

Parks, Landscape and Grounds Maintenance

Analysis of stakeholder consultation

July 2020

Consultation Team
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
020 7361 3394
consult@rbkc.gov.uk



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Introduction

Background

The Royal Borough's parks and open spaces are currently maintained under contract with Idverde UK (formerly Quadron). This contract comes to an end on 31 March 2021. The Council wanted to consult with residents and park users on the current contract and service, and what changes they would like to see. The results of this consultation will help inform the specification of the new contract.

Methodology and report

A survey was developed to seek residents' views on the parks, landscape and grounds maintenance contract and promoted widely. This report focuses on the stakeholder survey, a total of 99 surveys were returned by the closing date 31st March. Due to the current situation with the pandemic, the survey's closing date was extended to 28th June and a further 63 surveys were received bringing the total to 162. Additionally a number of events were held and the findings from these can be found in a separate report.

Where graphs are shown, percentage figures are used. Where percentages do not total a 100 per cent, this may be due to computer rounding, where respondents have chosen not to answer a question or where respondents have been able to select more than one answer.

Appendices

Appendix one contains the data tables of the results whilst appendix two details all the comments made by respondents in relation to the open questions in the survey. This is available as a separate document.

Acknowledgements

The Council would like to thank all residents that took the time to feedback their views as part of this exercise.



Results at a glance

- **Satisfaction with current provision:** The highest levels of satisfaction with the current service were with the grass cutting in parks and the maintenance of the planted areas. There was slightly less satisfaction with litter picking and bin emptying and hedge cutting. The highest level of dissatisfaction were with litter picking and bin emptying and the cleaning of toilets and changing rooms.
- **Visiting parks:** The parks visited most often by residents were Holland Park and Kensington Memorial Park, followed by Little Wormwood Scrubs. The least visited parks were Westfield Park and Emslie Horniman's Pleasance.
- **Park keepers and staffing arrangements:** The most popular option for future staffing arrangements was option one which was one gardener per park with a consistent Monday to Friday 7.30am to 4.30pm shift pattern. Evening locking up, and weekend litter collection carried out by a mobile team. Slightly more respondents (39 per cent) felt that contractor staff did not need to be present on bank holidays than those who did (32 per cent).
- **Public toilets:** Just over half of respondents felt public toilets should be open all year round from park opening to park closing whilst around one in five felt it should be determined by park usage on a park by park basis.
- **Annual bedding schemes:** Overall the majority of respondents (57 per cent) felt that annual bedding schemes should be removed although views were split between the different options for this. Forty one per cent of respondents felt the annual bedding schemes should be kept as is.



Results at a glance

- **Long grass area:** Three quarters of respondents (76 per cent) were in favour of the grass strips at the lawn and hedge borders being allowed to grow longer in their local parks.
- **Temporary artwork:** Seventy four per cent of respondents would support their local park hosting temporary artwork by local artists, including sculpture and performance art.
- **Increasing income:** Respondents views on whether or not they would support the Council allowing its contractor to hold a limited number of chargeable events in their local park were even split with 43 per cent in favour and against.
- **Your priorities:** The most important aspect of the new contract for respondents were wildlife/biodiversity closely followed by cleansing and waste management and then recycling and green credentials. The least important were sports facilities and volunteer programmes and events.
- **Community involvement:** Respondents were asked if they would like to get involved in their local park, 30 per cent of respondents would like to be involved in volunteering/helping to maintain the park. Eleven per cent would like to assist with running events and activities and three per cent fundraising.



Consultation findings: Satisfaction with current service

Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with aspects of the current service the results of this are summarised in the graph on the next slide.

Overall there was quite high satisfaction with the grass cutting in parks (57 per cent very satisfied and 26 per cent fairly satisfied) and maintenance of the planted areas (43 per each very satisfied and 28 per cent fairly satisfied). There was slightly less satisfaction with hedge cutting (35 per cent very satisfied and 30 per cent fairly satisfied) and litter picking and bin emptying (32 per cent very satisfied and 35 per cent fairly satisfied). Litter picking and bin emptying also attracted the highest level of dissatisfaction with 13 per cent of respondents fairly dissatisfied and eight per cent very dissatisfied.

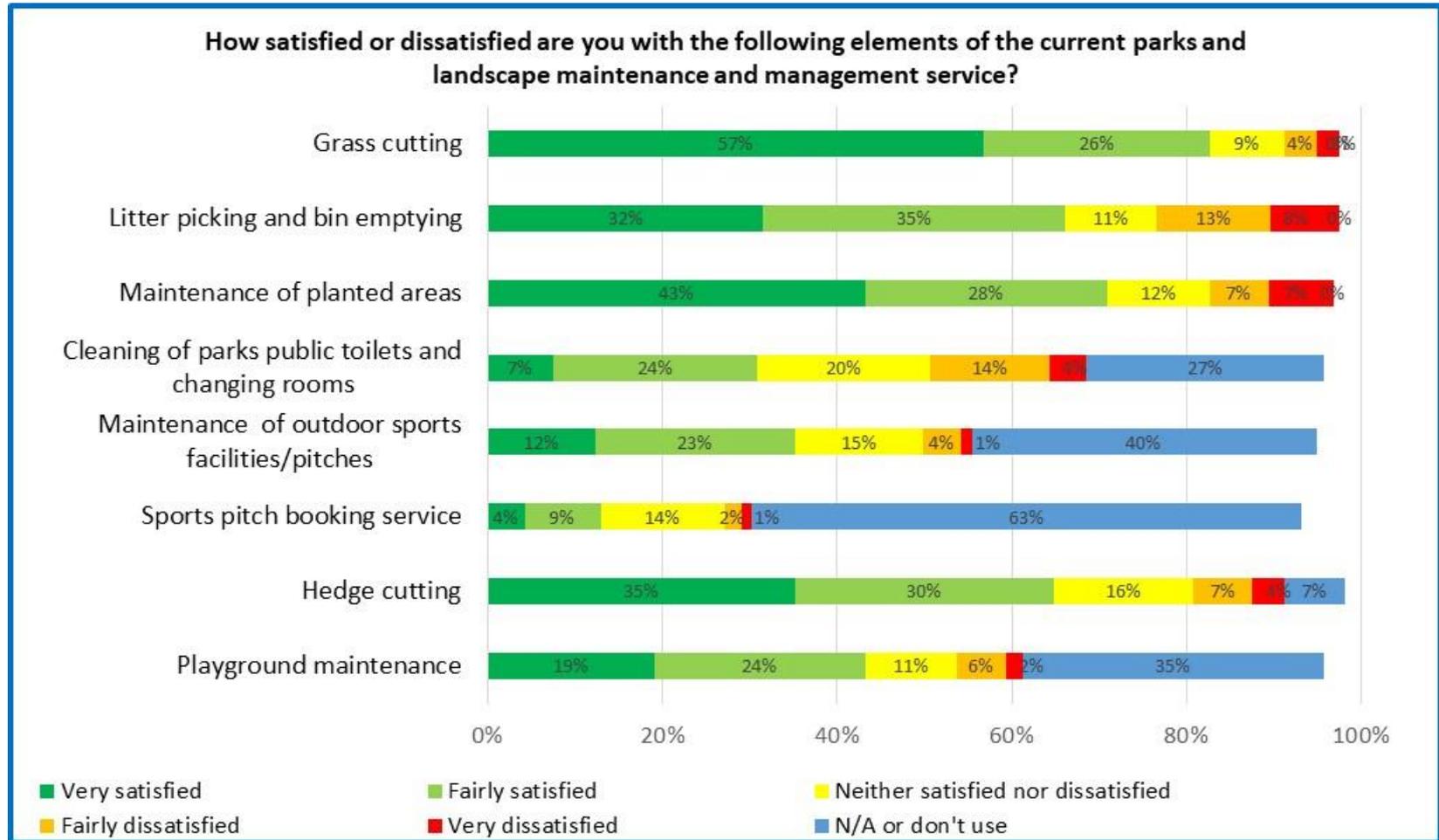
The other aspects of the service attracted more N/A or don't use answers. Nineteen per cent stated they were very satisfied and 24 per cent fairly satisfied with the playground maintenance and 12 per cent very satisfied and 23 per cent fairly satisfied with the maintenance of outdoor sports facilities/pitches. The second highest level of dissatisfaction was with the cleaning of toilets and changing rooms with 14 per cent fairly dissatisfied and four per cent very dissatisfied which compares to seven per cent very satisfied and 24 per cent fairly satisfied.

