

PARKS & GREEN SPACES STRATEGY 2020 – 2030

Findings of public consultation





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Executive Summary

This report details the findings of a public consultation into what the people of Leeds think about public parks and green spaces in the city. Over 2,000 different people responded to the consultation: some in person, and some by responding to a survey.

Previous research, undertaken by the University of Leeds, analysed use of and satisfaction with local parks. That research has not since been repeated. It is worth noting that their findings suggest that use and satisfaction levels are high, with 91% of respondents having visited a park in the preceding year and 90% of their respondents saying they were satisfied or very satisfied overall with their main park.

The consultation findings outlined in this document reveal common themes in respondents' thoughts on what's good and what might be improved about local parks and green spaces in Leeds.

Importance for nature, climate and the wider environment were widely considered as one of the best things our green spaces have to offer, as well as being areas for significant future growth, particularly in terms of protecting and enhancing biodiversity and mitigating the impact of climate change.

The health benefits of spending time in green spaces have been widely recognised through the recent coronavirus pandemic and our public consultation, carried out just before the pandemic occurred, also showed that one of the things people value most about parks and green spaces are their benefits to physical and mental health.

The value of green spaces for providing activities for children and families was also something that stood out in the responses.





62% of survey respondents said there were issues with local parks and green spaces they'd like to see addressed.

The most commonly reported issues were around anti-social behaviour (dogs and litter in particular); maintenance of infrastructure like paths and playgrounds; and the provision of visitor facilities such as toilets, lighting, bins and facilities for children and teenagers. Accessibility was also mentioned as an issue, touching on a range of themes, including getting to green spaces and disabled access once there.

When it came to thoughts about how to resolve the issues, suggestions included community engagement through education, communication and opportunities to get involved (e.g. through volunteering). Some respondents also suggested that systems for tackling anti-social behaviour (such as fines and penalties) might be enhanced. And a notable number of respondents thought more investment in infrastructure and staff such as wardens, rangers and gardeners was required to help resolve the issues.

In terms of positive developments for the next 10 years, a large number of respondents said they want our green spaces to be more nature and environmentally-friendly (including for the climate, wildlife and wider environment). Respondents also said they'd like more visitor facilities (including cafes, playgrounds, sports facilities and walking/cycling trails), to make our green spaces accessible to all, and for them to continue to be clean and well-maintained. A number of respondents also mentioned that they are key to see *more* public green space in the city, particularly the city centre, and that green space should be protected from development.

In the consultation document '*Towards a Parks and Green Spaces Strategy 2020 – 2030*' (Appendix 1) accompanying the consultation, seven priorities for the Parks and Countryside Service to focus on over the next ten years were proposed, and 85% of respondents agreed with them.

The findings summarised above are outlined in detail below.

1. Introduction

This document has been produced by Leeds City Council, Parks and Countryside Service as part of the process of developing a parks and green spaces strategy for 2020-2030.

The strategy aims to set out the priorities for public parks and green spaces in Leeds over next 10 years.

As a public service, it's important to us that the strategy reflects the views of residents and visitors to Leeds so that we provide parks and green spaces that meet the needs of our communities. So, to find out what people think about our green spaces and their future, we undertook a wide ranging public consultation between September 2019 and February 2020.

This report outlines the process and findings of that consultation.





Consultation workshop with Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum

2. Context

University of Leeds residents' survey

Previous research, undertaken by the University of Leeds, comprehensively analysed use of, and satisfaction with, parks in Leeds (as outlined in the consultation document in Appendix 1) so this research was not repeated as part of the current consultation. However, the findings are relevant and so it is worth briefly reminding readers of them to provide some context to the new findings outlined in this document.

These findings were based on responses from responses from 6,432 local residents.

Park Usage:

Parks are very popular with 91% of Leeds residents having visited a park in the preceding year and 50% visiting a park at least once a week in the summer months. It is estimated that Leeds parks host around 45 million adult visits a year.

Importance of parks:

88% of park users described spending time in parks as either essential, very important or fairly important to their quality of life.

Satisfaction:

Satisfaction with Leeds parks is high with 77% of park users in Leeds reporting very pleasant experiences and 90% were satisfied or very satisfied overall with their main park.





Satisfaction does vary depending on what park people are visiting, for example, 73% of those people whose main park is not at Leeds Quality Park standard say they are satisfied or very satisfied with the park, compared with 93% of respondents whose main park has met the Leeds Quality Park standard. Major park users were also more likely than community park-users to rate their park in good or excellent condition (94% compared with 80%).

Feelings of safety:

91% of users say they feel 'fairly', or 'very' safe using their park.

Who uses parks?

High usage of parks in Leeds is reported across the board when survey respondents are compared for gender, ethnic group, disability and age. However, people with disabilities and people aged over 75 are less likely to visit a park than those without disabilities or under 75 (77% of people from these groups compared with 91% of people on average had visited a park in the last year).

Which parks are visited most often?

63% of residents in Leeds chose a local community park as their 'main' park and 37% chose a 'major city park' as their 'main' park. 94% of respondents chose a 'Leeds Quality Park' as their main park which suggests usage is linked to park quality.

3. Methodology

To find out what people think about parks and green spaces in Leeds and their future, we undertook a public consultation which was based on the document '*Towards a Parks and Green Spaces Strategy 2020–2030*' (Appendix 1). The document outlined the scope of the strategy, previous relevant research, and its local and national context. It also set out some suggested priorities for parks and green spaces in the city going forward.

We then asked residents, visitors, Parks and Countryside staff, partners and stakeholders to tell us what they think of local parks and green spaces, and the proposed priorities.

People provided feedback in the following ways:

- Answering questions in a survey that was available online and on paper (Appendix 2)
- A survey for children was also made available online (Appendix 3)
- In face to face workshops/meetings (Appendix 4)
- 3 organisations sent in a formal submission document

The results of the consultation (which came in the form of both quantitative and qualitative data) were analysed by Leeds City Council and (partners) University of Leeds.





