

## **2019 Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>2019</b>
Overall Satisfaction	97%
Feeling Safe	93%
Ease of Access	98%
Maintenance	93%
Playground Facilities	95%
Respondents	767





# 2017 Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey



LONDON BOROUGH OF  
RICHMOND UPON THAMES

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

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## Introduction

### Aims

1. The 2019 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 helps ensure spending reflects the views and habits of local residents and park users.
2. The survey is the sixth in a series of Customer Satisfaction Surveys conducted by Parks and Open Spaces Team with others carried out in 2008, 2010, 2013, 2015 and 2017. These surveys set out to assess the development of the parks service over this period.

### Methodology

In line with previous years the survey ran for three weeks from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2019 to the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2019 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 16-day period from Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October to Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at 15 sites across the borough (see Appendix 1). Each site was surveyed for a period of 2 hours, either before or after 12pm (typically between the hours of 8am and 10am, and 12pm and 4pm). 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, Richmond Society and our enforcement contractor Parkguard. Where appropriate, surveys were left in park cafes for self-completion. Additional steps were taken to raise awareness 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. the South West London Environment Network 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, and cards advising how to complete a survey online were handed out to residents who did not have time to complete a survey in person. These cards were also left at the Civic Centre reception to be handed out by the reception staff.

### 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%
2019	767	334	44%	433	56%

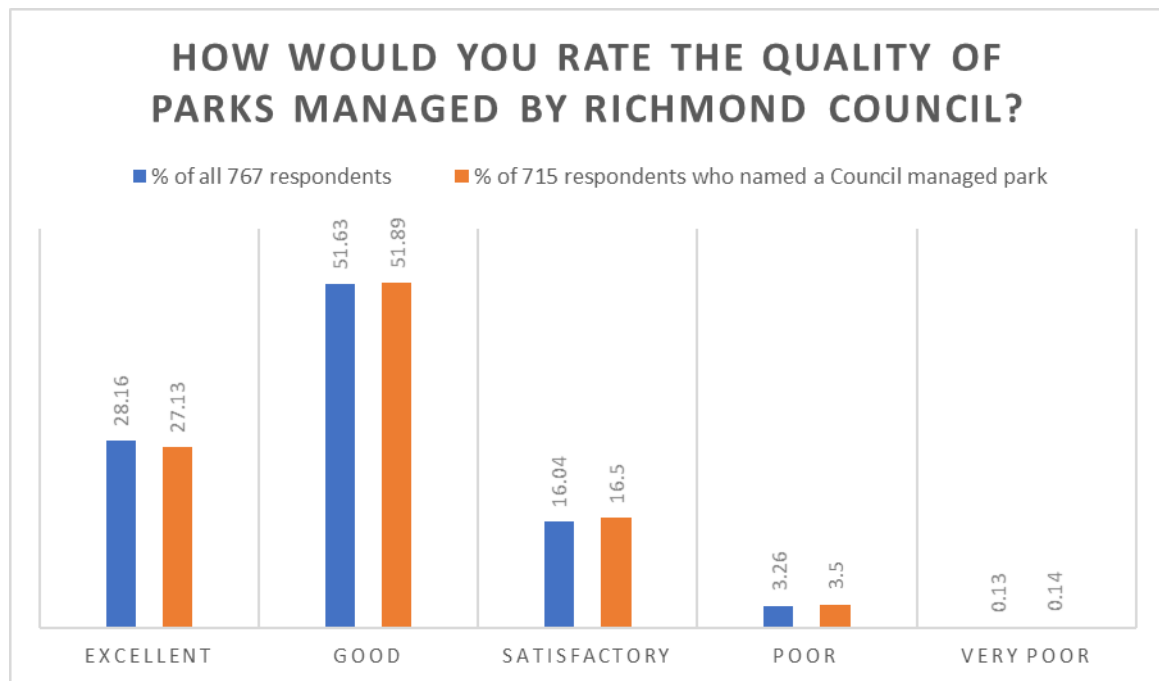
In total 767 responses to the survey were received 433 of these were completed online. The remaining 334 were completed through paper-based surveys, which were captured during the onsite interviews.

**Results summary**

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

97% of the total number of respondents rated the quality of council managed parks in the borough as excellent, good, or satisfactory, whilst 3% described them as either poor or very poor. 6 people out of the 767 respondents did not answer the question.

However, it should be noted that, the distinction between Richmond’s council-managed and non-council managed parks is not always clear to residents. 52 respondents (7%) later named a non-council managed park when asked to name the park they visit most often.’



