

Monitoring the quality of experience in Delamere Forest

Final Report

February 2007



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A. Background and introduction

Background

Forestry Commission (FC) forests and woodlands offer many recreation opportunities such as walking, cycling and picnicking, as well as more formalised activities such as mountain biking, horse riding, car rallies and orienteering. They also offer log cabins, camping and caravan accommodation, with a number of sites also equipped with a visitor centre. Printed material is produced in order to maximise the visitor experience and the FC is currently working alongside Ordnance Survey to incorporate information on land access into their maps.¹

In June 2002, TNS (then NFO) were commissioned to undertake a study which would investigate what constitutes quality of experience for visitors, addressing related concepts such as motivations, expectations and the needs of different groups. The output of this study was a survey method which could be used across Forestry Commission sites to effectively monitor quality of experiences.

Reflecting the increasing importance of community forests, TNS were commissioned in 2004 and 2005 to undertake surveys amongst residents of areas close to selected woodland sites in the Thames Chase and South Yorkshire areas. Research conducted at these sites employed a method developed from the on-site QOE approaches and investigated the profile of both users and non-users of the forests, the motivations and barriers to use, the benefits received from the forest and any improvements that could be made.

The *Forestry Commission Corporate Plan for England and Great Britain* identifies a need for further evidence to demonstrate the benefits that woodlands and forests bring to society and it is on this basis that the FC continued the QOE survey programme through a series of on-site and community surveys in England and Wales during 2006.

¹ 'Forestry Commission Corporate Plan for England and Great Britain Activities 2005/06'
[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/gbengcorp2005.pdf/\\$FILE/gbengcorp2005.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/gbengcorp2005.pdf/$FILE/gbengcorp2005.pdf)

These surveys had the following key objectives

- to undertake on-site surveying of around 300 visitors per site at 5 sites in England and Wales in 2006;
- to undertake community surveys at a minimum of 300 households surrounding 2 community woodland areas, one in England, one in Wales in 2006;
- to provide full reports and data to FC.

Method

A total of 269 visitors were interviewed at Delamere Forest between 26th July and 28th October during 20 days of interviewing.

Visitors who used the site at least once a month were interviewed and asked to rate both the levels of importance of different aspects of woodland and forest visits and their satisfaction with the same aspects at Delamere Forest. Visitors who came less often were interviewed for a shorter period before being given a questionnaire regarding their levels of satisfaction. This was completed and returned, using a reply-paid envelope. Copies of the questionnaires used are appended.

Report

This report provides the results of the survey undertaken at Delamere Forest. As mentioned previously, similar surveys have also been undertaken in nine other Forestry Commission sites to date, providing a total 'database' of over 3,800 interviews with forest users. The results of the surveys undertaken at other sites have been used within this report to help draw comparisons and to highlight the key variations at Delamere Forest. It should be noted that variations between the results obtained at Delamere Forest and at other locations may not always be statistically valid (i.e. are within margins of error) so should be treated with some caution.

A total of 269 visitors were interviewed and 40 self completion questionnaires were returned (25% of the 162 distributed). The following section provides the survey results across the total survey sample and, where appropriate, compares the responses provided by visitors in different demographic groups and those taking part in different activities.

Answers to open ended questions have been appended.

B. Main results

Summary

The majority of visitors to Delamere Forest were in the Family and Empty Nester lifecycles, with those in the Family lifecycle likely to take part in walking (both with and without a dog) and cycling, while those in the Empty Nester lifecycle were particularly likely to take part in hillwalking or rambling.

Delamere attracts a high proportion of visitors from the local area, particularly Crewe, Warrington, Chester and Liverpool, who travel for less than an hour to reach the site. The majority are on a repeat visit to the forest, especially those in the Empty Nester lifecycle. Almost two-thirds of visitors who were not from the local area indicated that the forest was their 'only reason for visiting'.

A range of leisure activities are undertaken during visits to Delamere Forest, including walking with and without a dog, visiting the café, cycling, and hillwalking or rambling. The aspects of the forest that are particularly appreciated by visitors are the peace, quiet and tranquillity, nice walks, the convenience and accessibility of the site, the scenery, beauty and views, the cycling facilities and the freedom to cycle that the site offers.

Slightly under two-thirds of first time and infrequent visitors to Delamere felt that their visit had been 'better than expected', an especially encouraging result. As may be expected, the majority of visitors relied on previous experience and/or knowledge of the forest when planning their visit, with dog walkers particularly likely to mention this information source. Cyclists were most likely to have been influenced by word of mouth recommendations when planning their trip, while the Internet was an information source used more often by Young Independents and infrequent visitors to the site.

Most encounters with other users were positive. However, motorbikes and other vehicles driving in the forest were most likely to disrupt visitor enjoyment, as were dogs and dog dirt, litter or fly tipping and vandalised, damaged or missing signposts. The most frequently suggested improvements that could be made to the forest included more or better dog bin provision, improved signposting and more or better litter bins. Three in ten visitors could not think of any improvements that needed to be made.

A summary of the TRI*M analysis regarding visitor experience can be found at the end of Section C.

Visitor profile

To determine the types of people using the forest, visitors were asked to provide some information about their age, family situation and place of residence.

Demographics

Table B-1 – Age and lifecycle (%)

Base: All respondents (269)

	%
Age	
16 – 24	6
25 – 34	16
35 – 44	34
45 – 54	16
55 – 64	19
65+	10
Lifecycle	
Young Independents	16
Families	39
Empty Nesters	38
Other	7

34% of visitors to Delamere Forest were in the 35 to 44 age bracket, while just over a fifth were aged 34 or under (22%). Slightly over a third were between the ages of 45 and 64 (35%), with a further one in ten over the age of 65 (10%).

In terms of lifecycle, a fairly similar proportion of visitors were in the Family (any children in household, 39%) and Empty Nesters lifecycles (aged 55+, no children in household, 38%). Less than a fifth were in the Young Independent lifecycle (under 35, no children living in the household, 16%). A small proportion of visitors (7%) did not fit into any of these lifecycle groupings.

It is also useful to compare these results with the averages obtained across all of the forests included in this programme of research to date². The profile of visitors at Delamere Forest was very similar to the average across all of the sites. In terms of the specific locations, the lifecycle profile was fairly similar to those obtained at Sherwood Pines, Hamsterley Forest, Dalby and the Forest of Dean.

² See Appendix 2 for full details of results obtained at other sites and overall benchmarking scores.

Table B-2 – Social class (%)

Base: All responses (269)

	Visitors	UK Population
AB – ‘upper middle class’ – higher/ intermediate managerial, administrative or professional	28	17
C1 – ‘lower middle class’ – supervisory or clerical, junior managerial, administrative or professional	44	26
C2 – ‘skilled working class’ – skilled manual workers	13	25
DE – ‘working class’ and unemployed – semi and unskilled manual workers, state pensioners, unemployed	15	32

Just under three-quarters of those visiting Delamere Forest were in the ABC1 socio-economic groupings, a higher proportion than amongst the UK population as a whole (72% and 42% respectively). Conversely, the proportions of visitors in the C2 and DE social classes were lower than amongst those resident in the UK overall (13% v 25% and 15% v 32% respectively).

The social class profile of visitors to Delamere Forest contained a higher proportion of C1s than the average recorded across the other sites included within this programme of research (44% compared to 35%). The social class profile at this forest was most alike those recorded at Thetford Forest and Sherwood Pines Forest.

Origin

All visitors were asked to provide the postcode of their place of residence. The table below lists the areas of residence mentioned by 1% or more of visitors.

Table B-3 – Area of residence (%)
Base: All respondents (269)

	%		%
North West England	87	Wales	3
<i>Crewe</i>	24	West Midlands	2
<i>Warrington</i>	22	Yorkshire & Humberside	1
<i>Chester</i>	18	South East	1
<i>Liverpool</i>	14		
<i>Manchester</i>	5		
<i>Stockport</i>	2		
<i>Wigan</i>	2		

As Table B-3 shows, the majority of visitors to Delamere Forest were from the North West of England (87%), with the largest proportions of visitors from the Crewe (24%), Warrington (22%), Chester (18%) and Liverpool (14%) areas. Small proportions were from elsewhere within England.

Annual parking permit ownership

Slightly less than a tenth of visitors (9%) indicated that they had an annual parking permit. Approximately a fifth of visitors who came to the site once a month or more stated that they owned a permit (21%) compared to 2% of those who visited less often. Dog walkers were more likely than those taking part in any walking or those cycling in the forest to own a permit (22%, 11% and 6% respectively), while 17% of those over the age of 55, 16% of Empty Nesters and 11% of those in the ABC1 socio-economic grouping owned a permit.

Visitors to Delamere Forest who stated that they had an annual parking permit were also asked how they rated the value for money they obtained from the permit. Encouragingly, 72% felt it was 'very' good, with the remaining 28% describing the value for money offered as 'good'. Please bear in mind that the sample size for this question was small (25 respondents) therefore, the results should be treated with caution.

Trip profile

Visitors were also asked a number of questions about their current visit to Delamere Forest in terms of the length of time spent away from home, time spent in the wood and activities undertaken.

Type of visit³

Slightly over four-fifths of visitors to Delamere were on a short trip to the forest of an hour or less from home (81%). 15% were on a short trip of between 1 and 3 hours from home, while much smaller proportions were on a day out of 3 hours or more from home or were on holiday away from home (1% each).

Compared to the average for all of the sites included in this programme of research, a smaller proportion of visitors were on short trips of less than 3 hours from home (73% v 96% at Delamere) while a higher proportion were on longer day trips from home (10% v 1%) or were on holiday (17% v 1%). High proportions of visitors on a trip of less than 3 hours from home were also recorded at Whiston (100%), Sherwood Pines (91%) and Hamsterley (89%), while higher proportions of visitors at Grizedale and Nant Yr Arian in Wales were on holiday (63% and 48% respectively).