4. Promotion and engagement

We were keen to ensure as many Leeds residents, park-users and stakeholders as possible responded to the consultation, so that we could get an accurate picture of what people think of our parks and green spaces, so the consultation was promoted widely as follows:

Online

- The consultation was available on the [Leeds City Council, Parks and Countryside consultations webpage](#).
- Advertisements were placed on the front page of the Leeds City Council website and intranet linking to the online questionnaire.
- The consultation was promoted on the Parks and Countryside Facebook and Twitter pages @Leedsparks and on other Leeds City Council social media including from the newsroom, local community committees, Child Friendly Leeds and park visitor attractions like Temple Newsam and Tropical World. Partners such as Love Leeds Parks, Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum and University of Leeds, Parks Project also shared.
- Two Facebook advertisements promoting the consultation were paid for. One in November 2019 to promote the public consultation event at City Museum, and one in March 2020 targeted at 18-30 year-old Leeds residents when it became apparent that this age group was under-represented among respondents.
- The public consultation event was also advertised on University of Leeds and Festival of Social Science website (as it was a partnership event, more details below) and on the Leeds Inspired website.

Press and media

- Two press releases were sent out by Leeds City Council promoting the consultation.
- It was also mentioned in the *Essentials* newsletter that goes to all Leeds City Council staff

On site:

- Posters in parks notice boards across the city
- A full page advert was placed in the Parks and Countryside events leaflet, *Out and About*. 20,000 hard copies of the leaflet were distributed across the city in parks, visitor attractions, libraries, museums etc.
- The public consultation event was advertised on the big screen at Roundhay Park bonfire.
- Adverts were also featured on the screens in Leeds City Council community hubs.

Direct approach:

- Parks and Countryside staff, Leeds City Council officers and key stakeholders were invited directly to get involved in the consultation.
- Some key user-groups, such as people with disabilities and BAME groups, were also approached directly to ensure they had a chance to get their voices heard.
- Members of [Leeds Citizens Panel](#) were asked to fill in the survey.





Poster advertising public consultation event

THE FUTURE OF LEEDS PARKS

Free exhibition, public consultation and pop-up park

Find out about how Leeds parks have changed through time at this free exhibition, consider the challenges and opportunities facing parks today and have your say on a 10-year strategy for the future of Leeds parks and green spaces.

COME ALONG AT ANY TIME.
Places at talks and workshops can be reserved.

Saturday 9 November 2019
11am – 4.30pm
Brodrick Hall, Leeds City Museum,
Millennium Square

View the full programme at:
<https://futureofparks.leeds.ac.uk>



5. Face to face consultation

Face to face consultation took 2 forms:

- Specially designed workshops
- Attending meetings

An example of the content of one of the workshops (they varied in content depending on the audience) is provided in appendix 4.





Face to face consultations:

Consultee	Type of consultation	Approximate number of attendees	Notes
General public	Large scale event at City Museum	900	Event was run in partnership with University of Leeds as part of <i>Festival of Social Science</i> . It involved workshops, activities for children, park-themed stalls and displays, park themed films and historic images of Leeds parks.
Parks and Countryside service staff	2-hour workshops	200	Eleven 2-hour workshops were run with staff from across the Parks and Countryside Service
Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum	2-hour workshop	40	The Forum is a voluntary organisation made up of individuals and community organisations interested in protecting and enhancing public green spaces in Leeds
Community committee, Environment Subcommittees, ward members	Presentation and discussion at meetings	100	Community committees provide a forum for local people to have their say about what happens in their community, and are attended by local elected ward members (as well as the public) - we contacted all, and attended 9 of the 10 environment subcommittees. We were also invited to, and attended, 2 full community committee meetings (Outer South and Inner North East) as part of the consultation.
Equality hubs	Presentation/discussion at meeting	120	Consultations were held at the following Leeds-based community organisation meetings: Disability Hub, EPIC (forum for parents/carers and families of disabled children and young people with additional needs), Federation for the Blind, LGBT+ Hub, BME Hub, Migrant Access Project and Older Peoples' Forum. Other groups were contacted but not all were interested in hosting us.
Local children	45 minute workshops	40	Youth Council and Youth Ambassador meetings.





Consultee ctd	Type of consultation	Approximate number of attendees	Notes
Key stakeholders	2-hour workshop	60	Invitees and attendees were from a wide range of stakeholder backgrounds including Leeds City Council departments such as Health, Planning, Marketing, Museums and Galleries plus representatives from external organisations such as local environmental charities, outdoor sporting organisations and Leeds Allotment Federation.
Leeds Inclusive Growth Conference	Presentation/discussion at workshop session	25	The audience at this event, themed around 'place,' was mainly made up of locally-based organisations such as businesses and charities.
Total		1485	



Future of Parks public event at City Museum

6. Surveys

2 surveys were undertaken: one aimed at adults and another for children.

Questionnaire for adults

The main survey was completed by 1,406 people and the results were analysed by Leeds City Council, supported by partners at the University of Leeds.





