

## **2017 Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>2017</b>
Overall Satisfaction	96%
Feeling Safe	94%
Ease of Access	96%
Maintenance	92%
Playground Facilities	95%
Respondents	453





# 2017 Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey



LONDON BOROUGH OF  
RICHMOND UPON THAMES

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

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## Introduction

## Aims

1. The 2017 Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey aims to assess overall satisfaction with council managed parks and highlight any areas for improvement. It will help the Parks and Open Spaces Team understand what matters to residents and help ensure spending reflects the views and habits of local residents and park users.
2. The survey is the fifth in a series of Customer Satisfaction Surveys conducted by Parks and Open Spaces Team. By asking a number of similar questions to those asked in the 2008, 2010, 2013 and 2015 surveys. The survey also set out to assess the development of the parks service over this period.

## Methodology

In line with previous years the survey ran from the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 to the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017 in which time residents were consulted either online via the council's consultation finder or onsite through face-to-face interviews.

Onsite surveying took place over a 2-week period from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October to Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at 15 sites across the borough (see Appendix 1). Each site was surveyed for a period of 90-180 minutes either before or after 12pm (typically between the hours of 8.00 and 10am, and 12.00 and 4.00pm). Surveys were conducted by members of the Parks and Open Space Teams. On a number of occasions, surveyors were assisted by representatives from the Parks Friends Groups, Councillors and Parkguard. Where appropriate, surveys were left in park cafes for self-completion. Additional steps were taken to raise the publicity of the survey by working with the communications team to create a press release and publicise the survey through the council's social-media accounts. Park Friends Groups and other relevant associations e.g. SLWEN were contacted and asked to circulate the online survey through their mailing lists. Furthermore, posters were put up on site on the parks notice boards.

## Number of respondents

Year	Total no. of respondents	Paper based		Online	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
2008	211	211	100%	N/A – wasn't introduced until 2010	
2010	266	227	85%	39	15%
2013	633	272	43%	361	57%
2015	535	261	49%	274	51%
2017	453	84	19%	369	81%

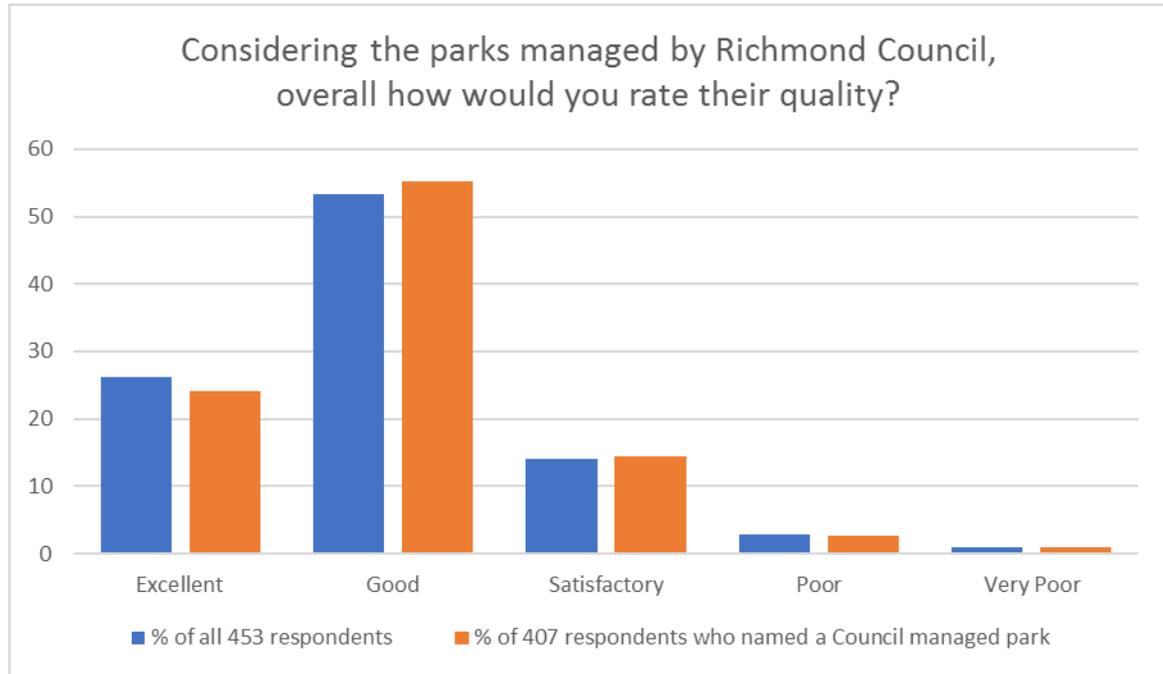
In total 453 responses to the survey were received 369 of these were completed online. The remaining 84 were completed through paper-based surveys, which were captured during the onsite interviews.

**Results summary**

**General Satisfaction Levels - all parks in the borough**

96% of respondents described council managed parks in the borough as excellent, good, or satisfactory, whilst 3% described them as either poor or very poor and 1% of the total number of respondents held no view.

However, it should be noted that, the distinction between Richmond’s council managed and non-council managed parks is not always clear in the public’s eyes. 46 (11%) of respondents later named a non-council managed park when asked to name the park they wished to comment on.