Table B-4 – Type of visit (%)

Base: All respondents (269)

	%
On a short trip of less than 1 hour from home	81
On a short trip of 1-2 hours from home	13
On a short trip of 2 to 3 hours from home	2
On a day out for more than 3 hours from home	1
On holiday away from home	1

Of those who visited Delamere forest at least once a month, 92% were on a short trip of less than an hour from home compared to 75% of those who visited less often. Visitors who travelled by car were also likely to have spent less than an hour travelling to the forest (83%), as were C2DEs and those aged between 25 and 44 (85% each).

³ Please note that this question refers to the type of trip respondents were taking (short trip, day trip or holiday), with short and day trips further broken down by distance travelled from home. Times mentioned do not relate to time spent in the forest.

Frequency of visits

Overall, 80% of all visitors had been to Delamere Forest previously. Visitors who cycled were more likely than those walking a dog to be on their first visit to the forest (22% v 7%). Visitors in the Empty Nester lifecycle were also more likely than Young Independents to be on a repeat visit (88% and 69% respectively).

Amongst those who had visited before, approximately a third visited Delamere Forest 1 to 3 times per month (33%), while 22% visited between 4 and 6 times a year. A similar proportion stated that they visited 1 to 3 times per year (21%), with a smaller percentage of visitors coming to the forest six times a week or more (3%).

Table B-5 – Frequency of visits to forest (%)

Base: Respondents who have been to Delamere Forest before (216)

	%
Every day	2
4 to 6 times per week	1
1 to 3 times a week	13
1 to 3 times a month	33
4 to 6 times a year	22
1 to 3 times a year	21
Less often	7

Length of visits

On average, visitors to Delamere spent 2 hours and 22 minutes visiting the forest. 35% of visitors spent 2 to 3 hours on site (35%), 27% spent between 1 and 2 hours and approximately a fifth were on a visit of between 3 and 5 hours in duration (22%).

The average length of time spent varied between several visitor groups with those who visited Delamere less than once a month spending an average of 2 hours and 32 minutes at the site compared to an average of 2 hours and 4 minutes amongst those who visited more frequently. In terms of activities undertaken, those who cycled spent longer on average in the forest than those participating in any type of walking (2 hrs 35 minutes v 2 hrs 15 minutes).

Table B-6 – Length of visit (%)

Base: All respondents (269); All who walked (177); All who cycled (65)

	Total time on site %	Time spent on any walking %	Time spent cycling %
Up to 15 minutes	*	3	-
15 – 30 minutes	2	2	-
30 minutes – 1 hour	12	25	12
1 hour – 2 hours	27	36	38
2 hours – 3 hours	35	27	35
3 hours – 5 hours	22	7	11
More than 5 hours	2	-	2
<i>Average</i>	<i>2 hrs 22 mins</i>	<i>1 hr 42 mins</i>	<i>2 hrs 6 mins</i>
<i>Proportion of time on site</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>82%</i>

- No responses * Less than 0.5%

Table B-6 also illustrates the amount of time spent walking or cycling by those visitors who took part in such activities. Overall, visitors who took part in walking spent an average of 1 hour and 42 minutes undertaking this activity, approximately three-quarters of their time on site (76%). Visitors who took part in cycling spent an average of 2 hours and 6 minutes undertaking this activity, around four-fifths of their total time on site (82%).

Overall the average length of visit to Delamere was shorter than the average across all of the sites included in this programme of research (2 hours 33 minutes), equalling the length recorded amongst visitors to Cannock Chase Forest in 2005.

Activities undertaken

When asked what they did during their visit, the most frequently mentioned activities were walking without a dog (37%) and visiting the café (32%). Around a quarter of visitors participated in cycling (24%), while slightly smaller proportions took part in hill walking and rambling and/or dog walking (20% each).

Table B-7 – Activities undertaken during visit to forest (%)

Base: All respondents (269)

	%
Walking without a dog	37
Visiting the café	32
Any cycling	24
- Cycling on surfaced roads/trails/paths/roads	13
- Off-road cycling	12
- Cycling on un-surfaced roads/trails/paths	11
Hill walking/ rambling	20
Dog walking	20
'Go Ape' course	13
Picnic or barbecue	11
Horse riding/pony trekking	11
Visiting the forest shop	9
Birdwatching	8
Photography	7
Other wildlife watching	5
Seeing something in the forest (e.g. sculpture/ ancient tree)	3
Nature/ natural history visit	3
Running	3
Climbing	2
Educational visit	1
Orienteering	1
Collecting mushrooms/chestnuts etc.*	1

* Specified by respondent as an 'other' activity as not included on list shown to respondents.

When asked, 72% of visitors who had taken part in walking or cycling during their visit to Delamere Forest indicated that they had followed waymarked trails. Those who visited the forest less often than once a month were more likely than frequent visitors to use a waymarked trail (77% v 64%).

Compared to the average across all of the sites included in this programme of research, visitors to Delamere Forest were less likely to take part in walking without a dog (37% at Delamere compared to 47% overall) and taking part in a picnic or barbeque (11% compared to 20%).

It is useful to compare levels of participation in the main activities amongst different user groups:

- *Walking without a dog (37% overall)* – C2DEs (44%), those aged 55 and over (44%), those in the Family lifecycle (43%), women (42%) and those visiting more than once a month (41%) were particularly likely to take part in this activity.
- *Visiting the café (32% overall)* – visitors most likely to undertake this activity included 45-54 year olds (38%), dog walkers (37%), cyclists (37%), C2DEs (37%) and frequent visitors (36%).
- *Cycling (24% overall)* – visitors more likely to cycle during their visit included those in the Family lifestage (34%) and Young Independents (29%), male visitors (31%), those in the C2 social classes and those who also used the café facilities (28%). In converse only 6% of those who used the Go Ape course also cycled during their visit.
- *Hill walking/rambling (20% overall)* – visitors more likely to participate in this activity included those aged 55 and over (31%) and those in the Empty Nester lifecycle (25%).
- *Dog walking (20% overall)* – more likely than the average to be undertaken by those aged between 45 and 54 (21%) and those in the Family lifecycle (17%).
- *'Go Ape' Course (13% overall)* - 16-24 year olds (25%), Young Independents (24%), those aged 45-54 (21%) and less frequent visitors (19%) were more likely than the average to have taken part in this activity.

Due to the small sample sizes for Young Independents and 45-54 year olds, these results should be treated with caution.

Children's play area

As well as asking about their own participation in different activities, visitors were asked whether they were accompanied by any children who would use the play area during their current visit.

Overall, 9% of respondents indicated that they were with children who would use the play area. As might be expected, this proportion was considerably higher amongst those in the Family lifecycle group (19%) than amongst Empty Nesters (5%).

Favourite aspects of forest

When visitors were asked what they liked most about Delamere Forest, the most frequently provided responses were peace, quiet and tranquillity (32%), nice walks (16%), that it was convenient and easy to get to (14%), the scenery, beauty and views (12%) and the cycling facilities/freedom to cycle (11%). The table below lists those mentioned by 2% or more of visitors.

Table B-10 – Most liked aspects of Delamere Forest (%)
Base: All frequent respondents and self completion respondents (147)

	%
Peace/quiet/ tranquil	32
Nice walks	16
Convenient/ easy to get to	14
Scenery/ beautiful/ views	12
Cycling facilities/freedom to cycle	11
Open spaces	10
Variety of the trees	7
Good/well maintained pathways/trails	7
Safe environment	6
Wildlife	5
Fresh air	5
Easy access/more accessible	4
Good for walking dog	4
'Go Ape' course	4
Variety/lots of things to do	3
Countryside near to the town	3
Restaurants/catering/café/coffee shop	3
Others	2
Don't know/ not stated	7

Other responses related to the facilities available, the variety of things to do, the staff and the weather. Full listings of the responses to this question are appended.

Some of the specific answers provided were:

“You can find peace and solitude.”

“Could come again and again and not get bored because there are so many trails.”

“Easy to get to from home - pleasant - peaceful – solitude.”

Use of café/restaurant

Slightly less than a third (32%) of visitors to Delamere Forest used or planned to use the café. Those who did use this facility (85 respondents) were asked to rate it on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = poor and 5 = excellent. Overall, 31% of visitors rated the value for money of the catering facilities as ‘good’, while a further 28% described them as ‘very good’ and 8% as ‘excellent’. 16% of visitors who used these facilities felt that they were ‘fair’ or ‘poor’. Overall, the value for money of the catering facilities at Delamere Forest received a ‘good’ average satisfaction score of 3.23.

Table B-11 – Value for money (%)

Base: All who used/plan to use Café/Restaurant/other catering (85)

	%
Excellent	8
Very good	28
Good	31
Fair	7
Poor	9
Don't know/not stated	16
<i>Average score</i>	3.23

The reasons given by those who rated the value for money of catering facilities as only ‘fair’ or ‘poor’ were as follows (14 respondents):

- *“Too expensive/could be cheaper”* - 9 respondents
- *“It's ok/nothing special”* - 3 respondents
- *“Limited choice”* – 1 respondent

Respondents who used the café were also asked to rate the quality of the food and drink served at Delamere Forest using the same scale as applied to value for money. 7% of those who used these facilities rated them as ‘excellent’, while 33% rated the food and drink as ‘very good’ and 28% as ‘good’. One in ten café or restaurant users rated the food and

drink supplied as 'fair' or 'poor' (10%). The average satisfaction score given for quality was 3.42.

Table B-12 – Quality of food and drink (%)

Base: All who used/plan to use Café/Restaurant/other catering (85)

	%
Excellent	7
Very good	33
Good	28
Fair	5
Poor	5
Don't know/not stated	22
<i>Average score</i>	<i>3.42</i>

Again, those who rated the quality as 'fair' or 'poor' were asked to give reasons why they felt that this was the case (8 respondents), which included:

- *“Limited choice”* – 4 respondents
- *“Not fresh/in packets”* – 4 respondents
- *“Nothing special/mediocre”* - 2 respondents

Table B-13, overleaf, lists the types of food and drink that those using the catering facilities would like to see on offer and includes those mentioned by 5% of these respondents or more. The most frequently mentioned refreshments that visitors using the café or restaurant would like to see on sale included sandwiches (29%), light snacks (29%), tea and coffee (27%) and cold drinks (21%).