Some of the University of Leeds team at the Future of Parks event

Adult Survey Respondents

Gender:

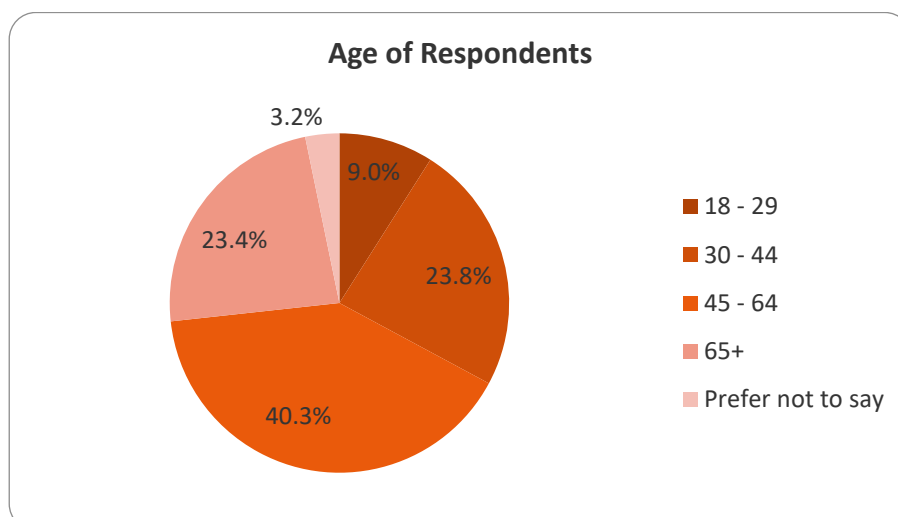
52% were female and 42% were male, and the remainder described themselves as 'other' (4%) or preferred not to say (2%).

Ethnicity:

The majority of respondents reported being of white ethnicity (87%) with 5% reporting being from a black and minority ethnic (BAME) background.

Age:

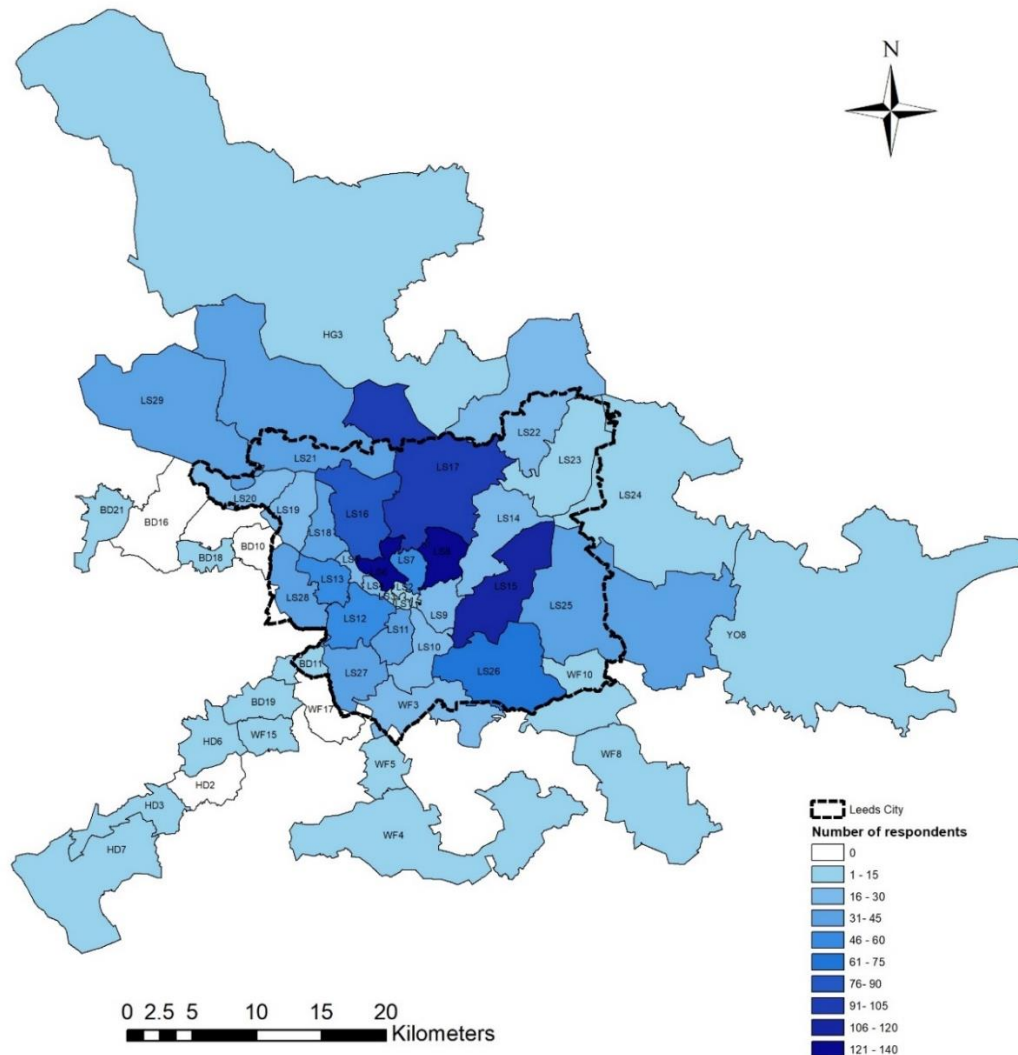
The majority of respondents (87%) were aged 30 or over.





Where they live:

Most respondents live in Leeds, with just 18 respondents reporting living at a postcode outside of the city's boundaries.



Childrens' survey respondents

43 people aged under 18 completed the questionnaire with their details being as follows:

Age	Count	Percent
0-5	2	5%
6-11	11	26%
12-16	21	49%
16-18	8	19%
Skipped	1	2%
	43	

Gender	Count	Percent
Female	28	65%
Male	12	28%
Prefer not to say/ skipped	3	7%
	43	





