

## MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Equality Impact Assessment

**Title of Policy/Service/Contract: Management of Parks and Open Spaces**

**Division: Leisure and Sustainability**

**Lead Officers: David Harper, Rupert Browning**

**Date Assessment completed: March 2013**

#### 1. SCOPING

##### **1.1 What are the aims of the policy, service/service change or contract?**

1. To provide a wide range of formal outdoor sports facilities and activities and informal outdoor recreational facilities for residents and visitors to the district.
2. To promote healthy lifestyles, through our health walks programme and community volunteering work.
3. To work in partnership with Town and Parish Councils and the local community of Mid Sussex to enhance the quality of local outdoor facilities.
4. To promote play opportunities for all ages within the District.
5. To facilitate a range of both commercial and charitable non-sporting events.
6. To encourage the development of more community organised activities in our pavilions.

##### **1.2 Who does the service/policy/contract affect? Who are the main customers (internal or external)?**

The service, policies and contracts will affect all Mid Sussex residents, businesses and visitors to the District.

##### **1.3 What equality information is available, including any evidence from engagement and analysis of use of services?**

Evidence from DDA audits of pavilions/community halls. Feedback received from those hiring and using the facilities.

**1.4 What does this information tell us about the equality issues associated with the service and implications for the protected groups?**

There are issues with the accessibility of some sites for people with mobility problems. DDA surveys revealed that many of the older buildings require major renovation and change to provide facilities for disabled users.

**1.5 Are contractors or partnerships used to deliver the service? Y/N**

If No go to section 2.

If yes, please refer to the guidance notes, particularly Appendix One of the MSDC Guidance "Integrating Equality and Diversity into Procurement", and complete the next three questions.

**Identify the contractors/partnerships used to deliver the service.**

Town and Parish Councils, resident clubs, leasehold tenants, long and short term contractors undertaking maintenance works and specific project work.

**What is their contribution to equality in service delivery and the promotion of equality?**

They should all be aware of all the equality issues that may arise through their work and activities and should be actively encouraging and promoting equality in their service delivery.

**How are equality issues addressed through contractual arrangements and service level agreements?**

When major Maintenance contracts come up for renewal and re-tendering (undertaking a major re-tendering process in 2013 with new contract start date of 1.1.14) there is an opportunity to ask for all company policies regarding equality to ensure they are following relevant legislation and Council policies. This is normally done at the PQQ stage when select contractors are being identified to tender for the works. During the contract it is possible to check on these policies through the regular contract meetings held and periodic audits. Furthermore standard Contract clauses cover this aspect within the terms of the contracts. Clubs and parishes have their own equality standards.

## 2. Assessment of Impact; Analysis and Action Planning

Any gaps in information or provision, opportunities to promote equalities and good relations identified above need to be translated into SMART actions and recorded here. These actions need to be delivered and monitored through the service planning process.

Opportunity to promote equality, good relations and/or address barriers to service/differential impact	Current action taken to address these	Further actions required and timescales	Lead Officer	How will impact be measured
The needs of different ethnic groups including white minorities, but also established white communities				
All signage and booking information is currently in English which could be a barrier to some users	Interpreting service available if needed Booking information is available online. Website includes online translation service.	None identified.		
The needs of men and women. Including taking account of pregnancy and maternity.				
Single Male / Female change facilities are only present in a small number of new sporting facilities	Separate rooms could be made available on request as long as the hirer identifies this at the time of booking. Programme of repair and maintenance work to be undertaken to address this issue as per the annually agreed Asset Management Plan.	Increased dialogue with resident clubs and leagues on child protection issues and incorporate use of separate rooms to hirers as part of the site programming function. Design brief should consider this issue when considering new facilities. This will also be raised with the requests for additional buildings on Council land from user groups and resident clubs.	RB/DH	Feedback from users of our sports pavilions
The needs of disabled people				
Some of the older pavilions require major renovation and change to provide facilities for disabled people.  Some outdoor sites have historically been difficult for persons with mobility problems to access as there is the conflicting need to regulate use of motorbikes on some of these sites. Difficulty using the specialist 'dog bins' provided on site	Programme of reserve funded improvements to bring the retained buildings to a reasonable state of compliance is now well advanced. Ongoing Monitoring Hard surfaced paths provided to all play areas now. Many playgrounds now have equipment that is suitable for children with varying degrees of disability. Dog bins being placed in easily accessible places where practicable	Finalise the programme of work over the next 3 years.  Install 'Radar' gates and provide adequate access paths in countryside sites where there is a need and a demand, such as at Bedelands Farm Local Nature Reserve.	RB/DH	Monitor feedback and requests from disabled users of our indoor and outdoor facilities