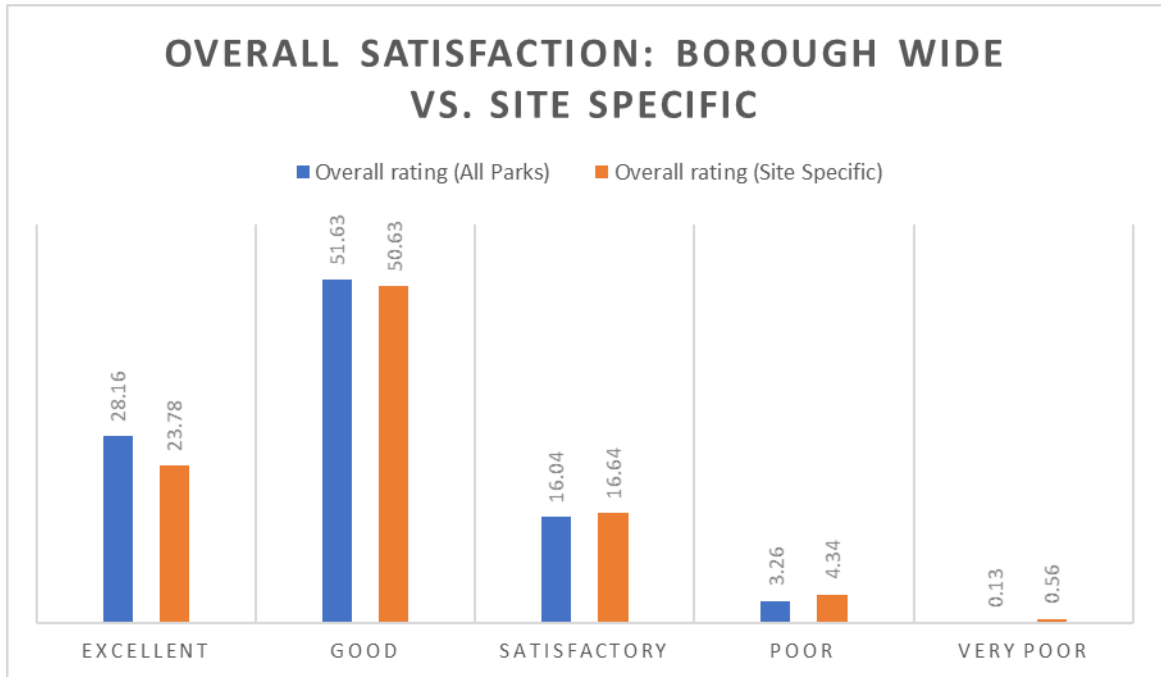
Of the total 26 respondents who gave council managed parks a rating of poor or very poor, there were 18 different parks mentioned, one being a non-council managed park. The park with the highest poor/very poor rating was North Sheen with a total of 4 respondents. In comparison to this, 52 people overall are satisfied with the park giving it a rating of either excellent, good, or satisfactory.

**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 graph shows the ‘overall rating’ of the 715 respondents who only named a council managed park compared to the ‘overall rating’ scores of all 767 respondents.

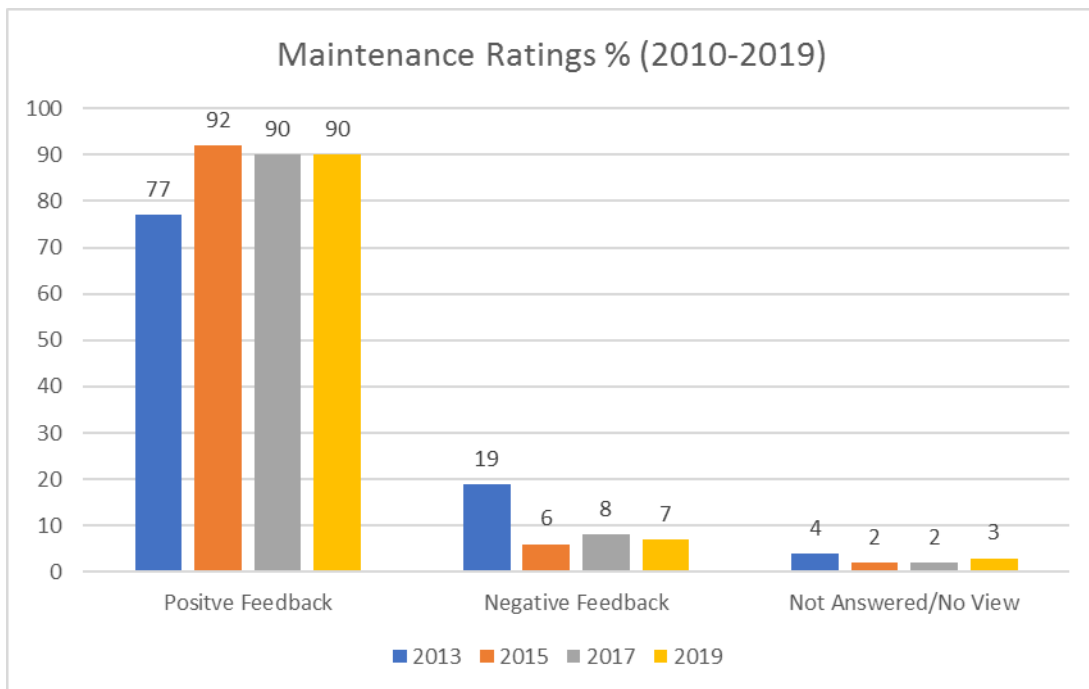
Of the respondents who named only council managed parks 96% rated it as excellent, good or, satisfactory.



Named parks tend to receive a marginally lower rating when compared to all parks. 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**

