

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

12 March 2014

**Report of the Director of Street Scene & Leisure 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 HAYSDEN COUNTRY PARK – USER SURVEY RESULTS

Summary

This report informs Members of the results of the 2013 user survey carried out at Haysden Country Park, and brings forward potential improvements for consideration.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 A user survey was undertaken at Haysden Country Park during the summer of 2013, as part of Leisure Services' ongoing market research programme. The survey consisted of 400 face to face interviews conducted at various locations within the Park, with interviews conducted on 15 separate days. The previous survey was undertaken in the summer of 2007.

1.1.2 The 2013 survey covers three main areas:

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

1.1.3 The survey enables the Council to gauge current feedback from visitors to the Park and assess the impact of improvements made since the last survey in 2007. Since the last survey the following improvements have taken place; improvement to the picnic area; employment of a new Seasonal Ranger; replacement/upgrading of play equipment; installation of seating, re-decking of the Shallows Bridge; and the provision of a new mobile catering service.

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 pleased to note the survey indicated that 97% of visitors were satisfied with the Park. This represents a minor drop of 2% since the last survey in 2007, but reflects the continued high standards being achieved.
- 1.2.3 A number of areas at Haysden Country Park have seen significant increases in satisfaction levels and are summarised in the table below.

Area of Satisfaction	2007 Result	2013 Result	Direction of Travel
Children's play area	74%	96%	+22%
Number of seats/ benches	80%	97%	+17%
Ranger service	71%	85%	+14%
Safety and security on site	78%%	89%	+11%
Signage in the Park	88%	98%	+10%
Car Parking	90%	96%	+6%
Cleanliness of the Park	92%	95%	+3%

- 1.2.4 The main reasons respondents gave for using the Park were to walk the dog or to engage in walks. Other high uses included use of the children's play area, enjoying the countryside or sitting and relaxing.
- 1.2.5 Users travelled from a wide catchment area, however, the majority lived within five miles of the Park (74%), almost half within two miles. 7% had travelled more than 20 miles.
- 1.2.6 Dissatisfaction levels were very low, with all but one of the areas recording a 2% or below dissatisfaction rating. The only area that received a higher dissatisfaction rating was refreshment facilities, where 22 comments were received representing 6% of those that used this service.
- 1.2.7 Users were also asked if they thought the Park should be improved in any way with 80% saying "No" and 20% saying "Yes". Those that replied yes (80 in number) were then asked what improvements they would like. The most frequently requested were improved refreshments, play area improvements and enhanced toilet provision.
- 1.2.8 The three main areas highlighted for improvement are detailed further below.
- Refreshment Facilities – when asked what improvements could be made 42 comments were received regarding improvements to refreshment facilities and typically related to: a more reliable service; a cafeteria building; and improved opening hours. Overall satisfaction levels for refreshment facilities were still high at 75%. It is, therefore, proposed that the outcome of the survey be discussed in liaison with the current catering provider to investigate potential areas for improvement.
 - Play Area – 29 comments were received regarding the play area and typically related to having more to do and more for older children. In recent years all the play equipment at the Park has been renewed and this is

reflected in an increase in satisfaction levels to 96%. It is acknowledged that the play area does have scope for expansion and a scheme for the extension of the play area is currently on List C of the Council's Capital Plan. It is, therefore, proposed that the scheme be progressed through the Capital Plan process when funding is identified, potentially through developer contributions or other external funding sources.

- Toilet Provision – 17 comments were received regarding toilets with only three relating to cleanliness. The remaining 14 all requested the provision of additional toilets within the Park. The Park has one main toilet block situated at the main car park close to the play area, picnic area and catering facility. At the current time it is not proposed that any additional facilities be provided elsewhere in the Park, due to the lack of services within these areas and the potential for anti-social behaviour and misuse. Consideration could, however, be given to enhancements to the existing toilets as and when funding is identified.

1.3 Summary

1.3.1 The market survey results have highlighted that Haysden Country Park continues to be well appreciated and highly valued by the local community. Overall satisfaction levels are extremely high and the results clearly reflect the positive impact of investment made in the Park by the Council and volunteers, and it is important that the existing facilities continue to be well maintained and looked after in the future. A large number of positive comments were received and a selection are highlighted below:

- “Tonbridge’s little paradise”
- “One of my favourite places”
- “Everything here is marvellous; thank you”
- “As a family we call this the quiet Park because it is so nice and peaceful here; don’t change it” (family from Portsmouth who visit 4 to 5 times a year)

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 None.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 Where possible, any actions to meet customer needs will be delivered through existing revenue budgets. Where additional funding is required this may be achievable through developer contributions or other external funding.

1.6 Equality Impact Assessment

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

1.7 Policy Considerations

1.7.1 Asset Management, Healthy Lifestyles and Community.

1.8 Recommendation

1.8.1 It is **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

- 1) the 2013 market survey results for Haysden Country Park user survey be noted; and
- 2) improvements be progressed in accordance with the approach outlined at 1.2.8.

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: Chris Fox

Haysden Country Park User Survey 2013

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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. 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.