Around two thirds of respondents (63 per cent) stated that the sports pitch booking service was not used by them or N/A to them. Four per cent stated that they were very satisfied with the service and nine per cent fairly satisfied.

The graph on the next slide contains all results for this question.



Consultation findings: Satisfaction with current service



Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Additional comments

Respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with any aspects of the service were asked how they felt they could be improved. The comments made have been themed (comments may relate to more than one theme) and the themes with five or more comments have been summarised in the table below. A selection of the comments made can be found on the next slide. The full table of themes and list of comments made can be found in appendix two

Themes	Comments
Litter, bins, cleanliness	23
Maintenance	23
Toilets	15
Staffing	9
Planting	7
Dogs	5
Playgrounds	5
Sports facilities	5



Consultation findings: Other comments

Most litter is caused by birds and squirrels pulling rubbish out of the bins. A design of bin that prevents this would be wonderful.

Little Scrubs is full of litter in the central area of scrub/bramble-I'm sure people would volunteer for regular litter pick-ups-but seeing litter lying in the bushes is depressing!

More bins or bigger bins? I see them overflowing very often.

The hedge along the eastern boundary of St. Luke's Gardens is not maintained as well as it could be. It is not cut-back regularly.

The washrooms need better cleaning. Some of the taps need repairs. The ones that require money to access are awfully smelly and dirty. The one inside Hyde park just across from Baglioni hotel for example.

Main toilets are dire - a risk to health, I'd say complete replacement needed. Most of park very well kept - love it.

Infrequent visits to Cremorne Gardens by contractors for a limited number of hours at a time is miles away from the service we used to enjoy from a dedicated park keeper.



The main problem in my local park (LWS) is there is now only one park keeper. It is almost impossible for one person to maintain this natural park. We really appreciate the regular contact with the Head of Parks but feel that LWS does not have the same.

The key factor for me is tracking damage to bins, graffiti on public facilities, picking up litter, emptying bins, cleaning toilets and changing rooms. Some level of responsibility needs to be placed on the VERY IMPORTANT PEOPLE who maintain and keep the parks.

There is a lot of litter and dog poo in Powis Square garden, reluctant to use it with my toddler because of this. Dogs should not be allowed to run around freely in the playground!

Redcliffe square park doesn't have enough swings and at Luke in Chelsea's bathrooms are simply filthy.

The playgrounds often have equipment that needs repair.



Consultation findings: Visiting parks

Respondents were asked how often they visited a list of parks in the Royal Borough. The responses to this question are detailed in the graph on the next slide.

The most often visited park in the Royal Borough was Holland Park with only one per cent of respondents having never visited it. Thirty five per cent of respondents visit Holland Park more than once a week and 15 per cent once a week. This was followed by Kensington Memorial Park which more than a quarter (27 per cent) of respondents had never visited. Eleven per cent visit Kensington Memorial Park more than once a week and five per cent once a week.

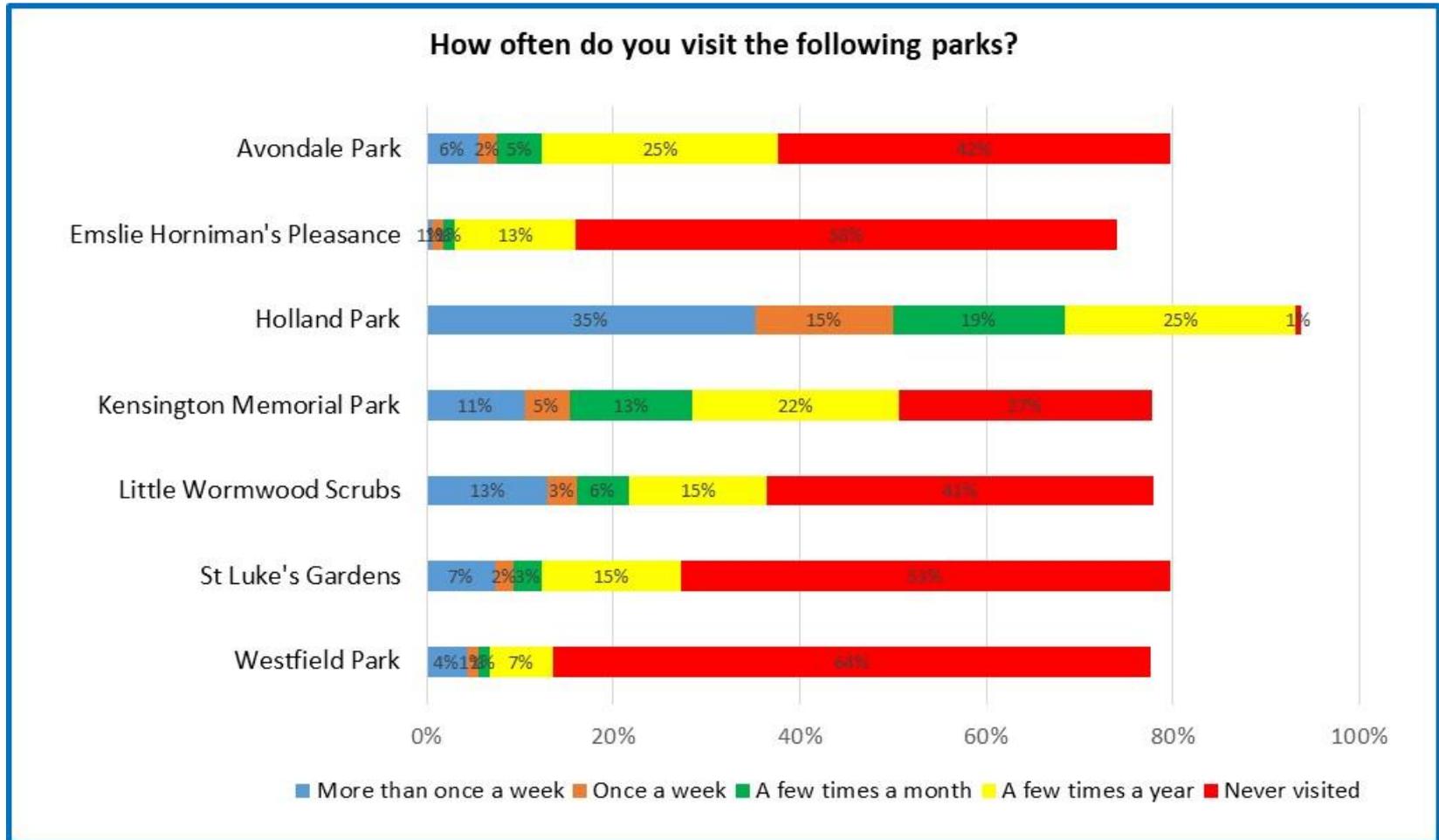
Little Wormwood Scrubs had a similar percentage of visitors with 13 per cent visiting more than once a week and three per cent once a week but a higher percentage of respondents who had be never visited (41 per cent).

