

TONBRIDGE RACECOURSE SPORTSGROUND MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION

Item CE 24/27 referred from Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee of 17 July 2024

The report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services presented comments received as part of the public consultation exercise on the draft Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground Management Plan.

A summary of the comments received, Officer responses and any proposed changes were detailed in Annex 2 and these were given careful consideration by the Committee. It was noted that the responses covered a 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.

There was detailed discussion on footpaths which respondents felt needed to be widened to accommodate pedestrians, runners, cyclists, prams and disabled buggies. Whilst the comments were noted, it was explained that as the site was on a flood plain there were restrictions on building so widening the paths all the way around the site was unlikely to be realistic. It was noted that a correction was required in Annex 2 to change 'likely to be realistic' to 'unlikely to be realistic'.

Members hoped that a number of issues could be considered as part of the Management Plan and these included encouraging more volunteers to the site, creating more activities for young people and addressing the issues around the use of the slipway impacting on the Borough Council owned car park. The Borough Council were in the process of reviewing its Sport Strategy which could highlight options for the area and Members would have opportunity to comment on any proposals.

Other points raised for future consideration related to improved security and lighting and cycle paths. With regard to the latter, Members were advised that project 62 in the Action Plan committed to a review of cycling provision on site.

***RECOMMENDED:** That it be commended to Cabinet that

- (1) the proposed amendments to the draft Management plan, as set out in Annex 2, be approved, subject to amending the proposed responses in respect of footpaths and active travel to read 'unlikely to be realistic'.
- (2) the draft Management Plan for Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground 2024-28 (attached at Annex 3) be approved.

***Recommended to Cabinet**