HERNE BAY WAR MEMORIAL PARK
AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Canterbury City Council

CREATIVE CULTURES
AND ASSOCIATES
July 2007
Executive Summary

A Background

Herne Bay's War Memorial Park forms a prominent feature of this seaside town, situated between the railway station and the town centre and sea-front beyond. It was laid out in the 1920s as a memorial to the First World War and is Herne Bay's only public park. It is used mainly by local residents and attracts few visitors from further afield, due to its run-down appearance, poor facilities and lack of signage.

As part of the wider ambitions for the regeneration of Herne Bay, Canterbury City Council wishes to make substantial improvements to the War Memorial Park, to meet the needs of the local population and to provide an attraction for visitors to the town. The City Council commissioned the Audience Development Plan from consultants, Creative Cultures, to support a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund's *Parks for People* programme.

B The context for Audience Development for the War Memorial Park

The proposed refurbishment and improvements to the Memorial Park takes place within a nexus of national, regional, and local corporate and community priorities. The Audience Development Plan will need to support the delivery of local priorities expressed in corporate, cultural and community strategies.

The City Council strategies which link with, support and inform proposals for the Park include: the Corporate Plan; the Local Development Framework; the Community Strategy; the Cultural Strategy; the Economic Development Strategy; the Children's and Young People's Plan; the Open Spaces Strategy; the Play Strategy; the Tourism Strategy.

Important strategies at County and regional levels include: the Kent Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreement; the Kent Design Guide; Culture South East's Regional Cultural Strategy; Tourism South East's *Tourism ExSEllence*.

Overall, there are clear links in all tiers of strategy which will inform the development of audiences and usage of the Park:

- conserving and valuing the District's heritage assets, including parks and open spaces
- enhancing access to heritage parks, either through physical and sensory improvements or intellectual access through better interpretation of their history and relationship with local communities
- fulfilling potential demand in meeting community needs for children's play, events and green spaces for outdoor activities
- enhancing the awareness, profile and wider appreciation of the Memorial Park, including amongst visitors to the town
- improving the prospects for the Memorial Park as part of the tourist attractions of the town, and finding ways of joining it up with the seafront and routes through Herne Bay
- contributing to the regeneration plans for Herne Bay
- making a sustainable contribution to the wider local economy.
C The current position

Facilities and the present condition of the Park are described in some detail in Section 3. The Park is used for a range of formal and informal activities, from the annual Remembrance Service to families feeding the ducks, from junior football matches to the annual fun fair visit, from bowls club matches to young children using the playground.

The condition of much of the Park is poor, and it lacks toilets, changing facilities for sports, café and adequate seating. The former café and sports pavilion is closed and vandalised, and there is run-down community centre (Parkside) which houses a nursery and youth club activities. The overall impression is one of neglect and this has a significant impact on the use of the Park by local residents (the barriers to users are considered in Section 5 of the ADP).

The Park is best summed up in a quote from the Herne Bay Conservation Area Appraisal:

“the War Memorial Park combines the discrete functions of sports grounds and fields, bowling greens, war memorial and garden, procession route, pleasure park area around the lake, children’s play area, youth centre location and sports area car park with the diagonal cross of footpaths. This is a lot to expect one area to cater for and at the same time to convey significant sense of the place”.

D Current audiences

The City Council carried out extensive survey work prior to the start of the Audience Development Plan, including a household postal survey of Herne Bay residents, focus group discussions and on-site interviews with users. The focus of all investigations was on identifying current usage patterns, views on the facilities, appearance and amenities in the Park and satisfaction levels with regard to the experience of visiting the Park.

Those consulted were also asked their opinions on which improvements should be prioritised and whether they had further suggestions for the Council to consider. Residents were also invited to get involved in development of the Park and to sign up as a Friend.

Findings from all investigations show:

Local Communities: the evidence from the household survey and other consultation activities demonstrates the vital part played in the lives of local communities (those living within one kilometer of the Park): 83.5% of those who responded have postcodes from nearby wards.

Older People: the majority of survey respondents are in the older age ranges (50 – 64, at 26.38% and 65+, at 29%). Although this high rate is partially accounted for by the fact that older people are more likely to take the time to participate in surveys of this nature, nonetheless the result does indicate strong representation of older people as Park users.

Children and Young People: in Herne Bay children and young people (from 0 – 19 years) form 24.66% of the total population, compared with a Canterbury District average of 24.45%. The fact that the Park represents the largest green play space available to
children and young people in the town puts enormous pressure on the facilities and resources available. The consultation with young people themselves has shown that these are not of sufficient quality or variety to meet the needs of young residents, and that improvements to both formal and informal play provision will increase levels of use.

**Disabled children and young people** are, of course, doubly disadvantaged in their use of the Park and the Council is committed to ensuring that the Park is fully inclusive.

**Disabled adults:** evidence from the consultative activities, including the Disability Advisory Group, shows that use of the Park is considerably restricted by a number of factors: lack of access to the War Memorial, lack of shelter and limited seating, poor quality of pathways, lack of signage and absence of toilets. This reduces both the duration of stay and the quality of the visit overall.

**Visitors:** the absence of café, picnic facilities, small numbers of events, lack of toilets and directions to and within the Park are all very likely to deter visitors to Herne Bay.

E  **Barriers to audience development**

The barriers to existing, and potentially greater, usage of the Memorial Park can be found in the following categories as recognised by the HLF:

**Physical and sensory barriers include**
- Paths used by cycles, maintenance vehicles and pedestrian, without adequate separation
- Poor signage to the Park and inadequate wayfinding within
- Layout of some paths and their unsuitability for wheelchairs and pushchairs
- Low lighting levels in Park; little security lighting in gardens
- Derelict, closed public toilets in Park
- No shelters in Park, in case of bad weather
- Poor quality of play equipment and not accessible for disabled children
- Lack of seating in some areas

**Intellectual and attitudinal barriers include**
- Lack of information on the Park distributed in town and beyond
- No interpretation or description of the Park and its history
- Lack of a staff presence (Warden) to help users or deal with any problems

**Cultural barriers include**
- Little attempt to connect the site and its history with the lives of local communities past and present
- Lack of consultation and engagement with local communities
- Few partnerships developed with external organisations (such as Herne Bay Museum, local schools and colleges, Sure Start and other community development programmes)

**Organisational and operational barriers include**
- No café or catering available
- Lack of power supply, water etc for events
- Users unable to self-navigate easily around the whole site
• Few opportunities for communities to get involved

Financial barriers include
• Charges for hire of spaces
• Charges to hire in equipment (such as for catering, staging, sound systems, lighting, portable toilets).

The Access Audit (and consultation with the Canterbury Disability Advisory Group) revealed a wide range of problems and shortcomings with the whole site. The Audit covered and reported on the following aspects of the Park, and set out a series of recommendations on how these should be tackled:

• Need for a multi-sensory wayfinding system
• Navigation within the Park is difficult
• Entrances are not clearly identified
• Need for marked and monitored accessible parking for disabled people
• Path layout is compromised by steep gradients and narrow access routes and surfaces are uneven in places
• Seating which meets the needs of disabled Park users needs to be improved
• Access to the War Memorial is restricted for disabled people
• Tennis and multi-sport courts are step only access
• The playground and play equipment is inadequate for use by disabled children
• Increased frequency of lighting would improve all routes and entrances
• Litter bins and dog-litter bins are often on grass and less accessible for disabled users
• Any café which is proposed for the park redevelopment must meet current inclusive design standards
• No current WC provision on site and the needs of disabled users and families including disabled children need to be addressed.

F Priorities/target groups

The shortage of good quality, accessible spaces for recreation means that the Memorial Park represents the major potential asset for the town in terms of provision for children, young people and their families. Analysis of the barriers to use have revealed that the quality of the Park restricts the range and amount of use made by children and young people, by virtue of facilities lacking for toilets, seating, good play equipment, park warden etc.

Disabled people (including children and their families) are either deterred from visiting or are obliged to restrict the time they spend in the Park. They, too, suffer from the same lack of facilities as children and young people, and are further disadvantaged by physical, sensory and operational barriers described in Section 5.

The current offer for visitors is very narrow and centres on Herne Bay seafront. Whilst the plans to regenerate the town include addressing the acute shortage of visitor accommodation and improving the retail offer, the Park has the potential to meet needs for informal recreation and encourage visitors to stay longer in the town.

This plan recommends that the priority target audiences are:
• young children and their families, especially those from the District’s most deprived wards
• young people
• disabled people (whether physical, sensory or learning)
• visitors to Herne Bay.

G The potential for audience development

The development of new facilities and plans to upgrade existing provision in the Park have been supported by the close involvement of key stakeholders, including Kent County Council and local residents (through the newly created Friends of Herne Bay Park).

Several developments provide a springboard for increasing the range of users and uses of the War Memorial Park. They are:

• the planned regeneration, economic and physical, of Herne Bay with the likelihood of the adoption of a substantive programme of linked improvements to the seafront, the town centre and the War Memorial Park
• the planned provision by Kent County Council of an improved centre for children and young people on the Parkside site of the Park
• increased promotion of Herne Bay to visitors and shoppers to extend the visiting season, the number of visits, and the length of visits to the town
• the formation of the Friends Group and the commitment of Canterbury City Council and its partners to prioritise improvements to the Park.

The proposals to be developed were debated in a series of meetings with different sectors of the community (including young people and the Friends Group), and the main agreed priorities which should be delivered were:

• New cafe building and terrace
• Play areas/provision for the three age groups of (2 – 6, 7 – 12 and 13 – 18 years)
• Event space/performance area
• Entrance /information signs
• Directional signs to, from and within the Park
• Lighting
• Safer road crossing points
• Seats.

In terms of other improvements, the appointment of a Park warden, increasing numbers of events taking place in the Park, refreshed planting schemes and more sports activities for young people in particular, were also raised as important to local communities.

H Vision, aims and objectives

To reinvigorate the Memorial Park as a place which offers local people a high quality green environment for active enjoyment of play and relaxation. To inspire people of all ages to get involved in its future, and create a park which brings Herne Bay’s communities together and is an attraction to visitors.
**Objective 1: Making the Park attractive and with better facilities for all users**

The focus in the Audience Development Plan will be on addressing the current neglected state of the Park, which offers little to young people in the town, provides a poor quality of experience for children, and through a lack of basic amenities does not encourage a longer stay amongst older or disabled users. There is little to attract visitors or, indeed, inform them of its existence.

**Objective 2: Engaging local communities and partners in the Park’s future**

A crucial part of building in sustainability to the revitalisation of the Park is the ability of the Council and its partners to encourage the widest possible interest in and support for its future. A broad partnership, led by Canterbury City Council, offers opportunities to develop the use of the Park by both visitors and the local community.

**Objective 3: Making wider use of the Park for events and activities**

Attractive and inclusive events, which appeal across generations and provide opportunities for communities to come together for fun and celebrations, will contribute greatly to the appeal of the Park. Activities provide reasons for people to visit, can help to enhance security through greater use of public spaces and make a useful contribution to the wider local economy.
1. Introduction

1.1 The Vision for the War Memorial Park

Herne Bay’s War Memorial Park forms a prominent feature of the seaside town, lying between its railway station and the town centre and sea-front beyond. It was laid out in the 1920s as a memorial to the First World War and at its centre is an impressive obelisk standing at the end of a grand avenue of horse chestnut trees.

Like many English coastal resorts, Herne Bay suffered economic decline in the latter part of the last century. Now Canterbury City Council and its partners are developing plans to regenerate Herne Bay; its sea front, the town centre retail area, and the War Memorial Park.

To help ensure that the Park plays a full role in improving both the quality of life of the local community and the economic regeneration of the town, Canterbury City Council commissioned an Audience Development Plan for the Park from Creative Cultures in early 2007.

1.2 The Audience Development Plan

This commission follows an extensive period of public consultation and the formation of a Friends Group for the Park. It is intended that this Audience Development Plan (ADP) will support a Big Lottery Parks for People grant application by the City Council.

The brief for the ADP states that it

‘will identify the target audiences in the context of the City Council’s corporate objectives and set against its desire to regenerate Herne Bay Town Centre, a major initiative in its early stages of development’ (ADP – Consultants Brief).

The scope and overall format for the Plan follows that set out in Heritage Lottery Fund guidance, which is identified as appropriate for the Parks for People programme and includes:

- a description of the site
- the aims and current uses of the site
- evidence from consultation carried out with stakeholders and users
- analysis of current audiences and users
- analysis of the barriers to use or involvement
- assessment of the potential for audience development
- objectives for audience development and identification of priority groups
- a strategic action plan, including targets.