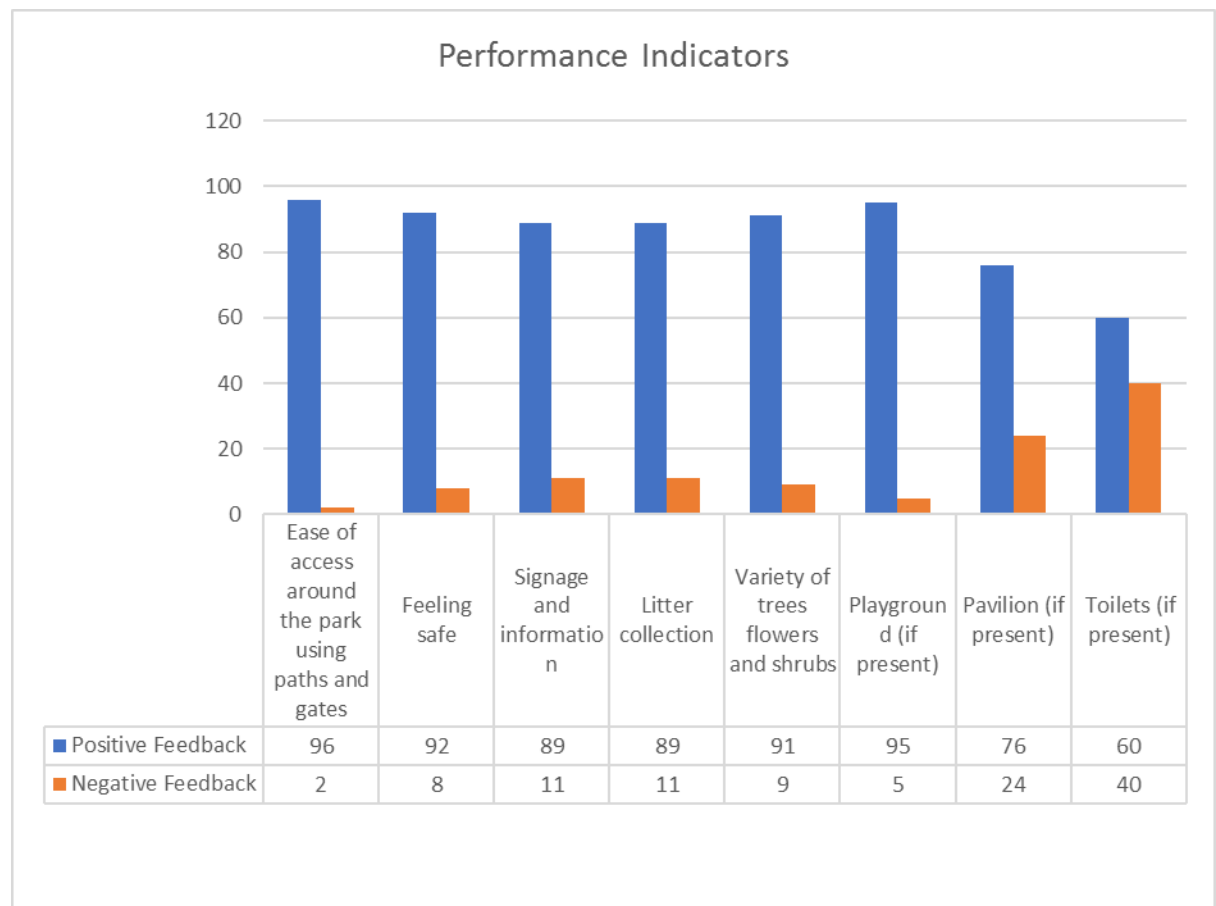
Respondents were also asked to rate the overall maintenance of their named park. Of the 715 who had named council managed parks, 18% rated it as excellent, 51% claimed it was good, 21% said satisfactory while 6% said poor and 1% said very poor. 3% held no view or did not answer.



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 715 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.



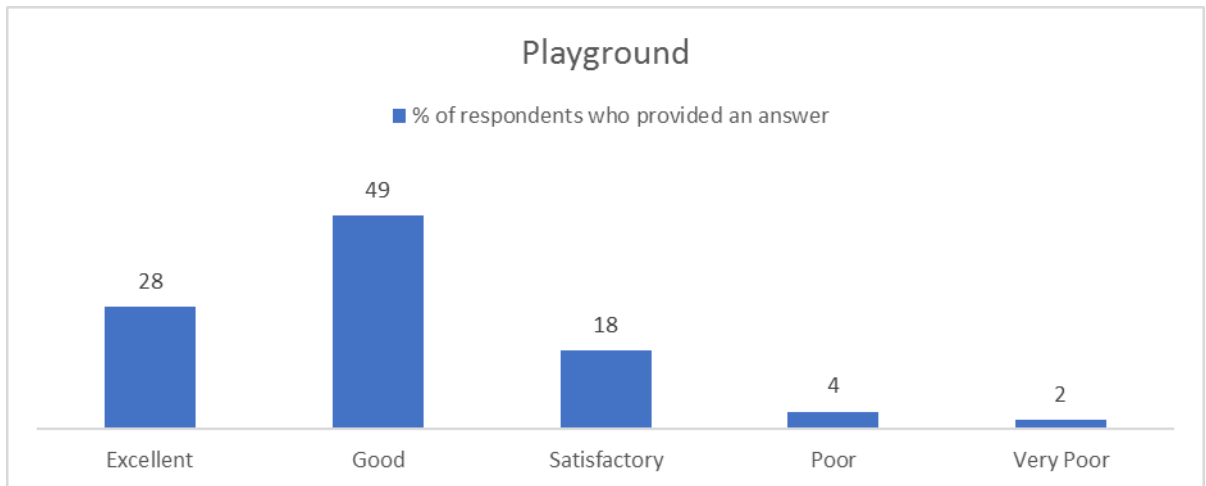
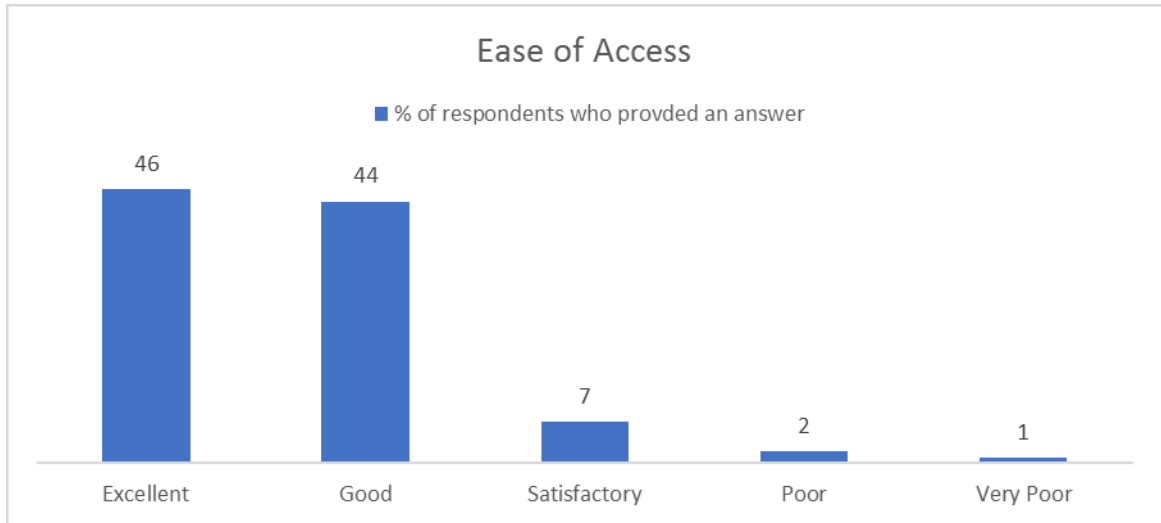
In order to judge the three top performing aspects and the three lowest scoring aspects (by comparing the amount of positive feedback with the amount of negative feedback).