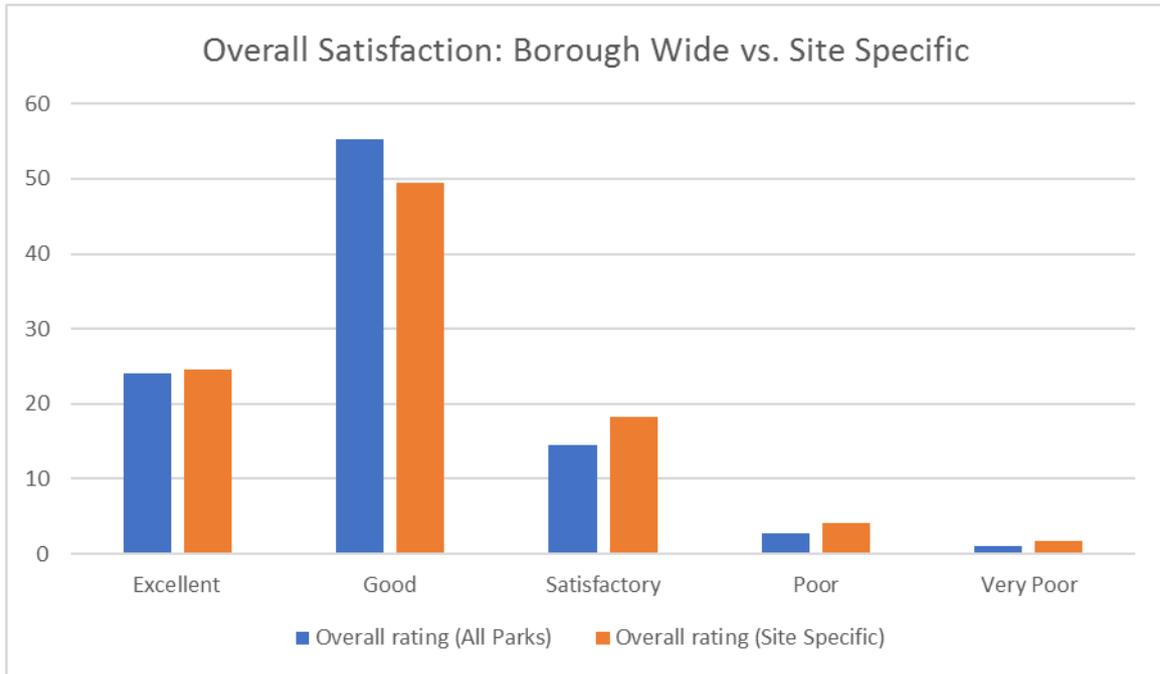
A total of 15 respondents gave council managed parks a rating of poor or very poor. No park was mentioned more than twice, indicating that the rating of poor-very poor for any one park is not a common theme of the overall satisfaction survey. In addition to this, of these respondents, 11 rated their local park as Excellent – Satisfactory and only 2 respondents gave further comments as to what can be improved.

**General Satisfaction Level - 'local' named park**

In addition to rating the quality of all council managed parks in the borough, respondents were asked to name the council managed park which they visited most often or wished to comment upon and give it an 'overall rating'.

The following table shows the 'overall rating' of the 407 respondents who only named a council managed park compared to the 'overall rating' scores of all 454 respondents.

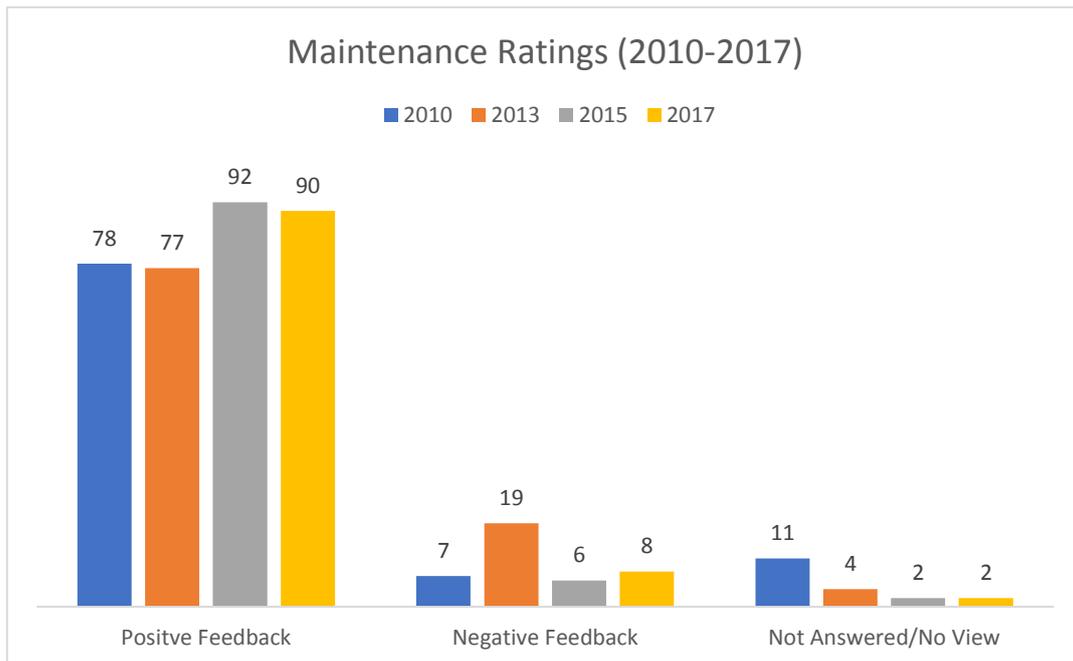
Of the respondents who named only council managed parks 92% rated it as excellent, good or, satisfactory.