The other four parks in the list were visited less frequently by respondents. Sixty four per cent of respondents had never visited Westfield Park followed by 54 per cent who had never visited Emslie Horniman's Pleasance, 53 per cent St Luke's Gardens and 42 per cent Avondale Park.

The full results for visiting parks can be found in the graph on the following slide.



Consultation findings: Visiting parks



Base: All responses (162)

Consultation findings: Park keepers and staffing arrangements

Parks currently have a Park Keeper based on site during park opening hours, this fully staffed service has a high labour cost, is difficult to recruit to and is unsustainable for the future.

The Council has developed some alternative models;

Option one:

One Gardener per park with a consistent Monday to Friday 7.30am to 4.30pm shift pattern. Evening locking up, and weekend litter collection carried out by a mobile team. This is the standard model for Council managed parks.

Option two:

One Park Keeper per site with a consistent Thursday to Sunday 7.30am to park closing shift. Tuesday and Wednesday litter collection and unlocking carried out by a mobile team.

Option three:

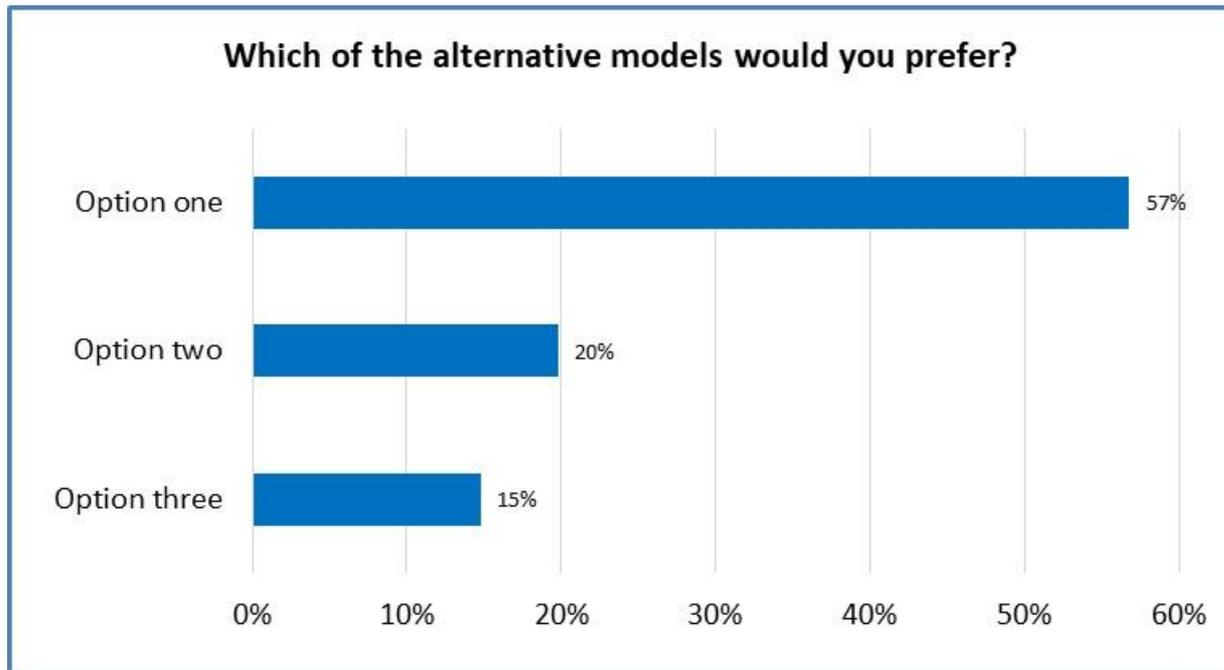
No static staff. Mobile teams for horticulture and cleansing attend every park daily to carry out works as needed.

Respondents were asked which of the three models they would prefer, results can be found on the next slide.



Consultation findings: Park keepers and staffing arrangements

Respondents were asked which of the three alternative models they preferred. The majority of respondents (57 per cent) chose option one (one gardener per park), followed by 20 per cent selecting option two (one park keeper per park) and then 15 per cent option three (no static staff).

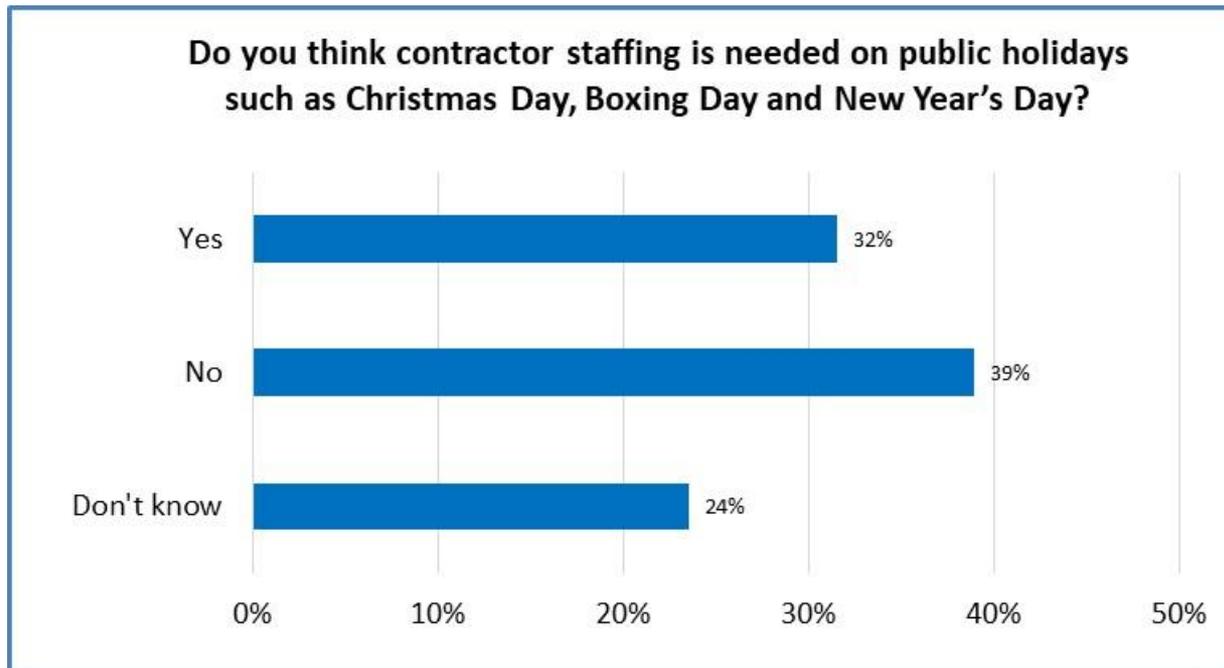


Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Park keepers and staffing arrangements

