

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: The Economy, Arts, Sports and Public Realm Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 18/11/2024

Subject: Review of Parks Satisfaction Survey 2024

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SUMMARY

This report provides an update to the Committee on the results of the annual Parks Satisfaction Survey via the council's 'Have you Say' platform. The report outlines the key results and the next steps towards bringing forward a Parks Improvement Plan to a future cycle of the Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Committee to note and comment on the report.
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Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Corporate Plan and the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	Providing and maintaining high quality parks and green spaces will provide an attractive environment to employers and residents enabling them to thrive and prosper.
Creating a compassionate and inclusive council	Improving access and availability of high-quality parks and green spaces will improve the physical health and mental well-being of all residents
Doing things with residents, not to them	The annual parks survey will help reform our services to respond to the needs of our communities by maintaining links and actively engaging with all users, stakeholders, and Friends groups, using the Parks Forum to engage with our diverse communities

	and co-produce improvements to our parks.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The survey will improve quality and reduce costs associated with parks maintenance and repairs by transforming our services by making use of; resident's views, new technology, new partnerships, and innovation in delivery, securing external funding through funding bids and partnerships.
Taking pride in H&F	The survey raises the profile of the borough's parks and open spaces and celebrates how they are vital assets for building a happier and more resilient borough by hosting community events, enabling residents to stay active and engaged with nature.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The survey will help create climate aware and wildlife-friendly green spaces which residents can enjoy.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

No Reports

Introduction

1. The Hammersmith & Fulham Council's Parks Team conducted a customer satisfaction survey from 29 July to 15 September 2024, to assess the performance of the parks service and identify areas for improvement. The survey, developed with the Parks Forum, who reviewed the 2023 survey and provided alterations and improvements to the questions, style, and layout. The survey was available online and promoted through various channels, resulting in 495 responses. This was an increase on the 2023 survey of 320 responses. A detailed report of the 2024 survey responses can be found at Appendix 1 to this report.
2. Respondents were asked to score their thoughts on the overall satisfaction and maintenance of the Council's managed parks and open spaces, how safe they felt, the cleanliness and the overall quality of the borough's parks and green spaces. The Key Findings from the survey were: -
 - Overall Satisfaction: 86.3% of respondents rated the overall quality of parks as satisfactory or above, an increase from 69% in 2023.
 - Maintenance: 83% of respondents were satisfied with the maintenance of parks, up from 61% in 2023.
 - Safety: 65.7% felt the parks were safe, a decrease from 73% in 2023.

- Cleanliness: 80% were satisfied with cleanliness, compared to 67% in 2023.
- Quality: 81% were satisfied with the quality of parks and open spaces.

Detailed Analysis

3. Respondents to the survey mentioned 38 of the 53 in-borough parks and open spaces (Mortlake and North Sheen Cemeteries are outside of the borough boundary) Eel brook Common was mentioned the most with 69 responses, and others that received more than 20 responses were Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith Park, Wormwood Scrubs, Bishops Park, Wormholt Park, Margravine Cemetery and Hurlingham Park. A further seven parks received at least 10 responses or more included Normand Park, South Park, Shepherds Bush Green, Brook Green, Fulham Cemetery, Lillie Road Recreation Ground and Cathnor Park.
 - Frequency of Visits: 83.4% of respondents visit parks at least once a week.
 - Over 90% of visitors to parks travelled on foot.
 - Top Reasons for Visits: Health and well-being, relaxation, commuting, exercise, and socialising were the primary reasons for visiting parks.

Desired Improvements

4. Respondents were asked to rank their top six (6) most wanted improvements in Hammersmith and Fulham's parks and open spaces. Not all respondents provided six responses.
5. The top five improvements desired were reducing litter, promoting responsible dog ownership, improving security, planting more flowers/shrubs, and enhancing biodiversity.
 - Litter: 141 responses highlighted litter issues, particularly in the larger parks
 - Dog Ownership: 135 responses called for more responsible dog ownership.
 - Security: 131 responses indicated a need for improved security.
 - Enhancing biodiversity: 124 responses called for new wildlife habitats, meadows, and pollinator projects.
 - Better tree maintenance and planting: 65 responses across 23 parks mentioned additional planting in several parks including Eel Brook common, Ravenscourt Park and Bishop's Park,

Park Features and Facilities

6. The boroughs parks contain many valuable features which enhance users visits to parks and many of them are often the reason for the visit. Many respondents called for more or improved play, sports pitches, outdoor gyms, toilets, and drinking fountains.
 - Playgrounds: Significant issues have been raised about the state of playgrounds seeking upgrades and improved accessibility.
 - Outdoor Gyms: requests for new and additional outdoor gyms in parks including Wormholt park and Ravenscourt Park.
 - Toilets: 95 responses requested improved toilet facilities across several parks.
 - Picnic Tables: 92 responses called for more picnic tables.
 - Drinking Fountains: 90 responses requested additional drinking fountains.

Accessibility and Signage

7. The respondents have raised concerns with the condition of some of the footpaths in Hammersmith and Fulham's parks and open spaces and several of the parks and open spaces signage and wayfinding has fallen into a poor state or repair.
 - Footpaths: Several footpath improvement projects have been identified in parks and green spaces.
 - Signage: Improved signage and wayfinding are required in several parks.

Infrastructure

8. The respondents' requests for infrastructural improvements included calls for additional CCTV, (linked to earlier concerns with anti-social behaviour in some of our parks and open spaces) and improved lighting in parks, where parks or open spaces are walking routes. The condition of lights in parks is currently being assessed as part of a condition review programme and is expected to be completed by January.
 - CCTV and Lighting: Requests for additional CCTV and improved lighting were noted, subject to funding availability.