Table B-13 – Food and drink would like on sale (%)

Base: All who used/plan to use Café/Restaurant/other catering (85)

	%
Sandwiches	29
Light snacks (unspecified)	29
Tea/coffee	27
Cold drinks	21
Good range already/fine as it is	9
Cakes/pastries	9
Soup	8
Fruit	8
Salads	6
Ice-cream	6
Brown rolls/bread	6
Toasties/toast/paninis	6
Healthier options	5
Children's food	5
Hot food (unspecified)	5
Hot drinks (unspecified)	5

Importance of Delamere Forest

To help determine the influence of Delamere Forest in the decision to visit the local area, visitors who did not live in the area were asked to indicate how important the site had been in their decision to come to the area:

Table B-14 – Importance of site and its facilities in decision to visit area (%)

Base: All respondents living outside of Delamere Forest area (43)

	%
The only reason for coming	63
Very important	12
Quite important	19
Neither important nor unimportant	2
Not very important	2
Not at all important	2

Almost two-thirds of visitors who lived outside of the area stated that Delamere Forest was their 'only reason' for coming (63%) for visiting the area, while a further 31% indicated that it was 'very' or 'quite important'. In contrast, only 4% stated that the site was 'not very' or 'not at all' important.

Information sources used to plan visit

When visitors were asked about the sources of information they had used to plan their visit to Delamere Forest, the majority had relied upon previous experience (68%), which reflects the high proportion on a repeat visit. 18% cited word of mouth recommendations, while 14% found information about the site on the Internet.

Table B-15 – Information used to plan visit to Delamere Forest (%)

Base: All respondents (269)

	%
Previous experience/ knowledge	68
Word of mouth recommendations	18
Information on the Internet	14
Leaflets picked up	8
Road signs to the site	7
Tourist board or other brochures	2
Newspaper advertisements	1
Leaflets or other information received in post	1
None of these sources of information	1

- No responses * Less than 0.5%

As might be expected, visitors who went to the site at least once a month were the most likely to rely upon previous experience (94%), as were those visiting to walk the dog (85%). Word of mouth was more likely to be mentioned by those on a visit of between 1 and 2 hours from home (39%), less frequent visitors (28%) and those who participated in cycling during their visit (22%). Young Independents (31%), infrequent visitors (19%) and ABC1s (16%) were likely to have obtained information on the Internet.

Other visitors

When asked which of a list of other users had been encountered during recent visits to Delamere forest, the vast majority had seen walkers (99%), cyclists (93%) and/or children (92%). 71% of visitors had encountered 'Go Ape' high wire customers, while 53% encountered horse riders and 21% vehicles driving in the forest. A small proportion (8%) encountered others riding motorbikes or those participating in moto cross.

Respondents who encountered other users were asked to indicate the level of impact this had on their overall enjoyment. Mean scores were applied to results from +2 if a user group 'increased enjoyment a lot' to -2 if they 'decreased enjoyment a lot'.

Table B-16 – Other visitors encountered (%) and impact on enjoyment (row %)

Base: All frequent visitors and self completion respondents (147)*

	%	Increased enjoyment a lot +2	Increased enjoyment a little +1	Made no difference 0	Decreased a little -1	Decreased a lot -2	Score
Walkers	99	7	9	83	1	-	0.22
Cyclists	93	4	5	81	9	1	0.38
Children	92	8	7	81	3	-	0.21
'Go Ape' high wire customers	71	13	21	61	4	1	0.42
Horse riders	53	3	12	78	6	1	0.08
Vehicles driving in the forest	21	3	84	13	-	-	-0.07
Motorbikers/ moto cross	8	9	82	9	-	-	0.00

* Base for responses regarding impact of encounters with visitors is smaller and varies by user type.

As the table above illustrates, while encounters with other walkers, children, cyclists, horse riders and 'Go Ape' customers usually had no impact or were predominantly positive, encounters with vehicles driving in the woods were more likely to be negative.

There were 2 respondents who stated that vehicles in the forest disturbed their enjoyment. These respondents stated that vehicles were a safety hazard and also objected to the fumes.

Further negative comments regarding other users included comments relating to a lack of awareness of others amongst walkers, inconsiderate behaviour amongst cyclists and horse riders, children being too noisy and throwing sticks and the speed of both cyclists and motor bike riders. It should be noted that these comments were given by a small proportion of visitors.

Motorbikes and vehicles driving in the forest were seen as less of an issue at Delamere Forest than at all of the other sites included in this programme of research.

Disturbances to visit

Respondents were also presented with a list of potential negative disruptions and asked what impact, if any, each had on recent visits to Delamere Forest. As the table below illustrates, the majority of respondents indicated that each of the potential impacts either 'didn't reduce their enjoyment' or that they did not know (suggesting the impact had not been encountered).

However, the disruptions most likely to have a more negative effect were dogs or dog dirt (decreased the enjoyment a lot amongst 14% of visitors), litter or fly tipping (5%) and vandalised, missing or damaged signposts (3%).

Table B-17 –Impact of potential disruptions on enjoyment (row %)

Base: All frequent visitors and self completion respondents (147)

	Didn't reduce enjoyment 0	Decreased a little -1	Decreased a lot -2	Don't know	Score
Muddy tracks	88	7	1	4	-0.09
Forest operations such as felling	87	1	1	11	-0.04
Noise from other users or motorised sports	84	5	1	11	-0.07
Vandalised, missing or damaged signposts	78	11	3	9	-0.18
Litter or fly tipping	66	19	5	10	-0.33
Dogs and dog dirt	58	23	14	5	-0.54

Respondents were asked to indicate what else, if anything had decreased their enjoyment. Encouragingly, most respondents could not think of anything or did not state any other issues (71%). However areas which were mentioned by small numbers of respondents included the car park (opening times and size), overcrowding, lack of dog bins and picnic seats or tables, separating cyclists and horse riders, a lack of signs and litter.

Expectations vs Reality

Respondents to the self completion questionnaire (40 respondents), who were either on their first ever visit to the site or visited less than once a month, were asked to indicate how their overall visit had compared with expectations.

Overall, 50% of visitors stated that their visit to Delamere Forest was ‘much better’ than they had expected, while 15% felt that it was ‘a little better’. 33% found their visit ‘as expected’ and 3% thought that it was a little worse.

Table B-18 – Overall rating of visit to forest compared to expectations (%)

Base: All self-completion respondents (40)

	%
Much better (+2)	50
A little better (+1)	15
As expected (0)	33
A little worse (-1)	3
Much worse (-2)	-
Don't know/not stated	-

- No responses; Percentages equal more than 100% due to rounding

When scores were applied to responses from +2 (‘much better’) to -2 (‘much worse’), an overall positive score of 1.13 was obtained. This is the highest average recorded across all of the sites surveyed to date, with the overall average 0.83. This suggests that visits to the Delamere Forest were more likely than the ‘norm’ to be better than expected.

When asked to state why they found the forest better than expected, responses mainly related to wildlife sightings (for example, the European eagle), the size of the forest, the scenery, the cleanliness of the forest and the facilities on site.

The one respondent who found the forest to be worse than expected was also asked to state why. They felt that the noise from the ‘Go Ape’ course was an issue.

Improvements

When asked what, if anything, needed to be improved at Delamere Forest, three in ten visitors either stated that nothing should be improved or that they ‘didn’t know’ what should be improved (30%).

The suggestions that were made by 2% or more of visitors are listed below. The most frequent suggestions related to providing or improving dog bins (16%), improved signposting (12%), more litter bins (10%) and improvements to the car park (9%). Dog walkers were the most likely to indicate a need for dog bins (34%).

Table B-19 – Suggested improvements (%)

Base: All frequent visitors and self completion respondents (147)

	%
Provide/improve dog bins	16
Improved signposting	12
(More) litter bins	10
Improve car park (any mentions)	9
More better/seats/picnic tables	5
Improve/better paths	5
Improve children’s play area	4
Provide/improve café	4
More information/maps/leaflets	3
Provide more facilities i.e. showers/changing areas etc.	3
More staff/security staff	3
Safe and secure park for children	3
More/ better cycle tracks	2
Keep facilities open longer	2
Nothing/fine as it is/don’t know	30

Some of the specific suggestions provided are listed below. Full listings of the responses to this question are appended.

“More litter bins and dog bins - and better signposts.”

“A few more bins in the forest - there is nothing worse than seeing litter or having to carry it for miles.”

“In the summer it is annoying that the car park shuts at 8pm. Could extend it till maybe 10pm in the summer.”

“Leave it as wild as possible. If change is going to happen keep it in one small area (have to provide for different types of people). But don't want to destroy the wilder areas so wildlife is undisturbed.”

Expenditure

To obtain an indication of the value of visitors to Delamere Forest, respondents were asked to specify the amount they had personally spent during the day of their visit to the forest. Overall, 3% of all respondents stated that they did not spend anything. The table below presents the average expenditure per person for different elements of their visit based upon those who spent anything in each category (for example the average accommodation spend amongst those who stayed in commercial accommodation only, excluding day trippers and others who spent nothing on this area).

Table B-20 - Average expenditure per person per day (incl. day trip and overnight stay)

Base: All frequent visitors and self completion respondents (147)

	Average spend (Based on those who spent anything on each category)
Accommodation (incl. food and drink)*	£37
Food and drink (excl. at accommodation)	£12
Admission fees*	£16
Shopping (non-routine, souvenirs)*	£6
Transport (incl. petrol, taxis, public transport)	£5
Equipment (e.g. hire of boat, horse-riding)*	£16
Miscellaneous*	£8
Overall average spend	£18

*Small sample size

Overall, visitors to the Delamere Forest who spent anything spent an average of £18 per person per day. Excluding accommodation, admission fees and equipment hire (£16 each) were the aspects with the highest average expenditure amongst those who spent anything.

C. TRI*M Results

A key objective of this survey was to identify issues relating to the quality of visitor experiences at Delamere Forest and priorities for improvements. In addition to the standard analysis of the responses to questions regarding satisfaction, the information collected from visitors to Delamere Forest has also been analysed using TRI*M.