Named parks tend to receive a marginally lower rating when compared to all parks except when considering the excellent and satisfactory response. This indicates that the general impression of all the borough’s parks is higher than the impression of the park they visit most often. However, it must be taken into consideration that the phrasing of the two questions is not identical.

**Maintenance Scores**

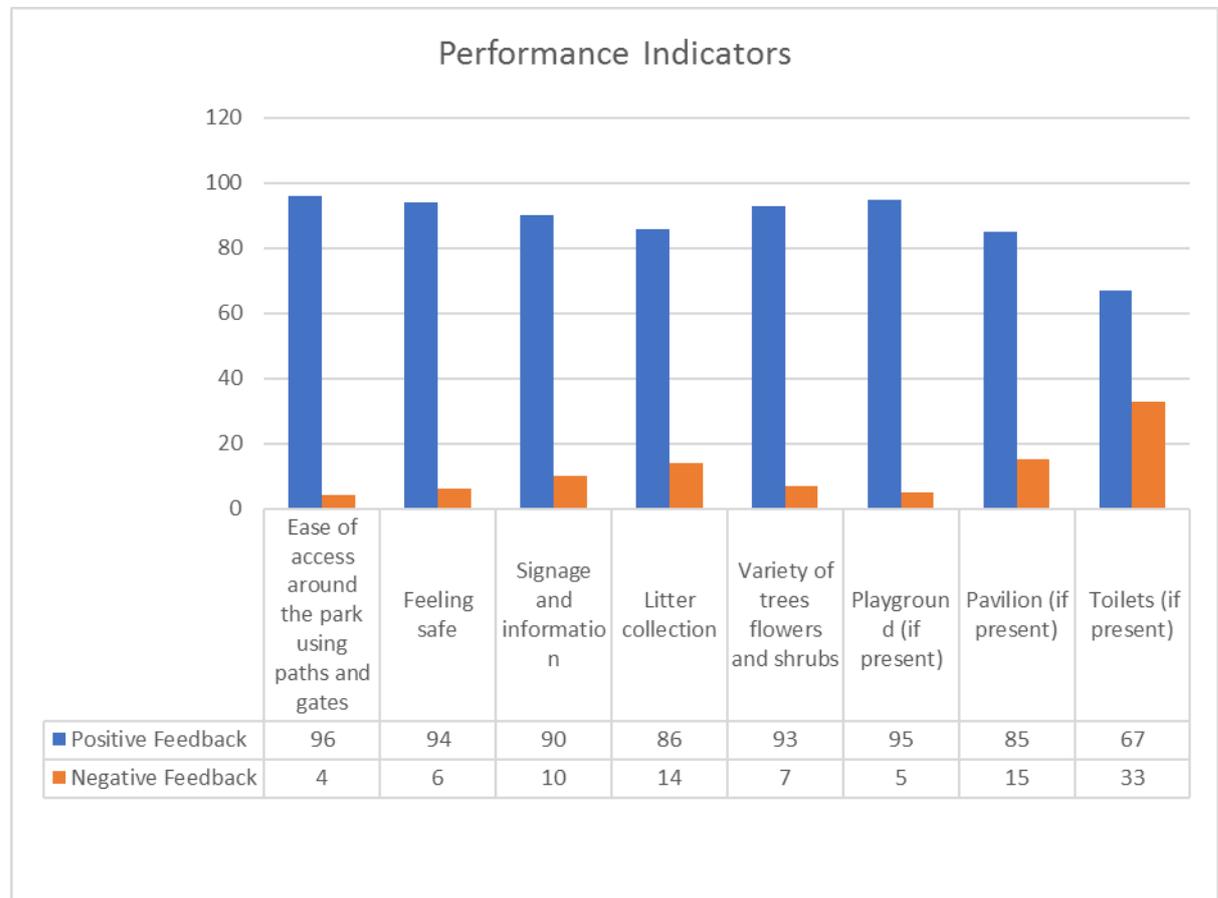
Respondents were also asked to rate the overall maintenance of their named park. Of the 407 who had named council managed parks, 20% rated it as excellent, 49% claimed it was good, 20% said satisfactory while 5% said poor and 3% said very poor. 2% (2013: 4%) held no view or did not answer.



However, when comparing results from previous surveys it must be noted that collection method and phrasing of questions are not quite identical. Particularly, the scale of ratings has varied. Scores of excellent, good and satisfactory have been combined into 'positive feedback' whilst scores of poor and very poor have been combined into 'negative feedback' to allow for direct comparison.

Performance indicators

Respondents were asked to name the park that they visit most often or wished to comment upon and then rate a number of aspects on a scale of excellent, good, satisfactory, poor, very poor, no view or not applicable. The following table displays the results of the 407 respondents who chose to discuss a council managed park and ratings have been condensed for ease of analysis. Positive feedback consists of ratings of excellent, good or satisfactory, negative feedback consists of poor or very poor. Please note that 'not answered' has been discounted from the total figure to calculate the percentage.



