

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

10 June 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 – DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Summary

This report presents a draft Management Plan for Haysden Country Park and seeks Member comment prior to formal public consultation.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Council's Leisure & Arts Strategy identifies the need for site specific Management Plans for the Council's principal public open spaces. Five year Management Plans are already in place for this site, Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground, Leybourne Lakes Country Park, and Tonbridge Farm Sportsground.

1.2 Introduction

1.2.1 Haysden Country Park covers an area of approximately 64 hectares (165 acres) in the Medway Valley, to the west of Tonbridge town centre, and encompasses a range of habitats, river, grassland, freshwater lakes, marshland and woodland.

1.2.2 Haysden Country Park, which opened formally to the public in 1988, is well used by the local community for walking, children's play, dog walking, picnics, fishing, sailing and family days out. The popular Tonbridge to Penshurst Cycle Route also runs through the Park.

1.2.3 The current Management Plan for Haysden Country Park expires at the end of 2014, and it is, therefore, time to review and prepare a Plan for the next five year period.

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.

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:

- Children and young people;
- Reducing anti-social behaviour, and fear of crime;
- Achieving a clean, smart, well maintained and sustainable borough;
- Healthy Living opportunities and community wellbeing.

1.3.3 The Plan has also been developed in line with the criteria of the Green Flag Award - a national standard for parks and open spaces and the Country Parks Accreditation Scheme. Key elements of both awards criteria include cleanliness, community involvement, health and safety, a welcoming Park, marketing and sustainability.

1.4 Draft Management Plan

1.4.1 The draft Plan is intended to provide guidance and direction for the management of the Park and be used to inform future maintenance and development of the site. The document may also assist in levering in external funding.

1.4.2 The draft Plan follows the format of the Council's previously adopted 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 can be found at **[Annex 1]** for Members' consideration and a brief summary of the sections is provided below.

- **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 Key consultees for this Management Plan will be: Haysden Country Park User Panel; Haysden Country Park Volunteers and Tonbridge Sports Association. An outline of this new Management Plan was presented to the User Panel meeting held on 28 May 2014.
- 1.5.2 Subject to Member comment at the meeting, it is proposed that formal public consultation takes place in the summer of 2014, 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 Gateway;
 - A copy will be available to view on the Council's website and;
 - Posters will be displayed at the Park advising visitors on the consultation process.
- 1.5.3 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.

1.6 Legal Implications

- 1.6.1 Legal responsibilities and issues have been considered within the draft Plan.

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.

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 Haysden 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 Director of Street Scene and Leisure 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 Management Plan 2010 – 2014
User survey 2013

Robert Styles
Director of Street Scene & Leisure

Maria Heslop
Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth & 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. 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?	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.