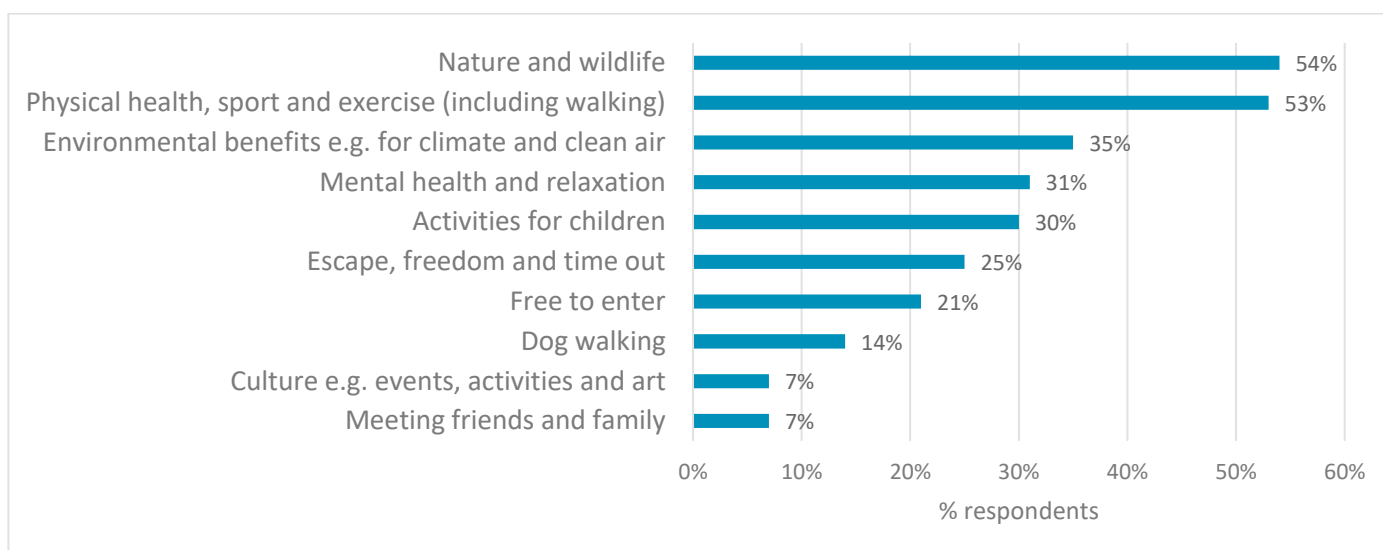
Four considered themselves to have a disability, and 33 (77%) were white British. The respondents came from 20 Leeds postcodes, with the most frequently recurring being LS19 (five people), LS8, LS17 and LS28 (each with four people).

7. Findings

The findings will be reported in turn by question for responses from both the surveys and the face to face consultations.

Question 1: Why are public parks and green spaces important to you?

Survey - survey respondents were asked to choose no more than 3 options from 14 (including 'other'). The top 10 responses were as follows.



Face-to-face responses – when asked this question in a face-to-face setting, the question was left open (rather than providing respondents with a number of options as we did in the survey) so it was interesting to find that many of the most popular responses were similar. The themes identified in the answers are outlined, in order of popularity (from most to least popular), in the table below (because the face-to-face discussions were held in groups it's not possible to effectively quantify the responses).





Top 10 answers face to face
Physical health, sport and exercise
Mental health including 'relaxation', 'escape', 'happiness'.
Biodiversity/nature/wildlife
Children/family/play
Culture e.g. events and activities
Environmental benefits e.g. for climate and clean air
Social aspect e.g. meet friends
Dog walking
Brings communities together, social cohesion
Free entry

In both the face-to-face and survey respondents the benefits of green space **for physical and mental health; nature, biodiversity and the wider environment**; and **children** stand out as popular reasons why they consider public parks and green spaces are important.

The open questioning at the workshops also revealed that some people think of public green space as an important shared space for communities, increasing community cohesion and providing opportunities for communities to come together.

Children were asked a slightly different question in their survey, they were asked: *What do you like to do when you go to the park?* Their responses, chosen from a list of options, in order of popularity were as follows:

What do you like to do when you go to the park (under 18s)
Go for a walk
Spend time with friends
Play in a playground
Relax
See nature and wildlife
Play sports and games
Spend time with family
Exercise e.g. running, yoga or tennis
Have something to eat or drink
Cycle/Skate/Scoot/Rollerskate

Again, common themes include physical and mental health (including exercise), play, spending time with friends and family, and nature and wildlife.