The structure of the plan is as follows:
# Section | Title & contents | HLF ADP Step
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**Executive Summary** | |  
1 | **Introduction** - setting out the brief and vision for the War Memorial Park |  
2 | **The context** - setting out the national, regional and local policy framework for the Park’s development | Step 1  
3 | **The current position** – describes the Park, its facilities, its usage by all groups, activities, partnerships; relationship with the wider regeneration of Herne Bay | Step 1  
4 | **Investigating audiences and under-represented audiences** – describes the work carried out for the ADP and summarises the results of the extensive consultation process, including the Household Survey, Friends Group and other meetings | Step 2  
5 | **Barriers to Audience Development** – information from the Access Audit; a description and analysis of these and other barriers to use of the Park and its activities | Step 3  
6 | **Developing audiences: the priorities**, in terms of the main target groups | Step 4  
7 | **The potential for audience development**: a description of the opportunities identified | Step 4  
8 | **The Audience Development Plan: vision, aims, objectives and Action Plan** | Step 4  
**Appendices:** - including the full Access Report, list of consultees and survey results/consultative meetings |  

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2. **The Context for the ADP**

2.1 **Setting the Policy Context for the Memorial Park**

The Herne Bay War Memorial Park provides key recreational and cultural facilities and activities for the communities of Herne Bay. The Park is run and maintained by Canterbury City Council and, as a local authority service, is subject to policy and guidance established through recent Local Government Acts.

Often referred to as establishing a ‘modernising agenda’, legislation, national strategies and policy statements and processes such as Best Value and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment have sought to consolidate a ‘performance culture’ for local authority services. These services need to be responsive to local needs and priorities and use effective partnership working between local authorities, other public agencies and the private and not-for-profit sectors.

The proposed refurbishment and improvements to the Memorial Park takes place within a nexus of national, regional, and local corporate and community priorities. The Audience Development Plan will need to support the delivery of local priorities expressed in corporate, cultural and community strategies.

2.2 **Local Authorities and the Shared Priorities**

The Shared Priorities agreed between the Local Government Association and central government are an overall focus for all local authority service development. Seven areas are established for delivering tangible improvements in service delivery to communities.

The provision of opportunities for active recreation, play, enjoyment of green spaces and events which take place at the Memorial Park makes a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the **Shared Priorities**, for example:

**Raising standards in our schools** – the positive impact of physical exercise on learning outcomes is now acknowledged and the Park provides opportunities for sports to nearby schools which lack their own playing fields

**Improving the quality of life for children, young people and families at risk** – the accessibility of facilities like the Park, with free access to sports and play spaces, or the events which are hosted there can make a contribution to social inclusion programmes

**Promoting healthier communities and narrowing health inequalities** – the physical and mental well-being of communities is based on the ability of people to make active use of parks and open spaces for a range of informal and formal exercise and recreational activities

**Creating safer and stronger communities** – not only do parks and open spaces provide ‘democratic’ meeting places for communities but they can increase community understanding and cohesion through bringing people together in common activities, across generations and cultures

**Transforming local environments** – prominent local facilities like the Memorial Park are already significant elements within our local built environment, as well as playing a vital role in increasing awareness and understanding of environmental issues.
Meeting local transport needs more effectively – the Memorial Park is easily accessible on foot to the majority of its users and its central location makes a valuable contribution to a more sustainable future.

Promoting economic vitality of localities – the Memorial Park is rightly seen as part of the wider regeneration of Herne Bay, and has the potential to increase visitor numbers and enhance their enjoyment of the town, playing a role alongside other cultural attractions in supporting employment and business development through cultural regeneration.

2.3 Comprehensive Performance Assessment: Cultural Services Inspection

A key aspect of local authority culture provision, in responding to community priorities, is established by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The scope of a culture inspection within the CPA regime will be determined by the configuration of services which are offered by the council concerned, as well as those activities which the council supports others to deliver. Guidance on the CPA culture inspection regime acknowledges the wide range of discretionary provision which characterises culture in any given area.

The inspection framework focuses on outcomes, access, impact and value for money, rather than on service processes as in earlier inspection methods. The ‘Key Lines of Enquiry’ centre on:

- how good the service is
- its effectiveness in meeting local, regional and national objectives (and particularly the Shared Priorities)
- whether it is meeting the needs of the community and its users
- whether it is accessible to all users, and addresses issues of equality and diversity
- satisfaction levels in users
- existence of appropriate consultation with local communities
- value for money
- prospects for improvement and the capacity to deliver improvement.

2.4 National Policy Context for Parks and Open Spaces

The provision of grant funding by national bodies to restore and reinvigorate parks and public open spaces is directly related to strategies produced and commissioned by Central Government departments. These policy documents provide the reasoning which has led to substantial grants being made available to the owners of parks which are in need of restoration. Of relevance to the War Memorial Park and the City Council’s bid are:-

2.4.1 The Green Flag Award

The Green Flag Award scheme was established in 1996, to recognise and reward high standards of management and maintenance of local authority owned parks and other green public open spaces. Over 400 parks and green spaces across England and Wales now hold this prestigious award. It is viewed by Central Government as a vital tool in raising the standard of parks provision. The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) currently chairs the Green Flag Advisory Board, a
stakeholder group to provide advice on the delivery and strategic direction of the Green Flag Award Scheme. The DCLG has a Public Service Agreement target (PSA8), to ensure that the number of local authority areas with at least one Green Flag Award standard space increases to 60% by 2008.

The Memorial Park does not hold a Green Flag Award.

2.4.2 The Public Parks Assessment

The 'Public Parks Assessment' study, jointly commissioned by the (then) Department for Transport and the Local Government Regions (DTLR), HLF, English Heritage and the Countryside Agency was published in 2002 by the Urban Parks Forum. Over 400 of the larger local authorities (85%) responded to the survey, the first ever undertaken. Unsurprisingly, it confirmed what everybody concerned with parks management knew, that:-

- there had been a significant decline in funding by local authorities over a period of at least 30 years. This was attributed to parks maintenance being a non-statutory function, the lack of leadership and low civic pride, and the periodic need to comply with uncomfortable budget saving exercises
- the most dramatic budget reductions took place between 1979 and 1985, probably due to the high levels of inflation. It was also thought by many people in the industry that budgets suffered badly between 1989 and 1995, attributed to the introduction and implementation of CCT legislation.

The survey revealed that 13% of public parks were in poor condition, 69% in fair condition and only 18% were considered to be good. Of those in fair condition, more than a third were still considered to be declining. One of the study’s conclusions was:-

“Without some effective action to halt the decline, those parks that are affected will become increasingly bland and desolate places, lacking in purpose and popular appeal. Without interesting features, high quality standards, decoration and attractive and popular facilities the original purpose of the park or garden as a beautiful and stimulating environment from which to derive pleasure and enjoyment and improved health becomes impossible to achieve.”

2.4.3 “Green Spaces, Better Places”

“Green Spaces, Better Places”, the report of The Urban Green Spaces Task Force commissioned by the DTLR and published in May 2002, recognises the importance of green public open spaces. It lays particular emphasis on the urgent need for a greater focus on investment and strategies to enable them to be restored, so that they can fulfill their original purpose.

The report reiterates why parks remain popular despite a lack of investment. It stresses the important contribution they make in improving the quality of life in urban areas by helping to deliver a range of social, economic and environmental benefits, in both the short and longer term. The report underlines the role of parks in:

- improving the quality of life for people living in towns and cities
- promoting healthy living and prevents illness, by providing places for physical activity including walking and cycling
• fostering social inclusion and community development
• giving people the chance to participate in the design, management and care of their local spaces
• encouraging education and lifelong learning by providing a valuable resource and learning about the natural world and local environment
• supporting a sustainable environment
• contributing to culture by providing free open spaces which can be used for outdoor events, local festivals and civic celebrations
• linking to urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal projects.

Partnership working and in particular promoting community involvement is seen as crucial if projects are to succeed in the longer term.

2.4.4 The Licensing Act 2003

The Licensing Act 2003 came into force in October 2005, superseding previous legislation. It sets out the procedure to be followed and the criteria to be met by a premises (i.e. War Memorial Park) wishing to retail or serve alcohol, or stage regulated entertainment.

Regulated entertainment is defined as:-
• a performance of a play
• an exhibition or film (including recordings of sports matches, computer game graphics)
• an indoor sporting event
• boxing or wrestling
• provision of facilities for making music or dancing
• a performance of dance
• a performance of live music
• playing of recorded music.

The four licensing objectives to be taken into account when considering an application for a licence are:-
• the prevention of crime and disorder
• public safety
• the prevention of public nuisance
• the protection of children from harm.

Parks and public open spaces, whether or not they are enclosed or open for an event or whether there is an admission charge or not, are now subject to the Licensing Act 2003.

2.4.5 HLF and Big Lottery Parks Fund

This is a three-year joint initiative between Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) which offers grant aid to help with the restoration and regeneration of public parks and gardens in England. The Scheme began in 2006 and awards range from £250,000 to £5 million.

To be successful, bidders have to demonstrate:-
• the community values the park as part of its heritage
• the park meets local social, economic and environmental needs
• the park actively involves local people.

They also have to demonstrate that the work to be undertaken and the proposed future activities in the rejuvenated park achieve the following project outcomes:-
• increasing the range of audiences
• conserving and improving the heritage value
• increasing the range of volunteers involved
• improving skills and knowledge through training
• improving management and maintenance.

2.4.6 Strong and Prosperous Communities - The Local Government White Paper

Strong and Prosperous Communities, published in October 2006, has as its principal thrust to devolve decision-making to a local level. This calls for not simply devolving responsibilities and accountability from Central Government to local authorities, but encouraging residents to take a far greater part in the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods.

The White Paper sets out new responsibilities for local authorities to give local citizens and communities a greater say over their lives, and this is intended to include increasing opportunities for local communities to take on the management or ownership of local facilities and assets.

Councils must demonstrate that they can deliver better and more efficient services. They must also show that they are ready to make fundamental changes in attitude and culture, engaging with citizens and working with their partners in new ways.

2.4.7 The Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) creates a statutory duty to take into account the needs of those who are less able and make provision to ensure they are not excluded from an activity on the grounds of a disability they may have. This is covered in more detail in the Access elements of this ADP.

2.4.8 CABE Space

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) summarises the potential benefits of open spaces thus:
• Health: helps to improve physical and mental well-being, through encouraging people to walk, play sport or simply enjoy the green outdoors
• Children and young people: providing opportunities for fun, exercise and learning
• Social benefits: public spaces bring communities and generations together and foster social ties. They shape local cultural identify and increase the sense of place and civic pride
• Crime reduction and fear of crime: good design and spatial management reduces potential for mischief and makes people feel safer when outdoors
• Economy: a high quality public realm is an essential part of any local regeneration strategy
- **Natural benefits**: help to reduce pollution, provide shade and give shelter and habitats for wildlife.

In May 2004 CABE published ‘*Involving young people in the design and care of urban spaces*’ (with CABE Education), aimed at architects, landscape architects, local authority officers, community groups, youth and play workers, regeneration agencies, children and young people. It provides an inspiring and practical guide for decision-makers and funders (with 16 case studies) and explores creative and constructive ways to involve children and young people in the development of public space.

### 2.4.9 Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS): *Getting Serious about Play*

The first ever government-sponsored review of children’s play, was published in 2004 and recommended that local authorities’ proposals for new and improved play spaces must be prepared in partnership with children and young people. Disabled children, too, often experience a high degree of exclusion. The DCLG’s good practice guide, *Developing Accessible Play Space*, states that failure to understand what disabled children want and are entitled to is one of the main barriers to developing accessible play space. It goes on to emphasise the importance of good design in developing accessible play spaces. This matter is further dealt with in the Access Report on the Park.

### 2.4.10 A number of other national policy initiatives underline the importance of access to open spaces, recreational opportunities and activities targeted at children:

- a **measure of child poverty** proposed by the Department of Work and Pensions includes lack of access to leisure, hobbies and other cultural activities as an indicator of deprivation
- Sport England’s **National Framework for Sport** seeks outcomes in health, stronger and safer communities, education and in improving the economy as well as widening participation, access to and excellence in sporting activities for children and young people
- the Green Paper, **Every Child Matters** (DfES 2003) acknowledges the need for Government and local authorities to provide a wide array of structured and unstructured free-time activities for children and young people
- ‘**Play as Culture**’, guidance produced by PLAYLINK for the Children’s Play Policy Forum in 2002, presents both a rationale and suggested approaches to incorporating play into cultural strategy development and providing open spaces is key to play provision.

