

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COBTREE MANOR ESTATE COMMITTEE**

**11 JANUARY 2012**

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT  
AND REGULATORY SERVICES**

**Report prepared by: Joanna Joyce, Acting Cobtree Officer**

**1. THE INTRODUCTION OF GATE COUNTERS AT COBTREE  
MANOR PARK**

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the introduction of electronic gate counters at Cobtree Manor Estate in order to count the number of visitors to Cobtree Manor Estate.

1.2 Recommendation of the Assistant Director of Environment and  
Regulatory Services and the Acting Cobtree Officer

That the Committee approves the introduction of electronic gate counters at the main entrance to Cobtree Manor Park in order to count the number of visitors coming into Cobtree Manor Estate by vehicle.

That the Committee agrees to the cost of £2005.50 to carry out this work.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 Accurate visitor figures are essential for measuring the success of the management plan.

1.3.2 Accurate visitor figures will make it easier to sell concessions in the park in future, should such sales be considered to be for the benefit of the charity.

1.3.3 Visitor figures are currently collected by the Ranger counting cars in the car park each week and this is then recorded. This is not particularly accurate but does give some indication as to the number of people visiting the park. The introduction of an electronic counter will be more accurate as it continuously counts all vehicles and will free up the Ranger for more important tasks. The new gate counter will count all vehicles entering the park; an average number of occupants will

then be given to each vehicle which will produce a number of visitors. At this time most people come to the park by vehicle so it is not currently considered worthwhile counting pedestrians separately, although this could be done in the future (at extra cost).

1.3.4 The appropriate software has already been purchased by the council as part of the Mote Park Project, meaning the cost of installing and running the equipment in Cobtree Manor Park is considerably reduced.

1.3.5 Once this equipment is installed there are no long term revenue implications to the Committee, other than if equipment is damaged. The only ongoing cost is the replacement of the batteries annually which is minimal. The exiting counters at Mote Park are downloaded quarterly. This could be done at Cobtree by existing staff and takes approximately half an hour. The data is then formatted to show monthly visitor figures.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The alternative action is to continue counting manually on set days and times. This is not recommended as it is both time consuming and inaccurate.

1.5 Impact on Charity Objectives

1.5.1 The addition of the electronic gate counter will monitor the success of the management of the park and whether visitor numbers increase as the master plan is implemented.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are minimal risks to the introduction of gate counters. Failure to work properly due to incorrect installation is likely to be the biggest risk.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

- 1. Financial
- 2. Staffing
- 3. Legal
- 4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
- 5. Environmental/Sustainable Development

X
X

6. Community Safety
7. Human Rights Act
8. Procurement
9. Asset Management


1.7.2 **Financial** – The cost of installing the gate counters is £2005.50 (excluding VAT). This is a one off cost to be funded from the Charity.

1.7.3 **Staffing** – Installation of the equipment will free up the rangers time for other tasks. Currently cars are counted in the car park once a week. The system will need recalibration quarterly which can be done by MBC staff.

#### 1.8 Conclusions

1.8.1 Installation of gate counters will allow for accurate visitor figures to be efficiently collected. This is essential for monitoring the improvements to the park.

#### 1.9 Relevant Documents

1.9.1 Appendices - None

1.9.2 Background Documents

Cobtree Manor Park Master Plan

**How to Comment**

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes

No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

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This is a Key Decision because: .....

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Wards/Parishes affected: .....

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