<b>Opportunity to promote equality, good relations and/or address barriers to service/differential impact</b>	<b>Current action taken to address these</b>	<b>Further actions required and timescales</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>How will impact be measured</b>
<b>The needs of people with a religion or belief</b>				
No barriers to use on religious grounds.	Regular hirers include St Johns Park pavilion for Friday prayer meetings etc	Ongoing monitoring and any issues picked up with individual hirers at time of booking.	RB/DH	Listen to feedback and reasonable requests
<b>The needs of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and heterosexual people</b>				
No barriers to use	N/A	None	RB, DH	N/A
<b>Issues from marriage and civil partnership</b>				
No barriers to use	N/A	None	RB, DH	N/A
<b>The needs of different age groups, for example older and younger people</b>				
No age-related barriers  There are a range of outdoor facilities for all age groups from playgrounds to lawn bowls.  There is always scope to improve the range of facilities for young and older people	Ongoing Monitoring  Healthy Walks programme now well established to promote walking as a start back to exercise. This has now been expanded to cater for varying levels of fitness.  Specialist equipment has been installed in several parks now that encourage older residents to exercise free of charge. Additional skateparks and playgrounds have been provided for the young people in the community plus a new splashpad facility at Victoria Park Haywards Heath.	Extend the programme of installation of adult fitness equipment that is suitable for the elderly as well as those with higher fitness levels through revenue, capital and partner funding over next 3 years.  Continue to improve and add to the range of equipment, facilities for young people (equipped playgrounds, table tennis, basketball, kick about areas etc)	RB/DH	Closely monitor the feedback and requests from older and younger sections of the community.
<b>The needs of transgender communities</b>				
No barriers to use	N/A	None	RB, DH	N/A

Opportunity to promote equality, good relations and/or address barriers to service/differential impact	Current action taken to address these	Further actions required and timescales	Lead Officer	How will impact be measured
The needs of people who are disadvantaged by socio-economic factors such as low incomes, skill or living in a deprived area				
<p>Charges may be too high for those on low incomes.</p> <p>Application forms for sports hirings and non-sporting events do require documentation to be completed and signed off by hirer, this has caused problems for a limited number of customers.</p>	<p>Charging fees pitched at a level that are widely adopted within the market.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of income levels on a monthly basis and feedback on charging levels sought from customer forum meetings.</p> <p>Higher risk activities, which are more likely to be effected by greater than inflation increases are identified at an early stage. The charges review exercise undertaken each winter will consider the nature of certain activities on a case by case basis and the arguments for a lower than inflation price rise or a price freeze if an acute problem is expected.</p> <p>No charged admission to play areas, paddling pools, skate parks and healthy walks.</p>	<p>The issue of charging levels is subject to an annual review and is put before the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Sustainability in the 4<sup>th</sup> qtr of each year. The report will consider any representations made to the Council on charging levels for Outdoor Facilities.</p>	RB/DH	Closely monitor the feedback and requests from persons in this category
The needs of people who live in a rural area				
<p>Rural outdoor sporting facilities may not meet the needs of all users.</p>	<p>The District Council has entered into Rural Management Agreements with a considerable number of Parish Councils for day to day management of rural sports grounds. Through this mechanism a considerable number of sites have benefited through partnership work in providing new facilities particularly for young people.</p> <p>MSDC investment has been undertaken in rural sites in terms of facilities and playgrounds etc.</p>	<p>Continue to encourage rural parishes to develop facilities for their communities using District Council land where appropriate</p> <p>MSDC to continue to invest in rural sites and not disproportionately favour urban locations when planning and budgeting new works</p>	RB/DH	Number of rural sites receiving investment.

### **3. Mid Sussex District Council Equality Impact Assessment Summary**

Key Findings	Future Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Single Male / Female change facilities are only present in a small number of new facilities.</li><li>• Some sites have been difficult for persons with mobility problems to access, as there is the conflicting need to regulate use of motorbikes on some of these sites.</li><li>• DDA surveys revealed many of the older buildings require major renovation and change to provide facilities for disabled users</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Design brief for new facilities to provide for separate changing accommodation including new community hall/pavilion at Finches Field, Pease Pottage</li><li>• Assistance to be provided as required by MSDC staff</li><li>• Install 'Radar' gates and provide adequate access paths in countryside sites where there is a need and a demand such as at Bedelands farm LNR.</li><li>• Existing programme of DDA compliant work is nearing completion under the Councils on-going Asset Management Programme</li></ul>

#### **4. Signing off this assessment and action plan**

Signature .....  Date ...March 2013.....  
Persons undertaking the assessment

Signature .....  .....Mark Fisher..... Date ...March 2013.....  
Head of Service

Please send your completed impact assessment to Neal Barton for publication on the website.