The TRI*M system has been developed by TNS to measure, manage and monitor customer relationships with products and services and, for the purposes of this study, it has been possible to adapt it to the 'product' offered by Forestry Commission sites.

The following sections provide details of the responses provided to the questions asked regarding the claimed importance of different aspects of the forest in decisions to visit, levels of satisfaction with these same elements and the results of the TRI*M analysis.

Claimed importance of different aspects of visit

To identify the drivers of quality, it was useful to ask visitors to rate how important different aspects were in their decision to visit the site. Visitors could rate each of a list of aspects as 'extremely important' (5), 'very important' (4), 'fairly important' (3), 'fairly unimportant' (2) or 'not at all important' (1). Scores were then applied to responses, allowing averages to be obtained across the whole sample - the higher the average score, the more important the aspect is across the sample as a whole.

It is important to note that these ratings are levels of *claimed* importance. The TRI*M analysis has also allowed the identification of which of these aspects have the greatest impact on overall levels of satisfaction, their real relevance to the overall quality of experience, as described later in this chapter.

Table C-1 – Importance of different aspects in decision to visit (mean score)

Base: All respondents (269)

	Importance score
Feeling safe in the forest	4.24
Clean toilets	4.18
Being able to enjoy scenery and views	4.14
Being able to spend time with family and friends	4.13
Feeling happy to leave your car in the car park	4.12
Being able to get fit and healthy	4.02
Being able to enjoy the wildlife	4.00
Value for money of your whole trip or day out	3.91
Litter bins	3.88
Enough car parking	3.87
Clear signposting on footpaths	3.83
Solitude, peace and quiet	3.80
Friendliness of staff	3.80
Choice of paths for walking	3.69
Dog waste bins	3.59
Printed information about the forest	3.56
Leaflets and maps to help you find your way around	3.55
A café	3.52
Picnic areas	3.33
A shop	3.15
Information provided by staff	3.12
Availability of staff at the site	3.06
Choice of trails for cycling	2.88
Choice of trails for other activities	2.68
'Go Ape' high rope course	2.53
Open grassy areas for ball games, sunbathing, etc.	2.49
Availability of cycle hire on site	2.38
Children's play equipment	2.13
Baby changing	1.81

This analysis suggests that the aspects claimed to be of most importance amongst most visitors were feeling safe in the forest, clean toilets, being able to enjoy the scenery and views, being able to spend time with family and friends and feeling happy to leave your car in the car park.

On the other hand, facilities claimed to be of less importance overall or only of importance to specific groups of visitors included open grassy areas (for ball games, sunbathing etc.), the availability of cycle hire on site, children's play equipment and baby changing facilities.

Respondents were also asked to specify in their own words what else, if anything, had influenced their decision to visit. The most frequently provided responses related to the

good weather (15%), the convenience of the forest's location (14%), the fresh air or being out for a day (14%) and that it is a good place for children to play (10%). The table below shows the influences mentioned by 2% of visitors or more.

Table C-2 – Other influences on decision to visit (%)

Base: All respondents (269)

	%
The weather	15
Close to home/convenient	14
Fresh air/just out for the day	14
Good/safe place for children playing	10
Good for cycling/bike hire	9
Spend time with friends/family	8
Visit 'Go Ape' course	7
Walk the dog	6
Exercise/keeping fit	4
Scenery	4
Stopped to eat and drink	4
Peace and tranquillity	3
Been before	3
Safe place to be/friendly environment	3
Good facilities – open-air concerts/café/toilets etc.	2
School trip/work related/scout trip	2

Some of the specific responses provided are listed below. The full verbatim comments provided to all of the open ended questions are appended.

“Ease of access. Good location from home.”

“Fresh air to wake us up. Locality for us - within travelling distance. Really feel as if you're in the countryside. Big enough to exercise well - keep fit.”

“No traffic - kids can just run around.”

“It's nice for my son to have space without having to worry about the cars.”

Performance of different aspects of visit

Visitors were provided with a list of different elements of the site and asked to rate how satisfied they had been with each during their visit. Respondents could rate each of the elements on a five point scale which included 'excellent' (5), 'very good' (4), 'good' (3), 'fair' (2) and 'poor' (1).

Scores were then applied to responses, allowing averages to be obtained across the whole sample - the higher the average score, the more satisfied visitors were with this aspect. This analysis suggests that, overall, visitors were most likely to be satisfied with being able to get fit and healthy, the value for money (whole trip or day out), being able to spend time with family and friends and the 'Go Ape' high rope course. Elements ranked lowest on average included the children's play equipment and dog waste bins.

Table C-3 – Satisfaction with different aspects at forest (mean score)

Base: All frequent respondents and self completion respondents (147)

	Satisfaction score
Being able to get fit and healthy	4.11
Value for money of your whole trip or day out	4.03
Being able to spend time with family and friends	4.02
Being able to enjoy scenery and views	3.99
'Go Ape' High Rope course	3.88
Being able to enjoy the wildlife	3.85
Feeling safe in the forest	3.80
Feeling happy to leave your car in the car park	3.76
Choice of paths for walking	3.72
Solitude, peace and quiet	3.62
Clean toilets	3.62
Friendliness of staff	3.58
Choice of trails for cycling	3.55
A café	3.52
A shop	3.40
Information provided by staff	3.39
Choice of trails for other activities	3.38
Printed information about the forest	3.29
Picnic areas	3.26
Clear signposting on footpaths	3.24
Leaflets and maps to help you find your way around	3.18
Baby changing	3.12
Enough car parking	3.08
Open grassy areas for ball games, sunbathing, etc.	3.05
Availability of staff at the site	2.90
Litter bins	2.55
Children's play equipment	2.50
Dog waste bins	1.97

When comparing these scores it is important to bear in mind that not all variations are statistically significant. This ranking should therefore be treated as providing an indication of what visitors are most and least satisfied with.

Compared to the average scores obtained across the other sites included in this programme of research, visitors to Delamere Forest were generally less likely to be satisfied with a number of aspects of their visit, in particular, the children's play equipment, open grassy areas and clear sign posting on paths.

Visitors who stated that they were dissatisfied with any aspects of their visit were asked to indicate why. Key reasons provided and the numbers of respondents providing each comment were as follows:

- Not enough/no dog waste bins/ none seen (47)
- Not enough/no litter bins (29)
- Not enough car parking spaces (22)
- No children's play equipment on site (9)
- No staff seen (7)
- Not enough open grassy areas (7)
- Got lost/other people got lost (6)

TRI*M Index

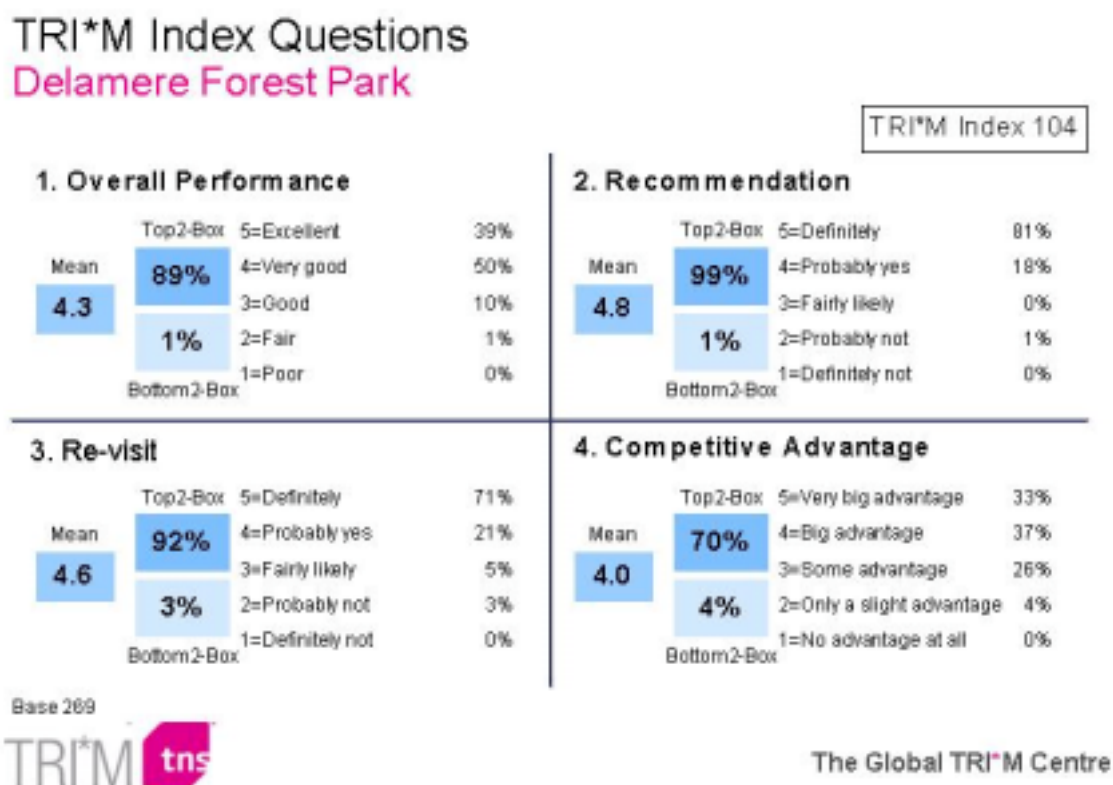
The TRI*M Index is a weighted calculation based on responses to the four following questions:

- How would you rate your visit to Delamere Forest overall? (*Overall performance*)
- Based on your experience, would you recommend Delamere Forest as a place to visit to a friend or relative? (*Recommendation*)
- Based on your experiences on this trip, would how likely are you to visit Delamere Forest again in the next few months? (*Repeat visit*)
- How would you rate Delamere Forest as a place to visit compared to the other forests, parks or outdoor recreation sites you could have gone to today instead? (*Competitive advantage*)

These four questions provide the TRI*M index score for overall visitor satisfaction with Delamere Forest (and the context within which all of the detailed satisfaction ratings are placed). It has been used in this report to benchmark Delamere Forest against other forest sites included in the 2006 survey programme and could be used also be used as a benchmark score for future comparison.