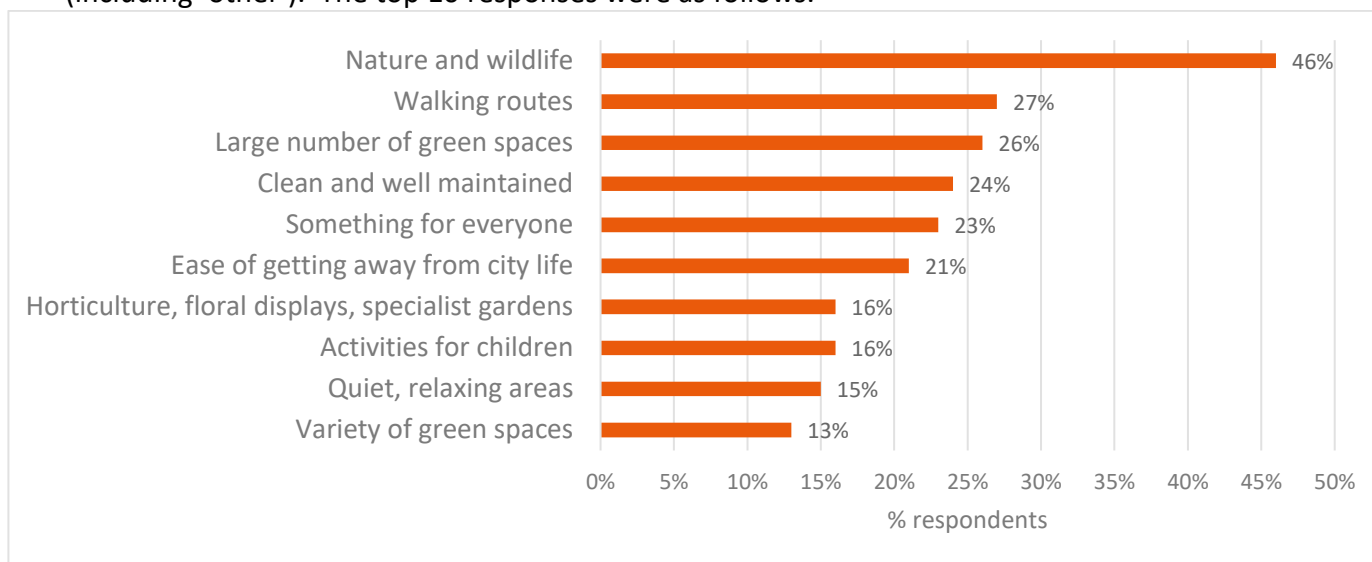




It is interesting that having something to eat or drink is in the children's top 10 because visiting cafes and concession and having picnics and BBQs was also a recurring theme among adults in the face-to-face consultations (though not in the top 10 most popular responses).

Question 2: What do you think the best things about public parks and green spaces in Leeds are?

Survey - survey respondents were asked to choose no more than 3 options from 23 reasons (including 'other'). The top 10 responses were as follows.



Face-to-face responses – the open question in the face-to-face consultation revealed the following as the 10 most popular answers by theme (from most to least popular):

Top 10 answers face to face
Provide places to exercise/sport/walking
Variety of green spaces in Leeds
Free/affordable
Nature and wildlife
Accessible spaces (including being local)
Events and activities
Well maintained
Children/families/play
Volunteers/Friends of/Community engagement
Lots of green space





Children

Best things about parks and green spaces in Leeds – under 18s
Place to relax/escape
Places to play/explore/have fun
Nature and wildlife
Walking/cycling
Somewhere to spend time with friends or family

When it comes to what people think the best things about parks and green spaces in Leeds are, the results are not so consistent across the survey and face to face respondents, but there are several recurring themes as follows:

- Nature and wildlife
- They provide places to walk/exercise
- They provide things to do, especially for children
- The large amount of green space in Leeds
- The variety of green space in Leeds
- The sites are well maintained

It is interesting to note that the face-to-face consultation revealed that people really value the fact that parks and green spaces are free/affordable to visit. This wasn't one of the options provided on the questionnaire so has perhaps been missed in those responses for that reason.



Leeds Youth Council workshop





Question 3: Are there any issues with parks and green spaces in Leeds that you would like to see addressed?

Survey

62% of respondents answered yes to this question. Those respondents were given 150 words to describe these issues and the issues most commonly highlighted by respondents are as follows (in order from most to least common):

Issues highlighted by survey respondents (and % of people who mentioned the subject in their response – from a total of 854 respondents)	Details
Anti-social behaviour (38%)	Includes the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter and fly-tipping • Dog control and fouling • Vandalism and graffiti • Quad bikes and motorbikes in green space • Other anti-social behaviour and crime (such as drug-taking) leaving visitors feeling unsafe • Cycling
Maintenance, funding and staffing (23%)	Includes the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor quality of infrastructure, particularly paths, playgrounds and sports facilities. • Not having enough staff/resources to maintain green spaces properly
Provision of facilities and amenities (17%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need of more facilities in green spaces, notably playgrounds, bins, lighting, toilets and cafes. • Need of quality facilities for children and (more so) teenagers.
Traditional park management approach limits biodiversity and climate mitigation (13%)	Includes the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request to reduce intensity of management including mowing, pruning, pesticide-use and annual bedding • Request to create more wildlife habitats such as meadows, ponds, areas of scrub and other wildlife habitats • Requests for more tree planting • Requests for more green space connectivity and wildlife corridors.



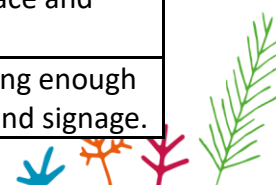


Issues highlighted by survey respondents, cont. (and % of people who mentioned the subject in their response – from a total of 854 respondents)	Details
Accessibility and equality of opportunity (10%)	<p>Includes the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways to get to green spaces (including parking, cycling, walking and public transport) need improving. • Inequality in provision of quality green space (specifically in more deprived areas and within walking distance of residential areas) • Fees and charges (to visitor attractions & events) – people commenting thought they should be free/more affordable <p>Access for people with disabilities requires improvement (including footpaths, benches, toilets).</p>
Protection and quantity of green space (7%)	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green space being sold for development • Need more public green space, <i>particularly in the city centre</i>
Events and activities (3%)	<p>Some people thought more events and activities should be provided but (in approximately equal numbers) others didn't think parks should be closed off to host events, especially if they weren't free. Others said the damage caused by events, particularly in wet weather was an issue.</p>

Examples of responses are provided in appendix 5.

Face-to-face responses – the open question in the face-to-face consultation revealed the following as the most common answers by theme (from most to least common):

Issues, top answers face-to-face	Details
Anti-social behaviour	Includes litter and fly-tipping, dogs, drug-taking, graffiti and vandalism and other ASB.
Maintenance, funding and staffing	Includes issues with general maintenance and comments on parks being understaffed, underfunded and under-resourced.
Accessibility and equality of opportunity	Includes lack of disabled access, public transport to parks, parking and unequal distribution of quality green space and affordability issues.
Provision of facilities and amenities	Includes issues around not having enough toilets, bins, lighting, benches and signage.





Issues, top answers face-to-face cont.	Details
Working with communities	Includes requirement for better communication with, and support for, communities by council.
Traditional park management approach limits biodiversity and climate mitigation	Includes suggestion that nature conservation should be a higher priority, more trees should be planted and that green space should be managed to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Within these themes there were responses that came up repeatedly that are worth highlighting as follows:

Issues around **litter** and **dogs** (fouling and not being under control) are worth emphasising here - in both the survey responses and the face to face consultation, litter and dog fouling were often highlighted as issues both in terms of anti-social behaviour and maintenance of green spaces. Related to these are the many comments around not having enough bins in parks and green spaces, again a common concern raised by respondents as an issue.