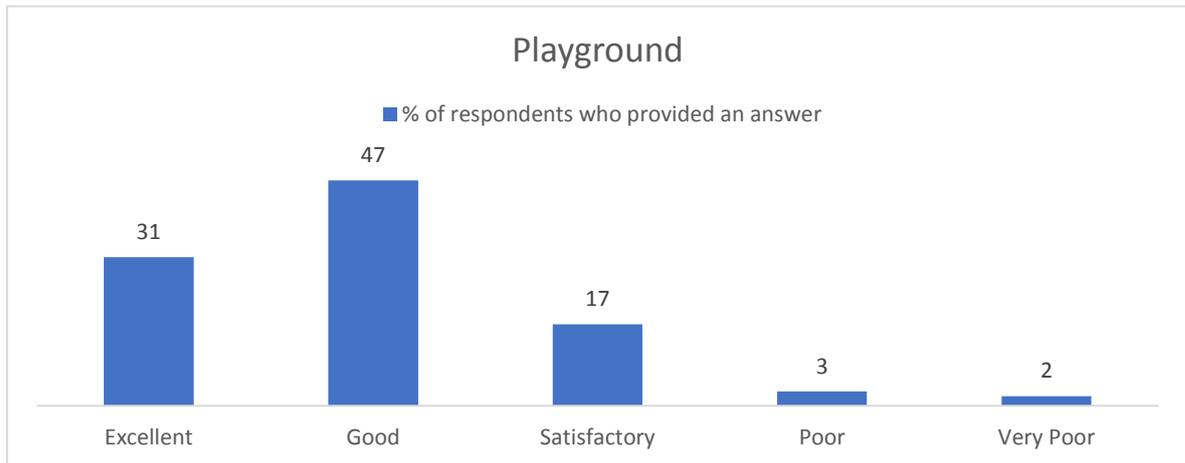
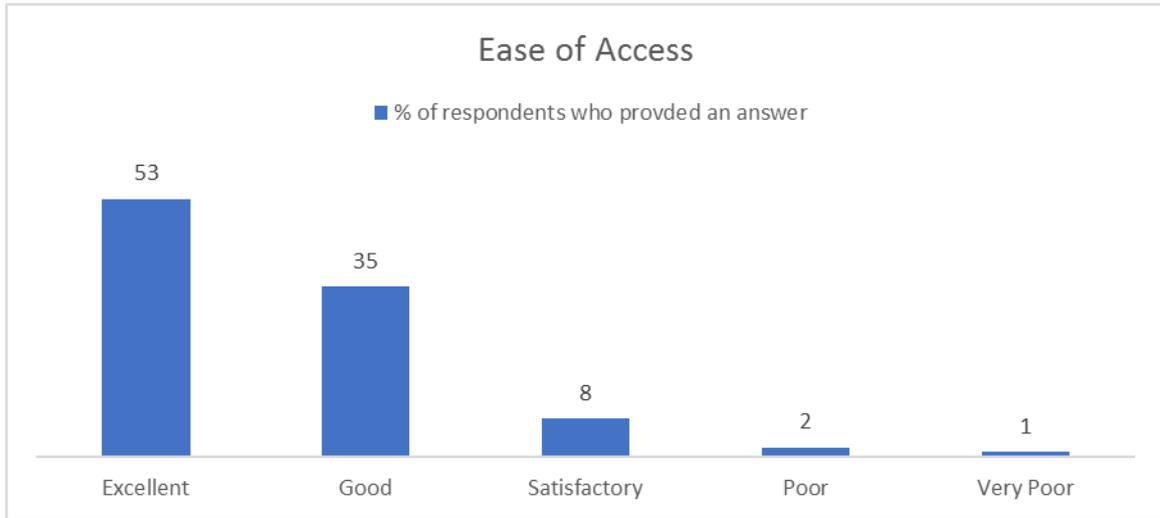
In order to judge the three top performing aspects and the three lowest scoring aspects (by comparing the amount of positive feedback with the amount of negative feedback).

**The top performing aspects are;**

1. Ease of access with 96% positive feedback
2. Playground with 95%
3. Feeling safe with 94%

This contrasts with previous results in 2015 that ranked Ease of Access, Feeling Safe and Litter Collection as the top 3 performing aspects.

Breakdown of top 3 performing aspects;

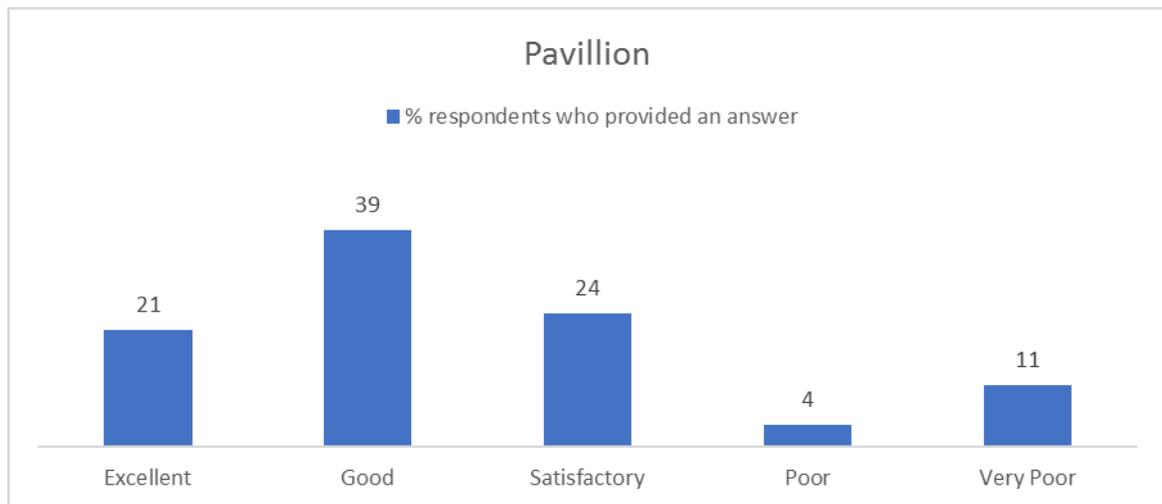
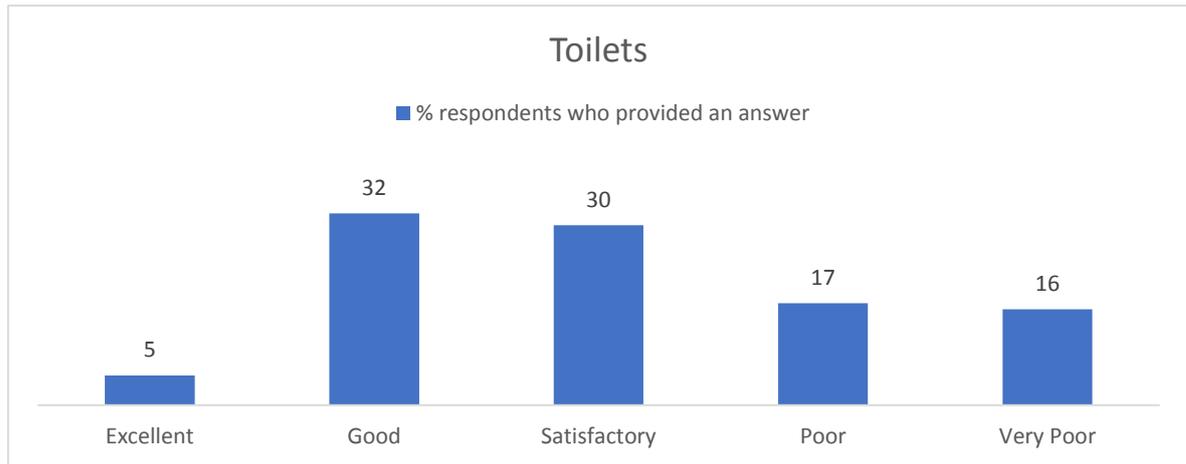