Figure C-1 shows the overall results for each of these questions, as illustrated by the 4 quadrants in the diagram.

Figure C-1 – Overall satisfaction with Delamere Forest



The overall TRI*M index figure for Delamere Forest was **104**, a very high index that suggests overall satisfaction with visits to the forest were very high. By comparison, the TRI*M index figures obtained at the other sites included in the 2006 survey were as follows:

- Sherwood Pines Forest Park – 108
- Hamsterley Forest - 106
- Nant yr Arian – 107
- Garwnant – 104

The overall satisfaction data shows that the majority of visitors rate their trip very highly, with just under two-fifths (39%) claiming it was 'excellent' and 50% claiming that it was 'very good'. In addition to this high satisfaction with their trip, 81% of visitors stated that they would 'definitely' recommend a visit to Delamere Forest. This is a very good indicator of

enjoyment of a visit as word of mouth was an information source cited by almost a fifth of visitors when planning to visit this location (as detailed on page 16).

A high proportion of visitors would return to Delamere Forest for a repeat trip, with approximately seven in ten visitors indicating that they would 'definitely' return (71%). When asked how the forest compared to other outdoor recreation sites, most of the sample stated that Delamere Forest does have an advantage over alternative sites, with approximately a third claiming the site had a 'very big' advantage (33%) and 37% claiming that it had a 'big' advantage. A further 26% of the sample saw Delamere as having only 'some' advantage over other sites which could have been visited.

As with the other sites covered in 2006, all of the scores are very high which is encouraging and suggests that most people enjoy their visits to Delamere Forest, they would highly recommend it as a place to visit to friends and family, would return for another visit and are likely to perceive it as a better place to visit than other, alternative outdoor recreation sites.

TRI*M Typology

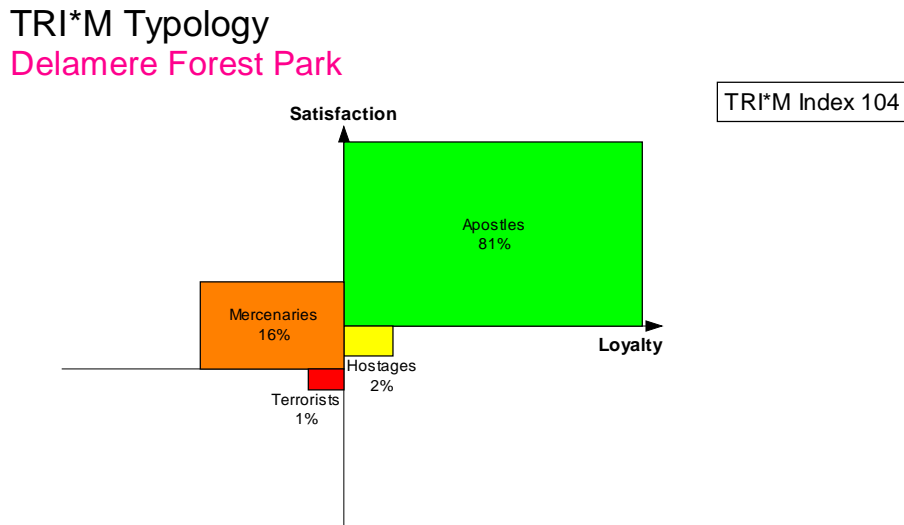
The next stage of the TRI*M analysis involved the categorisation of all respondents into four different groups. This categorisation is based upon responses to the four key questions (as described on page 28) with respondents classified by level of satisfaction, based upon their overall performance and recommendation responses, and levels of loyalty, based upon their repeat visit and competitive advantage responses.

The four groups are as follows:

- *Apostles* – visitors with high levels of satisfaction and loyalty. Visitors essential to the long term success of the site. The focus should be on how to retain these visitors.
- *Hostages* – visitors with low levels of satisfaction but high levels of loyalty. These visitors may be visiting the site due to a lack of alternatives or barriers to travel elsewhere. The focus should be on how to satisfy these visitors, to ‘move’ them to the Apostles group.
- *Mercenaries* – visitors with high levels of satisfaction but low levels of loyalty. Typically these types of visitors are always looking for better options and are likely to visit a range of different locations to take part in outdoor recreation. The focus for this type of visitors should be to identify what will engender loyalty.
- *Terrorists* – visitors with low levels of satisfaction and low levels of loyalty. These types of visitors are actively disruptive via negative word of mouth.

As Figure C-2 overleaf illustrates, the majority of visitors to Delamere Forest (81%) were categorised into the Apostles grouping i.e. both satisfied and loyal. Most of the remainder (16%) were classified as Mercenaries (satisfied but not loyal), with small proportions classified as Terrorists (neither satisfied nor loyal, 1%) and Hostages (not satisfied but loyal, 2%).

Figure C-2 – Visitors to Delamere Forest by TRI*M Typology



Base 269



Visitors identified as Apostles (both satisfied and loyal) were significantly more likely than those classified as Mercenaries (satisfied but no loyal) to visit the site 1 to 3 times per month (59% v 29%). Conversely, Mercenaries were more likely to have visited between 1 and 3 times in the past year (24% v 4% Apostles).

TRI*M Grid

The third stage of the TRI*M analysis combined responses to the series of importance and satisfaction ratings (as detailed in Tables C-1 and C3) with the TRI*M index which was derived for each respondent on the basis of the four key questions described on page 28.

To produce each TRI*M grid, each of the aspects of Delamere Forest was given a relative value in terms of the following three dimensions:

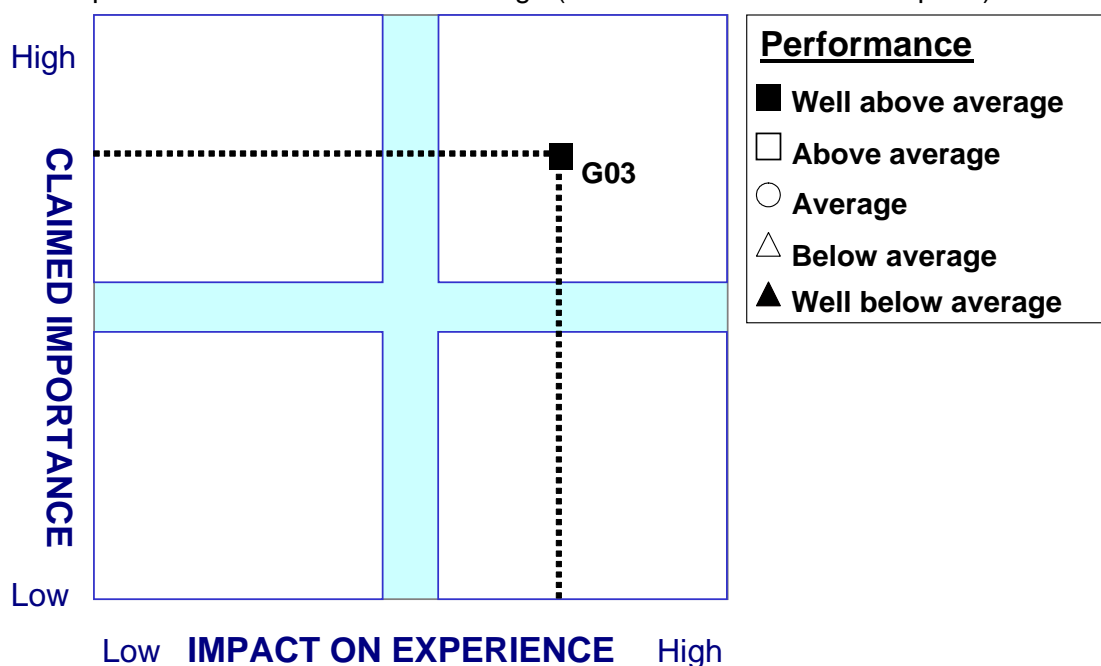
- *Levels of claimed importance* – as reported in Table C-1. This measurement provides an indication of the aspects that visitors believe to be most important in their decision to visit Delamere Forest, those which should be reinforced in marketing communications.
- *Impact on experience* – this measurement is statistically derived from an analysis of the correlation of each aspect's performance (i.e. levels of satisfaction reported) with the TRI*M index. If there is a positive correlation between the TRI*M index and the performance of a particular aspect, it is rated as having a high impact on quality of experience. Conversely if there is no correlation between the TRI*M index and the performance of an aspect, it is rated as having a low impact on quality of experience.
- *Levels of satisfaction* – as reported in Table C-3. This measurement provides an indication of the relative performance of each of the aspects which were rated. This measurement provides an indication of areas which require improvement.

In the following TRI*M grids, each of these three dimensions are plotted as follows:

Levels of claimed importance - this score is displayed on the vertical axis which runs along the left hand side of the grid. The closer to the top of the grid, the higher the claimed importance and the closer to the bottom of the grid, the lower the claimed importance.

Impact on experience - this measurement is displayed on the horizontal axis which runs along the bottom of the grid. The further to the right of the grid the higher the impact on the quality of experience, the further to the left of the grid the lower the impact on quality of experience.