Another issue worth highlighting because it was mentioned often is the quality and availability of **play facilities** for children and teenagers – many respondents suggested improvements could be made to play both locally and in the larger city parks.

Children

Issues with parks and green spaces in Leeds – under 18s
Litter/lack of bins/bins not being emptied often enough
Graffiti/vandalism/ASB/other young people in groups are intimidating
Dog poo/ dogs off leads
Poor quality or broken facilities/play equipment or other maintenance issues

It is worth noting here that several recurring themes cited as issues with green space in Leeds – around maintenance, managing green space for wildlife, activities for children and accessibility, were also popular responses to the question about what the *best* things about parks and green spaces in the city are. From this, it could perhaps be surmised that there is considerable variation in these themes across the different green spaces in the city; certainly, not all parks in Leeds have achieved Leeds Quality Park standard. And the findings of the 2016 survey (of 6,432 people), undertaken by University of Leeds showed satisfaction with parks does vary depending on the park (for example users of city parks are more likely to say the park is in good or excellent condition than community park users).





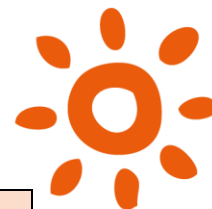
Workshop with Parks and Countryside staff

Question 4: Do you have any ideas about how the issues you've highlighted might be addressed?

The question above was asked in the face-to-face consultations only. The most popular responses (from most to least popular) were as follows:

Solutions - Top 10 responses from face to face consultations	Details
More communications, education and marketing	Includes education of children and general public, providing information on the internet, advertising, on-site signage and interpretation.
More environmentally/nature friendly site management	For biodiversity and the environment – common themes were tree planting, relaxed mowing and reducing pesticide use.
Working with communities, volunteers and partners	Engaging volunteers, Friends groups and wider community.
More ParksWatch/enforcement/CCTV	More security systems proposed to deal with anti-social behaviour
More investment in Parks & Countryside staff and infrastructure	Includes generally providing more funding for green space and related facilities, and for staff - particularly rangers and site based staff.
External funding	Includes a range of ideas such as sponsorship, grants, taking donations, fees and charges and commercial developments like cafes.





Solutions - Top 10 responses from face to face consultations	Details
Providing sustainable transport options	Including public transport and cycling and walking routes to, and in, green spaces.
Provision of more accessible facilities	Including paths, playgrounds and car parking suitable for people with disabilities to use.
Partnership working	Working with other council departments and non-council organisations.
Provision of more on-site facilities	Mainly bins, toilets and lights.

From these responses it seems that engaging with communities through information, education, collaboration and partnership working are popular options for resolving some of the issues with local parks and green spaces as is more environmentally-friendly site management. Investment (in staff, security and facilities), which is perhaps trickier to implement given all the other pressures on council budgets, is also a popular option for resolving issues raised.

Question 5: What (if any) positive changes would you like to see in our parks and green spaces over the next 10 years?

Survey

Respondents were given 150 words to outline positive changes they would like to see. The most popular themes are outlined below (in order from most to least popular).

Top 10 positive changes from survey (and % of people who mentioned the subject in their response – from a total of 1013 respondents)	Details
More wildlife, environment, climate-friendly management (31%)	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting • Reduced mowing • More diverse plants/habitats (including wild flowers, ponds, shrubs) for the benefit of wildlife. • Creating green corridors • Less pesticide-use Less annual/more perennial planting





Top 10 positive changes from survey cont. (and % of people who mentioned the subject in their response – from a total of 1013 respondents)	Details
More visitor facilities (30%)	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More for children (such as playgrounds) • More for teenagers • More sports facilities (such as outdoor gyms, tennis courts, all-weather sports pitches) • More cycling routes • More toilets • More bins, cafes, covered areas for rainy days and lighting
Access for all (18%)	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better quality of paths • Better disabled access to parks and related facilities • Better access to green spaces (car parking, public transport, off-road routes) • Keep facilities free/affordable • Ensure quality is shared equally across city
Tackle anti-social behaviour (14%)	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog fouling and dog control (very common answer) • Litter • Quad/motorbikes in green spaces • Increased security e.g. CCTV/wardens/penalties • Unsafe cycling • Making people feel safe when they visit.
Protect and / or increase green space (14%)	This popular response focussed on protecting green space from building development (sometimes with examples) or increasing the size and number of green spaces in the city – particularly in the centre.
Clean and well maintained (12%)	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliments on level of maintenance and request that it is kept that way • Requests for better maintenance





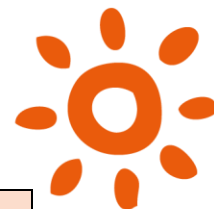
Top 10 positive changes from survey cont. (and % of people who mentioned the subject in their response – from a total of 1013 respondents)	Details
More vibrant and imaginative green spaces (10%)	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More events and activities • More interesting/creative play facilities • Art or other installations • Interactive water features like lidos, paddling pools and water play • Take inspiration from other cities with great parks
More promotion, information and education (7%)	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide on-site information (e.g. about nature, history, horticulture) • Educate children (through school) about nature, history, horticulture etc) • Promote parks and green spaces
Invest in sites and staff (6%)	Includes request for more general investment and for more staff (particularly site-based staff, gardeners, wardens and rangers)
More community involvement (5%)	These comments suggest volunteers, communities and local organisations might get more involved in caring for local greens spaces and activities like tree planting

Examples of responses are provided in appendix 5.

