

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

17 July 2024

Report of the Director of Street Scene Leisure and Technical Services

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet – Non Key Decision

1 TONBRIDGE RACECOURSE SPORTSGROUND MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION

SUMMARY

This report brings forward comments received as part of the public consultation exercise on the draft Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground Management Plan. The Committee is invited to consider the responses and make recommendations on any proposed amendments to the Plan to Cabinet.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 In advance of public consultation, the draft Management Plan for Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground was considered by the Communities and Environmental Scrutiny Select Committee on 7 February 2024 and subsequently by Cabinet (Decision Notice **D240017MEM**).

1.2 Consultation Process

1.2.1 The draft Management Plan was circulated/made available for comment between 4 April and 10 May 2024. An email was circulated to key stakeholders, as listed at **[Annex 1]**, advising that copies of the Plan were available on the Council's website and hard copies were available to view at Tonbridge Castle and at the Council Offices, Kings Hill.

1.2.2 In addition, posters were displayed around the site advising visitors where the Plan could be viewed and how feedback could be provided during the consultation process. Posts were also made on social media to promote the consultation.

1.3 Consultation Response

1.3.1 Social Media posts were made reaching 17,380 people with 500 people following the link to the consultation webpage. The website page had 2159 visits. In response to the consultation 45 people and 2 stakeholders provided feedback, with 117 individual comments returned. Most people responding (30) were nearby residents.

- 1.3.2 From those responding, there was an average rating of 3.09 out of 5 for ease of understanding the document. The document is a complex operational plan for the site, which is designed to meet the requirements of and most comments received were supportive of the Plan. All comments received have been carefully considered and, where appropriate, amendments to the Plan have been proposed. A summary of the comments received, Officer responses and any proposed amendments can be found at **[Annex 2]** for Members consideration.
- 1.3.3 Members will note that the comments received cover a whole variety of topics including active travel, improvements to the children's play area, biodiversity, footpath widening, reuse of the bowling green area, tennis court improvements and flooding.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 The Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground Management Plan has been prepared using the guidance produced by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) Space – A guide to producing Park and Green Space Management Plans.
- 1.4.2 There are a number of legal provisions and statutory obligations that affect delivery of services in open spaces and this need to be duly reflected in the management plan.
- 1.4.3 These statutory provisions enable local authorities to hold land, provide services, enforce orders and in some cases impose fines.
- 1.4.4 Consultation is vital to the process of producing a robust management plan and the council has engaged with stakeholders as appropriate. The council has amended the draft management plan to reflect any proposed changes that have been agreed following consultation.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 Once approved, general works will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework and be delivered using existing revenue/capital funding where possible.
- 1.5.2 It should be noted that the delivery of many projects will be subject to sourcing additional or external funding such as developer contributions.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 The Council's Health and Safety Officer has been consulted on the draft Plan.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 An approach has been taken to the public consultation to reach a broad audience with 12 local disability organisations on the key stakeholders list.

- 1.7.2 The decisions recommended through this paper have remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact to end users.
- 1.7.3 The proposals aim to extend and provide additional/improved facilities with free public access for all. An access audit has been undertaken for the site which forms part of the Plan.

1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Biodiversity & Sustainability, Climate Change, Community, Crime & Disorder Reduction, Equalities/Diversity, Health and Safety, Healthy Lifestyles, Young People

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 Subject to comments by the Committee it be recommended to Cabinet that the proposed amendments to the draft Management Plan as shown in **[Annex 2] be made**, and that the Management Plan for Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground 2024-28 **[Annex 3] be approved**.

Background papers:

Market survey of Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground
Record of Decision Notice **D240017MEM**

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