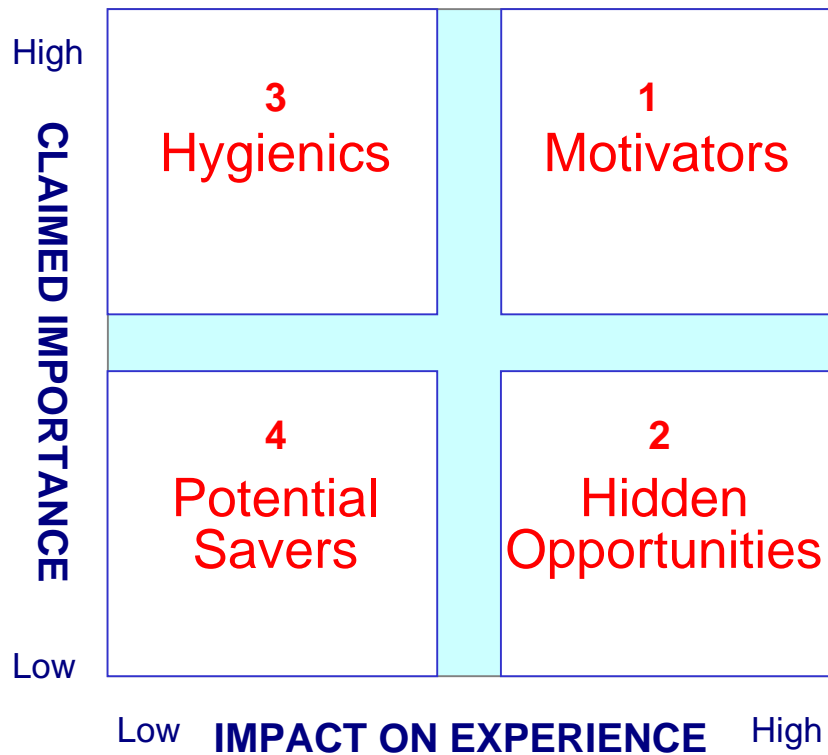
Levels of satisfaction – the previous two dimensions (claimed importance and impact on experience) tell us where on the grid each attribute falls. On the example below these are represented by the dotted lines. Where the two dotted lines cross is where on the grid the aspect of the forest is located. The third dimension is levels of satisfaction, the measurement of performance. The average satisfaction score respondents gave to each aspect is displayed by the shape plotted on the grid, for example the filled in square on the grid below. This tells us how well the forest is performing on each attribute. In the hypothetical example below the attribute **G03** has fairly high claimed importance (because it is near the top of the grid), a fairly high impact on experience (as it is to the right of the grid) and its performance is well above average (because it has a filled in square).



As illustrated in Tables C-1 and C-3, a total of 28 aspects of Delamere Forest have been rated by respondents. The results of the TRI*M Grid analysis can provide an insight into which ones should be priorities for improvement or marketing. Each aspect's impact on experience rating should be considered to be a higher priority than claimed importance rating as this measure has a direct relationship to overall levels of satisfaction. As such, aspects that are further to the right on the grid should be considered as higher priorities. However, claimed importance also has some bearing so things that are towards the top of the grid also have some priority. To help identify which aspects to prioritise each of the four quadrants has been given a name indicating its relative priority.

The top priorities should be those that fall into the Motivators quadrant (top right hand corner of the grid) because these have both a high impact on experience and high claimed

importance. Second priority should be any aspects in the Hidden Opportunities quadrant (bottom right hand corner) because these also have a high impact on experience. Third priority is aspects in the Hygienics quadrant (top left hand corner) because although these have high claimed importance they are less motivating and therefore have less influence on the quality of experience. The last priority is the Potential Savers quadrant (bottom left hand corner) where aspects have both a low impact on experience and low claimed importance.



*TRI*M Grids for Delamere Forest*

Over the following pages the strengths and priorities for Delamere Forest have been identified. Strengths and priorities are defined as those aspects which fall in or on the boundaries of the Motivators quadrant. The crossbars on the grid are there to remind us that there are no hard and fast dividing lines between quadrants. Each aspect must be interpreted in relation to the position of the other aspects in order to determine its relative priority in the overall assessment of quality of experience.

The TRI*M grids illustrating the results obtained across all visitors to Delamere Forest are presented on page 37. For clarity the results are presented across 4 grids but all of these findings should be considered together.

Strengths - strengths are classified as attributes in or on the boundaries of the Motivators quadrant (in the top right hand corner of the grids) that are represented by squares. An unfilled square denotes above average performance and a filled square means well above average performance.

At this overall level, 6 of the 28 attributes were considered as strengths for Delamere Forest. These were grouped closely together meaning that they had similar impacts on experience. The aspects were being able to enjoy scenery and views (G03), value for money of the whole trip or day out (G05), the choice of paths for walking (F08), being able to spend time with family and friends (G02), being able to get fit and healthy (G06) and being able to enjoy the wildlife (G04).

Priorities - priorities, like strengths, are also found in or on the boundaries of the Motivators quadrant. They are indicated by triangles (below average performance) and circles (average performance). Only one aspect was identified as priority for Delamere Forest as the overall market level – solitude, peace and quiet (G01). While this element is considered to be of high claimed importance and has an impact on experience, its performance is only rated as average.

Hidden Opportunities - hidden opportunities are indicated by any aspect that appears in or on the borders of the quadrant in the bottom right of the grid. These attributes have a high impact on quality of experience but have lower claimed importance than attributes in the Motivators quadrant. 7 of the 28 aspects are in this quadrant – picnic areas (F17), a shop, (F03), the availability of staff on site (F11), choice of trails for cycling (F09), choice of trails for other activities (F10), baby changing facilities (F05) and the ‘Go Ape’ course (F21). Of these aspects only one (the ‘Go Ape’ course) is performing above average. Improving the quality of the other aspects in this quadrant could be the driver for further improving overall levels of quality of experience at Delamere Forest.

Hygenics – while the performance of aspects in this quadrant is important to the viability of the site, high levels of satisfaction will not improve retention in themselves. Aspects included in this quadrant or close to boundaries are clean toilets (F04), enough car parking (F01), the friendliness of staff (F12), clear signposting on footpaths (F02), dog waste bins (F19), the café (F15), feeling happy to leave your car in the car park (A02), feeling safe in the forest (A01), leaflets, maps and interpretation boards (F07) and litter bins (F20). Notably two of these aspects are performing below average – the leaflets, maps and interpretation boards and the friendliness of staff – and one is performing far below average – dog waste bins.

Potential savers - aspects in this quadrant receive lower than average levels of claimed importance and have a lower than average impact upon the quality of experience. These aspects may be considered as lower priorities at the ‘all visitors’ level, although they may be of more importance to smaller groups of visitors. Aspects included in this quadrant are the printed information about the forest (F16), information provided by staff (F13), open grassy areas (F18), the availability of cycle hire on-site (F14) and children’s play equipment (F06).

FACILITIES IN DECISION TO VISIT SITE

- F01 Enough car parking
- F02 Clear signposting on footpaths
- F03 A Shop
- F04 Clean toilets
- F05 Baby changing facilities
- F06 Children's play equipment
- F07 Leaflets, maps and interpretation panels to help you find your way around
- F08 Choice of paths for walking
- F09 Choice of trails for cycling
- F10 Choice of trails for other activities (e.g. horse riding)
- F11 Availability of staff at the site (e.g. rangers)
- F12 Friendliness of staff
- F13 Information provided by staff
- F14 Availability of cycle hire on-site
- F15 Cafe or restaurant
- F16 Printed information about the forest
- F17 Picnic areas
- F18 Open grassy areas for ball games, sunbathing, etc
- F19 Dog waste bins

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ASPECTS OF PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY IN DECISION TO VISIT

- A01 Feeling safe in the forest
- A02 Feeling happy to leave your car in the car park

Base 269

FACILITIES IN DECISION TO VISIT SITE

- F20 Litter bins
- F21 On Age course
- F22 A forest drive *
- F23 Bike wash *
- F24 Showers *
- F25 Red kite hide *

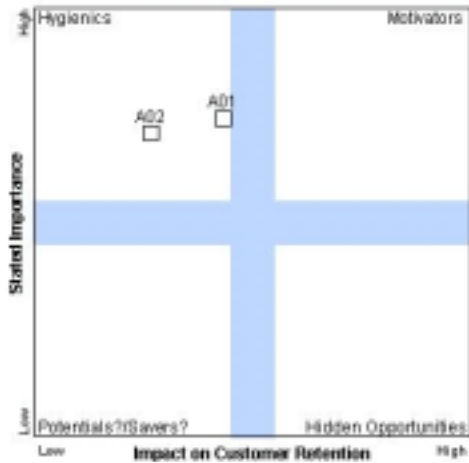
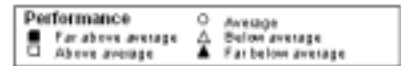
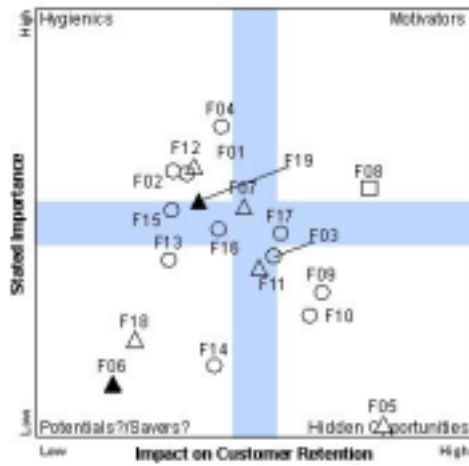
*Not available at this site

Base 269

GENERAL ASPECTS IN DECISION TO VISIT

- G01 Solitude, peace and quiet
- G02 Being able to spend time with family and friends
- G03 Being able to enjoy scenery and views
- G04 Being able to enjoy the wildlife
- G05 Value for money of your whole trip or day out
- G06 Being able to get fit and healthy

Base 269



Summary of key TRI*M findings

The TRI*M Grid analysis for Delamere Forest has highlighted the following key drivers of quality of experience and potential areas for improvement:

Strengths – these are the attributes of the site which are considered as important amongst most visitors, are proven to have a high impact on overall levels of satisfaction and are currently performing well. At Delamere Forest the main strengths of the site are value for money, opportunities to get fit and healthy, being able to spend time with family and friends, being able to enjoy scenery and views, being able to enjoy wildlife and the choice of paths for walking.

It is vital that these strengths are maintained and communicated in promotional materials.

Immediate, top priority issues – these are attributes of the site which are considered to be important amongst most visitors, have an impact on overall levels of satisfaction but are currently performing below average. At Delamere solitude, peace and quiet receives a lower performance rating so this should be considered a priority in the site's management and maintaining current levels of satisfaction.

Second priority issues – there are a number of attributes at this site which, although most visitors rated them as important, were found to have less impact on overall levels of satisfaction. Of these attributes, three were found to be performing below average - leaflets, maps and interpretation boards, friendliness of staff and dog waste bins. These should be considered as second priorities in maintaining levels of satisfaction at Delamere Forest.