**The top performing aspects are;**

1. Ease of access with 96% positive feedback
2. Playground with 95%
3. Feeling safe with 92%

This is in line with previous results in 2017 that ranked Ease of Access, Playground and Feeling Safe as the top 3 performing aspects.

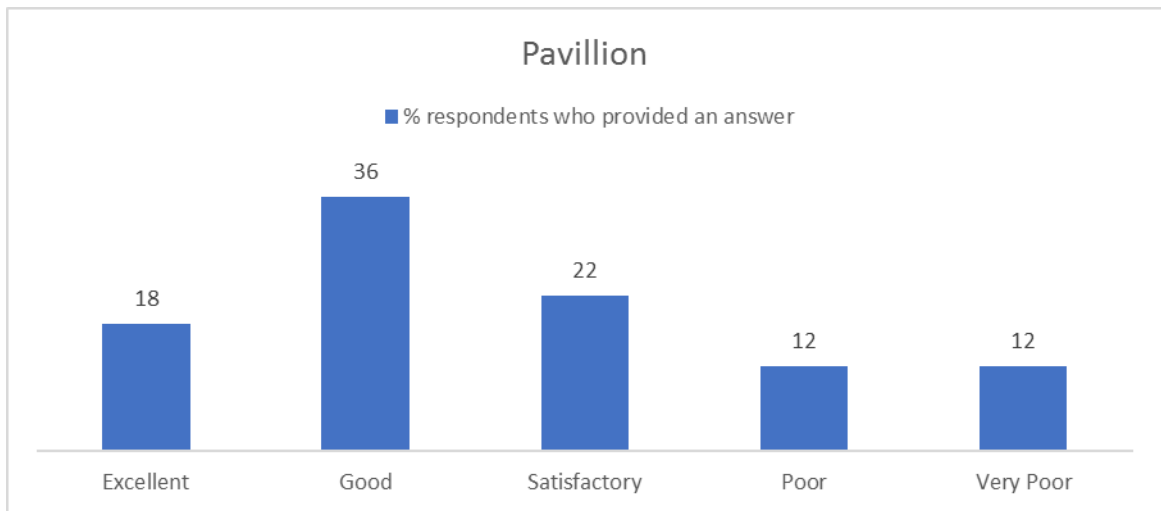
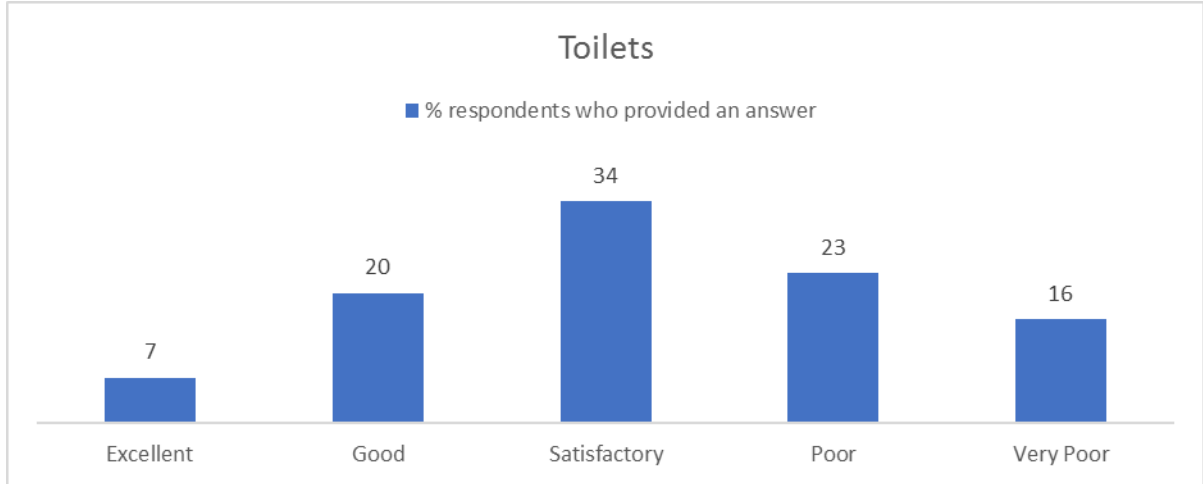
Breakdown of top 3 performing aspects;