### 2.5 Regional and Sub-regional Policy

Regional Policy seeks to focus on these national priorities and initiatives within the special challenges and opportunities of the South East Region. Of particular relevance are:

#### 2.5.1 **The Cultural Cornerstone** (SEECC, 2001)

The South East Region’s Cultural Strategy produced by Culture South East, its Cultural Consortium stresses the role of cultural activities as ‘key drivers of prosperity and social cohesion’. An outline action plan **The Cultural Agenda** (2002) sets out six challenges:
inclusion, excellence, learning, recognition, partnership and coherence and support, and these still form the strategic direction.

Culture South East has established core priorities in its funding agreement with the DCMS, and the following are relevant to the revitalisation of the Memorial park:

- working with local authorities to embed culture into community plans
- advocating culture’s role in economic and social regeneration
- contributing to key regional plans and strategies
- promoting the contribution of culture to the sustainable communities agenda
- promoting sustainable business models.

2.5.2 Tourism ExSEllence 2003, Tourism South East

The Strategy emphasises the role played by the tourist economy throughout the region, and the quango is keen to see the development of new tourist attractions and improvements to the cultural infrastructure. It works closely in partnership with South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), which also acknowledges and promotes the contribution made by cultural tourism in the South East as a key element in the Regional Economic Strategy.

2.5.3 Kent County Council: Kent Strategic Partnership and the Local Area Agreement

The County Council, District Councils, Kent Police and the Primary Care Trusts in the county, alongside a wide range of partners from the voluntary and private sectors, form the Kent Strategic Partnership. This body is charged with a range of planning and delivery tasks, including the drawing up, implementation and monitoring of the Local Area Agreement for Kent (LAA). The Kent Agreement is based on shared priorities for all Kent communities, and is set out in four blocks, with declared key outcomes.

Block 1: Children and Young People
The significant outcomes in this block which have implications for improvements to the War Memorial Park are:

- To promote the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of young children so they flourish at home and at school
- To improve participation and engagement by all the children and young people in youth, cultural and community activities.

The planned rebuilding of the Parkside Community Centre by the County Council will contribute positively towards delivery of outcomes in this Block.

Block 2: Safer and Stronger Communities
Relevant outcomes here are:

- To make Kent a safer place in which to work, live and travel
- Cleaner and greener public spaces.

Block 3: Healthier Communities and Older People
The relevant outcome in this Block is:

- To promote the health of Kent's residents.
Block 4: Economic Development and Sustainable Communities
The relevant outcome in this Block is:
• To develop the economic prosperity of Kent.

2.5.4 The Kent Design Guide (2005 – 6)

Section 2.2.9 of the Design Guide makes a number of recommendations with regard to the design of open spaces, of which the most relevant to the Park are:

In making open space provision, consider:
• access by pedestrians, cyclists and the less mobile
• safety, particularly play equipment standards
• areas for youths, including kick-about spaces
• need for overlooking and natural surveillance
• the needs and constraints of the surrounding uses, especially in mixed-use areas
• areas for walking dogs
• the need for sunlight, shade and a good quality environment
• seating, which should be sited well.

Play Areas: in creating children’s play provision, the need for informal supervision and impact on surrounding uses is important. Play areas should be overlooked by footpaths or properties. Children of different ages require different facilities but may still require supervision by the same guardian. It will also be important to ensure that the space is located and designed to avoid nuisance to nearby residents. Designers should be aware of the potential conflicts between residents and the users of open space.

Improvements to the Park will be made within the framework of the guidance.

2.5.5 Area Investment Framework (AIF) for East Kent Triangle Area Strategic Partnership

This joint programme involves Canterbury City Council with Kent County Council, Thanet District Council, Dover District Council, SEEDA and Pfizer Ltd. The Framework has a focus on regeneration priorities, with a key theme of ‘Quality of Life’, which includes cultural provision.

2.6 Local Policy Context

The following local policies and initiatives are of particular relevance to the Memorial Park.

2.6.1 Canterbury District Corporate Plan 2004-2008

The Plan has a set of seven objectives, of which the following are the most significant in terms of the development of Herne Bay War Memorial Park:
• ‘achieve excellence in delivering services
• protect, serve and listen to our local community, promoting social inclusion and social enterprise
• become the cultural centre of South East England by improving our cultural infrastructure and building the capacity to secure sustainable cultural development
• boost and diversify the local economy, investing in our strengths and attracting sustainable investment
• enhance our environment as the green heart of East Kent, … setting high standards of urban design to develop and protect our heritage
• help our citizens to improve their health, safety and well-being’.

Within the Plan there are clear opportunities for the Park to deliver against a number of outcomes, including:
• increased public satisfaction with parks, open spaces and play facilities
• securing Green Flag Awards for the Council’s parks
• engaging local communities in taking an active part in looking after their environment
• supporting the development of a thriving tourism industry.

2.6.2 Local Plan (Unlocking the Potential)

Canterbury City Council is in the process of developing the Local Development Framework (LDF), which establishes the overall spatial planning process for the area. This work is scheduled for completion in late 2007, but there are nonetheless a number of assumptions about the treatment of parks and open spaces which it is expected will be retained from the Local Plan. In Chapter 6 there are important policies to protect and conserve historic open spaces, including parks and gardens. Policy BE 10 stipulates that:

• development which would adversely affect their historic character or appearance will not be permitted
• conservation of their landscape and architectural elements will be encouraged
• maintenance, restoration and reconstruction of the layout and features of historic parks and gardens will be encouraged where this is appropriate and it is based on thorough historical research
• development that would detract from settings would not be permitted.

Phase Two of the LDF will cover: ‘Preserving, enhancing and conserving the built and natural environments; good design principles, context and local distinctiveness; place-making (the urban design approach) and the public realm, heritage and conservation, historic landscapes, parks and gardens, archaeology; natural environment including protected sites, nature conservation outside protected sites, protected species, enhancing biodiversity, trees, woodland and hedgerows.’

2.6.3 Statement of Community Involvement (part of the LDF)

There is now a requirement for local councils to engage in a planning process which aims at a more dynamic involvement of its residents. By producing a Statement of Community Involvement, Canterbury City Council is declaring its intention to promote effective participation in the planning system, ensuring that all sections of the community have an opportunity to be involved.
The Council is expected to consult widely on all proposals which affect local communities, including future developments. Community involvement ensures that there is a focus on the issues that matter to local people, and aims at boosting the sense of ownership of planning and decisions on local facilities. The Council has applied these principles to the extensive consultation on the future of the Memorial Park (see Section 4 of this ADP).

2.6.4 Community Strategy, ‘All Together Now’

There are several elements within the Strategy’s Action Plan that have a potential direct link with audience development for the Park. These include:

- providing better access to services for disadvantaged groups, including disabled people
- providing better services for children and young people
- tackling the lack of facilities and activities organised for young people
- promoting existing facilities to increase use, and organising opening times and programmes around the needs of particular geographical and interest communities
- developing projects for local community groups using cultural facilities.

2.6.5 Economic Strategy

Two of the Strategy’s themes and objectives have particular implications for the Memorial Park redevelopment:

**Promoting a strong local economy**: improvements to the Park will help to support the development of tourism in Herne Bay, as part of the overall regeneration of the area

**Investing in quality of life**: making the Park a safer and more attractive environment will also help to improve the vitality of the town centre

2.6.6 Canterbury Culture: Local Cultural Strategy, 2003 – 2010:

All the strategy themes have some resonance with the ambitions for audience development at the Memorial Park:

- **Boosting and diversifying the local economy** – particularly in the tourism sector, and through increased investment in cultural facilities and infrastructure
- **Developing audiences and increasing participation** – through identifying and removing barriers to involvement; access is a key driver, and boosting the creativity of local communities
- **Improving health and well-being** – more participation and activity, and safer communities through involvement with cultural programmes
- **Creating and supporting new opportunities for learning and development** – raising standards and aspirations in local communities, developing the creative industries and enterprise, linked to strategies for economic growth
- **Enhancing, protecting and promoting public spaces** – conservation of heritage and improvements in urban design, greater access to natural and built assets, but careful management and protection of vulnerable sites.
2.6.7 Open Spaces Strategy

This important document contains many strategic statements and priorities for action which are of considerable value to any plan to develop the Park. Its main aims are to:

- **inspire local people** (to enjoy, respect and care for open spaces)
- **secure an even distribution of open space** (making green spaces accessible)
- **raise the quality** (especially targeting those of lowest standards sited within deprived areas)
- **create diversity** (in developing a broader range of uses by the community)
- **make connections** (to link up open spaces for pedestrians and cyclists alike)
- **promote** (through improvements to marketing, increasing range and number of events and activities).

The Memorial Park is designated as a priority site, categorised under parks and gardens and accorded ‘quiet’ space status (despite the presence of sports pitches and a children’s playground). Policy actions to enhance this ‘low quality, high value’ asset, through a bid to the HLF, include:

- aiming to achieve Green Flag status
- working to secure excellence in design
- providing spaces for people to relax and have fun in a safe environment.

The consultation for this strategy was wide-ranging and included:

- questionnaires used in developing the Community Strategy and for Best Value service reviews
- other consultative programmes for the Play Strategy, the Local Plan Review and the Scrutiny Review on Parish Council contributions
- a general questionnaire on open spaces to the Citizens’ Panel
- on-site interviews
- a series of workshops with stakeholders and hard-to-reach sectors of the local community.

Most of the key findings also characterised the findings of the consultation on the development of the Memorial Park, and focused on:

- the high value set on parks and open spaces by local communities
- the popularity and frequency of use of parks and open spaces: over half the District's population visits a park, the beach or a green corridor at least once a month, with more than 25% visiting at least once a week
- open spaces across the District are visited by people of all ages and are used equally by men and women
- open spaces and parks are generally considered to be safe, clean and welcoming, although there are inevitably concerns about maintenance and cleanliness
- the Top 10 most requested improvements are:
  - Patrol by park keeper or ranger
  - More bins
  - More seats
  - Areas for wildlife
  - Better lighting
  - More trees
  - Better disabled access
  - More sheltered areas
  - More wild flowers
  - More information signs.
2.6.8 Children’s and Young People’s Plan

Consultation on Open Spaces in the District showed that the provision of facilities for children and young people was one of the highest priorities for the whole community.

A high quality urban park has great potential to contribution to the aims and objectives of the Children’s and Young People’s Plan:

**Making a positive contribution** (increasing the participation of children, young people and their families in community life): promote activities for families in the park and engage local people in the Friends and Young Friends groups

**Enjoying and achieving** (providing opportunities for safe and stimulating play): develop exciting play spaces for different age groups and encourage sports clubs to make better use of the park

**Staying safe** (taking action to make young people feel safe and to divert the small minority of those who engage in anti-social behaviour towards purposeful activities): better lighting and designing out crime, alongside youth services initiatives to offer activities for purposeful recreation

**Achieve economic well-being** (increasing economic opportunities for disadvantaged members of the community): develop cultural and sports activities to help boost self-esteem and social skills, together with promotion of volunteering programmes

**Being healthy** (increase opportunities for physical activity): widen range of sports and informal recreation in the Park through improved infrastructure and secure catering based on a healthy eating offer

2.6.9 Play Strategy

The Strategy defines play as free-time activity undertaken by children and young people aged 0 -18. It does not include sports activities, which are covered separately in the sports strategy. The strategy recognizes three distinct types of play:

- ‘Fixed’ play – play facilities, such as equipped play areas, skate parks and ballcourts
- ‘Organised’ or ‘adult-led’ play – supervised play activities, such as play-schemes, children’s clubs and youth clubs
- ‘Casual’ or ‘child-led’ play – play activities that children and young people create and do on their own, without supervision

The Strategy places particular emphasis on the active involvement of children and young people in the development of play – whether facilities, equipment or activities. There is also a strong commitment to inclusive play, which needs to be based on engagement with disabled children and young people and their families. Much play provision in the district is felt to be unexciting and unable to offer sufficient stimulation to children, and the redevelopment of the playground offers an opportunity to actively address the issues of access and innovation.

2.6.10 Playing Pitch Strategy

An independent assessment of the provision of playing pitches across the borough was carried out for the City Council in 2003. Amongst the detailed findings, there was a high priority recommendation to address the identified shortfall of junior football pitches in
Herne Bay. The potential to improve the current provision in the War Memorial Park (especially with regard to basic toilet or café facilities, for example) would make a significant contribution to achieving this strategic objective.