Face to face responses

Positive changes - Top 10 answers face to face	Details
Manage sites better for nature and wildlife	Includes tree planting, reduced mowing, creating wildlife habitats and connecting green spaces
More community collaboration	Includes consultation, community engagement, volunteering and partnerships
More facilities	Includes cafes, toilets, BBQ, bins, benches and drinking fountains
More events and activities	To provide enjoyable things for people to do
More sustainable and climate resilient sites and management practices	Includes using renewable energy, more sustainable planting, recycling, flood alleviation and becoming carbon neutral





Positive changes - Top 10 answers face to face	Details
Better play facilities for children and teens (including skate parks)	Includes suggestions for paddling pools and other water play, skate parks and generally more varied play options.
Improved access for people with disabilities	Includes entrances, seating, paths and play equipment.
More visitor attractions	Such as boating, Go Ape, crazy golf and art installations.
More education and interpretation	Includes signage and information on site as well as more formal education through schools
More staff	Including on-site, rangers and security (like ParksWatch)

Children

Proposed positive changes to parks and green spaces in Leeds – Under 18s
Waste management: Provide more bins/ empty bins more frequently/provide recycling bins/make people pick up their litter/ less dog poo
Provide better/more adventurous play areas and/or better provision for older children
Maintenance: Clean and maintain parks frequently/ fix broken equipment
Provide more marked trails for walking/ provide better cycling facilities
Provide more seating, including shelter from the rain

Again the responses to the survey and the face to face consultations revealed similar themes when people were asked what they want more of in future with recurring themes including; more focus on managing sites for nature and the environment, providing more/better visitor facilities and events and activities in parks, providing accessible green space, and information and education about the sites.



Stakeholder workshop





Question 6: We have identified 7 potential priorities for public parks and green spaces in Leeds over the next 10 years which are outlined in the document entitled '*Towards a Parks and Green Spaces Strategy*' (Appendix 1). Those suggested priorities are as follows – do you agree with them?

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <u>Quality</u>: | Providing good quality green space |
| 2. <u>Equality of Opportunity</u>: | Green space for everyone |
| 3. <u>Environment</u>: | Greening the city |
| 4. <u>Health and Wellbeing</u>: | Supporting healthy, active lifestyles |
| 5. <u>Sustainability</u>: | Public green space for the long term |
| 6. <u>Collaboration</u>: | Working as a team for Leeds |
| 7. <u>Culture</u>: | Contributing to the cultural offer of the city |

Survey

85% of respondents said they agreed with the priorities outlined; 10% said no and 5% didn't know.

The 10% of respondents who answered no were asked to provide reasons for their answer, and these are summarised in the table below in order of popularity.

Main reasons expressed for not agreeing with priorities – survey respondents (and % of people who mentioned the subject in their response – from a total of 161 respondents)	Details
Wanted to add/remove particular priorities (30%)	Includes things like adding control of anti-social behaviour and providing safety, more focus on children, creating and protecting green space
Should focus on nature, wildlife, climate and general environment more (20%)	Many people wanted to see an emphasis on biodiversity and/or the climate emergency in the priorities.
Need to define the priorities more clearly (17%)	Some respondents thought that the list of priorities was too all-encompassing to be meaningful and/or requested more clarity on what they would mean when applied on the ground. Others suggested the number of priorities be reduced or ranked in order of priority.

Examples of responses are provided in appendix 5.





Face to face

In the face to face conversations most people expressed broad agreement with the proposed priorities. Recurring themes in the comments, that diverged from the priorities outlined, were that there should be:

- More on education of children and general public
- More consideration given to connecting green spaces for people and wildlife
- More emphasis on the climate emergency
- Consideration given to environmental sustainability (including things like eliminating single-use plastic, using renewable energy and recycling) in the priorities

Question 7: Do you have any further comments/suggestions for Leeds City Council's Parks and Countryside Service on how to manage parks and green spaces in future?

This question was asked of survey respondents only. The most common answers in order of most to least popular fitted into the following themes:

Most common themes that came up in 'other comments' section of survey (and % of people who mentioned the subject in their response – from a total of 504 respondents)	Details
Make green spaces better for wildlife and climate (16%)	Including lots of comments about planting more trees and managing green spaces better for wildlife.
Compliments and thanks to the Parks and Countryside Service (14%)	Lots of people ended the survey by thanking staff and volunteers and saying things like 'Keep up the good work'.
Suggestion that the council collaborate more for the benefit of public green space (12%)	Including working with communities, volunteers, Friends groups and businesses.
Request that anti-social behaviour is tackled (10%)	Many (30) of these responses highlighted issues with dogs. Motorbikes, quad bikes and cyclists on footpaths were also recurring themes.
Ensure parks and green spaces are accessible to everyone (7%)	Including making sure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parks are accessible for disabled people • parks are free/affordable to access
Protect green space (5%)	Lots of people were concerned of the threat of development to public green space and were keen that it be protected.
More staff/general investment (5%)	Several respondents again suggested more staff and/other general investment in parks and green spaces is required.





Most common themes that came up in 'other comments' section of survey (and % of people who mentioned the subject in their response – from a total of 504 respondents)	Details
Retain/improve quality (4%)	These comments focussed on retaining/improving site maintenance to a good standard.
Provide more for children and teenagers (3%)	These comments included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • importance of getting children outdoors • improve playgrounds • provide more activities/facilities for children and teens.
Focus on health benefits (3%)	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work more closely with NHS/Public Health • importance of public green space for physical and mental health benefits.

Most of the comments in this section are similar to the responses to the other questions, with nature, wildlife and climate, working more closely with communities, tackling anti-social behaviour and access again being common themes.

Parks and Countryside staff and volunteers really appreciate the compliments and thanks received by many survey respondents – it is great to know our work is appreciated! ☺

Examples of responses are provided in appendix 5.

