review the current Capital Plan Scheme for the extension to the existing Games Kiosk to assess the feasibility of the provision of additional public toilets.

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

Maria Heslop  
Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth and Arts

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

<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	The proposals aim to extend/enhance current facility provision
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.*