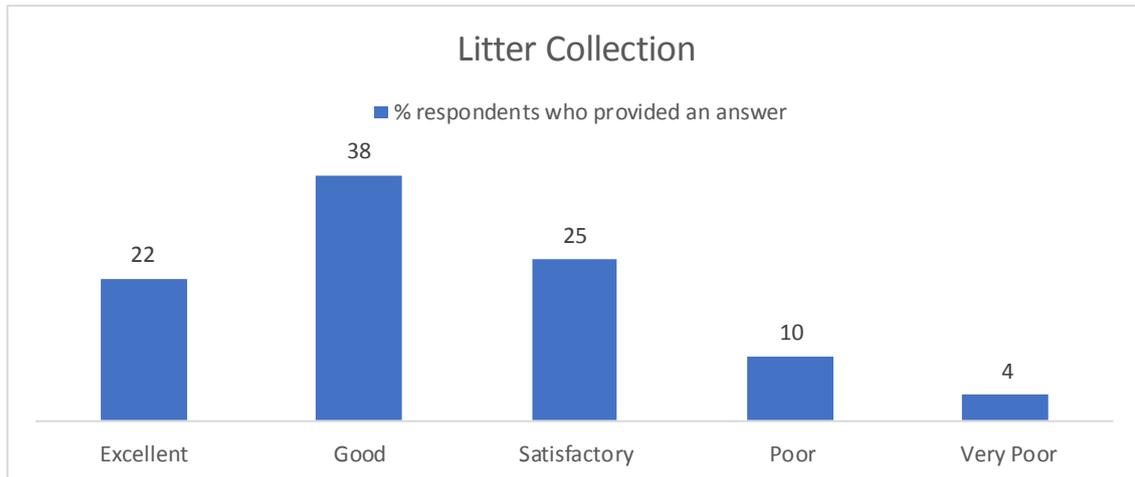
**The three lowest performing areas are;**

1. Toilets with 33% negative feedback
2. Pavillion with 15%
3. Litter Collection with 14%

It should be noted that toilet facilities are only present across some of the sites; hence 52% of respondents did not provide an answer or ranked them as poor for not being present, which brought the overall positive statistics down.