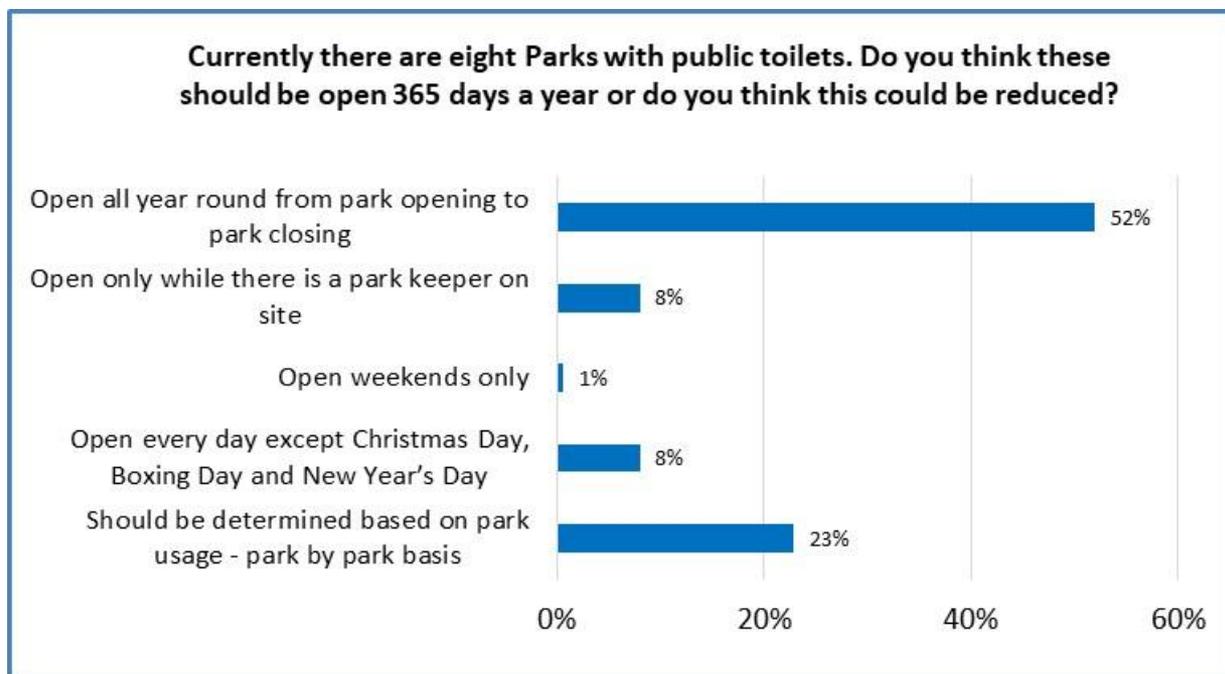
More respondents (39 per cent) felt that there was not a need for contractor staffing on public holidays than those who felt there was (32 per cent). Just under a quarter (24 per cent) of respondents didn't know.



Base: All responses (162)

Consultation findings: Public toilets in parks

When asked about the public toilets within parks, over half (52 per cent) of respondents felt they should be open all year round from park opening to park closing. Around one in five (23 per cent) felt toilet opening times should be determined based on park usage on a park by park basis. There was less support for the other options with eight per cent feeling public toilets should only open when the park keeper is on site, again eight per cent open every day except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day and just one per cent that public toilets should be open weekends only.

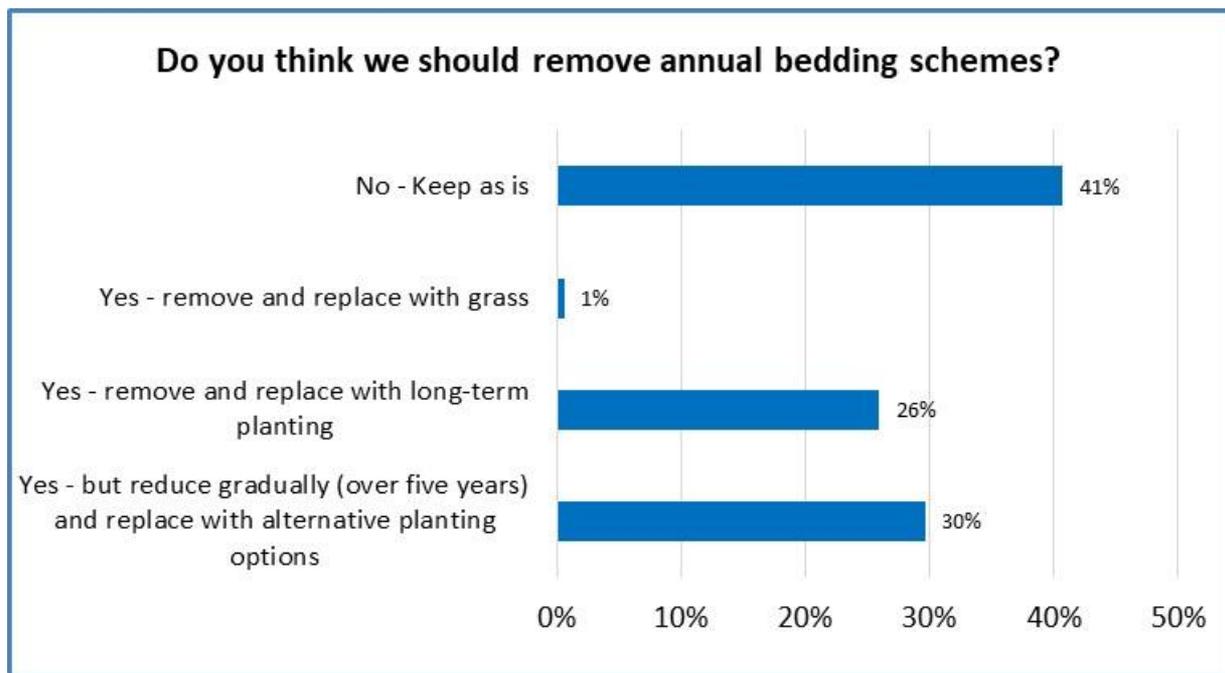


Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Annual bedding schemes

Annual bedding schemes are areas that are planted twice a year, in May and October, with plants that only last one season. Respondents were asked whether they felt the annual bedding scheme should be retained. Overall the majority (57 per cent) felt they should be removed: 30 per cent felt they should be removed gradually and replaced with alternative planting options; 26 per cent removed and replaced with long term planting and one per cent removed and replaced with grass. Forty one per cent of respondents felt the annual bedding schemes should be kept as is.

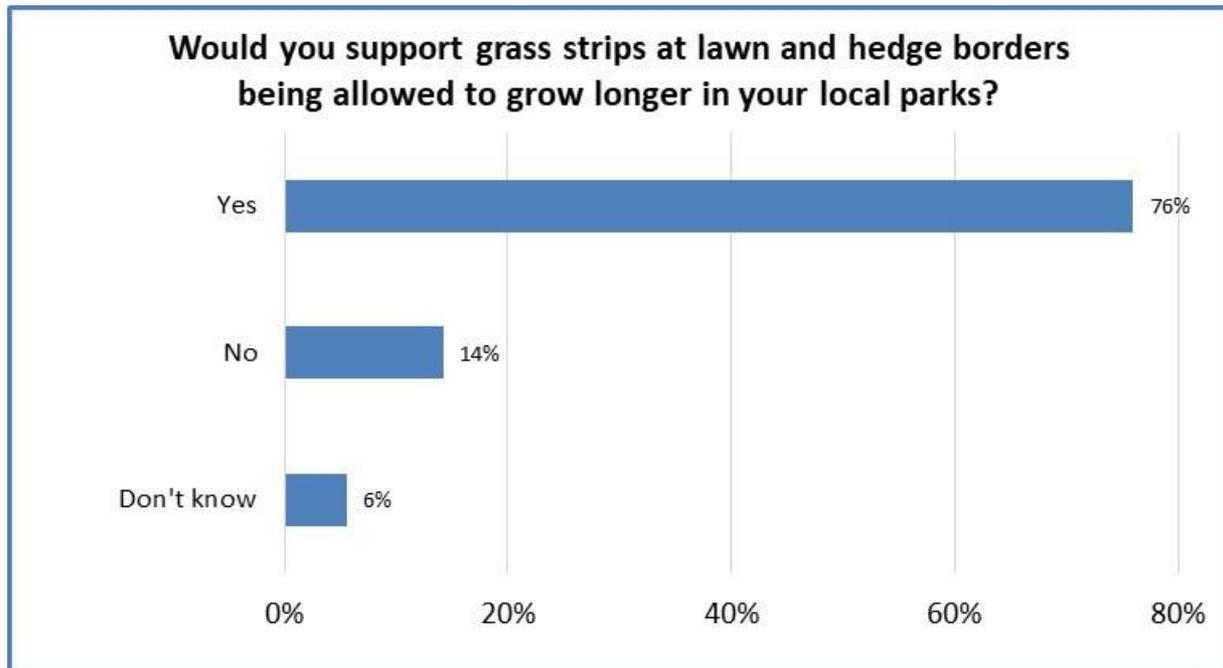


Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Long grass areas

Long grass areas are beneficial for wildlife and reduce maintenance, however, these can look scruffy at certain times of the year. Respondents were asked if they would support grass strips at the lawn and hedge borders being allowed to grow longer in their local parks. Just over three quarters of respondents (76 per cent) were in favour of long grass areas with 14 per cent against and six per cent stating that they didn't know.

