

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

12 November 2019

Report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

Part 1- Public

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

1 TONBRIDGE FARM SPORTSGROUND – USER SURVEY RESULTS

Summary

This report informs Members of the results of the 2019 user survey carried out at Tonbridge Farm Sportsground. The results show high levels of user satisfaction. 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 and there is therefore no anticipated impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 A casual user survey was undertaken at Tonbridge Farm Sportsground during the summer of 2019 and consisted of 370 face to face interviews. The interviews were conducted at various locations within the Sportsground over 14 separate days. The report presents the results of the survey which will be reflected in the Site's next five year Management Plan.

1.1.2 The 2019 survey covers three main areas:

- Characteristics of market and patterns of use, including diversity;
- Customer assessment/satisfaction 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 Sportsground and assess any potential improvements suggested for the future.

1.2 Survey Results

1.2.1 A summary of satisfaction levels from the report are highlighted in sub-section 1.2.3 below. A full copy of the survey report can be made available to Members on request.

- 1.2.2 I am sure Members will be delighted to note that the survey indicated that 99.5% of visitors were satisfied with the Sportsground. This represents an increase of 1.5% since the last survey in 2014, and reflects the continuing high standards being achieved.
- 1.2.3 As well as general overall satisfaction, users were asked to comment on a number of key site features and these are shown in the table below. Again satisfaction levels remain high for every aspect of the site, and the ratings for the refreshment facilities, safety and cleanliness are particularly pleasing to note.

Area of Satisfaction	2019 Result
Overall Satisfaction	99.5%
Car park	98%
Play area	91%
Attractiveness of sportsground	94%
Path surfaces	94%
Cleanliness of the sportsground	87%
Ball court	86%
Safety and security	89%
Skate park	81%
All weather pitch	75%
Cleanliness - dog fouling	79%
Number of litter bins	83%
Signage on site	78%
Balance of recreation / conservation	65%
Presence of wildlife	51%
Number of seats/benches	61%
Facilities for people with disabilities	41%
Picnic tables	38%

- 1.2.4 The main reasons respondents gave for using the Sportsground were to exercise their dog, use of the children's play area; walking; and family day out.
- 1.2.5 Whilst users travel from a wide catchment area, the majority live within 1 mile of the sportsground. Only 6% of visitors travelled from outside the Borough. There was an increase in the number of people that drove to the sportsground 72% (42% in 2014). 25% of visitors walked to the sportsground.

1.3 Potential Improvements

- 1.3.1 Users were also asked if they thought the Sportsground should be improved in any way with 22% saying "No" and 78% saying "Yes". Those that replied yes were then asked what improvements they would like to see. The most frequent requests were: public toilets, catering facilities and more wildlife/wildflower areas.

1.3.2 The comments below cover the three most frequent requests for improvement and also the areas with the lower satisfaction rates detailed at sub-section 1.2.3. When considering any improvements Members need to take account of the current high satisfaction levels.

- Public Toilets – the site originally had access to toilet facilities via the sports pavilion, however due to serious vandalism and anti-social behaviour they were closed. Toilet provision is currently included within List C of the Council's Capital Plan and has been deferred pending development opportunities for the site coming forward.
- Catering Facilities – the offer of catering facilities has been tendered by the Council on numerous occasions, however all commercial companies have responded that the site is not commercially viable. Council Officers will continue to explore potential catering options as and when they become available.
- More wildflower/wildlife areas – the majority of the site is allocated to formal play and sports use. The Council planted over 200 trees this year in partnership with a voluntary group. The Council will continue to enhance the sites wildlife areas where possible, subject to funding.
- Number of seats/benches – satisfaction with the provision of seats and benches at the site is quite high (61% of the public satisfied). Due to the public response an audit of seat provision and locations will be undertaken and any actions brought forward.
- Facilities for people with disabilities – 41% of users were satisfied with this area, which does leave some scope for improvement. It is proposed the Council undertake an 'Access Audit' and action any recommendations as and when funding permits.
- Picnic tables – 38% of users were satisfied with the picnic table provision, which again leaves scope for improvement. It is proposed to incorporate picnic tables within the audit of seats/benches.

1.4 Summary

1.4.1 The survey results highlight that Tonbridge Farm Sportsground continues to be well appreciated and highly valued by the local community. Overall satisfaction levels are very high and the results clearly reflect the existing facilities continue to be well used and appreciated. A large number of positive comments were received and a selection are highlighted below:

- Nice local park. Most people friendly
- Good facilities overall in Tonbridge

- Nice park, well laid out
- Think very lucky, love Tonbridge, have so many greenspaces which are brilliant
- TMBC are very good for sports areas.

1.5 Legal Implications

1.5.1 None.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 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.
- 1.6.2 Included in List C of the Council's Capital Plan is a scheme to enhance the site with general improvements including those arising from the user survey. This scheme is subject to funding becoming available.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 Work based health and safety risk assessments and site inspections will continue to be undertaken. The strategic risks of these findings have been assessed as medium to low and relate to: service standards; strategic site management; financial investment; and responding to changing customer expectations.

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.8.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act, with no perceived impact on end users. The report recommends an Access Audit for people with disabilities be progressed.

1.9 Policy Considerations

- 1.9.1 Asset Management, Customer Contact, Healthy Lifestyles and Community.

1.10 Recommendations

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

- 1) the 2019 casual user market survey results for Tonbridge Farm Sportsground be **NOTED**, and **REFLECTED** in the Site's next 5 year Management Plan;
- 2) an audit of the provision and location of seats, beaches and picnic tables be **UNDERTAKEN**;
- 3) an Access Audit for people with disabilities be **PROGRESSED**; and

- 4) potential improvements be **PROGRESSED** in accordance with the approach outlined in the report and **REFLECTED** in the Site's next 5 year Management Plan.

The Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers: contact: Mike Harris

Nil

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