

## **Maintaining Our Open Green Spaces**

### **2014 Consultation Report for Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – 19 Sept**

The online survey was carried out between Friday October 17 and Friday December 12 **2014** and 173 responses were received. Below is a summary of the responses received for each question.

#### **Q1. What types of open spaces do you visit / use and how often**

	Every day	Every week	Few times a month	Occasionally	Never
Parks	37	72	22	25	2
Sports pitches	5	33	15	44	42
Play areas	12	42	19	33	38
Cemeteries	1	4	6	38	86
Local green space	29	58	23	16	5

#### **Q2. Are you aware that different organisations are responsible for maintaining open green spaces across the borough?**

Yes: 94 (55%)

No: 71 (41%)

Don't know: 7 (4%)

#### **Q3 Do you think that organisations/groups that regularly use open spaces (such as sports pitches) should be able to help contribute to more maintenance in times of high demand?**

Yes: 85 (49%)

No: 61 (36%)

Don't know: 26 (15%)

Those responding yes were asked which groups/ organisations and, in summary, the majority of respondents focussed on sports clubs with a particular emphasis on football use. Other groups mentioned were: dog walkers and other walking groups.

Other issues raised were:

- Level and proportion of financial contribution
- Respondents noted that sports clubs already pay to hire pitches and issue of whether this fee was sufficient to cover costs was raised.
- Payment should be proportional to usage
- Feeling among some respondents that sports clubs should do more to reduce litter and / or be fined for doing so

**Q4. Would you support an approach where the council can amend the frequency of its work to provide more cuts in particular areas whilst reducing the work in other areas?**

Yes: 110 (64%)  
 No: 48 (28%)  
 Don't know: 14 (8%)

**Q5. Would you be happy for certain areas to be given preference in times of high demand, such as this year?**

Yes: 139 (82%)  
 No: 24 (14%)  
 Don't know: 7 (4%)

**Q6. If yes, (to Q5) could you rank the area below in order of importance to you:**

Area	Percentage rank in importance to respondent (1 high to 6 low)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Park	30	43	35	23	2	6
Sport pitches	30	24	18	19	27	19
Play areas	41	28	31	18	10	5
Grass verges	19	16	16	24	32	28
Cemeteries	5	5	11	24	32	59
Local green spaces	20	24	23	24	32	20

**Q7. Have you ever cut/mowed a public space in your area?**

Yes: 55 (32.2%)  
 No: 116 (67.8%)

Respondents who had mowed / cut public spaces predominately mentioned grass verges outside or near their homes.

**Q8. Do you think any of the following would encourage local residents or groups to help maintain open green spaces?**

	Yes	No	Don't know
Equipment	101	41	19
Training	72	57	20
Permission	125	23	11
Friends Groups	88	33	28
Volunteers schemes	132	17	15

**Respondents were asked for other suggestions and the comments focused on:**

1. Specific ideas to encourage volunteering, including:

- Employed 'caretakers' to encourage / organise local groups
- Designated events / days similar to borough wide litter picks
- Incentives (such as reduction in Council Tax or other financial support)
- Provision of free equipment and storage

2. Transfer of ownership to homeowners, sports clubs or other interested groups

3. Other ideas including:

- Tarmac over grass verges
- Flower meadows
- Use of people on community service orders
- Prevention of people parking on verges / damaging grass

4. Some respondents objected to the principle of residents being asked to perform this service

**Q9. Overall how satisfied are you with the information you receive from the Council about the maintenance of open green spaces in the borough**

Very Satisfied:	3 (2%)
Satisfied:	18 (11%)
Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied	71 (41%)
Dissatisfied:	66 (38%)
Very Dissatisfied:	14 (8%)

**Q10. Overall how satisfied are you with the condition and the maintenance of open green spaces in the borough**

Very satisfied:	3 (1.8%)
Satisfied:	34 (19.9%)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied:	43 (25.1%)
Dissatisfied:	75 (43.9%)
Very dissatisfied:	16 (9.4%)

**Q 11. Respondents were asked for other comments and, in summary, the comments focused on:**

1. Support for a greater level of flexibility over the prioritisation and timing of public green space maintenance with issues to consider:

- Greater flexibility to be built into contract arrangements
- Differing focus on whether to prioritise areas based on sporting use, family use, general appearance or area or safety

2. Comments on volunteering were limited, with specific issue raised:

- Use of existing groups (NAG)
- Desire for 'permission'
- Lack of free green waste collection

3. General comments on quality of service, with focus on:

- Impact on appearance of area
- Impact on use of space by children / families
- Impact on use of space for sport
- Problems of litter and dog fouling exacerbated by longer grass
- Risks caused by overhanging hedges and tree
- Inflexibility of current contract arrangements