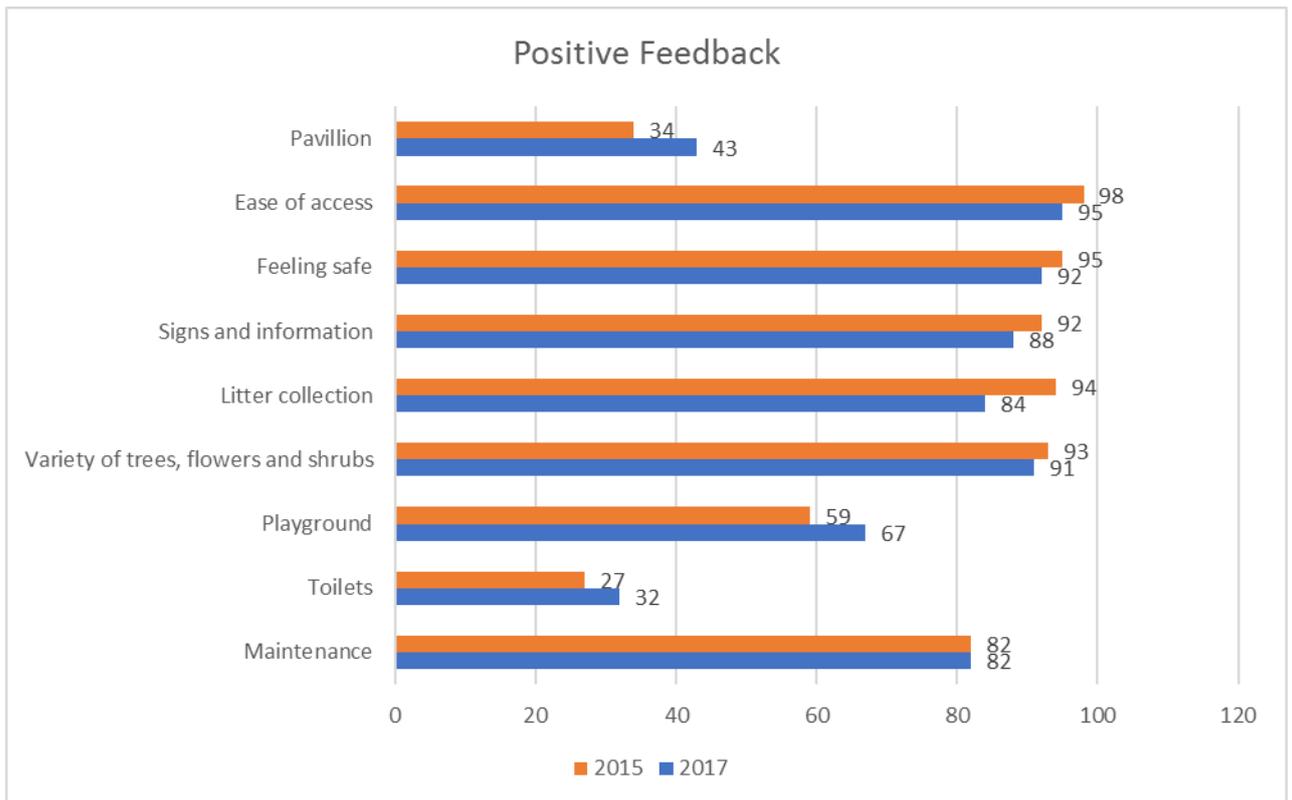
**Breakdown of lowest 3 performing aspects;**





Performance compared with 2015 results

The following table displays the percentage of positive feedback from the 2015 and 2017 surveys in instances where the same aspects were rated. The most significant increase in positive feedback is Pavillions in parks, Playground facilities in parks, and Toilets.



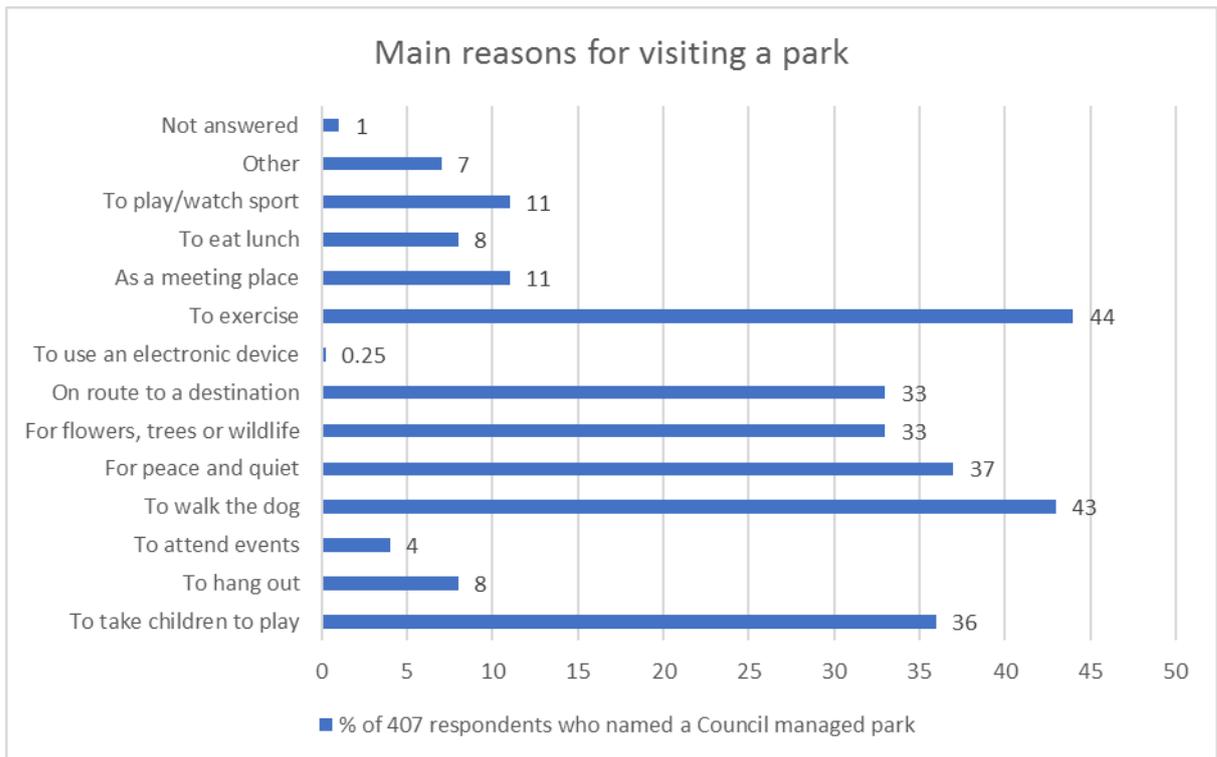
It should also be noted that not all of the 407 respondents who mentioned a Council managed park rated each specific category, resulting in a varying amount of 'blank' answers for each category.