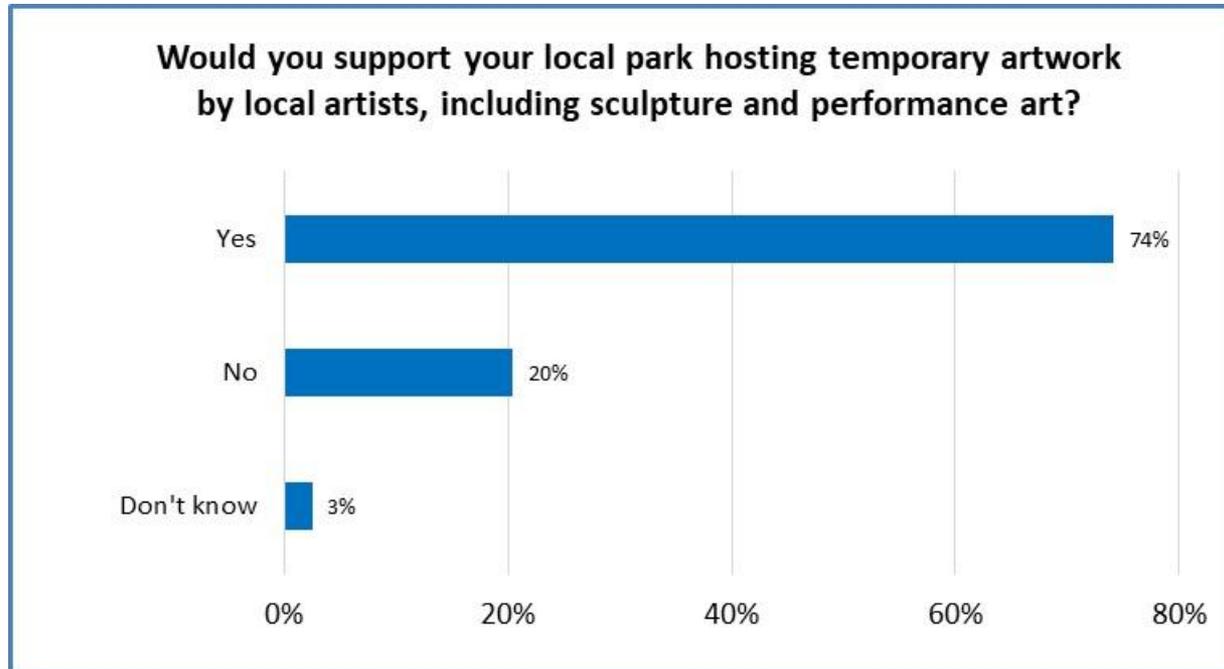


Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Temporary artwork

Respondents were asked if they would support their local park hosting temporary artwork by local artists, including sculpture and performance art, the majority of respondents (74 per cent) supported this whilst 20 per cent did not. Three per cent of respondents stated that they didn't know.

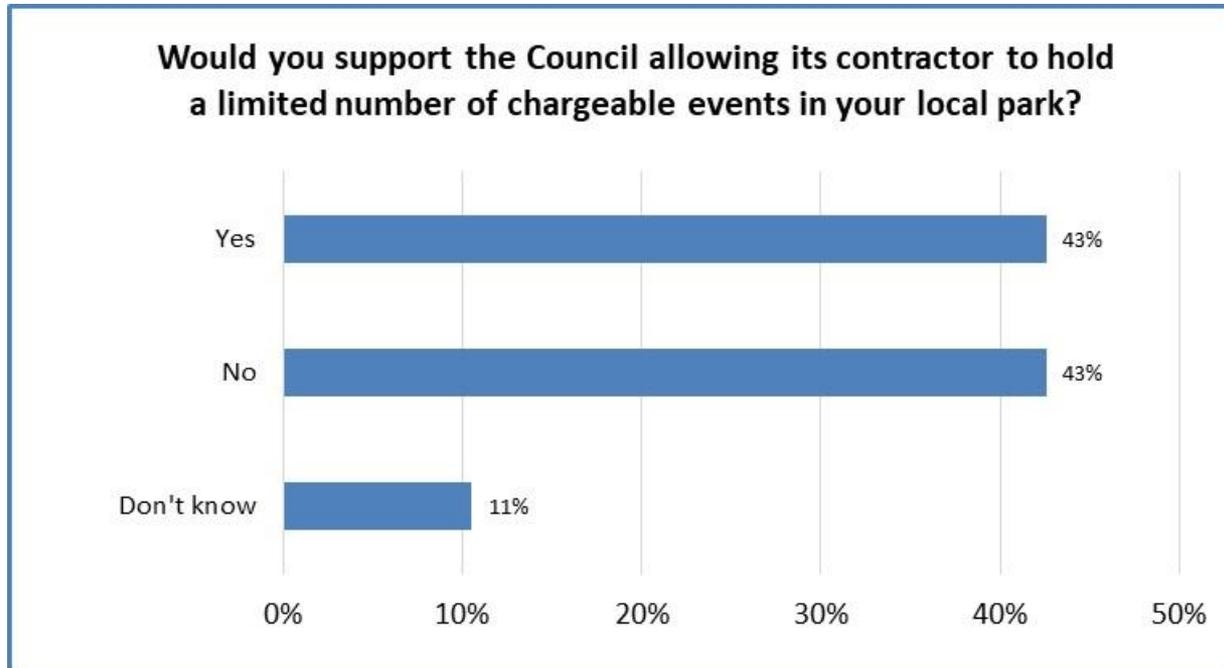


Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Increasing income

Views were evenly split on whether or not they would support the Council allowing its contractor to hold a limited number of chargeable events in their local park, with 43 per cent supporting the idea and 43 per cent against it. Eleven per cent of respondents stated that they didn't know,



Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Your priorities

Respondents were asked about how important or unimportant various elements of the new contract were to them, their responses are shown in full on the graph on the following slide. By knowing residents' priorities for parks it will help influence what the Council ask the contractors to provide and how they evaluate their tenders.

The most important aspect of the new contract for respondents was wildlife/biodiversity with 79 per cent finding this very important and 18 per cent somewhat important. This was closely followed by cleansing and waste management where again 79 per cent of respondents found this very important and 17 per cent somewhat important and then the recycling and green credentials found very important by a third (66 per cent) of respondents and somewhat important by a quarter (25 per cent) of respondents.

Fifty nine per cent of respondents found horticultural quality and improvement very important and 32 per cent somewhat important. Forty five per cent of respondents found working with the community very important and 35 per cent somewhat important.