**The three lowest performing areas are;**

- 1. Toilets with 40% negative feedback
- 2. Pavillion with 24%
- 3. Litter Collection with 11%

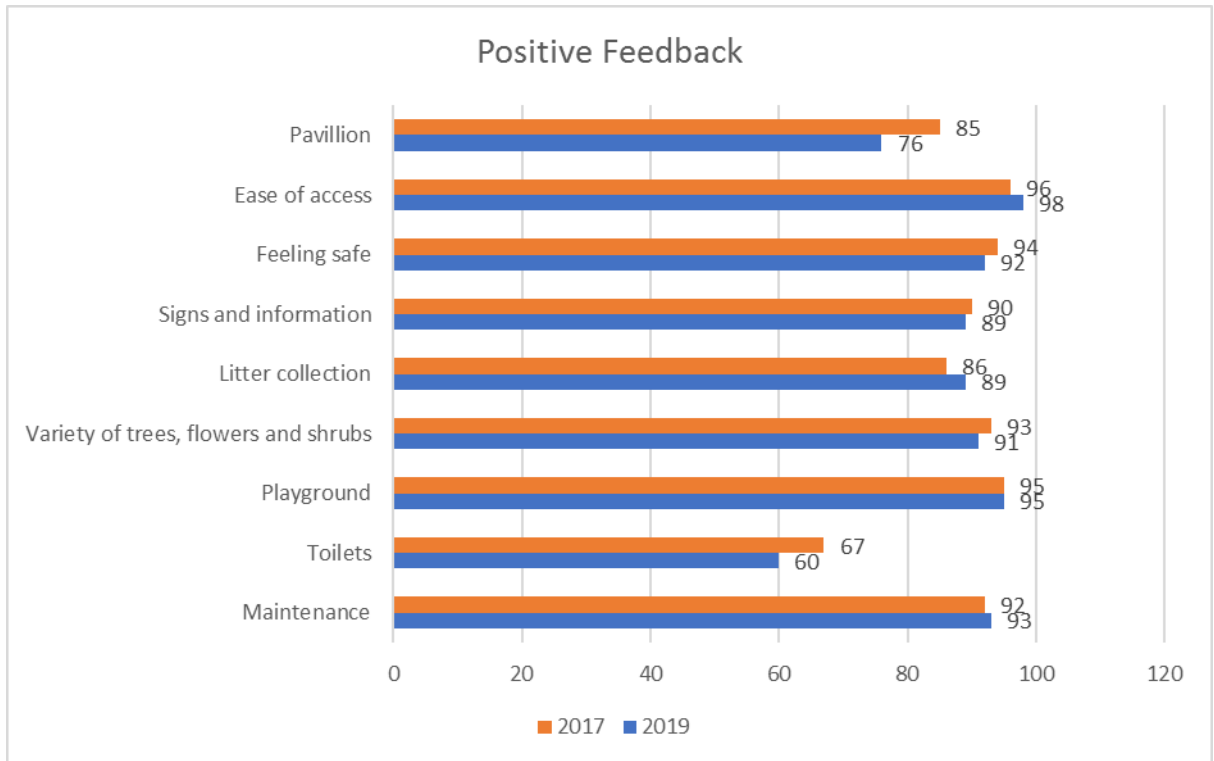
**Breakdown of lowest 3 performing aspects;**





Performance compared with 2017 results

The following table displays the percentage of positive feedback from the 2017 and 2019 surveys in instances where the same aspects were rated. The most significant increase in positive feedback is Ease of Access in parks, Litter Collection in parks, and Overall Maintenance in parks.



The table also shows that there was a decrease in positive feedback for certain areas, most significantly for Pavilions (-9%) and for Toilets (-7%)

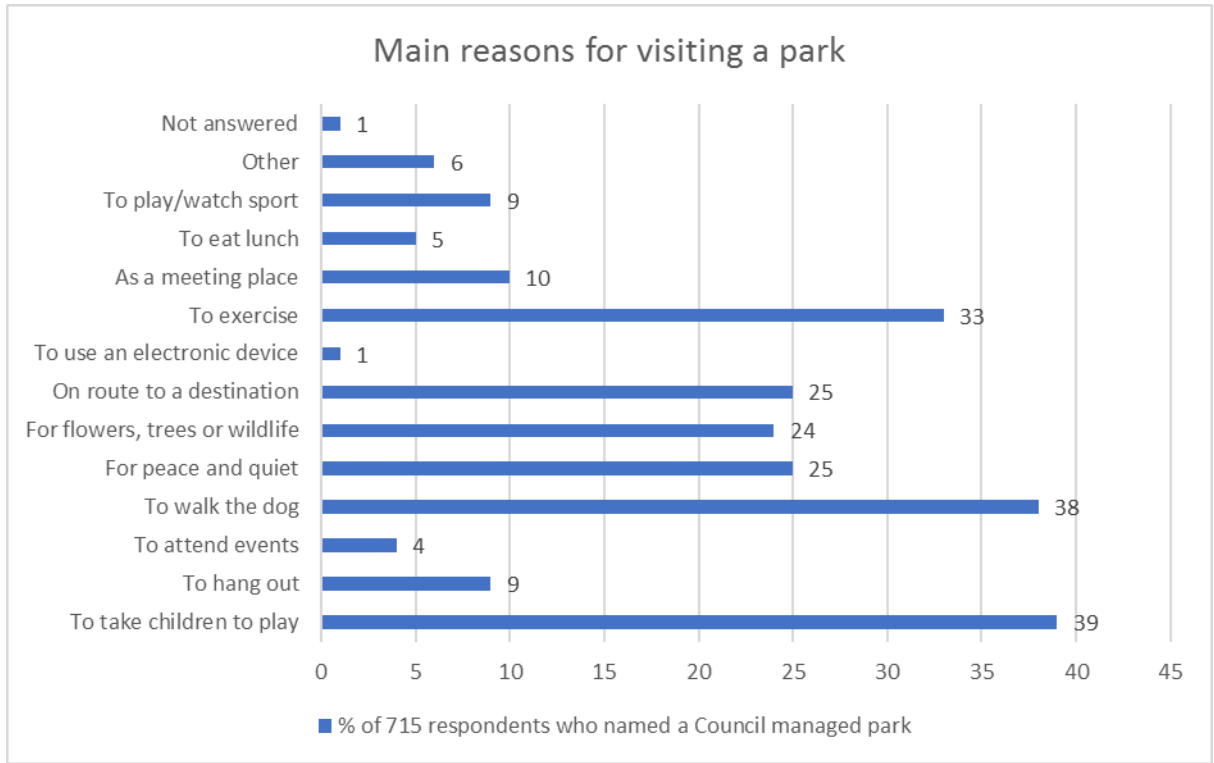
It should be noted that the responses from 2017 have been recalculated to reflect the results excluding respondents who did not answer.