2.6.11 Tourism Strategy

Improvements to the Park would contribute to a number of the objectives in the Council’s Tourism Strategy:

- **Visitor management**: boosting visitor dispersal and increasing length of stay through better signage, facilities on site or linking with cycle routes
- **Interpretation and technology**: improving interpretation of Park history through trails or mobile phone ‘tours’
- **Sustainable development**: investing in current events and activities in the Park as well as encouraging new events
- **Town and city renaissance**: making a major contribution to the regeneration of Herne Bay, as a greatly improved facility for visitors and residents alike
- **Open – access for all**: improving the quality of visits to the Memorial Park through facilities which benefit disabled users of all ages, as well as encouraging events to broaden the Park’s appeal across generations and cultures

2.6.12 Public Art Policy

Canterbury City Council supports the principle of commissioning site-specific artworks in many forms and all types of environment and settings. By supporting public art, the Council aims to:

- **Boost and diversify the local economy** – increasing opportunities for artists; increasing the attractiveness of the District for cultural tourists
- **Develop audiences and increase participation** – taking the work of artists into the streets and open spaces helps to reach those who do not visit galleries and workshops with local communities stimulate wider interest and experience of the arts
- **Improve health and well-being** (including Community Safety) – use of artists to create works associated with healthy activities (such as cycle tracks); by commissioning artists to work on making public spaces safer and more welcoming
- **Creating and supporting new opportunities for learning and development** – by commissioning education and training programmes with local community participation, alongside public art commissions where possible
- **Enhancing, protecting and promoting public spaces** – through the intervention of artists as members of design teams and contributors to the creation of the public realm

There is reference in the LDF to public art/site-specific commissioning and a Supplementary Planning Document is apparently to be jointly developed with the Planning Section. The presumption is in favour of securing new public art within all new major developments or refurbishments, including those in the public realm and in open spaces such as parks.

2.7 Overall, there are clear links in all tiers of strategy which we can draw on to inform the development of audiences and usage of the Park:
• conserving and valuing the District’s heritage assets, including parks and open spaces
• enhancing access to heritage parks, either through physical and sensory improvements or intellectual access through better interpretation of their history and relationship with local communities
• fulfilling potential demand in meeting community needs for children’s play, events and green spaces for outdoor activities
• enhancing the awareness, profile and wider appreciation of the Memorial Park, including amongst visitors to the town
• improving the prospects for the Memorial Park as part of the tourist attractions of the town, and finding ways of joining it up with the seafront and routes through Herne Bay
• contributing to the regeneration plans for Herne Bay
• making a sustainable contribution to the wider local economy.

The focus on development of the Memorial Park for the benefit of local communities as well as for visitors will allow the ADP to tap into resources and widespread support for proposals which deliver against actual and potential needs and aspirations.
3. **The Current Position**

This Section provides a description of the Memorial Park, its spaces, facilities, activities and events, shows how it features within the wider plan to regenerate Herne Bay and supplies a profile of current users.

3.1 **The Park**

The War Memorial Park is one of the premier green public open spaces within Canterbury City Council’s administrative boundary. There are five public open spaces in Herne Bay, of which War Memorial Park is the largest and most significant, being 6.3 hectares in size. The others are relatively small, one being at William Street and the other three are on the seafront. The Park is sited in the conservation area of Herne Bay and viewed by conservationists as an important asset for the town.

At the end of the Great War, the Council decided to adopt an idea first mooted in 1884 to turn an area of wet marshland into a park and recreation ground, thus creating the War Memorial Park. The Park replaced what was a mixture of allotments and rubbish tips either side of the Plenty Brook. The War Memorial was unveiled in 1922 and the following year, topsoil from a road widening scheme (20,000 tonnes) was used to raise the ground to its present day level and appearance and totally obliterated the Plenty Brook. The burial and culverting of this brook accounts for why the grassed area of the northern quadrant appears to be so boggy and, indeed, is occasionally subject to flooding.

The Park layout was originally arranged around tree-lined pedestrian ‘desire lines’ formally known as chines. These are the paths which divide the park in to its four quadrants. The layout has not changed since the Park was constructed in the 1920s, including tennis courts which at the time were probably grass. Tree planting was seen as being particularly important and is still viewed today as being essential in giving the Park character.

Although not constructed during her reign, the War Memorial Park was designed as a classic Victorian pleasure ground. It has all the standard elements of a Victorian park, which has suffered neglect through budget pressures (over the last twenty years), and as such is a perfect exemplar for the HLF Parks for People fund.

3.2 **The Facilities**

**War Memorial**

This is the centre piece of the Park and stands in the apex of its western quadrant. The memorial is one of the principal reasons for the Park’s creation, commemorating those who fell in the First World War, 1914 to 1918. The main approach is from the north along a tree-lined procession route, entering through the Memorial gates which bear the inscription, *Justice and Peace*. 
Memorial Gardens

These enclose the monument and expand to occupy the adjacent half of the western quadrant. The gardens are themed Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter and are correspondingly planted with seasonal bedding and shrubs.

Tennis and Basketball Courts

Located in the base of the triangular western quadrant, abutting the Memorial Gardens, are four double tennis courts, two of which have been converted to full size basketball courts. There is a further double tennis court to the south of the western arm of the station chine. The courts are surrounded by fencing, in a dilapidated condition and, unusually, are available for use free of charge.

Bowls Club

Progressing in an anticlockwise direction, the apex of the southern quadrant houses two bowling greens and a club house, with changing rooms and lounge facilities. The greens are screened from the main park by a tall hedge and the entrance is secured by a gate. In 2000 the lease for the clubhouse and the use of the greens was renewed and has another 45 years to run.

Boating Lake

The lake occupies 60% of the total area of the eastern quadrant and has an island to one side. It is in the order of two foot deep, which the ducks that frequent it seem perfectly happy with. It is also adequate for use by the model boating club. This and the Memorial Gardens are the areas which are best served by free public seating.

The Northern Quadrant

The northern quadrant is predominantly grass and is divided one third/two thirds by the processional walk from the North Gate to the War Memorial. The northern quadrant represents 50% of the space which is available to the public. It is the area used for outdoor events, football matches (one senior pitch or two junior pitches) and informal recreation. The northern quadrant has a premises licence held by Canterbury City Council, to enable the staging of regulated entertainment from 0900 hours to 22.30 hours, seven days a week. The ground does not appear to drain well, because of the Plenty Brook which runs underneath the Park.

Children’s Play Area

In the north east corner of the Park (in the northern quadrant) is a children's play area, with a range of playground equipment catering for the younger age ranges. The area is outdated, with poor play value, lacking shade or shelter and is located next to a busy road, which creates noise and pollution.

Changing Facilities

Adjacent to the children's playground are changing rooms used by teams who play football on the pitch in the northern quadrant.
**Café and Sports Pavilion**

In the centre of the Park, backing on to the War Memorial area, is a closed and disused café and sports pavilion. Badly vandalised and derelict, this is now only used by the parks maintenance team (two full time staff) as a store for equipment and materials.

**Car Park**

A car park for approximately a dozen vehicles is located immediately inside the memorial gates.

**Parkside Community Centre**

Although the site it occupies was probably once in the Park, for the purpose of the HLF bid, this facility is not formally part of the development proposal. It is, however, an important part of the community of interests in the future of the Park.

At present it houses a children’s nursery, run by an independent, not-for-profit organisation, and catering for 45 children on five days a week. The rear gate of an enclosed play space opens on to the Park and the children are taken to explore and play there when the weather is fine.

The Centre is also used two nights a week as a youth club (The Gap), run by staff from Kent County Council's Youth Services, and currently has a membership of around 70 young people. Young people also make use of the Park for sports and to ‘hang out’, occasionally to the annoyance of local residents.

The buildings, which were originally built from local donations, are now in a poor state of repair and plans have now been drawn up to demolish the present site and build a new centre.

**3.3 Events, Sports and Activities**

**Remembrance Sunday**

This event is held on the Sunday closest to the 11th November each year and is organised by the Royal British Legion as part of a national programme of remembrance of Service men and women who lost their lives defending their country. It is a sacrosanct occasion which will always take precedence in the calendar, as will the monument for maintenance funding.

**Organised leisure events**

Canterbury City Council facilitates and organises a range of outdoor events and entertainments in Herne Bay (for full list see Appendices). Those which are hosted or staged at the War Memorial Park comprise:

- Guide Dogs for the Blind Summer Fete – 1 day
- Rotary Club Family Fun Day – 1 day
The Park is best summed up in a quote from the Herne Bay Conservation Area Appraisal:

“the War Memorial Park combines the discrete functions of sports grounds and fields, bowling greens, war memorial and garden, procession route, pleasure park area around the lake, children’s play area, youth centre location and sports...”
area car park with the diagonal cross of footpaths. This is a lot to expect one area to cater for and at the same time to convey significant sense of the place”.

3.5 Linking with town regeneration

Canterbury City Council is currently engaged in the development of options for the development and revitalisation of Herne Bay. The improvement of the War Memorial Park is intended to play a vital role in the transformation of the town. Once the main option for development is selected and adopted, it is envisaged that change to the town centre will take place over a ten-year period.

Community consultation in 2005 had already highlighted the need for a better town centre which would act as a focal point for the community, and identified four principal issues:

- the town’s image
- rundown buildings
- a lack of pedestrian routes
- unattractive public spaces and street scene.

Subsequent stakeholder consultation on the issues confronting Herne Bay focused around Connecting Herne Bay: Options Consultation Document’ (Canterbury City Council, November 2006) identified that it was a divided town centre:

‘it has a well-used seafront area, a disjointed retail area and an under-utilised Memorial Park’. ¹

Another issue raised was that Herne Bay lacks a unique selling point or significant tourist attraction and there was a shortage of good quality useable recreation, leisure opportunities and community facilities.

The Memorial Park, along with Herne Bay’s natural advantages of location on a wide bay and enjoying high sunshine levels, is seen as offering a basis for regenerating the town with a key element being the linking of an improved seafront, a regenerated town centre, and an improved park.

A vision for the future of Herne Bay makes clear the central role for the improvement of the Memorial Park. It is to:

‘Make Herne Bay a town with a vibrant town centre, streets bustling with people moving along enhanced links to a renewed Memorial Park and a dynamic seafront, creating an ideal place for families to live, work, visit, shop and play’.

Realising this vision will include elements which are important in the planned improvements for the Memorial Park including:

- the use of high quality urban design with a network of attractive public spaces and link routes

¹ Quotations from ‘Connecting Herne Bay’, CCC 2006
• a focus on the needs of the community and maximising of community benefits
• successful engagement of young people
• more activities for children and young people
• provision of easily accessible, centrally located community and recreation facilities
• the physical improvement of the Memorial Park
• development of local cultural activities and venues for artists and the performing arts
• improvement of Herne Bay’s image and building on its on history, heritage and culture
• a network of signed connected spaces and pedestrian routes connecting the parts of the town.

Four options were identified in the ‘Connecting Herne Bay: Options Consultation Document’ (Canterbury City Council, November 2006) with Options 3 and 4 proposing a more substantial response to tackling the issues identified in consultation. The Memorial Park refurbishment is part of both Options 3 and 4 on which consultation has been undertaken and, given the high level of community support for these two options, it seems likely that some mixture of elements of these two options will emerge for more substantive development.

The likely pattern for the regeneration of the town centre can be expected to include other developments that will offer synergy with the development of greater use of the Memorial Park including:

• potential contributions by developers to public realm improvements and to public art
• the establishment of art and heritage trails
• an expanded yearly events programme
• the creation or upgrading of other public spaces with the use of landscape and urban design to improve the quality of spaces
• the linking of the seaside theme into the town centre to heighten linkages
• improved car parking
• improved pedestrian routes and signage
• a new centrally-located community and youth facility.
4. Investigating existing and under-represented audiences

4.1 Introduction

This section sets out what is currently known about the people who make use of the Memorial Park. We also explore the issue of under or non-use by certain sectors of the community, and will use this as the basis for outlining the major challenges and opportunities in planning for audience development, as well as proposing priority target audiences for the focus of effort by Canterbury City Council and its partners.

4.2 Data Sources

In establishing the current position of use of the Memorial Park, we have drawn on an existing body of work, as well as carrying out our own qualitative investigations. The information we have used is a mix of quantitative studies, in addition to consultative discussions with key sectors of the community. In preparing for the Audience Development Plan, Canterbury City Council set out a consultation plan, in line with its commitment to community engagement.