Patterns of use

Respondents were asked why they visited their named park. Of the 407 respondents who named a council managed park, the most popular reasons for visits were:

1. To exercise (44%),
2. To walk the dog (43%),
3. For peace and quiet (37%).

A notable change is that to exercise has risen by 13%. This can be credited to the growing number of outdoor fitness equipment the Council have installed across a number of parks. Of the respondents who named 'to exercise' as one of the reasons they visit a park, 43% mentioned a park with outdoor fitness facilities as the park they visit most often.



Suggestions/ areas for change

Respondents were asked “What changes would like to see to enhance your enjoyment of this park?” and to rate the desirability of a number of potential additions to their park (based on previous suggestions from 2013). Additionally, respondents were given the option to give spontaneous suggestions of what they might like to see to enhance their enjoyment of their named park, by filling out the ‘Other’ box.



This highlighted three ‘top’ changes that respondents would like to see. They are:

1. Improved or addition of toilet/refreshment facilities with (6%),
2. Reduction or action on dog mess (6%),
3. Improved security (5%),

10% of respondents said they like the park the way it is and do not feel any changes are necessary.

‘Other’ improvements

	Count	% of 52 answered
Parking	1	2
Pavilion/ toilet refurbishment	3	6
Sports facilities (addition & maintenance)	5	10
Play facilities (addition & maintenance)	4	8
Clearance (litter/recycling)	11	21
Signage & more information	1	2
Horticultural (Inc. more flowers, less chemicals & undergrowth)	5	10
Access (gates/ fencing & opening hours)	3	6
Café (addition & maintenance)	2	4
Surface and pathways	1	2

Night lighting	3	6
Enforcement (dog walkers and cyclists)	5	10
Reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour	5	10
Seating and shelter	2	4
Activities/Events	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	

Other comments

Respondents were asked “Are there any other comments you wish to add about this Council managed park?” A total of 215 comments were received, due to the sheer volume of comments the top reoccurring themes have been listed below with a snapshot of a few quotes for randomly selected parks.

**Play facilities:**

- Chase Green: *“This playground is a great use of barren space. I’d like to see a rip slide added and another couple of things for children to play on.”*
- Radnor Gardens: *“My only complaint about its facilities is that like a lot of parks its playground equipment is mostly suitable for school age children rather than toddlers and preschoolers. The heaviest users of all of our playgrounds are toddlers, because they obviously aren’t in school during the day. I would like to see this playground, (and every other playground in the borough,) well equipped for this age group, with a small, toddler-safe climbing frame and other equipment they can use independently to encourage exercise and development of good motor skills”*

When designing a new playground or carrying out improvements to existing playgrounds, the Parks Team always looks to ensure that all age groups and abilities are catered for. Recent playground upgrades at St Lukes Open Space, Hampton Village Green and Broom Road Rec have looked to incorporate an increase in play provision for all ages. Going forward the Council are continuing to invest in our parks with an upgrade of the play provision at Mortlake Green and are currently working with the Friends of Suffolk Road Recreation Ground and Sheen Common on proposals to create new play areas at these two sites.



**Toilet/ refreshment facilities:**

- Carlisle Park: *“Carlisle Park is a fabulous space, however the toilets are in a poor state of repair and aren’t always unlocked when needed.”*
- Palewell Common & Fields: *“New pavilion great but toilet is always in a shocking state!”*

The Parks Team are working with our contractor and proprietors of the park cafes to improve the condition of the public toilets. The Parks Team are also working on two new improvement projects to refurbish the toilets at Buccleuch Gardens and Vine Road Recreation Ground.

**Sports facilities:**

- Kneller Gardens: *“The tennis courts are getting a bit worn and could do with a bit of attention and my son has suggested the addition of a skate park would be a great addition for young kids and teenagers.”*
- Old Deer Park *“I’ve always been concerned at the lack of facilities for teenagers in Richmond’s parks. We need a skate park, basketball hoops, football goals. They hang around on the swings - occasionally causing trouble - because there is nothing else to do.”*

The Parks Team have installed outdoor fitness gyms at 10 of its parks and open spaces with the most recent being installed at North Sheen Recreation Ground, Kew. Further details of our fitness equipment can be found on the Council’s website. Within the borough there are also two skate parks, one in Murray Park, Whitton and the other is at Kings Field, Hampton Wick. Multi Use Game Areas are also found at a number of our sites. Where possible the Council works to provide a mixture of equipment that caters for all age groups.

**Pavilion:**

- Twickenham Green: *“It would be nice if the Pavillion could be more inclusive as if you don’t have kids or play sport there is no use of it.”*

- Sheen Common: *“Pavilion at Sheen Common needs huge improvement and toilets.”*

The Parks Team are working with cricket club at Sheen Common on improvements to the layout of the pavilion and the toilets.

**Horticultural:**

- Crane Park: *“The grass cutting is is often poorly finished, with clippings fouling paths and not swept, resulting in a slippery surface for cyclists.”*
- North Sheen Recreation Ground: *“North Sheen Recreation Ground has improved a lot over the last year with the addition of flowers and the outdoor gym - this is much appreciated - thank you.”*



**Security:**

- Murray Park: *“I use to visit murrey park regularlry with my children, but there has been a number of safety risks/concerns recently and I no longer feel safe to go there. I now drive the other parks. It's such a shame. I feel Whitton generally lacks open green spaces, Murrey park is full on unsupervised dogs.”*
- Broom Road Recreational Ground: *“Would not go there after dark for fear of drug usage. Better lighting might reduce this problem.”*

The Parks Team is actively working to reduce ASB within the borough. For the past four years, Parkguard have been delivering the Council’s wardening service where they are tasked to visit a number of sites across the borough at weekends and some evenings. Parkguard look to engage with park users and educate to reduce the impact of ASB. Parkguard also actively work with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams to carry out joint patrols and have recently been awarded with a new contract that will cover the next 3 years and ten months.