Future opportunities – these are attributes which, although most visitors do not perceive them as important in their decision to visit, have been proven to have an impact on the overall quality of experience of those who rated them. At Delamere Forest the aspects included in this category are picnic areas, the shop, availability of staff on site, choice of trails for cycling, choice of trails for other activities, baby changing facilities and the 'Go Ape' course.

Investing and improving these facilities in the future will provide opportunities to develop levels of satisfaction beyond those currently achieved.

D. Appendices

Results obtained at other Forestry Commission sites

Responses to open-ended questions

What else influenced your decision to visit today?

A change from our usual dog walk.
A day out. Somewhere to take the girls that is attractive.
A newspaper article at the weekend suggested here.
A nice day out in the countryside really. Because it's familiar I feel secure coming with my children without dad.
A nice day preparing the body for hibernation.
A nice walk.
A stop off and something to eat.
Access from home - not too far to travel – familiarity.
Away from cars. Cycling.
Basically just quality time. With family.
Because it may be cooler in the forest.
Being outdoors, therapeutic, play for the children.
Being outside in the fresh air. Nice friendly environment.
Bike ride.
Biking to get fit and healthy.
Birthday present - Go Ape.
Both got bikes.
Break in journey.
Came over for a walk.
Came today to pick up children who have used the Go Ape course. If they enjoy it we will be back again.
Came with work.
Central place between us all meeting here - accessible - cheap - would have liked to do 'Go Ape' today but fully booked.
Change of place to walk.
Change of scenery pleasant day out.
Chill out time.
Chose to visit the forest and picked a campsite nearby for that reason.
Close by and really nice environment - lovely day for it. Weather is dry.
Close proximity.
Close proximity nice to take dog out-safe environment.
Close proximity to where we live.
Close to home I can ride from home to home.
Close to home. Different age groups. Can walk.
Closeness.
Convenient to come for a day out on the bikes.
Convenience.
Convenient.
Cycling - brought a group with us today 4 -5 families to cycle.
Cycling for fitness. The weather. Good diverse forest. Weather doesn't put me off.
Day off and thought I'd come down to see what the bike trails are like.
Day out for the children.
De-stress from everyday life.
Dog friendly, good exercise for us - didn't find any dog litter bins and ordinary litter bins, local farm shop could be on site.
Dog walking.
Dog walking.
Dog walking.
Dog walking mostly.

Dog walking mostly.
Dog walking on a nice day.
Dropped daughter off locally so decided to walk the dog here.
Dry - walking area- safety.
Due a ride out on the bikes.
Ease of access. Good location from home.
Ease of location. Variety of paths (underfoot terrain different).
Easy accessible by road.
Easy option-closeness.
Eddisbury fruit farm- local to forest - two trips in one day out.
Enjoy walking, safe for children, easy walking.
Enjoyment of cycling and walking. Short drive to get away in the nature.
Environmental forest.
Exercise.
Exercise and for relaxing.
Exercise for me. Being able to walk somewhere in the countryside no traffic etc.
Fairly accessible from home and like forests - the weather it's not chucking down and not overcrowded.
Family outing.
Family visitor.
Fancied bike ride today.
Food/cycle.
For children spaces and cycling for me.
For my dog to have a new place to walk in, we liked it a lot, though will definitely use it regularly in the future, interested in the dog activity route.
Free except for parking. Children like it.
Fresh air - being able to get out inside.
Fresh air to wake us up. Locality for us - within travelling distance. Really feel as if you're in the countryside. Big enough to exercise well - keep fit.
Fresh air unpolluted.
Fresh air. Exercise. Dog walking. Scenery etc.
Friendliness of the people here and the facilities here.
Get out of house on a wet day.
Get together with ante-natal girls and children. Do it once a year and have a great time.
Give the kids some fresh air and exercise.
Go ape.
Go Ape course.
Go ape course.
Go ape course.
Go ape course.
Go Ape, have booked it.
Good weather.
Grandson to cycle.
Hadn't been since Christmas - somewhere different to where we normally go - and relatively close to home.
I enjoy the fresh air.
I have got to walk for health reasons and this is a safe place to walk. The cars don't go there. I'm worried on country lanes about cars.
I suppose specifically today it was the opportunity to swim.
I think it was fairly easy to get to.
I wanted something to eat.
I work in Chester and had a half day.
I booked the Ape course.
I'm being sponsored to go on Ape course.

It was the Go Ape course.

It wasn't raining.

It wasn't raining.

It's a good place where the dogs have a good wander without too many people around. And I can have a walk in peace.

It's a nice day to get outside and enjoy the scenery and wildlife here.

It's a nice place fairly handy to get to.

It's going to rain for 2 days so making the most of the nice weather.

It's going to rain later. Came early.

It's nice for my son to have space without having to worry about the cars.

It's raining. We came for a hot coffee first. Too wet at the moment to walk but we will later.

I've been to Go Ape before and wanted to bring my daughter.

Just a lovely place to come to - I've been coming for years.

Just because it's local.

Just bring the kids out.

Just came out for a short break while visiting the surrounding area. Based on the fact that we come here regularly for other activities - we like it here.

Just cycling.

Just for the day out today.

Just fresh air and first frost to enjoy.

Just local.

Just the ability to safely walk around the trails.

Just the fresh air and away from hassle and cars, children play area, just walking.

Just the open fresh air.

Just the thought that it might be a bit cooler. Good to bring the dog.

Just to get outside.

Just wanted a day out cycling.

Just wanted to get out in the fresh air - get some exercise - the scenery is excellent. Get out in the country with the kids - stress release.

Kids have somewhere to go. Convenient for me. No traffic - kids can just run around.

Knew we would have a nice fun day.

Lack of shops. Don't have to shop. Child nagging to come.

Limited time with the grandchildren. Came to see Go Ape.

Local

Local amenity staying with my daughter in Isle of Wight.

Local and convenient. It's a nice place.

Locality - we like local - good day weather wise.

Locality/can walk into forest. Forest is dog friendly and pram friendly. Well maintained.

Lunch mainly today.

Mainly to have a look - fairer today and came with a friend for a walk.

Meeting my daughter here for coffee and a walk.

Meeting point for friends half way between the houses.

Mum wanted blackberries so helping pick them.

My afternoon off. Weather is ok. Cooler under cover out of the sun.

My children had a choice and choose here for a picnic.

My mate - he chose the location today.

My son particularly enjoys it.

Near to Chester nice day.

Near. Easy.

Nearby.

Need for exercise. Fresh air and tranquility and peace and serenity - de-stress in the forest.

Need to walk the dog.

Nice cafe went here for lunch.

Nice day. Got the grandchildren staying. Walking the dog.

Nice day. Pick up my nephew and son.
Nice place to visit.
Nice quiet walk.
Nice restaurant. Then were going fruit picking.
Nice to come and picnic with kids and the dog.
Nice walk.
No time to go for a walk and have a cup of tea.
Nothing in particular. Part of routine for walking and fitness.
Nothing. A great place to take your dog.
On works team building day.
Other people.
Peace and quiet.
Peace and quiet. Away from all the humdrum.
Proximity knew it's good anyway. The weather, wouldn't have come if it was pouring down.
Proximity of site.
Proximity to home - close enough.
Quality time to enjoy cycling.
Recommendation from a gentleman - giving a talk to the WI on the history of Delamere, 300 million years back the talk started.
Recommendation.
Relatives live nearby so combined visit.
Relaxation mainly.
School holidays.
Something new and different to do.
Something to do with the kids.
Somewhere different to go out in the open air. It was lucky I found Delamere because it was badly signposted from North Wales.
Somewhere to bring grandchildren out of the sun and it keeps them interested on the way around.
Costs very little. Car park is reasonable.
Somewhere to come to get away from it all.
Somewhere different to go to.
Spare afternoon. Good place to visit.
Special skills area for mountain bikes.
Spend time with family.
Spur of the moment. Usually come to wear the kids out.
Sun was shining nearest forest to visit.
Sunny weather, fresh air, freedom.
Surroundings - it's beautiful and the facilities - need a coffee!
Taking my mate out (in a wheelchair) to get out and have a laugh. Have a drink.
The bike jumps.
The children - for something to do.
The fact that it is on my doorstep. It's beautiful.
The forest and countryside rather than running on the roads - nicer environment.
The info brochure in the tourist info centre in Chester that brought us here today.
The kids - always enjoyed Delamere.
The kids wanted to go on the Go Ape.
The sunshine - the fact it was going to be a nice day.
The sunshine. Like to get out and mix with other people. So close to home.
The 'uphill downhill' course .
The weather. A nice day. Cheap - it's free.
The weather - not raining. Not too cold. Spontaneous decision.
The weather - a bit cooler today so better for taking part in activities. Fresh air.
The weather – dry, clear day.
The weather - good to be not raining.

The weather - it's a nice day. Nice. Quiet and pleasant atmosphere.
The weather - it's not raining.
The weather - sunny day, kids off school.
The weather - wouldn't come if it was really bad weather cause of taking photos. The season was important too - late summer, early autumn.
The weather, enjoy sunshine.
The weather, it's nice, won't come if pouring down - the paths get muddy.
The weather, nice day. Not too hot - too many midges if it gets too hot. Cycling - nice safe environment, no cars.
The weather was fine - the grandchildren are on school holidays and it's good to get out in the fresh air.
The weather. It's nice - not too hot - not raining.
The weather. It's somewhere different.
The weather. Wasn't too hot. Not raining either though. Nice to get off road - away from cars and traffic. Nice to get out of the office.
Thought it might be sunny - but it's not! Autumn colours coming out.
Thought the cafe was open but it was not. Arrived at 5.45 pm and it was just locking up.
Time to spend together for family in the forest.
Go Ape course.
To chill
To find out more about facilities available. What's on – concerts.
To get some fresh air.
To go out for a bike ride between the showers.
To ride out horses.
To use the café.
To walk the dog.
To walk the dog.
To walk the dogs.
Train stopping here. Don't have to spend money to have fun.
Training for Duke of Edinburgh walk.
Try to come out at least once a month to spend time with my wife.
Very good place for walking.
Visit the trees and forest.
Visitor staying with us so brought him here for the day - for Ape course in particular.
Wanted a walk.
Wanted to get out in nature.
Wanted to get out on the bikes. Nice place to come - close to home - safe place to cycle away from the roads.
Wanted to visit Go Ape but it was fully booked. And a play area would be good - lots of children here today.
Wanted to relax.
Was not far to travel.
We can keep fit with facilities half way.
We got family with us.
We have family with us.
We just like it. Somewhere nice to go.
We live near and it's a nice place to come to.
We love walking. Somewhere different to go.
We use the permanent orienteering course.
We were just passing.
Weather - nice and sunny so you want to get out. Plus the shade from the trees is good if it gets too hot.
Weather and locality. Opportunity for cycle trails.
Weather generally. Distance - easy reach. Recommendation.