Patterns of use

Respondents were asked why they visited their named park. Of the 715 respondents who named a council managed park, the most popular reasons for visits were:

1. To take the children to play (39%),
2. To walk the dog (38%),
3. To exercise (33%).

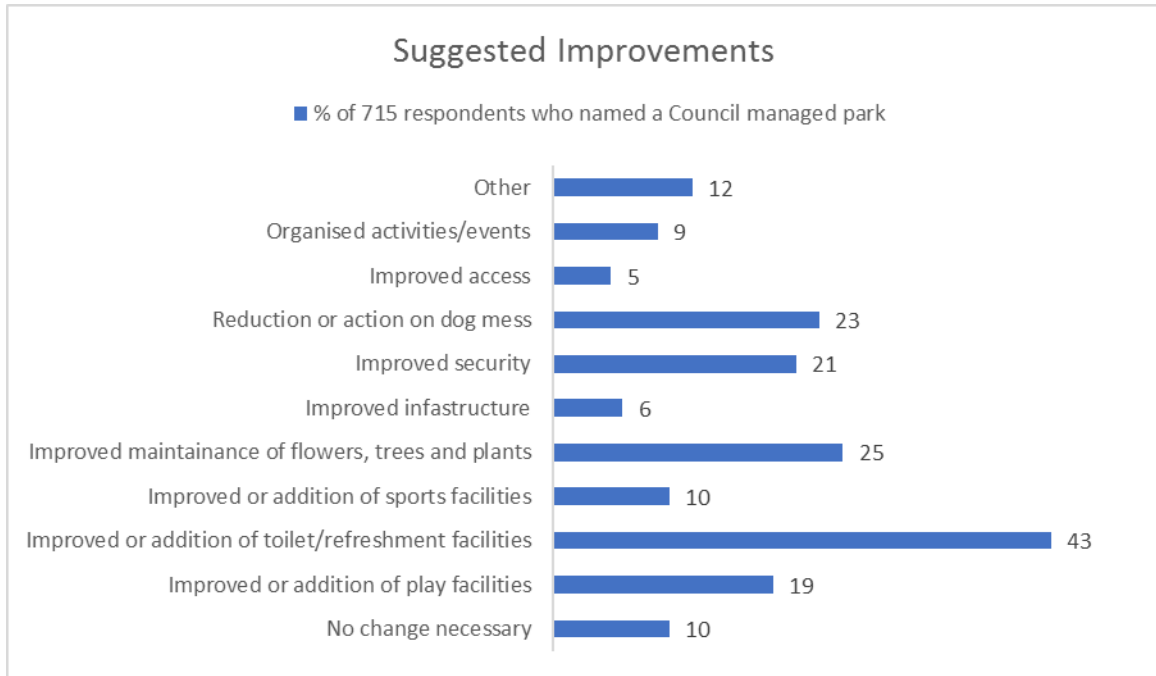
A notable change is that to take the children to play has risen by 3%. The growing number of improvements the Council have made to playground equipment across a number of parks could be a contributing factor to this slight rise in usage.



Easter egg hunt at Westerley Ware Recreation Ground

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. 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 (43%),
2. Improved maintenance of flowers, trees and plants (25%),
3. Reduction or action on dog mess (23%),

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

‘Other’ improvements

	Count	% of 183 answered
Parking	2	1
Pavilion/ toilet refurbishment	12	7
Sports facilities (addition & maintenance)	10	5
Play facilities (addition & maintenance)	10	5
Clearance (litter/recycling, more bins)	34	19
Signage & more information	1	1
Horticultural (Inc. more flowers and trees, wildlife areas)	27	15
Access (gates/ fencing & opening hours)	12	7
Café (addition & maintenance)	5	3
Surface and pathways	5	3
Night lighting	12	7
Reduction of ASB (Inc. CCTV, patrols)	16	9

Water fountain	2	1
Regulate dog walkers (dog free zone, enforcement for fouling and not on lead)	16	9
Regulate usage (schools, private events)	6	3
Adapt for climate change (Inc. more trees, recycling)	4	2
Benches (Inc. picnic tables)	9	5
Regulate cyclists (speed)	7	4
Park keeper	1	1
Enforcement (litter, BBQs)	2	1
Dementia friendly facilities	1	1

### Other comments

Respondents were asked “Are there any other comments you wish to add about this Council managed park?” A total of 455 comments were received; most common themes are listed below with some comments from respondents.