We have based the audience and under-represented user investigations on information gathered through the following consultative activities:

- Herne Bay Stakeholder Consultation Meeting, January 2006
- Household postal survey of Herne Bay residents, August 2006
- Focus group discussions with the following groups: Age Concern; Shaw Trust (for learning disabled people); Herne Bay Umbrella Centre (for disabled people); Greenhill Resident Association, August 2006
- On-site consultation, to target users of the Park (especially young people), August 2006
- Phone consultation and postal surveys for local groups (Heron Boating Club; Homestart; Herne Bay Shopmobility; Herne Bay and District Residents Association; Saxon Community Group), August 2006
- Internet survey for children and young people August to October 2006
- Postal survey of 42 young residents of Herne Bay (from the Council’s ‘Say What’ database), January 2007
- Discussion 511 sessions at Parkside Community Centre and at Greenhill Centre, for children aged 5 – 11 years, January 2007
- Meetings of newly formed Friends of the Park group, February, March, April and May 2007
- Focus group sessions with young people at The Gap, Parkside Community Centre and the Scouts, April 2007
- Consultation session with Canterbury Disability Advisory Group, April 2007
- Interviews with stakeholders, including service providers and organisations making use of the Park (between February and May 2007)
4.3 Data from Household Postal Survey

In August 2006 Canterbury City Council carried out a postal household survey of Herne Bay residents, in order to find out who uses the Park, what activities they do there, what they think about facilities and activities and what sort of improvements they would like to see. The response rate to the survey was one of the highest ever received in a Council consultation (23.5%) – attracting 1,600 completed questionnaires – and is sufficiently robust to provide reliable data on the Park. A full copy of the summary of responses is attached as an Appendix to this Plan.

4.3.1 Who uses the Park? Adult Responses

We have summarised data on respondents from the survey in the following tables, and a more detailed report is provided in the Appendices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>9.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 29</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>16.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>17.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 64</td>
<td>26.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>29.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESIDENCY BY POSTCODE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CT6 5xx</td>
<td>47.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT6 8xx</td>
<td>24.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT6 6xx</td>
<td>11.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODE OF TRAVEL TO PARK</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On foot</td>
<td>79.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By car</td>
<td>8.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By bicycle</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRAVEL TO PARK FROM</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>86.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DURATION OF JOURNEY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 – 10 minutes</td>
<td>39.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 minutes</td>
<td>28.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 15 minutes</td>
<td>17.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although very few respondents (24 out of 1,600) were under 18, use by children and young people connected to respondents can be estimated as follows:
- Children aged 0 – 12 years accompanied 40.75% of all respondents (a total of around 1,700, from singletons to a group outing of 72)
- Young people from 13 – 19 accompanied 14.24% of all respondents (a total of 425, from singletons to maximum group size of 10).
Although data on ethnicity or disability was not collected in the postal survey, we have been able to make use of consultation with disabled and learning disabled people through focus group discussions and meetings with representative organisations. Additional information on these groups has been drawn from the 2001 Census, and is included later in this section (4.9).

The summary of the other consultative activities (with a participant total recorded of 101) outlined at 4.2, also show considerable similarities to the survey findings, with the exception of gender (female users, 55.45%, male users, 44.55%) and age profiles (under 18, 42.57% and no-one over the age of 65%). These reflect the types of groups targeted for consultation and are not taken as representative of users overall.

4.3.2 Patterns of usage

There is considerable variation between the frequency of visits and length of stay in summer and winter months:

**Frequency of visits:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Winter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice a week</td>
<td>22.25%</td>
<td>Seldom/never in season 25.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most days</td>
<td>17.88%</td>
<td>Once a month 18.06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Duration of visits:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Winter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between 30 – 60 minutes</td>
<td>32.31%</td>
<td>Between 30 – 60 minutes 23.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30 minutes</td>
<td>22.75%</td>
<td>Less than 30 minutes 36.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 1 – 2 hours</td>
<td>18.81%</td>
<td>Do not visit 21.88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be pointed out that the Park lacks shelter from bad weather and that this inevitably impacts on both frequency and duration of visits out of the summer season.

The information from the wider consultations also offers very similar findings.

4.3.3 What people do in the Park

The following table summarises the most popular activities carried out by respondents in the Park.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>%AGE</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>%AGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get some fresh air</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>45.38</td>
<td>Take a walk</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>44.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy flowers/trees</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>43.44</td>
<td>Feed the birds/ducks</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>35.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a shortcut</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>31.31</td>
<td>Visit the play area</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>28.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy peace and quiet</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>24.94</td>
<td>Attend events</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>24.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk the dog</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>20.69</td>
<td>Children/family outing</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>18.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play sports or games</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>17.56</td>
<td>Ride a bike</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>17.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit War Memorial</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>14.50</td>
<td>Watch sports or games</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet friends</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>9.75</td>
<td>Picnic</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>9.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other activities cited include keeping fit, model boat sailing, bowling and tennis.

The consultative groups recorded their most popular activities (in ranked order) as:

- Meet friends
• Eat/drink
• Play sports or games
• Keep fit
• Attend events
• Visit play area
• Take a walk
• Ride a bike.

4.3.4 Satisfaction levels with the Park

People were asked to rate a number of aspects of the Park, on a scale from Very Good to Very Poor:

Design and appearance of the Park

Cleanliness and maintenance

Standard and maintenance of trees, flowers, shrubs, grass areas

Ease of getting around the Park
Overall, the lower scores for satisfaction with facilities provided for children and sports activities underline the need for significant improvements in these areas.

The views of the consultative groups gave similar results for satisfaction with:
- Cleanliness and maintenance
- Standard and maintenance of trees, flowers, shrubs and grass areas
- Facilities provided for children.

There was divergence in the following aspects:

- 63% of the consultative groups rated the design and appearance of the Park as Good, compared with 45% of the survey group
- 45% of the consultative groups rated the ease of getting around the Park as Good, compared with 55% of the survey group
- 30% of the consultative groups rated the sports facilities available as Good, compared with 19% of the survey group
- And 66% of the consultative group rated their overall impression of the Park as good, compared with 45% of the survey group.

Given the comparative sizes of the samples for the survey and focus group consultations, and the special interests of the latter, in terms of general indicators on use and satisfaction levels, we recommend that the views from the survey are a more accurate representation of the general views. We will, of course, note the particular
concerns of the group discussions which set out issues for disabled and learning disabled people, children and young people.

4.3.5 Who does not use the Park and their reasons for non or under-use

People were asked their views on which sections of the community tend not to use the Park and to indicate what they believed the reasons for this to be:

**Older people:** reasons included
- Feelings of insecurity because of young people and their anti-social behaviour (115 responses)
- Lack of seating (26)
- No toilet facilities (16)
- No refreshment facilities (15)
- Access/mobility issues (10)

**Disabled people:** reasons included
- Lack of toilet facilities (3)
- Lack of play equipment for disabled children (2)
- Poor paths (2)

See also 4.7 (consultation with Canterbury Disability Advisory Group).

**Teenagers and older children without parents:** reasons included
- Lack of facilities for this age group (46)
- Not allowed out on their own/unsafe (16).

It is worth noting that teenagers also feel unsafe in the Park

In addition, all sections of the community report feeling intimidated by groups of young people, during the day and at night; there is concern over abuse of alcohol and drugs. All groups, too, cite lack of toilets, poor lighting and dog mess as significant deterrents.

4.3.6 What improvements people would like to see to the Park

Information on potential improvements and priorities was initially secured through open questions in the survey. Ranking of the suggested improvements shows the public response to proposals from the Council (notionally awarding marks per item from 5 = most important to 1 = least important).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demolish the pavilion and replace with a café and toilets</td>
<td>6960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A daytime warden to patrol the park</td>
<td>6598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A night-time warden to patrol the park</td>
<td>6253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More seating/benches</td>
<td>6218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic benches</td>
<td>5685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redesign of the boating pond to increase and widen use</td>
<td>5217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete refurbishment of children’s play area</td>
<td>5019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running arts groups in the park</td>
<td>4236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-siting children’s play area to a new position within Memorial Park</td>
<td>3753</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The consultative groups produced a slightly different ranking within their top five priorities, but these were the same five as the survey results.

An open question to the postal survey and the focus groups/other consultative activities also produced a wish-list of improvements, of which the most highly supported (i.e. frequently mentioned) were:

**Buildings:** toilets and café  
**Sports:** better sports facilities; mini golf; football goals/football pitch; cricket; organised sports; changing rooms  
**Facilities for children and young people:** more dedicated areas for teenagers; new, relocated or improved play area; BMX facilities; adventure play area/assault course; big swings  
**Access:** easier access to tennis courts; inclusive play equipment, such as swings; better/more parking; improved crossing or island at Kings Road; widen the access at Spencer Road/Station Road for wheelchairs/buggies; better access to play area for pushchairs; improved footpaths for wheelchair users  
**Publicity/Signage:** more publicity (for events); provision of historical and environmental information around Park; improved signage guiding people to and within the Park  
**Cycles:** cycle lanes/cycle trail; better surfaces for cycling; separate footpaths – for cyclists, pedestrians, other users; cycle rack/bike store  
**Environment and appearance:** creation of a wildlife area; more litter bins; better maintenance/cleaning; woodland trail/nature trail; sensory garden  
**Seating/Shelters:** picnic benches/area; more seating; shelters and sheltered seating  
**Dogs:** separate dog area (fenced) and/or dog free area; more dog bins and dog warden to control fouling  
**Security:** better lighting; wardens in the Park; CCTV  
**Events/Entertainment:** bandstand (for concerts/plays/theatre/music); more events/entertainment, especially for children and families; markets/craft fairs/boot fairs; outdoor art gallery/shows  
**The Pond area:** restore boating on pond; cleaning/better maintenance of pond  
**Facilities for all ages:** improved Community Centre (Parkside); temporary ice rink

After analysis, to establish the main priorities for local users, these were further discussed and refined through the consultation sessions with the Friends Group meetings, including those with young people. They have also been used by the Council to inform the preparation of drawings and plans for the Park.

### 4.4 Consultation with Young People

The City Council interviewed children and young people on site and in focus groups at The Gap (youth club run in the Parkside Community Centre) and local scouts.

**Site Survey:** 55 young people were interviewed, in age range from under 11 to 16+, with the majority in the younger age range. All, save one, were from nearby wards in Herne Bay, and the majority lived close enough to the Park to reach it on foot or by bicycle, travelling from home or school, although 27% do still arrive by car.

They use the Park more in summer than winter (over 63% visit between daily and once a week in season, compared with 65% who do not visit at all or only one a month), and the majority of visits in winter are under 30 minutes duration. In summer they are likely to spend between 30 minutes and up to four hours (weekdays), with longer stays at weekends.
50 of the children tend to visit with others, whether other children or an accompanying adult or teenager. 11 children said they came with school groups.

The five most popular activities:
- Meet friends
- Play sports or games
- Ride a bike
- Keep fit
- Walk the dog

They rated the Park as follows:

- **Design and appearance**
  - Very good/good = 53%; fair = 38%
  - Cleanliness
  - Very good/good = 33%; fair = 31%; poor/very poor = 33%

- **Standard of trees and planting**
  - Very good/good = 75%; fair = 15%

- **Facilities for children 0 – 11**
  - Very good/good = 47%; fair = 18%; poor/very poor = 25%

- **Facilities for children 11+**
  - Very good/good = 22%; fair = 27%; poor/very poor = 40%

- **Sports facilities**
  - Very good/good = 42%; fair = 20%; poor/very poor = 36%

- **Ease of getting around**
  - Very good/good = 73%; fair = 20%

- **Overall impression**
  - Very good/good = 56%; fair = 36%

Although it is unsurprising that this age group identifies the poor quality of facilities for children and young people as a concern, it is also clear that they are adversely affected by the cleanliness and maintenance of the Park – recording much lower levels of satisfaction than the adult groups.

Their ranked priorities for improvements to the Park were slightly different to those recorded by adults:
- Demolish the pavilion and replace with café and toilets
- Redesign of boating pond
- Picnic benches
- More seating/benches
- A night time warden to patrol the Park

Additional, open questions about what would encourage them to visit the Park more often or stay longer produced a wide array of suggestions: from a maze, giant chess, temporary ice rink, bandstand, shelters, pedal boats on the pond to more trees, less dog mess, improved sports pitches for cricket and football and better facilities for children of all ages, including the very young.

