

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

21 May 2013

**Report of the Director of Street Scene & Leisure (Designate) 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 MYSTERY SHOPPER REPORTS

Summary

This report provides Members with the results of the 2012/13 mystery shopper visits to the Council's main leisure facilities. The report identifies a number of key areas for improvement, which will be 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 80% is included in the Leisure Services Business Unit Annual Business Plan and 75% for Poulton Wood Golf Centre. 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 87.5%. This is a significant increase from an average score of 81.6% in 2011/12.
- 1.2.2 The scores for each facility in 2012/13 are listed below:

Facility	Visit 1 – Score (%)	Visit 2 – Score (%)	2012/13 Average Score (%)
Larkfield Leisure Centre	86	87	86.5
Angel Centre	87	87	87
Tonbridge Pool	94	90	92
Poult Wood Golf Centre	83	86	84.5

1.2.3 By using Right Directions Ltd the Council can benchmark performance against ratings from 160 facilities that were ‘mystery shopped’ in 2012/13 across the UK. The current Right Directions database of all sites shows:

- the ‘pass mark’ is 60%
- the industry mean is 76%
- the upper quartile score is 84%

1.2.4 Members will note from the above that the 2012/13 average scores for all of this Council’s leisure facilities are all within the upper quartile of performance. It is also exceptional to note that the Tonbridge Swimming Pool score of 94% for the first visit is the highest score of all 160 visits undertaken in the year.

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.

1.3 Improvements

1.3.1 Detailed reports are received for each facility after each visit and copies can be made available to Members 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/replace the rusty gate in the Fitness Pool
 - Ensure customer information is captured upon enquiry about Lifestyles membership
 - Review high level cleaning
 - Ensure feedback forms are available

- Angel Centre

Ensure reception customer care standards are met
 Consider car park refund to Angel Centre customers as at Tonbridge Pool
 Review internal directional signage
 Improve external areas

- Tonbridge Swimming Pool

Ensure reception customer care standards are met
 Ensure the enforcement of the barefoot policy in the Changing Area
 Undertake deep clean of roof beams and ducting above Pool
 Improve street signage to the Pool from Castle Street

- Poult Wood Golf Centre

There were several damaged lockers in the male changing room and benches were showing signs of deterioration
 In the ladies changing area a tap head was missing and some basins were stained
 Staff uniform inconsistent and several staff not wearing name badges
 Some of the hedgerow around the car park was overgrown and untidy in places

1.3.3 The results will be displayed on the customer information boards in each facility reception area and will be discussed at the facility customer panels.

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 a mark in the top quartile of performance 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 2012/13 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 Director of Street Scene & Leisure (Designate) 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

Nil

Robert Styles

Director of Street Scene & Leisure (Designate)

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.

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	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.