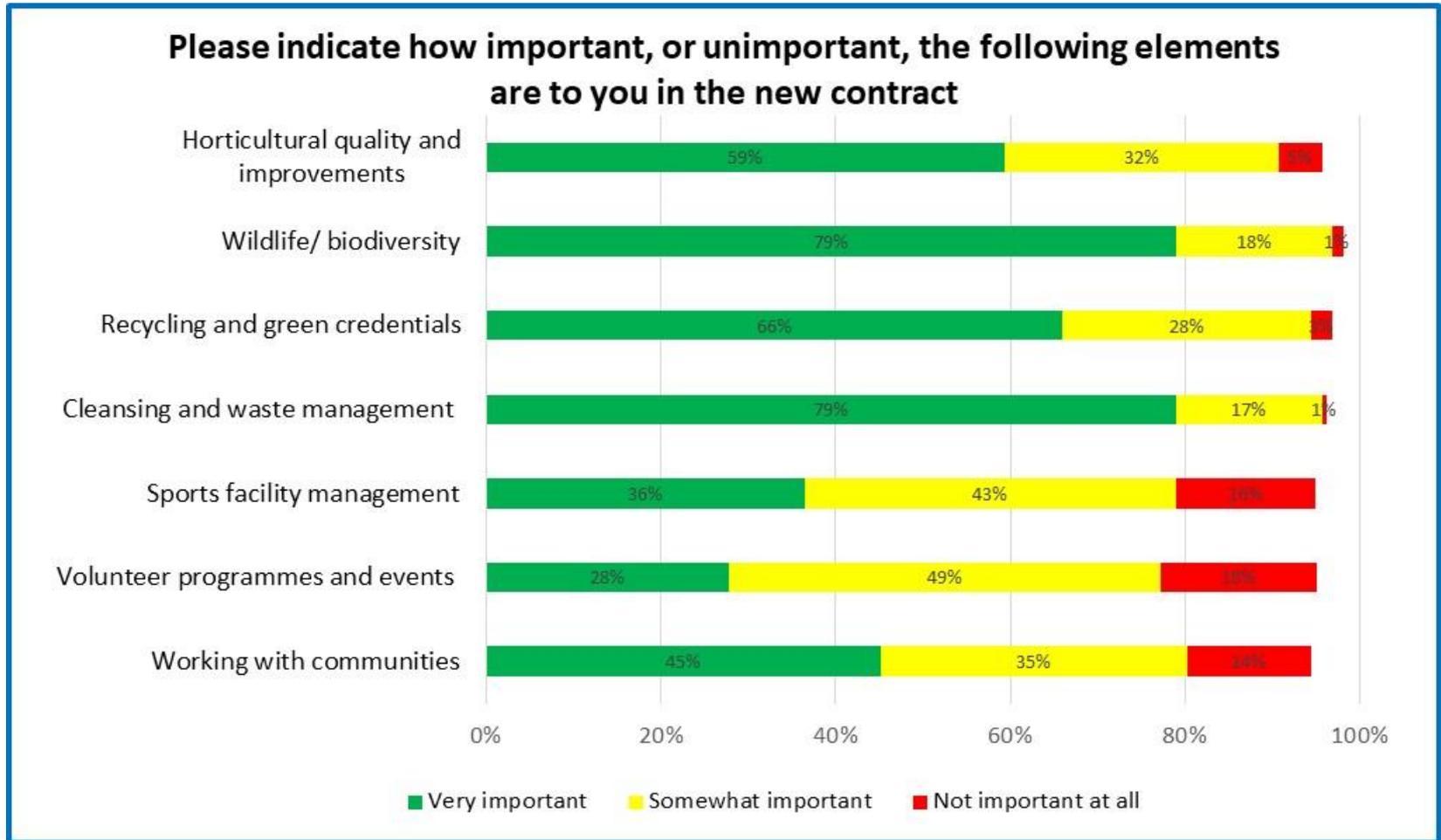
Sports facilities were not at all important to 14 per cent of respondents whilst over a third (36 per cent) found them very important and 43 per cent somewhat important.

Eighteen per cent of respondents thought volunteer programmes and events were not at all important, whilst 28 per cent found them very important and 49 per cent somewhat important.

The graph on the next slide contains all results for this question.



Consultation findings: Your priorities



Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Additional comments

Respondents were asked for any other comments they had about the parks, landscape and grounds maintenance contract. These have been themed (comments may contain more than one theme) and the themes with five or more comments are summarised in the table below. Some examples of the comments made can be found on the following slide. The full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

Theme	Comments
Importance of parks	18
Litter, bins, cleanliness	10
Planting	9
Current staff	9
Additional equipment or activities	8
Dogs	8
Maintenance	7
Events	7
Maintain current level of service	6
Future staffing	5



Consultation findings: Other comments

Parks, gardens, green areas, public flower beds, green walks etc are all very important to urban communities and should be valued as such.

We are lucky enough to have lovely parks that are widely used by local people, especially in the summer. This is a great facility in RBKC and we need to treasure these spaces - particularly for elderly people and families.

Parks are vital and should be cherished for people, children and birds

I'd like to see more elderly sports equipment, thought through about disabled access

Holland Park needs 1. Better lighting. 2. New benches or repaint. 3. Cafes local in park (plant based) 4. Ice cream truck in park. 5. Jumble sale to raise money for park. 6. Water fountain improved. 7. Dog water important-needs improving.

Need to be stricter with people with dogs if they not pick up dog mess

Please oil the gate on the maintenance/staff area of LWS park. Wakes me up without fail every time it is opened. DOG'S MESS of course, start on the spot fines. Do something to make my park being not much more than a huge dog lavatory.



Planting is very important. Our parks should be the best in London.

Bedding all year round-pretty shrubs looking very attractive. This would cut costs in labour. 8-hour shifts per day each from 7:30am start-finish pm. Park keeper-model daily Monday, 2nd 1pm until park closes.

So important to keep parks clean free from litter and if toilets are present they should be monitored. A clean environment helps to promote those values. Plants-a good opportunity to rethink planting in line with climate change. providing a sustainable design which can mature.

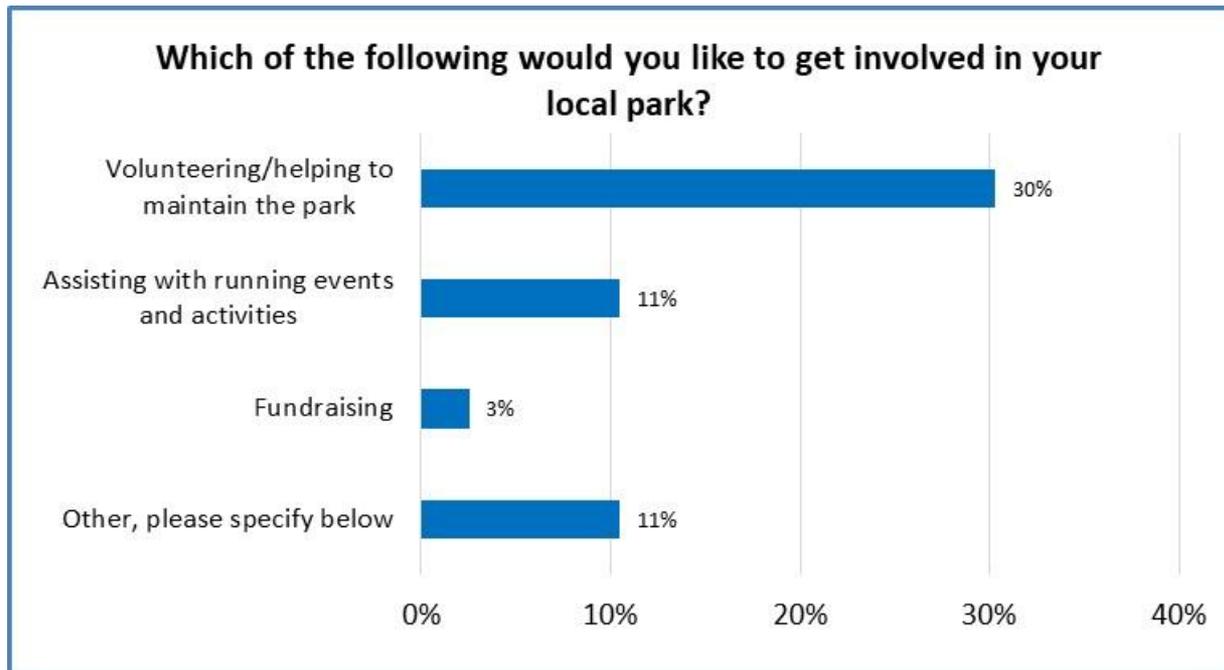
Parks cannot run themselves. It's a typical idea to spend money on big projects and never on long term maintenance. It doesn't work. Leave Little Scrubs as it is and employ a really good park warden.