**Focus groups**: these sessions built on outcomes of earlier consultative activities and the development of ideas for the Park. The youth club members and the scouts were informed about the background to the Park proposals by Council staff (supported by youth workers and scout leader) and were then divided into smaller groups to discuss a range of proposals. Their views on the following were canvassed, and they were also asked for any other ideas on how to get people involved in the Park.
• New café building and terrace
• Play areas for separate age groups (2 – 6, 7 – 12, 13 – 18)
• Events space/performance area
• Water play space
• Entrance/information signs
• Directional signs
• Lighting
• Safer road crossing points
• Hired deck-chair area
• Sculpture
• Boat hire point
• Cycle racks
• Seating.

4.5 The Friends of Herne Bay War Memorial Park

As part of the household survey, people were asked if they would be interested in further involvement in the Park’s future. Over 130 responded positively, and are now included in the Friends’ database. Ages range from 12 to 85, and are a mix of working and retired people. A very wide range of skills, knowledge and experience is potentially now available to support the activities of the Friends Group: from accountancy to teaching, from street warden to website developer, from project management to scout leader, and from garden and forestry staff to those who work professionally with young people.

Although this is not strictly speaking a representative group of the local resident population, nonetheless the creation of a body of interested individuals to help inform the more detailed consultations on proposals has already proved extremely valuable to the Council as a sounding board in preparing the ADP.

Further information on the Friends Group and how it has actively contributed to the ADP is provided later in this report (Section 7.5).

4.6 Stakeholder interviews (meetings and by telephone):

In order to gauge the potential for developing the Memorial Park, and to understand both the concerns and opportunities, we carried out a number of discussions with key players from the City Council and local organisations. A full list of those consulted is provided in the Appendices.

All meetings and interviews focused on:
• collecting information and views on the Park and its significance as a community resource for Herne Bay
• examining the current type and level of activity carried out in the Park by the organisation interviewed (if appropriate)
• establishing any ambitions or needs for development of activities which might take place in the Park
• analysing any threats or obstacles to creating new programmes and uses of the site, especially by under-represented community groups
• considering how the Park might contribute to delivering programmes or facilities which meet current or proposed aims and objectives for the Council and its partners, including boosting visitor numbers and duration of stay in Herne Bay
• what new opportunities the Park might offer to the community served by the particular organisation or department interviewed.

A number of key points from these discussions have been drawn out to inform the issues and opportunities contained in this paper, alongside all the evidence gathered through surveys and consultation meetings. The Memorial Park is a valuable and priority site for Canterbury Council, and is accorded a high ranking within its proposals for lottery funding. The Council also believes that the whole site has considerable potential to address and improve leisure and recreational provision for local communities in general, and for families living in nearby Heron, Reculver and West Bay wards in particular.

There is clearly great potential to upgrade the Park’s assets and make it more fully inclusive for the whole community – this is, after all, the most important open, green space for Herne Bay’s residents. We found considerable support and enthusiasm for proposals which seek to engage local communities, improve access to all current elements in the Park, as well as for the development of appropriate activities and facilities to benefit local people and visitors. Stakeholders, whether within or outside of Canterbury Council want to see a development plan which aims to:

• promote access, whether defined in physical, sensory, intellectual or cultural terms, so that all sectors of the community, as well as tourists, are able to enjoy and benefit from a visit to the site
• ensure that the original purpose of the Park (as a war memorial) is fully understood, appreciated and enhanced by all actions taken to improve it
• build on the local cultural and heritage dimensions, by strengthening partnerships with schools, colleges, youth provision and other cultural institutions in the town and district, including Kent County Council and the Herne Bay Museum and Gallery
• carry out a wide range of improvements to the whole site, especially to make all users feel safer, and create new dedicated areas or facilities in the Park for children, young people and disabled users
• encourage activities which bring communities together, especially those which help to break down barriers between generations, and draw on the site’s important role in the history of Herne Bay
• find ways to keep people for longer on site, particularly through good quality toilets, a café, more seating and shelters
• join the Park up more effectively with the rest of the town, through signage, marketing and improvements to roads and crossing points
• increase the number and diversity of regular events and one-off activities which take place on site, whether specifically for local audiences or including visitors
• support the new Friends Groups (including for young people), and ensure that these play an active role in the development of the Park, supporting the Council and its grounds maintenance contractors, Serco
• aim to involve local businesses and the private sector, to explore potential for developing catering on site or the ability to offer new activities, such as temporary ice rink or boating.
4.7 Canterbury Disability Advisory Group

Although we lack data from the postal survey on deaf and disabled people, we can draw on the evidence of consultation with the Disability Advisory Group and a number of observations made by users in focus group meetings about access problems, to make valid assumptions about the aspects of the Park which deter disabled users and their families.

The demographic profiles for Herne Bay wards (taken from the 2001 Census) show that the numbers of people who describe themselves as either being disabled or having a limiting long-term illness is higher than the average for Canterbury District (21.44% compared with 18.85%). In Heron, Reculver and West Bay wards (those nearest to the Park), the figures are as high as 24.93%, 23.03% and 23.69% respectively. This is a significant demographic feature of Herne Bay, and presents a challenge to be addressed by the development of the Park.

As part of the work for the Access Audit, the Access consultant met with members of the district’s Disability Advisory Group, to explain about the proposals to redevelop the Park and the Council’s intention to improve inclusive access to its facilities. The Disability Advisory Group was set up to advise Canterbury Council on the implementation of its Disability Equality Scheme. The Group consists of individual residents from the district and representatives of disability groups and organisations, as well as any group or individual with an interest in disability issues. Consultations on projects as they relate to disabled people are an important part of the Group’s remit because the DES commits public bodies to engaging disabled people in the life of their community to eliminate discrimination and positively promote their interests.

All attending the meeting (held in Canterbury) were aware of the Herne Bay War Memorial Park and use it in the following ways:

- jogging
- Carer’s Voice events
- dog walking
- going to the fun fair
- boating
- visiting with disabled children.

The following weaknesses, some of which were also identified in the Access Audit, were agreed:

- lack of identity and inclusive wayfinding (signs)
- no current WC facility/accessible WC
- limited seating on long routes
- no café
- playground near the road
- lack of accessible play equipment and provision
- cyclists (including BMX bikers) using the paths.

The need for inclusive and independent access was stressed as essential.

The following were agreed as being some of the barriers:

- lack of designated accessible parking
• state/condition/unevenness of the paths
• lack of equipment for all ages and ability in play areas
• steps without nosing or handrail
• step only access to the War Memorial
• limited path area around the War Memorial
• lack of distinguishing edge to the boating lake.

The City Council will continue to liaise and consult with the Disability Advisory Group throughout the process of planned improvements to the Park.

### 4.8 BME residents of Herne Bay

The BME population of Herne Bay is very small and widely dispersed throughout the town. Advice from the Chair of the Ethnic Minorities Independent Council for Canterbury and the local Police Liaison Officer on consultation with ethnic minorities was sought. On the basis of this and the need to avoid tokenism in seeking out representation of BME interests in the Herne Bay communities, the Council has determined that detailed focus group discussions with BME residents is neither appropriate nor effective and, in terms of consultation best practice, that no separate consultative activities should take place. There will, instead, be a presentation on the Audience Development Plan to a meeting of the Ethnic Minorities Independent Council later in 2007.

The BME profile of Herne Bay residents is very small, at an average of 1.44% of the town’s total population, compared with the average for the District as a whole of 3.38%. The largest ethnic grouping comprises mixed race people (white and Caribbean/African or Asian), followed in size by Asian/Asian British and Chinese residents.

### 4.9 Summary of who uses the site and who doesn’t

**Local Communities:** the evidence from the household survey and other consultation activities demonstrates the vital part played in the lives of local communities (those living within one kilometer of the Park): 83.5% of those who responded have postcodes from nearby wards.

**Older People:** the majority of survey respondents are in the older age ranges (50 – 64, at 26.38% and 65+, at 29%). Although this high rate is partially accounted for by the fact that older people are more likely to take the time to participate in surveys of this nature, nonetheless the result does indicate strong representation of older people as Park users.

**Children and Young People:** in Herne Bay children and young people (from 0 – 19 years) form 24.66% of the total population, compared with a Canterbury District average of 24.45%. The fact that the Park represents the largest green play space available to children and young people in the town puts enormous pressure on the facilities and resources available. The consultation with young people themselves has shown that these are not of sufficient quality or variety to meet the needs of young residents, and that improvements to both formal and informal play provision will increase levels of use.

**Disabled children and young people** are, of course, doubly disadvantaged in their use of the Park and the Council is committed to ensuring that the Park is fully inclusive.
**Disabled adults:** evidence from the consultative activities, including the Disability Advisory Group, shows that use of the Park is considerably restricted by a number of factors: lack of access to the War Memorial, lack of shelter and limited seating, poor quality of pathways, lack of signage and absence of toilets. This reduces both the duration of stay and the quality of the visit overall.

**Visitors:** the absence of café, picnic facilities, small numbers of events, lack of toilets and directions to and within the Park are all very likely to deter visitors to Herne Bay.

The next Section considers the barriers to audience development in more detail.
5. Barriers to Audience Development

5.1 The barriers

The barriers to existing, and potentially greater, usage of the Memorial Park can be found in the following categories as recognised by the HLF:

- Physical and sensory
- Intellectual and attitudinal
- Cultural
- Organisational and operational
- Financial

Barriers can be both real or in the minds of potential audiences. It is important to be aware that real or perceived barriers have equal impact on how users or non-users view the Memorial Park, and that it will be just as important for the AD Plan to address people’s perceptions as to remedy tangible problems or concerns.

5.2 The Access Audit findings

The key issues arising from the access audit and discussions on site are set out below. The tabular report and Appendices contain detailed reference sources for guidance and use during the planning and implementation of access improvements.

Full details of recommendations are provided in the Audit report. These can be developed into a phased action plan for staged improvements to the Park. Some recommendations will be appropriate in the short term and can be incorporated into current operational and maintenance procedures, whilst others will need longer-term planning and be delivered as part of larger-scale works on site.

Direction to and location of the Park is not clear from main approaches. A multi-sensory wayfinding system could be developed as an integral part of design proposals to improve the Park.

Identity of the Park is not evident at entrances, and there is no naming sign.

Wayfinding and navigation within the Park is difficult at junction points due to lack of directory signs or limited directional signs that do not meet inclusive design standards and lack of identity to exits or facilities at the end of long paths. A combination of clearly defined physical features and a continuation of the multi-sensory wayfinding system across the Park would address these problems.

Entrances are well located to provide access and links to routes beyond the park in all directions. However, they are not clearly identified as entrances to the Herne Bay War Memorial Park. The main gate has uneven raised kerbs and shared pedestrian and vehicle routes in the car park entrance. Corner entry points have varying and limiting widths for manoeuvring around bollards and barriers.
**Parking** is provided in a small car park on the north side, although this does not have marked bays or designated accessible parking. There is also on-street parking surrounding the park. Clearly marked and monitored accessible parking for disabled people is important for people to access the park by car. This is recommended within the existing provision and near main entrances to the park, also within shortest distance to the War Memorial.

**Path layout** currently provides good direct, easy to navigate and wide routes across the park and to the War Memorial. However, some secondary routes within gardens are narrow without passing spaces without passing spaces. Some smaller paths have closed ends. Routes to tennis courts include steep gradients and cross-fall. It is important that main/primary routes allow generous circulation and passing to meet best practice for access. The scale of secondary routes, such as those in the seasonal gardens, are more appropriate to meet best practice width for less busy routes, and it will be important to include passing bays and avoid closed-ends.

**Path surfaces** are uneven in places due to settling, removal or subsidence of materials over time, also by tree root growth lifting and cracking finishes. It is recommended to re-align and level paths to create level and even surfaces as detailed in the report tables.

**Sloped paths at junctions** are at a steep gradient. It is recommended these are either re-graded to create a gradual slope or alternatively re-landscaped to create a ramp with a stepped alternative detailed to meet current inclusive design guidance as detailed in the report.

**Paths are used by** pedestrians, cyclists and occasional maintenance vehicles. Proposals include an option for designated cycle routes. Cycle free paths that are clearly identified are preferred. If separate cycle and pedestrian routes are implemented it is important to clearly differentiate between separate cycle and pedestrian routes.

**Seating** with arms and backs is provided within the Memorial Gardens and around the boating lake. However, there is limited manoeuvre space around some benches. There is no seating on the long cross routes. Additional space around seats would allow wheelchair users to sit with others. A variety of seats would improve arrival and use of longer paths if set-back off the main circulation and with good visual contrast to other finishes. Consider seating on the edges of sports courts.

**The War Memorial** has steps up on four sides, without handrails and no visual contrast at nosings. A temporary central handrail is fixed for ceremonies, although this is abused by skate boarders. The Park redevelopment project provides an opportunity to improve access to the Memorial and consider step free options. However, it is important this does not compromise the experience or historic features of the Memorial.