**Dog mess:**

- Barnes Common: *“Barnes Common is exceptionally well managed. It is a joy to walk across, which I do most days. The dog mess situation is much better than it used to be but I suspect there are still some dog owners who do not take the situation seriously enough.”*
- North Sheen Recreation Ground: *“Litter and dog mess are a major problem at this park. There is not enough signs to stop the dog walkers to bring their dogs to children play area.”*

The Parks Team work closely with our wardening contractor Parkguard and the Street Scene Enforcement Team to actively target park users who do not clear up after their pets. When details of repeat offenders are reported to the Council, joint patrols are carried out to engage with users and award fixed penalty notices where possible.

**Access:**

- Terrace Gardens: *“Access from Richmond Hill. There needs to be provision for wheel chair access and buggy access. There are steep steps to climb down. How is it possible for someone in a wheel chair, difficulty walking or alone parent with pram to gain access to the gardens from Richmond hill? It's not possible. Please consider putting in a paved path so everyone can access these beautiful gardens.”*
- Carlisle Park: *“We are keen to keep the gates open for access as long as possible in daylight hours but closed at dusk”*

In recent years the Parks Team explored the possibility of creating an accessible entrance from Richmond Hill, however due to the estimated costs it was not perceived as a project that would be possible. Terrace Gardens is accessible to all users via the entrance on Petersham Road. It must be said that access to our parks and open spaces is often at the forefront of our mind and we are often co-ordinating repairs to our pathways and entrances to ensure that our sites are accessible to all.

**Events/ Activities:**

- Murray Park: *“More activities, concerts, fun days, community get togethers and definitely more picnic facilities, there's only 1 picnic table in Murray Park.”*
- Heatfield Recreation Ground: *“We need more people to use it as a hub like the measway park is. A cafe / popupshop would be great like meadway. I wanted tennis courts as they wud suit all ages as currently park suitable for your kids but we hav lots teenagers loitering so something to encourage them.”*

Since 2013, the Parks Team has contracted The Event Umbrella to manage, co-ordinate and promote all Council and community events within the borough. The events team work tirelessly to create and promote a varied schedule of events throughout the year.



### **No Change/ Preserve:**

- East Sheen Common: *“Sheen Common is a unique woodland park, as beautiful and natural as nature intended. Makes a great anti-dote to the council’s other manicured open spaces. My children have benefitted from the relative wilderness of Sheen Common; spotting more birds and wildlife there than in Richmond Park. It’s a serene and meditative place, I know the trees like old friends, and wander the paths with wonder. It needs nothing. There are plenty of benches and bins, open spaces, streams, signs, and a pond. Paths are good, dogs are well managed, fouling is not a problem, and access is easy. It’s my favourite place in the borough.”*
- Ham Common: *“It’s a lovely community resource, well cared for and sensibly used for a range of activities.”*

### Respondent profiles

Based on the 453 respondents who names a council managed park, a higher number of women answered the survey at 58% to 40% men. It should be noted that some responses included “prefer not to say”.

The majority of respondents were of a White or a White British ethnic background at 88%, a figure which is roughly in line with data from the 2011 census for Richmond upon Thames (86%).

2% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability. According to the 2011 census 2% of residents between the ages of 16-74 are considered permanently sick or disabled. This indicates that the survey did well in reaching residents with disabilities.

The two most popular age bands to participate in the survey were respondents ages 55-64 (22%) and 35-44 (22%). The two least captured age bands were respondents aged 85+ (0.74%) and 15-24 (1%).

## Conclusion

Overall the survey indicates that Parks and Open Spaces continue to operate to a high standard. General satisfaction measures at 96% for all council managed parks, and positive feedback for rating of local council managed parks is at 92%.

Significantly, 67% of respondents rated the playground facilities as excellent, good or satisfactory. This is an 8% increase from results in 2015 (59%).

Notably 45% of respondents visit Council managed parks to exercise, compared to 2015 where 32% of respondents visited parks to exercise. This 13% increase can be partly attributed to the recent investment into fitness gyms in our parks, where in the past 18 months we have installed new outdoor fitness gyms and equipment in a number of parks.

It has been recognised that there are some improvements that could be made in terms of the delivery of the survey. Suggestions include spending an extended period in parks to conduct face to face questioning, due to the decline in the number of paper surveys collected. However, **there has been an increase in the number of online surveys completed (+30%)** which is a positive indication on the effectiveness of the online press release.



## Appendices

### Appendix 1

*Below is a list of each site and the time of day that were visited as part of the survey:*

### **Sites Timetable**

<b>Date</b>	<b>AM (before 12pm)</b>	<b>PM (after 12pm)</b>
23 October 2017	Barnes Green	Carlisle Park
24 October 2017		Castelnau Rec Kneller Gardens
25 October 2017	Heathfield Rec	
26 October 2017	Hatherop Park	Moormead Rec North Sheen Rec
27 October 2017		Kings Field
28 October 2017	Sheen Common	Palewell Common and Fields Murray Park
30 October 2017	Palewell Common and Fields	Radnor Gardens
31 October 2017		Terrace Gardens
01 November 2017	Carlisle Park	
02 November 2017	Ham Village Green Radnor Gardens	Hatherop Park
03 November 2017		Strawberry Woods
06 November 2017	North Sheen Rec	