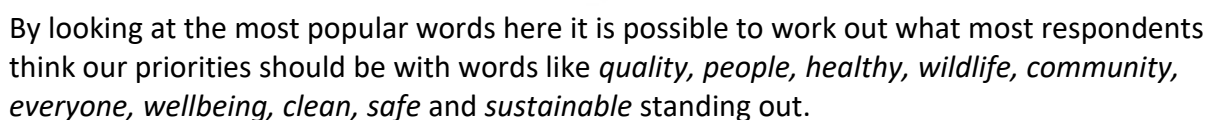
Question 8: Please write down, in one or two sentences, what you think the stated aim of the parks and countryside service should be (for the next 10 years).

This question was only asked in face to face workshops with Parks and Countryside staff and Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum – consultees with a good working knowledge of the Parks and Countryside Service.

To make the responses easier to absorb (which is difficult when looking through over 150 different paragraphs) a *wordcloud* has been created (below) which shows which words were used more than twice, and how popular they were in the phrases provided (the more times a word was used in the responses, the larger the word appears in the diagram).

Example responses are available to view in appendix 5.





During the consultation process, 3 formal submissions were also received, the contents of which are summarised overleaf:





Organisation	Details of organisation	Summary of submission
Wade's Charity	Wade's is a local charity whose main relevant objective is " <i>providing and maintaining open spaces within the pre-1974 Leeds city boundary, for the benefit and recreation or health of the inhabitants of Leeds</i> "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wade's supports the priorities proposed in the consultation document. They 'strongly' support development of management plans (in partnership with local communities) for each site. They are very keen on the proposal for continued collaboration with communities and suggest moving resources around to invest in more rangers, particularly in deprived areas to facilitate more community engagement and volunteering. They suggest <i>'there are opportunities to make much more of the cultural heritage of the City's Parks'</i> e.g. at Middleton, Gotts and Kirkstall Abbey parks. They propose the strategy should include <i>'an aspiration and commitment to upgrade Gotts & Armley Park to one of the City's major parks, and to seek opportunities to bring in the resources to achieve this in a collaborative partnership.'</i> <i>'Wade's would also like to see and be part of a much more focused analysis of the potential for creating more attractive open space, with better, more nature and climate friendly planting and management together with informal features for children's play, public enjoyment and exercise.'</i>
Leeds Civic Trust	Leeds Civic Trust is a charity. One of their objects is to promote ways of improving the environment within Leeds including high quality green and public spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeds Civic Trust supports the priorities proposed in the consultation. They support the development of management plans for each site in consultation with local communities. They support the idea of the Parks and Countryside service working more closely with communities and volunteers, particularly Friends groups and suggest consideration is given to creating more ranger posts to facilitate that (through restructure if required). They believe <i>there are opportunities to make much more of the cultural heritage of the City's Parks, not least in relation to the pocket parks near the City Centre.</i> They would like to see more public green space in the city; <i>'We would support more high quality green and public spaces in other areas of the city as such areas are redeveloped, subject to appropriate provision for ongoing upkeep and maintenance.'</i> <i>'In order to advance education in the appreciation of a people friendly environment, and considering climate change,' they 'strongly support a much more focused analysis of the potential for creating more attractive open space. That should include better, more natural and climate-friendly planting and management, fewer large areas of mown grass...and informal features for children's play, public enjoyment and exercise.'</i>





Organisation	Details of organisation	Summary of Submission
Cobbett Environmental	Charity focussing on environment, conservation, heritage and education. Funding community-led projects relating to the maintenance upkeep and improvement of open space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are <i>'impressed with the vision for the future of open space in Leeds outlined in consultation document.'</i> • They <i>'Emphasise benefits of collaborative effort involving community groups, user groups and other volunteers to bring about change in less high profile parks and open spaces.'</i> They <i>'recognise Middleton Park as an exemplar for what can be achieved, with an established Friends group, a community centre, annual events and a more public profile'.</i> • They <i>'support Wade's Charity in seeking an aspiration and commitment to upgrade the standing of Gotts and Armley Park, and to promote the significance of the Repton-designed landscape within the Kirkstall Valley.'</i>

9. Conclusion

Following a wide reaching and varied public consultation, it can be concluded that the subjects below are most important to the general public and stakeholders when it comes to public green space in Leeds. These are grouped under the themes outlined in the consultation document in no particular order – they were all highlighted frequently.

Quality:

- Provision of basic visitor facilities (like benches, bins and toilets)
- Maintenance
- Dogs (dog walking, dog fouling, dog control)
- Litter and cleanliness
- Tackling anti-social behaviour and safety

Equality of opportunity

- Accessibility (including getting there and disabled access)
- Keeping them free/affordable
- Activities/facilities for children and teenagers

Environment:

- Protecting and supporting nature and wildlife
- Tree planting
- Mitigating climate change
- Environmental sustainability (e.g. recycling, avoiding peat, using electric vehicles)
- Connecting green spaces for wildlife and in support of sustainable transport

Health and wellbeing:

- Mental health and wellbeing (including 'relaxation')
- Physical health, sport and exercise (such as football, cycling, walking, tennis, golf).
- Bringing people together (friends, families, wider communities)



**Sustainability:**

- The need to invest in the sites and staff
- Protecting public green space in the city from development

Collaboration:

- Working in partnership with communities and volunteers
- Provision of information and education (such as signage, trails, school visits)

Culture:

- Provision of events, activities and visitor attractions (including cafes)

In addition, one more theme emerged:

- The need for more public green space in the city (particularly the city centre)

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the consultation for sparing the time. Your contribution will help us make sure that we are providing parks and green spaces that residents and visitors to Leeds can appreciate and enjoy, and that will play a part in making Leeds the Best City in the UK.

The findings of the consultation, along with national research findings and other local plans and policies (such as the Leeds City Council, Best Council Plan), will be used to develop a Parks and Green spaces strategy for the next 10 years (to 2030).



Leeds Youth Ambassadors workshop