Key Individual Parks:

9. The report highlights several parks that feature most regularly based on the survey responses. Here are the key findings for those parks:

Eel Brook Common: 69 responses

Key Issues: Litter, responsible dog ownership, security, flower/shrub bed maintenance, tree maintenance.

Desired Improvements: Reduce litter, improve security, plant more flowers/shrubs, create more wildlife habitats, improve lighting, and install more drinking fountains.

Ravenscourt Park: 61 responses

Key Issues: Litter, responsible dog ownership, security, flower/shrub bed maintenance, tree maintenance.

Desired Improvements: Plant more flowers/shrubs, create more wildlife habitats, improve paths, install more drinking fountains, and improve lighting.

Hammersmith Park: 42 responses

Key Issues: Litter, responsible dog ownership, security, flower/shrub bed maintenance, tree maintenance.

Desired Improvements: Improve security, plant more flowers/shrubs, create more wildlife habitats, install more drinking fountains, and improve lighting.

Wormwood Scrubs: 38 responses

Key Issues: Litter, responsible dog ownership, security, flower/shrub bed maintenance, tree maintenance.

Desired Improvements: Create more wildlife habitats, plant more trees, improve paths, install more drinking fountains, and improve lighting.

Bishops Park: 37 responses

Key Issues: Litter, responsible dog ownership, security, flower/shrub bed maintenance, tree maintenance.

Desired Improvements: Improve security, plant more flowers/shrubs, create more wildlife habitats, improve paths, and install more drinking fountains.

Wormholt Park: 36 responses

Key Issues: Litter, responsible dog ownership, security, flower/shrub bed maintenance, tree maintenance.

Desired Improvements: Improve security, plant more flowers/shrubs, create more wildlife habitats, improve paths, and install more drinking fountains.

Margravine Cemetery: 21 responses

Key Issues: Responsible dog ownership, security, flower/shrub bed maintenance, tree maintenance.

Desired Improvements: Improve security, plant more flowers/shrubs, create more wildlife habitats, and improve paths.

Hurlingham Park: 20 responses

Key Issues: Litter, responsible dog ownership, security, flower/shrub bed maintenance, tree maintenance.

Desired Improvements: Improve security, plant more flowers/shrubs, create more wildlife habitats, and improve paths.

10. These parks were frequently mentioned by respondents, indicating areas where the Council can focus its efforts to improve the overall quality and user experience. The key issues and desired improvements provide a clear direction for future actions and projects.

Future Actions:

11. Based on the findings from the Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey, the Parks Service plans to take several actions to address the feedback and improve the parks and open spaces. Here are some of the key actions:

Desired Improvements:

Litter Reduction: Issues with litter will be reported to the relevant contractors for immediate action. Review requirements for litter cleansing in future contracts.

Grounds Maintenance: The Council will continue to manage and monitor the performance of maintenance contractors to ensure high standards are met.

Safety and Security: The LET conducted an average of 1,500 patrolling hours per month in parks and open spaces in the last year, however concerns about anti-social behaviour (ASB) will be addressed by targeting patrols from the Council's Law Enforcement Team (LET) and local police groups to address issues reported.

Security Improvements: There have been efforts recently to improve security in parks, including the installation of five additional CCTV cameras, any further efforts will be discussed with community safety and will be subject to funding.

Biodiversity and Ecology: The Council will continue to plant more trees and create new wildlife habitats, with specific projects planned for various parks. Ongoing projects to plant flowers and shrubs to support pollinators will be expanded. 82 trees were planted in the 2023/24 season, with plans for 80 more in 2024/25; this does not include whips.

Park features and facilities

Playground Upgrades: A detailed strategic review of playgrounds has recently been undertaken over the summer months and an action plan is being developed which will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee for comment. In the meantime, Section 106 funding has been secured to improve several playgrounds at Margravine Gardens, Normand Park, South Park, and William Parnell Park which will undergo refurbishments.

Outdoor Gyms: Two new gyms were installed in South Park and Hammersmith 2023/24 increasing the total to eight. Existing outdoor gym facilities will be maintained and upgraded as needed. New outdoor gyms will be subject to funding.

Toilet Facilities: The Council will look to maintain and improve the existing eight parks with toilet facilities and expand the Community Toilet Scheme, as resources allow.

Picnic Tables and Drinking Fountains: Additional picnic tables and drinking fountains will be installed where feasible.

Accessibility and Infrastructure

Footpath Improvements: We will conduct an inspection of the footpaths to identify an improvement programme based on tackling the worst locations first, so that available funds can be targeted to achieve best value.

Lighting and Signage: Efforts will be made to improve lighting and signage in parks, ensuring they are safe and user-friendly following an updated condition survey.

Enforcement and Community Engagement

Responsible Dog Ownership: The LET will continue to manage ASB concerns, enforce Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) for responsible dog ownership and increase engagement and awareness among park users.

Community Involvement: The Council will continue to collaborate with Friends Groups and other stakeholders to manage expectations and develop new projects.

12. These actions aim to address the key areas of concern highlighted by the survey respondents and improve the overall quality and user experience of the parks and open spaces in Hammersmith & Fulham.

Conclusion

13. The 2024 survey indicates increased user involvement and pleasing increases in satisfaction levels in most areas. However, concerns about cleanliness, safety and specific maintenance issues highlight areas to be addressed that will improve satisfaction levels even further. The Parks service plans to implement various improvement projects over the next 12 months and is developing a Parks Improvement Plan that will be aligned to investment to maintain and enhance the borough's valuable parks and green spaces.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Hammersmith & Fulham Parks Satisfaction Survey 2024 Results Report