Holland Park is my favourite place in the borough, I go there every day as do several other residents. Don't privatise it in any way.



Consultation findings: Community Involvement

Respondents were asked if they would like to get involved in their local park. Thirty per cent of respondents would like to be involved in volunteering/helping to maintain the park, eleven per cent would like to assist with running events and activities and three per cent fundraising. Eleven per cent of respondents said they would like to be involved in other ways, where they specified further comments can be found in appendix one.

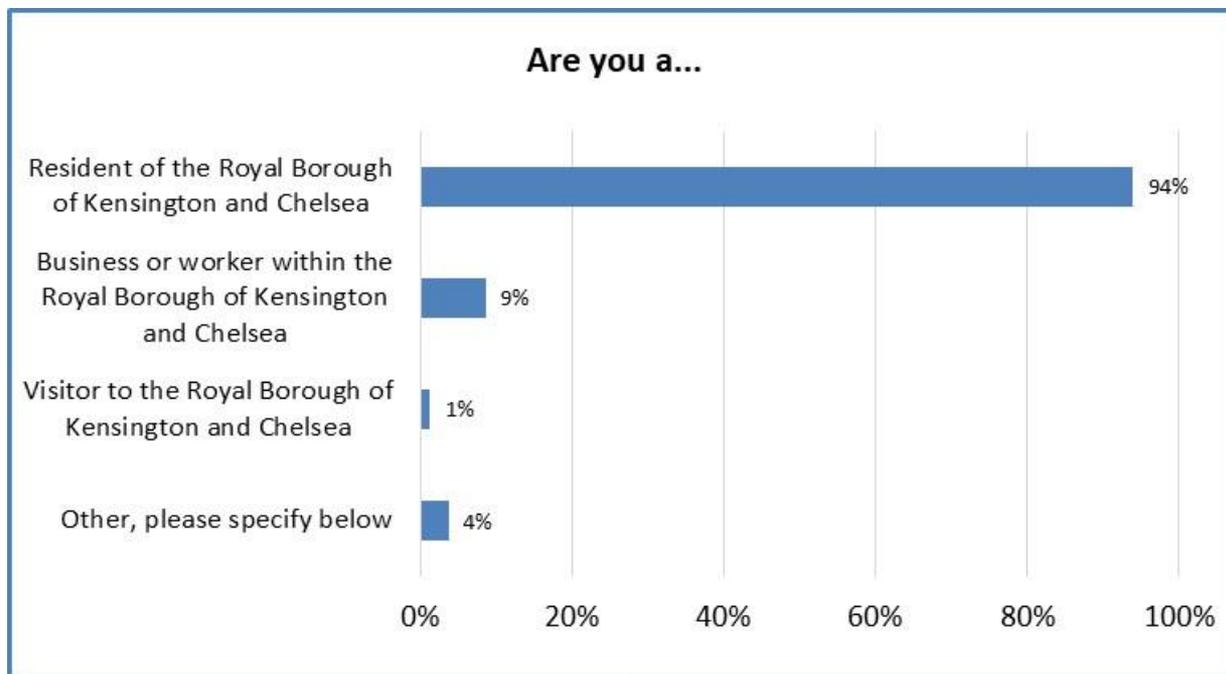


Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Respondents

The large majority of respondents (94 per cent) were residents whilst nine per cent stated they were a business or worker in the borough and one per cent a visitor. Four per cent of respondents selected other, where they specified further comments can be found in appendix one.

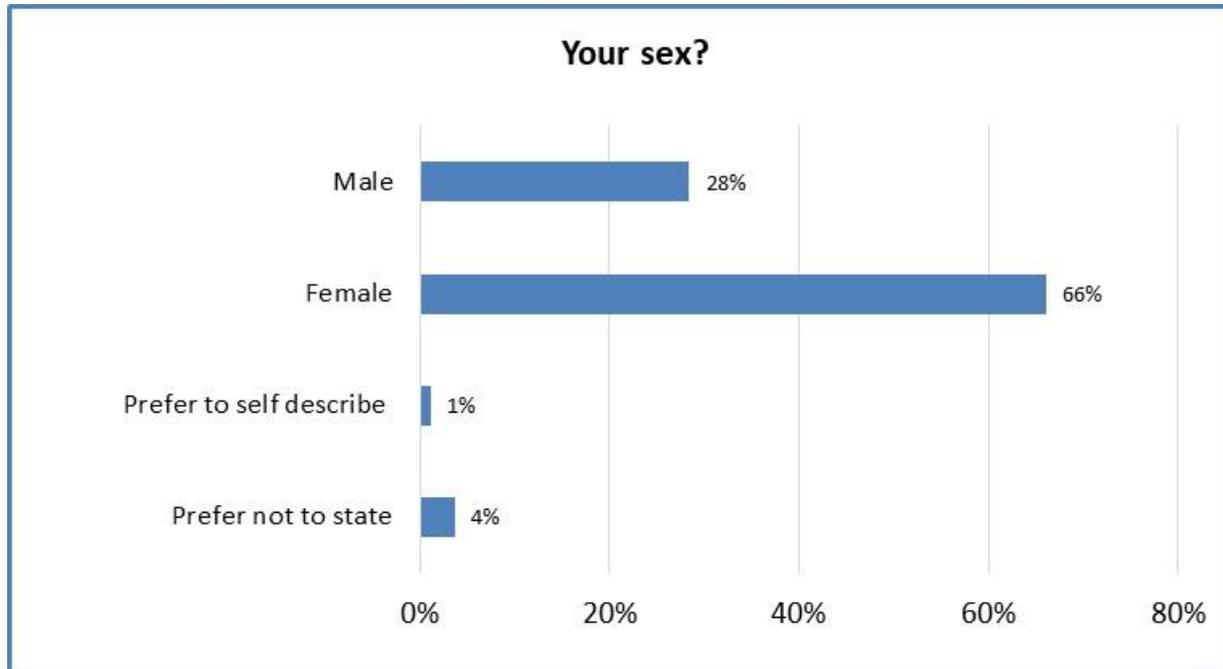


Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Respondents

Two thirds of respondents (66 per cent) were female whilst over a quarter (28 per cent) of the respondents were male. One per cent of respondents preferred to self-describe and four per cent preferred not to state their sex.