Weather. Cooler today after the heat so nicer for walking in. Also the weekend is when we get to spend time together.

Well the weather in the sense that it will be cooler under the trees.

Wild walk and cup of tea.

Work made us come!

Work! We had to!

Suggestions for improvements

A few more bins in the forest - there is nothing worse than seeing litter or having to carry it for miles.

A play area for children. Green areas for playing.

A restricted area where dogs weren't allowed, there is already somewhere where you can't take horses - possibly make it a dog free area as well.

Advertise BMX off road trials and make appointments for these pastimes to control these.

Another facility for drinks in a different part of the forest.

Be nice to have a new trail 5 - 6 miles + 10 miles, two more trails

Better sign post and maps.

Build a children's play area.

Cafe open later - especially during the summer. More dog bins in the forest.

Certainly ban on parking on roadway. Not always enough clear map signs.

Changing facilities.

Clean up a bit more. Leave it wild - no more work needed.

Definitely dog litter bins. More litter bins. More signposts in some areas of the forest.

Dog bins and general litter bins too.

Dog bins here - and in the forest. More car parking.

Dog bins on the trails so people can dispose of waste regularly at regular intervals on the path.

Signposts - make the colour code system more clear.

Dog litter bins.

Dog litter bins and ordinary ones.

Dog litter bins please provide.

Dog waste bins and litter bins and children's play area

Donate a chair for people to sit down on.

Don't think anything.

Don't want the rural aspect changed, this is a forest keep it in its natural state, just make bigger area for picnics.

Expand the picnic area. More dog litter bins.

Extend the cafe area.

Free or less expensive car parking and more spaces.

Get rid of the Go Ape course.

Horses for hire.

I enjoy it as it is- is a nice cheap day out.

I like things as they are.

I think everything is just about right at the moment. Maybe improve the café and the food it offers.

I think it could be modernised a bit more. .Parts of it are old fashioned compared to elsewhere.

I think the kid's play area could be extended more. More activities for wet weather.

I would say more picnic areas, more sign posts for walkers and more play area for children.

If they could put more hardcore on the paths so they are less muddy - stone chippings could be ok- less muddy wet and dirty to walk along.

In the summer it is annoying that the car park shuts at 8pm. Could extend it till maybe 10pm in the summer.

Just like to see more.

Just something I mentioned.

Leave it as wild as possible. If change is going to happen keep it in one small area (have to provide for different types of people). But don't want to destroy the wilder areas so wildlife is undisturbed.

Less felling.
Less litter is the main thing.
Make car park bigger and more privacy for local residents.
Maps. Being able to just pick up a map instead of ones on boards.
More advertising of the concert only hear about them when their over.
More bins for the dog.
More car parking - improve the café.
More car parking - more cycling tracks and walking tracks - wider range of food.
More car parking. More dog bowls. More dog waste bins.
More car parks - more signposts. To see a ranger now and then. Less felling. More dog bins. More restrictions on lakes and pools that are amassing.
More covered picnic areas.
More cycling routes.
More deciduous trees.
More dog and litter bins.
More dog bins.
More dog litter bins.
More dog waste bins. An outside tap at linmere and a few more dog bowls.
More facilities on other car parks.
More interpretation. Clear signposting. More rangers present.
More like Gridsdale - dog bins.
More litter bins and dog bins - and better signposts.
More open air concerts.
More open areas for play.
More rangers.
More seating.
More sign posts - dog waste bins.
More signs, more bins, toilets at other car parks too, possibly a butty wagon. Maps on major junctions 'you are here' maps etc.
More signs on trails in forest.
More tables at cafe area. To site outside. Don't make it too commercialized.
More toilet facilities, toilets at Barnsbridge burnt down two years ago and not replaced.
More trails with wheelchair access. Less dusty roads. More barriers on the road to stop cars going off.
More waste bins and doggy bins.
Nice if there were more places like Linmere around the forest where you can feel safe and more litter bins.
Not much really. Perhaps the signs could be clearer.
Nothing - I think it's great as it is.
Perhaps more open grassy areas. Just for sitting down on. Sometimes it's just nice to be able to sit on the grass.
Perhaps more signs with maps.
Play area for kids.
Play area introduced.
Quite happy as it is.
Quite happy really I come to walk the dog.
Quite satisfied with things the way they are.
Recycling bins, restaurant should not close so early. Could have a licence.
Sectioned off for bikers right of way etc.
Slightly bigger area would be nice.
Small play areas to keep kids occupied - for smaller children - monkey bars - rope swings.
Some signposts on the paths.
Stays here and is not got rid of for various reasons. Happy the way it is.
The bikes - less of them or banned. Just seems like they've introduced them to make money.
The main car park tends to get busy on Sundays maybe more room here.

Two pounds on car park is too much if you're making short visit.

What do you like most about the forest?

Amount of different routes you can take with the horses.

Being able to bring the dog for a walk - and let her off the lead.

Being able to bring the dogs for a walk. Being able to wander where I want without restrictions.

Being able to ride your bike and horses in the forest. Being out in the fresh air - the wind blowing through your hair.

Biking.

Can cycle safely - no cars or traffic here.

Chill out time. Nice to walk. And then go for a cup of tea.

Cleanliness.

Close proximity.

Close to home. Back to nature.

Closeness to home. Trees.

Coming in cafe then a nice walk.

Coming to get away from everywhere - love a forest atmosphere.

Convenience.

Convenient.

Cycling, walking.

Cycling and cycling trail.

Cycling. Happy healthy day out.

Don't feel threatened here - can relax and enjoy the day.

Easily accessible, its nice and clean - quite big - good facilities go 5 mins in any direction and its quite peaceful.

Easy to get to.

Easy to get to from home - pleasant - peaceful – solitude.

Easy to walk around.

Enjoy the walking in the peaceful forest. And wildlife.

Enjoyable walks.

Freedom - openness and the ability to get away from it all.

Freedom/getting in countryside more quickly.

Fresh air - scenery - variety of views - waterside - hillsides etc. – accessible.

Fresh air - scenery. English countryside - the greenery. It's nice you get to run around and play.

Fresh air and peace and quiet.

Go Ape - the walks are nice. During the week I like the quiet and at the weekend I like the company of others.

Good place to take the dog safely.

I just like the walking - meeting my friends.

I like to walk with my friend. Then we go for a cup of tea.

It was very convenient.

Its accessible to home.

It's close to home - managed quite well on the whole - I like the trees and the way the lake has developed. It's been great watching the developments.

Its convenient we live on a nearby farm.

It's nice scenery to take the dog for a walk and it's a good way for me and the dog to get some exercise.

It's relaxing. Change of scenery - change of environment. I like the facilities.

Itself. Delamere itself. Lovely place.

It's shady in hot weather.

Just bike riding.

Just biking only.

Just the diversity of it walking, cycling protected from the wind.

Lake-scenery and trees away from town.
Largest nicest wood around.
Location and solitude.
My time to myself.
Nice area to visit with kids - chill out time.
Nice friendly atmosphere for walking and other activities.
Not too far from home. Very well maintained. Could come again and again and not get bored because there are so many trails.
Open air - great outdoors.
Outside the country.
Peace.
Peace and quiet.
Peace and quiet.
Peace and quiet and solitude.
Peace and quiet of the area.
Peace and quiet. One of my favourite places.
Peace and quiet. Time to sit with family over a coffee.
Peace and quite.
Proximity to home. Variety of tracks. Not too technical.
Quiet. Wildlife and scenery. Helps if its good weather.
Quite area, time to think.
Really nice, natural and secluded.
Safe for the children to run off and play.
Scenery varied and beautiful.
Scenery. Just like the forest.
Scenery. Walking and freedom to cycle.
Solitude and scenery.
Still natural - not much done to it commercial wise.
The ability to use countryside in a safe and secure way.
The fact I like the forest.
The fact it's here. It's nice. It's peaceful. I come during the week.
The fact we work here and get paid.
The freedom - the peace and quiet.
The fresh air. Peace. Lovely walks. Views. Solitude.
The general part as a whole
The hilly soft trails under foot - walking and running and cycling. And the trees.
The locality. On our doorstep.
The location - handy. It's quiet. Good facilities.
The natural beauty.
The open space.
The quiet when walking round - the distance you can walk off road – wildlife.
The range of different cycle tracks - feeling of being in the country. Handy from home.
The ruggedness - off road bits, the forestry bits.
The scenery close proximity.
The solitude.
The solitude and quietness and the fact it's in the countryside away from traffic and noise and fumes.
The solitude. The fresh air. The wide open spaces. Nice after being in the office all week.
The tranquility and the environment in general.
The trees and the quiet areas. Bird watching and little mammals.
The Visitors Centre! The vastness of it - the choice of walks.
The walking and the freedom. Feeling safe.
The walking and the Go Ape course.
Tranquility - nice walks - close to home - relatively cheap exercise with the kids.
Vast amount of trails.

Very open. Don't see a lot of people. Don't bump into people.

Very well kept it's a very good place to run for orienteering.

Walking.

Walking.

Wildlife. Peace and quiet.

Wildness. Natural state.

Wow, open spaces and solitude.

You can find peace and solitude.

Questionnaires