**Seasonal Gardens** are laid out around the War Memorial creating a potentially multi-sensory experience. This is limited by some narrow closed-ended paths, low planting and lack of information about areas. Existing seating with backs and arms provide good resting points but have limited area around them.

**Tennis and multi-sport courts** are step only access. It is recommended to re-grade the approach path to remove the level change or provide a ramp and stepped alternative at entrances to the courts to meet current inclusive design standards.
A playground on the north east corner may be relocated to a more central location. The park redevelopment project is an opportunity for inclusive design with consideration for use of the playground for disabled parents and children.

Lighting along main routes does not continue on some secondary routes or to all entrances/exits. Increased frequency of lighting would improve all routes and entrances.

Litter bins are often on grass, with limited visual contrast to what they are seen against. These would be more accessible to use if positioned where they can be easily reached from the path or a firm level surface and have good visual contrast.

Dog-litter bins often sit on grass away from the path edge and would be more accessible if positioned where they can be easily reached from the path or a firm level surface.

A café is proposed for the park redevelopment. Ensure design meets current inclusive design standards. A design appraisal and access statement (as well as design and access statement for planning) are recommended.

WC provision is proposed for the park redevelopment. However, there is no current WC provision on site and the needs of disabled users and families including disabled children need to be addressed.

5.3 Barriers and users affected

The following table summarises the barriers and identifies the users who are most affected by them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical and sensory barriers</th>
<th>Who is most affected?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What these include:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Paths used by cycles, maintenance vehicles and pedestrian, without adequate separation</td>
<td>o Mobility impaired people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Lack of designated parking for disabled users on site or nearby</td>
<td>o Blind or visually impaired people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o No cycle parking or storage facilities</td>
<td>o Deaf or hearing impaired people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Moving between levels and areas on uneven or steep paths</td>
<td>o Families with babies or young children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Poor signage to the Park and inadequate wayfinding within</td>
<td>o Older people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Layout of some paths and their unsuitability for wheelchairs and pushchairs</td>
<td>o Visitors to Herne Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Low lighting levels in Park; little security lighting in gardens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Derelict, closed public toilets in Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o No shelters in Park, in case of bad weather</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Sports facilities not accessible for disabled users</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Vandalism and graffiti in Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Poor quality of play equipment and not accessible for disabled children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lack of seating in some areas

**Intellectual and attitudinal barriers**

**What these include:**
- Lack of information on the Park distributed in town and beyond
- Insufficient understanding in the wider community of what is available
- No interpretation or description of the Park and its history
- Lack of a staff presence (Warden) to help users or deal with any problems
- Fear of young people and anti-social behaviour: seen as a threat by older people and young children

**Who is most affected?**
- Young people
- Children
- Learning disabled people
- People lacking basic skills or confidence
- Families considered to be socially excluded
- Older people
- Visitors to Herne Bay

**Cultural barriers**

**What these include:**
- Little attempt to connect the site and its history with the lives of local communities past and present
- Lack of consultation and engagement with local communities
- Few partnerships developed with external organisations (such as Herne Bay Museum, local schools and colleges, Sure Start and other community development programmes)

**Who is most affected?**
- Young people
- Children
- Families considered to be socially excluded
- Learning disabled people

**Organisational and operational barriers**

**What these include:**
- Lack of a Park ranger/warden providing full-time cover on site
- Lack of benches/tables for picnics
- No café or catering available
- Lack of power supply, water etc for events
- No strategic approach to marketing the Park or distribution of information
- Users unable to self-navigate easily around the whole site
- Few opportunities for communities to get involved
- Insufficient activities or facilities for young people

**Who is most affected?**
- All users, including visitors to the town

**Financial barriers**

**What these include:**
- Charges for hire of spaces
- Charges to hire in equipment (such as for catering, staging, sound systems, lighting, portable toilets)

**Who is most affected?**
- Families on low incomes
- Young people
- Older people on low incomes

* indirect impacts, with charges for events put on by organisers and promoters, which are then passed on to audiences and users.
6. Developing audiences: the priorities

6.1 Introduction

This section will take as its starting point the current information available on users and under-represented users (as set out in Section 4) and set this against the priorities of a range of important policies and strategies for Canterbury Council and its stakeholders (as in Section 2). From this analysis we will propose the key target audiences as the basis for this development plan.

6.2 Target audiences

The Audience Development Plan will seek to address the needs of Herne Bay communities for leisure and recreational facilities. The Open Spaces Strategy has identified deficiencies in open space in all wards save Heron in Herne Bay, and those that exist are deemed of low quality although high value. Herne Bay has the fewest facilities for play in the District, and the lack of open space is masked by the seafront, which meets some needs for outdoor recreation.

This shortage of good quality, accessible spaces for recreation means that the Memorial Park represents the major potential asset for the town in terms of provision for children, young people and their families. Analysis of the barriers to use have revealed that the quality of the Park restricts the range and amount of use made by children and young people, as it is currently configured. Lack of facilities (toilets, seating, safe and attractive play equipment for a range of ages, park warden etc) mean that full use is inhibited throughout the year.

Disabled people (including children and their families) are either deterred from visiting or are obliged to restrict the time they spend in the Park. They, too, suffer from the same lack of facilities as children and young people, and are further disadvantaged by physical, sensory and operational barriers as already outlined in Section 5.

The Council is driving an ambitious plan to boost the poor performance of the local economy in the town, which has suffered in comparison with the recent investments in other Kent coastal resorts – including nearby Whitstable. The current offer for visitors is very narrow and centres on Herne Bay seafront. Whilst the plans to regenerate the town include addressing the acute shortage of visitor accommodation (Herne Bay has no hotel and few bed and breakfast establishments), and improving the retail offer, there is an obvious need to broaden the attractions.

At present, visitors make use of the seafront, typically on day trips, and there is little to draw them to the Park, with the exceptions of Herne Bay Festival events, circus or funfair. Indeed, the lack of signage between the town centre, the seafront, the railway station and the Park compound its isolation. The creation of a lively, high quality park, offering a range of events and facilities, located between the railway station and town centre and seafront, will provide an additional draw for visitors and help to lengthen duration of visits, thereby boosting local spending. As reported already in Section 3.5, improvements to the Park are an integral part of the overall strategy to improve Herne Bay.
The following table sets out these groups and indicates how they are all high priorities in national and local policy terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target audience</th>
<th>Strategic priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Children and their families (including socially excluded) | • Government/LGA agreed Shared Priorities  
• DCMS stated priority  
• DfES Every Child Matters  
• Sure Start and Home Start  
• Early Years Strategies  
• South East England Cultural Consortium: Cultural Strategy  
• Canterbury City Council Corporate Plan  
• Canterbury City Council Community Strategy: All Together Now  
• Canterbury City Council Children’s and Young People’s Plan  
• Canterbury City Council Open Spaces Strategy  
• Canterbury City Council Play Strategy  
• Canterbury City Council Cultural Strategy |
| Disabled people | • Government/LGA agreed Shared Priorities  
• DCMS stated priority  
• Disability Discrimination Act  
• South East England Cultural Consortium: Cultural Strategy  
• Canterbury City Council Corporate Plan  
• Canterbury City Council Community Strategy: All Together Now  
• Canterbury City Council Equalities and Inclusion Policy  
• Canterbury City Council Play Strategy  
• Canterbury City Council Open Spaces Strategy |
| Young people | • Government/LGA agreed Shared Priorities  
• DCMS stated priority  
• South East England Cultural Consortium: Cultural Strategy  
• KCC Youth Services Strategies  
• Canterbury City Council Corporate Plan  
• Canterbury City Council Community Strategy: All Together Now  
• Canterbury City Council Children’s and Young People’s Plan  
• Canterbury City Council Open Spaces Strategy  
• Canterbury City Council Play Strategy |
| Visitors | • South East England Development Agency: Regional Economic Strategy  
• Tourism South East Tourism ExSEllence  
• Culture South East: Cultural Strategy  
• Canterbury City Council Economic Development Strategy  
• Canterbury City Council Tourism Strategy  
• Regeneration Options for Herne Bay |
6.3 Guiding principles for audience development

In order to focus on those groups in the community which should receive the major benefits from improvements to the Memorial Park, three important principles must underpin any audience development work:

**Equal opportunities**: all should be able to enjoy and take advantage of the facilities and activities available in the Park

**Access**: that barriers to participation, whether physical, intellectual, cultural, organisational or financial should be removed wherever possible

**Equity**: that resources and effort should be focused on those who are currently most disadvantaged in the provision of facilities or services in the Park, and in proportion to their greater need.

Even within an ambitious development of this nature, resources available for implementation and sustainable programmes are not infinite and prioritisation is essential.

This plan recommends that the priority target audiences are:

- young children and their families, especially those from the District’s most deprived wards
- young people
- disabled people (whether physical, sensory or learning)
- visitors to Herne Bay

6.4 The Park and older people

Herne Bay has a very high proportion of its population aged 60 and above (27.45%, 2001 Census), in comparison with an average across the District of 24.33%. It is clear that many older people do currently make considerable use of the Park. As they are already the dominant user group, what is needed is to improve the quality of their visit.

Older people with mobility problems or the visual impairments associated with ageing, even if not describing themselves as disabled, experience a number of deterrents to visiting the site, whether through the Park’s access shortcomings, perceived concerns over personal safety or lack of toilets and catering, for example. Many of the improvements recommended in the Access Audit will address this group’s needs without the need to make older people a priority target audience in their own right.

We should point out the older people will, of course, play a significant role in the Friends Group, and its support for activity within the Park. Older residents already form an important sector of the local community, and other voluntary or community organisations with which the City Council will form partnerships to deliver the improvements.
6.5 Existing users

By designating target audiences, Canterbury Council will be sending clear signals as to its priorities. This action does not, of course, preclude the provision of activities and programmes for and with other sectors of the community. Physical improvements to the site, alongside an increased range of activities and events available to the general public, will clearly benefit all current users and visitors alike.

Having agreed priorities will enable the Council and its partners to identify where maximum effort and input will be required to make the greatest differences to current and potential new audiences, and this constitutes an inclusive approach to audience development for the Memorial Park.
7. The Potential for Audience Development

7.1 Introduction

This section reviews the potential for audience development, aiming to secure increased use of the War Memorial Park. Previous sections have reviewed the current use of the Park, the results of extensive consultation on what the local community and a wide range of stakeholders would like to see in the Park and the barriers and constraints to greater use. This section will examine the main opportunities for audience development which can provide a basis for the strategy for audience development.

7.2 A Springboard for Audience Development

Several developments provide a springboard for increasing the range of users and uses of the War Memorial Park. They are:

- the planned regeneration, economic and physical, of Herne Bay with the likelihood of the adoption of a substantive programme of linked improvements to the seafront, the town centre and the War Memorial Park
- the planned provision by Kent County Council of an improved centre for children and young people on the Parkside site of the Park
- increased promotion of Herne Bay to visitors and shoppers to extend the visiting season, the number of visits, and the length of visits to the town
- the formation of the Friends Group and the commitment of Canterbury City Council and its partners to prioritise improvements to the Park.

7.3 The Park’s Stakeholders

Canterbury City Council and the local Herne Bay community can call on a wide range of statutory, public and community bodies with a stake in the future of the War Memorial Park. All these groups have expressed an interest in and commitment to the development of the Park. They include:

- the recently established Friends Group for the Park
- Kent County Council, particularly children’s and young people’s services
- local businesses – organised as Town Partners and the Chamber of Commerce
- Herne Bay Residents’ Association
- Kent Area Retirement Fellowship
- local schools
- local sports clubs, including bowls, cricket, football and tennis
- activity groups like the model boating group
- community groups including those working with families and disabled people
- Sustrans who are planning the coastal cycling route
- the Herne Bay Festival group and other events organisers
- the circus and fun-fair who use the park each year.
7.4 The Friends of Herne Bay War Memorial Park

One of the great strengths of the development of proposals for the revitalisation of the Memorial Park has been the active involvement of local communities. The initial household survey also asked respondents whether they would be willing and able to be engaged in the development process. The public response was very positive and over 130 people signed up to be part of an action-oriented advisory group, designated as the Friends of the War Memorial Park. They were also asked for their particular areas of interest in the Park and what skills, knowledge or experience they would be able to contribute as volunteers.

The Friends Group first met in February 2007, when they were informed of the main findings of the public consultation exercise and were able to discuss which of the many suggestions made by respondents are more achievable than others. They also received information about the Audience Development Plan process and a brief presentation on design options for the Park and some images of good examples from other sites.