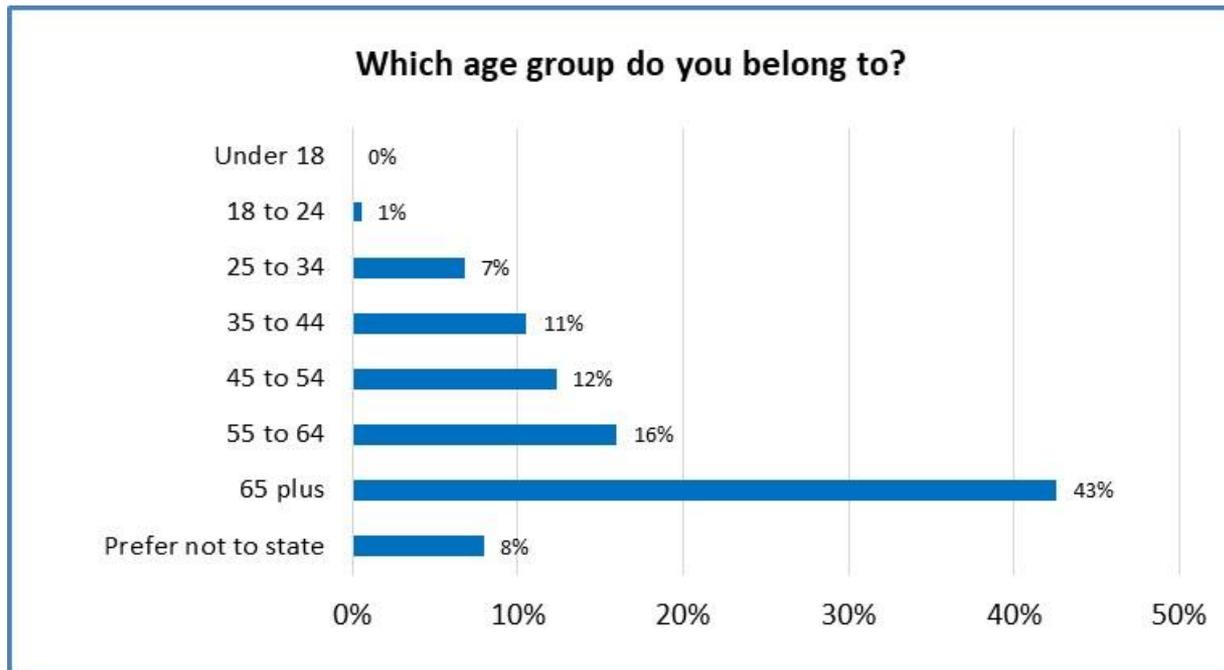


Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Respondents

The majority of respondents were aged over 45 with 12 per cent aged 45 to 54, 16 per cent 55 to 64 and 43 per cent 65 plus. Eleven per cent of respondents were aged 35 to 44, seven per cent 25 to 34 and just one per cent 18 to 24. Eight per cent of respondents preferred not to state their age.

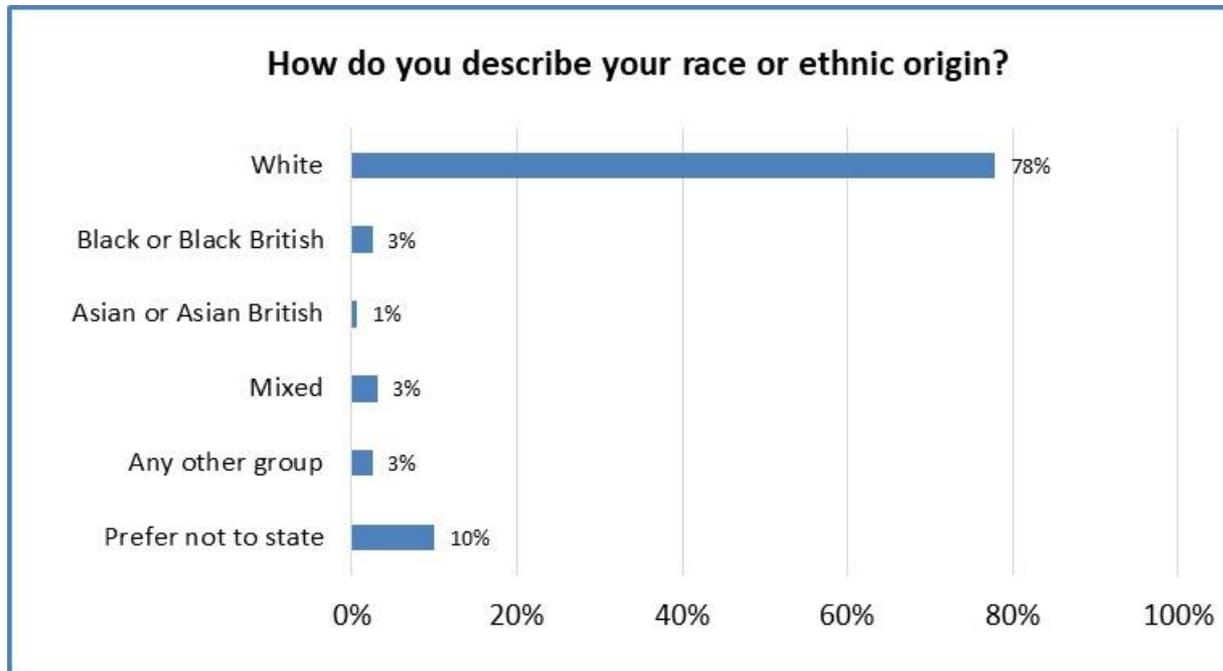


Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Respondents

The majority of respondents described themselves as White (78 per cent) with ten per cent of respondents describing themselves as BAME. Ten per cent of respondents preferred not to state their race or ethnic origin.

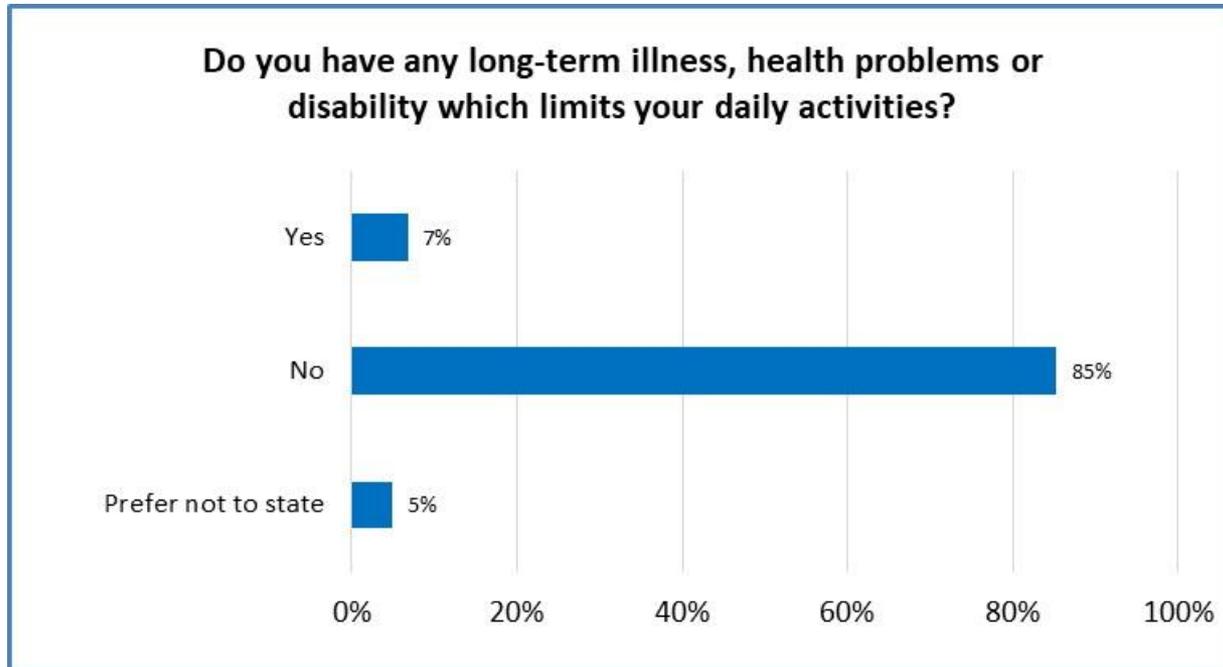


Base: All responses (162)



Consultation findings: Respondents

The majority of respondents (85 per cent) stated that they did not have any long-term illness, health problem or disability with seven per cent stating that they did. Five per cent of respondents preferred not to state.



Base: All responses (162)