#### **Play facilities:**

- Vine Road Rec *“I would really like there to be more for older children to do - maybe table tennis tables or basketball hoops. We love Vine Park and have spent many happy days there but as my children grow older there seems less for them to do locally.*
- Murray Park: *“A wider variety of playground equipment with the addition of a possible water feature for use in the summer months, more seating around the park to sit and more picnic tables for family use”*
- North Sheen Rec: *“The paddling pool is a joy. In hot weather it attracts very many people who can relax safely, picnic and socialise. Really great for children and all free of charge and with no transport issues”*

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. We are working with the Friends of Sheen Common on a brand-new playground situated within the woods. This will also include a nature trail. In 2019 we opened our latest playground in Suffolk Road Recreation Ground, working with the Friends Group on the design to accommodate all users. We have also upgraded the play equipment at Kings Field, replacing 3 dilapidated units with more modern equipment to improve the play provision of the site. Other future playground improvements include Grimwood Road Recreation Ground, Raleigh Road Recreation Ground, and Tangier Green.





*Richmond's newest playground, Suffolk Road Recreation Ground.*

#### **Toilet/ refreshment facilities:**

- Palewell Park: *"Palewell park is an excellent park which is used all year round for sporting and recreational activities. The only addition would be a public toilet which would allow all-day usage of the park."*
- Radnor Gardens *"There are no toilets which needs to be addressed urgently as there are no nearby alternatives. This is a children's play area as well as an open recreation space. Some local people will not visit because they are worried about having no toilets."*

The Parks Team are working on a renovation project of the toilets in Buccleuch Gardens to refurbish the facilities which were closed due to anti-social behaviour. This will be transformed into a new café with toilet facilities. The Vine Road Recreation Ground pavilion has also been upgraded in the past 2 years. We are also looking at seeking planning permission to improve the pavilion at Kneller Gardens.

#### **Sports facilities:**

- Radnor Gardens: *"I have been attending the Our Parks fitness sessions that are held in Radnor Gardens for the last couple of years. I think they are an excellent initiative, both for fitness and socially for the community, and they're well attended. I appreciate that the council continue to support it."*
- Carlisle Park *"A fixed set of fitness machines that could be used in a cycle would be fantastic."*

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. We have also upgraded the fitness equipment available at Heathfield Recreation Ground to include equipment for those with mobility issues, and for able-bodied users which is the first of its kind within the Borough. 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.



Poppy meadow in Ham



Refurbished Duke of Northumberland River

**Pavilion:**

- Kneller Gardens: *“Look forward to pavilion redevelopment, which will provide welcome community space and additional shelter for cafe during winter months.”*
- Moormead and Bandy: *“Please prioritise funding the plans for refurbishing the pavilion to provide much needed toilet facilities and ideally a cafe.”*

The Parks Team are working with the Friends of Moormead and Bandy Recreation Ground to refurbish the pavilion in the near future.



Carlisle Park Pavilion



**Horticultural:**

- Ham Lands: *"The charm and value of Ham Lands is that it has developed as a semi-wild area over the past 60 years and I think it's important to maintain this character in its management as a Local Nature Reserve."*
- Gothic Gardens *"In the last two years the fantastic planting has been choked with weeds which is such a great pity. The garden was often photographed by people walking along Petersham Road, as each season the different plants made for a spectacular garden."*

**Security:**

- Mortlake Green: *"It is a really nice park but there have been several reports of antisocial behaviour and muggers around the park after it gets dark, which is now happening very early, as the park is unlit."*
- Kneller Gardens: *"The park is lovely during the day but when it gets dark there are a fair few trouble makers causing issues (taking drugs and attacking passers by)"*

The Parks Team is actively working to reduce ASB within the borough. For the past six 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 and Friends Groups to carry out joint patrols and discuss ongoing issues in our parks.

**Dog mess:**

- Crane Park: *"Dog mess is a really big problem around the Crane park area and the footpaths all around the area. I don't like to let my children play on the actual field as it's such an issue and a shame in the summer re picnics etc"*
- Hatherop and Carlisle: *"Both parks are pleasant and ideal places to walk dogs and to chat with the other dog walkers from our community. Both parks are looked after well, grass regularly cut and holes are filled when necessary. There is always a problem with some dog walkers who do not pick up their dogs mess wherever you go but on the whole, both parks are not too bad considering how many dogs are using the field and park each day."*

The Parks Team work closely with our wardening contractor Parkguard 7 days a week 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:**

- Murray Park: *"Grateful for it. Access excellent especially since new paths."*
- Palewell Common *It would be wonderful if the path that runs along Beverley brook were widened slightly at the Brook Gate end and a more durable surface put on (as in Richmond park). It is impassable during any wet weather, especially in the winter months, and too narrow in parts for prams and wheelchairs to easily manage- which severely restricts access to the far end of Palewell (leading to Roehampton Gate).*
- Hampton Common: *"road crossing from hampton common across oak avenue to nature reserve would be good. people parking near entrance to park make it hard to cross road."*

We continually look to improve and make repairs to our pathways and entrances to ensure that our sites are accessible to all. The Parks team have recently made improvements to the pathways in Nursery Green and Heathfield Recreation Ground

and are currently investing Kneller Gardens. We are also looking investing in various sections along the Towpath.