The Council is actively seeking the Friends support and endorsement, as a key component in making decisions about the main areas for improvement to form the basis of the lottery bid.

The first and subsequent meetings of the Group (March, April and May 2007) have considered potential improvements to the Park in some detail. The March session brainstormed, discussed and explored design possibilities and park planning, using a pre-prepared to-scale map board template and moveable visual aids representing different items. This produced a series of maps showing the desires and aspirations of each group.

Each group was asked to consider and record comments on the following items (those most requested by the survey respondents):

- New cafe building and terrace
- Play areas/provision for the three age groups of (2 – 6, 7 – 12 and 13 – 18 years)
- Event space/performance area
- Water play space
- Entrance/information signs
- Directional signs
- Lighting
- Safer road crossing points
- Hired deck-chair area
- Sculpture
- Boat hire point
- Cycle racks
- Seats.

The April meeting offered an outline from the Consultants of the emerging Key Issues and Opportunities from their own researches and included the outcomes of the Access Audit. The Friends were in agreement with the findings of the Audience Development Plan and offered a number of useful suggestions in response to questions on:
- How to get local people actively involved in the Park
- How the management and operation of the Park can be improved (including with help from the Friends)
- How the Park can best be linked with the regeneration of the town
- How visitors can be encouraged to visit the Park.

The May meeting set out design options for the Park, based on the 'planning for real' sessions in March.

The Council also organised parallel activities with two groups of young people – the Gap Youth Club and the Herne Bay Scouts. These have all been taken into account in the development of proposals in this section. Minutes from meetings are included as Appendices to the Plan.

7.5 SWOT analysis

Before introducing what we believe are the key opportunities for developing the Memorial Park, it is helpful to summarise its current position through a SWOT analysis. Whilst this does not claim to be a comprehensive listing of its strengths and weaknesses, nor a fully detailed account of the opportunities and threats which face it, nonetheless we believe this provides a useful overview of key aspects which affect the site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Community support for the Memorial Park</td>
<td>• Lack of park warden presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Central location in Herne Bay</td>
<td>• Poor signage to the Park from town/station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easy accessible on foot to majority of users</td>
<td>• Poor wayfinding signs within the Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• On route between station and town/seafront</td>
<td>• Poor access to Memorial for disabled people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good parking available nearby</td>
<td>• No toilets or changing facilities for sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open aspect and available for use 24/7</td>
<td>• No café or picnic tables/benches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Equipped for variety of uses</td>
<td>• Insufficient seating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Free use of tennis courts</td>
<td>• Low quality play equipment for young children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pond used for model boats</td>
<td>• No adventurous play facilities for older children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quality of gardens</td>
<td>• Play equipment not inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Large size of Park can accommodate a wide range of activities</td>
<td>• Poor quality of games pitches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recent creation of the Friends Group and their active involvement in developing proposals</td>
<td>• Poor lighting throughout the Park, creating insecurity for users of all ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commitment of Canterbury City Council to improve and maintain Park</td>
<td>• No shelters in Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unique War Memorial role for town</td>
<td>• Poor quality of pathways and entrances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Closeness of residents limits vandalism</td>
<td>• Lack of information on Park and its history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Very limited revenue raising opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Proximity of residents and War Memorial status makes some uses inappropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Training for volunteers to support Park, and give the Friends a stake in the Park’s future</td>
<td>• Competing priorities for users (young vs old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Proposals to provide a new Children’s and Young People’s Centre on Parkside site</td>
<td>• Failure to secure Lottery funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promotion and marketing of Park to encourage use by visitors as a Herne Bay attraction to complement the seafront</td>
<td>• Being unable to deliver improvements as part of the wider regeneration programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Difficulties in sustaining improved Park, through budget restrictions in Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Vandalism on new facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.6 Partnerships

All large-scale proposals to refurbish assets benefit from being based on partnership working. This is not simply because of the need to try and maximise sources of funding and in-kind support, but because the regeneration of a valuable community space calls for the active involvement of its major stakeholders. It also presents an opportunity to draw in new partners, in pursuit of commonly agreed aims and ambitions. The development of the Memorial Park will be successful if it is able to both represent the aspirations of local people and engage a wider and dynamic partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The following diagram illustrates the range of stakeholders and types of projects or events that can generate substantially increased use of the Park and which have been identified in discussion with stakeholders and Friends alike.
**Partners and stakeholders**
- Canterbury City Council
- Kent County Council
- Town Partners, including the Herne Bay Improvement Group
- Chamber of Commerce
- Herne Bay Residents Association
- Friends and Young Friends Groups
- Kent Area Retirement Fellowship
- Herne Bay and area schools and colleges
- Herne Bay Museum and Art Gallery
- Sports Clubs (including Bowls, Model Boating, football)
- Community groups
- Herne Bay Festival Group
- Local artists and arts groups
- Events organisers including circus and fun-fair
- Environmental groups
- Local horticultural societies
- Sustrans
- Tourism groups

**Initiatives and projects**
- Parkside Children’s and Young People’s Centre activities using the Park
- Improved play areas for different age ranges (maze, water play, adventurous play equipment)
- Local business-run facilities like café, deck-chair hire, ice rink
- Bandstand or performance area
- New signage to the park from the town centre and sea-front, and better way-finding in Park
- Interpretation trails through Herne Bay linking the park through arts and heritage
- Public art involving the community in improvements to entry points and other parts of the park
- Graffiti wall or shelter for young people
- Sensory garden
- Environmental projects
- Setting up coaching for sports activities
- Creating fitness trails/Green Gyms to promote well-being

**Events and activities**
- Easter Egg Hunt; Halloween activities
- Herne Bay Festival events
- Fun-fair
- Circus
- ‘Green’ events
- Ballooning
- Model Boat Regattas
- Sports competitions and demonstration events
- Charity events
- Summer and school holiday activities for children, families and young people
- Performances by local music, dance or drama groups
- Open-air arts exhibitions
- Encourage spill over of local markets into Park (including French and Continental markets
8. The Audience Development Plan

8.1 Introduction

This section sets out the overall vision for the redevelopment of the Memorial Park, and establishes the aims and key objectives which will drive the project and deliver audience development.

8.2 Assumptions for Audience Development

We intend to make the case for the recommendations in this Audience Development Plan on the basis of the following assumptions:

- the over-arching principle behind all recommendations is to focus on making the Park and its facilities an inclusive asset for the town, accessible and available equally to local people for a wide range of pleasurable, social, sporting, recreational and learning activities
- the proposed improvements to the site acknowledge its contribution to the quality of life provided by Herne Bay's only public park
- the target audiences can be broadly defined as local communities, with particular regard to the needs of children, young people and their families, disabled people and visitors
- any proposals to enhance the Memorial Park must seek to maximise benefits through making links with other activities and programmes which support
  - community development and engagement
  - the local regeneration initiatives
  - promote tourism in the town
  - encourage physical activity and lifelong learning
  - boost awareness of the environment
- revitalisation of the Park enhances and does not compromise its special functions with regard to its memorial status
- that the development of proposals for the Park continue to engage the local community in implementation, through the assignation of roles and responsibilities to the Friends Groups
- implementation of any proposals should be phased if necessary, although capable of seizing any opportunities which arise in the short to medium-term (regeneration funds available for the development of Herne Bay, for example)
- development of the Park does not jeopardise the rights of nearby residents to continued quiet enjoyment of their local area
- that the Action Plan should contain objectives, tasks and targets which are believed to be realistic and achievable.

8.2 The Vision

To reinvigorate the Memorial Park as a place which offers local people a high quality green environment for active enjoyment of play and relaxation. To inspire people of all ages to get involved in its future, and create a park which brings Herne Bay's communities together and is an attraction to visitors.
It is essential to ensure that the nature of redevelopment and improvements enhances the site’s inherent characteristics, and respects the needs of current users. We would want to see the City Council working in close partnership with the Friends Groups and other stakeholders to preserve the integrity of the site as well as bringing its many benefits to the attention of residents and visitors alike.

8.3 The Objectives

We propose three key objectives for Audience Development within the Memorial Park, where we believe the Council and its partners should focus the majority of their efforts:

A  **Making the Park attractive and with better facilities for all users**

B  **Engaging local communities and partners in the Park’s future**

C  **Making wider use of the Park for events and activities**

In creating the Action Plan we will, too, focus on the key outcomes which relate to the priorities of the Parks for People programme, and demonstrate how actions as part of audience development address these.

Based on the three objectives, we suggest an incremental and inter-linked approach with a series of phased actions. Taken as a whole, the proposals are an integrated package intended to deliver considerable improvements, over and above what is required to make the Memorial Park accessible both within the terms of the DDA and the City Council’s ambitions to regenerate Herne Bay. Depending on resources available, some elements are capable of being adopted as stand alone solutions to a number of the current barriers. In our view, however, failure to address all elements at least to some extent will result in a weakening of the overall approach to audience development, and could affect the viability of those which are adopted.

**Objective 1: Making the Park attractive and with better facilities for all users**

The focus in this Plan will be on addressing the current neglected state of the Park, which offers little to young people in the town, provides a poor quality of experience for children, and through a lack of basic amenities does not encourage a longer stay amongst older or disabled users in particular. There is little to attract visitors or, indeed, inform them of its existence.

Key actions to achieve this objective will include:

- Addressing the recommendations set out in the Access Audit and ensuring the Park is inclusive in all facilities (including the War Memorial itself)
- Taking advantage of the planned development of the new children’s and youth centre at Parkside as offering opportunities for these groups to make increased use of the Park
- Working with artists to develop public art elements for the Park
- Improving lighting across the Park, to help promote a greater sense of security
• Establishing a post of Park Ranger (or Warden), with responsibility for working with local communities to promote enjoyment of the Park, active involvement of local volunteers and boost the sense of safety for all users
• Securing a café to meet the needs of Herne Bay residents and visitors
• Providing toilets and changing spaces which are fully accessible and family-friendly
• Developing adventurous play spaces and facilities for children and young people
• Improving and upgrading the standards of planting across the Park
• Creating distinctive signage for entry points and wayfinding within the Park
• Developing interpretation panels to inform and guide visitors and local residents alike.

Objective 2: Engaging local communities and partners in the Park’s future

A crucial part of building in sustainability to the revitalisation of the Park is the ability of the Council and its partners to encourage the widest possible interest in and support for its future. A broad partnership, led by Canterbury City Council, offers opportunities to develop the use of the Park by both visitors and the local community.

To achieve this objective we will:

• Explore the potential for local business involvement in the Park, to operate seasonal catering and leisure facilities, deck-chair hire or boating on the pond, for example
• Support the Friends Group, community-based organisations working with children, young people, elderly or disabled people, in developing a group of volunteers to help out in the Park and its activities; provide training and recognition programmes for volunteers in appropriate skills
• Create a Young Friends Group and foster citizenship and responsibility towards the environment through projects based in the Park
• Establish links to local schools, colleges and universities, exploring any opportunities for horticultural skills training, including apprentice training with Serco
• Offering opportunities for local people interested in horticulture to get involved with design and maintenance of new planting programmes (in conjunction with Serco)
• Working with Herne Bay Museum on heritage elements within the Park/develop inter-generational projects linking World Wars and their impact on Herne Bay communities.

Objective 3: Making wider use of the Park for events and activities

Attractive and inclusive events, which appeal across generations and provide opportunities for communities to come together for fun and celebrations, will contribute greatly to the appeal of the Park. Activities provide reasons for people to visit, can help to enhance security through greater use of public spaces and make a useful contribution to the wider local economy.

To achieve this objective we will:

• Encourage the adjacent bowls clubs and other sports clubs to use pitches for demonstration events and competitions to raise their profile, attract new members
• Boost the use of the Park by local schools who lack open space both for sport and physical activity and for environmental or other project work in arts and heritage
• Increase the number of activities run by Youth Services, including holiday and summer play-schemes
• Increase the number of events in the Park, through support for Herne Bay Festival, encouraging local performers, storytelling, family fun days and outdoor theatre
• Establish a Green Gym in the Park and encourage self-organised fitness promotional activities such as 'Trim Trails'
• Ensure that the Park is much better known, through targeted marketing and information.

The City Council will need to ensure that it measures increased use of the Park by target groups, through site surveys, household questionnaires or focus group discussions, with clear baseline figures established at start of the improvement programme.

It is essential, of course, that all proposals recognise the constraints on the Park, and the need to balance developments with the interests of nearby residents and the special nature of the Park as an open area around a War Memorial.