#### Events/ Activities:

- Palewell Park: *“My main activity is Petanque. We have the best facility and setting one could wish for. Thank you.”*
- Murray Park: *“There is a kid’s nursery within the only building in the park. It’s not open all the time / every day. Could the building be used for other community activities at other times?”*

Since 2013, the Parks Team has contracted The Event Umbrella to manage, coordinate 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. The Parks team have also been working with the Friends of Murray Park and our Hall booking service to potentially set up a weekend café in the hall next Spring to coincide with the launch of the Junior Park Run. Whitton Safer Neighbourhood Team also use the hall to conduct weekly community contact sessions.



Heathfield Recreation Ground chair opening ceremony

#### No Change/ Preserve:

- North Sheen Rec: *“This is a great place for people of all ages to enjoy. Much improved over the past 5 years”*
- Barnes Common: *“The Common is a lovely place to find some peace away from London’s noise. It has a good mix of wild places, mown grasses and trees.”*

#### Respondent profiles

Based on the 752 respondents who specified their gender, a higher number of women answered the survey at 62% to 36% men. It should be noted that 3% of respondents selected “prefer not to say”.

Of the 725 respondents who specified their ethnicity, the majority of respondents were of a White or a White British ethnic background at 84%, a figure which is roughly in line with data from the 2011 census for Richmond upon Thames (86%).



4% 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.

The two most captured age bands whom participated in the survey were respondents aged 35-44 (23%) and 55-64 (21%). The two least captured age bands were respondents aged 19 and under (2%) and 20-24 (1%).



Carlisle Park Wildflower Meadow

## **Conclusion**

Overall the survey indicates that Parks and Open Spaces continue to operate to a high standard. General satisfaction measures at 97% for all council managed parks, and positive feedback for rating of local council managed parks is at 93%.

Significantly, 98% of respondents rated the ease of access in parks as excellent, good or satisfactory. This is an 2% increase from results in 2017 (96%).

Notably 39% of respondents visit Council managed parks to take their children to play, compared to 2017 where 36% of respondents visited parks to take their children to play. This 3% increase can be partly attributed to the recent investment into play equipment in our parks, where in the past 24 months we have installed a new playground at Suffolk Road Recreation Ground and made a number of improvements to playgrounds across the borough.

The most consistent negative feedback was related to the toilet and pavilion facilities in our parks. We are taking steps to improve the facilities available across several parks in the borough. In Buccleuch Gardens renovation works of the old toilet block

has begun to create a new café facility and toilets, which is scheduled to be completed in early 2020.

We are also arranging to make improvements to the Kneller Gardens pavilion, and the Friends of Heathfield Recreation Ground aspire to work with the Council to upgrade the pavilion in the future.

We are constantly working with parks cleansing and our contractors to maintain a good standard of cleanliness in the toilet facilities available in our parks.

It has been recognised that there are some improvements that could be made in terms of the questions included in the survey. Suggestions include ensuring the wording specifies whether the questions relate to an individual park, or Council parks in general. It is also suggested that in the multiple-choice questions, less popular choices should be removed as an option, for e.g. 'To use an electronic device'.



Wasp Spider at Ham Lands

## 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 (8am-10am)</b>	<b>Pm (2 hours between 12pm and 4pm)</b>
22/10/2019	<b>Barnes Green</b>	<b>Carlise Park</b>
HALF TERM	Ross G (8-10)	Pete Lewis (12-2)
	Tasha hunter 8 - 10	Erin Dunford (12-2)
23/10/2019		<b>Castelnau Rec and Kneller Gardens</b>
HALF TERM		Ross G (2-4) Castelnau
		hugo (2-4) Castlenau
		Fenn (kneller)
		yvonne (Kneller)
24/10/2019	<b>Heathfield Rec</b>	
HALF TERM	Yvonne Kelleher	
	Daf	
25/10/2019	<b>Hatherop Park</b>	<b>North Sheen Rec and Moormead Rec</b>
HALF TERM	SWLEN (from 9:30)	Parkguard & Friends (NSR 2-4pm)
	Craig Ruddick (9:30)	Hugo (Moormead)
		Matt (Moormead)
28/10/2019		<b>Kings Field</b>
HALF TERM		Tasha Hunter (2 - 4)
		SWLEN (2-4)
29/10/2019	<b>Moormead Rec</b>	<b>Murray Park</b>
		Craig Ruddick (am)
	Matt Almond	Tasha Hunter (am)
	Paul Maher	
30/10/2019	<b>Palewell Common and Fields</b>	<b>Radnor Gardens</b>
	Dafydd Smith (8-10)	Pete Lewis (12-2)



	Matt Almond	Erin Dunford (12-2)
31/10/2019		<b>Terrace Gardens</b>
		Fenn Porter (2-4)
		SWLEN (2-4)
		Hugo (2-4)
01/11/2019	<b>Carlise Park</b>	
	Dafydd Smith (8-10)	
	Parkguard	
04/11/2019	<b>Ham Village Green and Radnor Gardens</b>	<b>Hatherop Park</b>
	Paul Maher (8-10am) Radnor	
	Dafydd Smith (8-10) (Radnor)	Erin Dunford (12-2)
	Parkguard & Friends HVG (8-10)	Fenn (12-2)
05/11/2019		<b>Strawberry Woods</b>
		Jane Crowther (2-4pm)
		Parkguard (2-4)
07/11/2019	<b>North Sheen Rec</b>	
	Ross G (8-10)	
	Hugo (8-10)	

- The Friends of Murray Park, Palewell Common, Heathfield Recreation Ground, Ham Village Green, and the Richmond Society assisted with their own survey's during this period.