Parks and Open Spaces
Our Strategy for Barnet 2016-26
Appendixes to Strategy Document - Appendix F
Appendix F

Engagement and consultation

Barnet’s parks and open spaces are well regarded by local residents. 70% of respondents to the resident survey of 2015 felt that the borough’s parks and open spaces are either good or excellent. This score contributes to an overall score of 87% when respondents are asked to comment on their overall satisfaction with Barnet as a place to live. 78% of Barnet residents reported that they strongly believe that they belong to their neighbourhood. Research by Greenspace suggests that in a survey of 5686 respondents, only 3% disagreed with the statement “parks and open spaces are a focal point for local communities”. 28

Barnet Council does not assess the use of its parks and open spaces in numerical terms but research by Keep Britain Tidy (2010) suggests that over 50% of the population of the UK uses parks and open spaces at least once a week. 29 Given this high level of use, the role that parks and open spaces play in supporting sense of place and cohesion and the range of outcomes that parks and open spaces can support, the Open Spaces Strategy needs to respond to the needs and aspirations of variety of users, stakeholders and partners in order to define future policy for service provision. An engagement programme was implemented over the summer and autumn of 2015 to capture these views and aspirations.

Barnet Council is committed to involving local people in shaping their area and the services they receive. Engagement is one of the key ways the council interacts with and involves local communities and residents, providing them with opportunities to:

- gain greater awareness and understanding of what the council does
- to voice their views and know how they can get involved
- to have their views fed into the democratic decision making process

The Barnet Open Spaces Strategy engagement aligns to the standards and key guiding principles set out in the council’s Consultation and Engagement Strategy and supports the council’s Corporate Plan priority ‘to improve the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study; promote responsible growth, development and success across the borough.’ 30

28 GreenSpace. (2010). GreenSTAT visitor survey system
29 Keep Britain Tidy. (2010). People, Places and their Green Spaces
30 Barnet Corporate Plan 2015-2020
F.1 Aims and objectives of Barnet Open Spaces Strategy engagement programme

As part of the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy an engagement programme across the borough was conducted between July and September 2015.

The engagement programme sought to:

- gather views from key stakeholders about Barnet parks and open spaces, their current and future use, building on the work done during stage 1 of the strategy development process

In support of this a range of key stakeholders, partners and consultees was identified and agreed.

- parks ‘Friends of’ groups
- key officers and departments of London Borough of Barnet
- partner organisations such as Police and enforcement and schools
- community organisations including Neighbourhood Panels and Tenants and Residents Associations
- special interest groups such as those representing local residents with disabilities and those from black and minority ethnic groups and refugees

- Barnet residents whether they be park users or not

F.2 Engagement methodologies

To ensure that data capture was as comprehensive as possible, a variety of engagement and survey methods were agreed and deployed. These methods gathered both quantitative and qualitative data on use of and aspirations for parks and open spaces. The engagement methodology consisted of

- on-line questionnaire
- citizens panel questionnaire
- face to face interviews, opinion gathering and questionnaire completion at park events
- face to face interviews, opinion gathering and questionnaire completion at Town centre sessions
- face to face interviews with key stakeholders and organisations
- focus groups
- presentations and Q & A at Neighbourhood Fora
- presentations and Q & A at Resident Association meetings

- use of social media – Facebook page and Twitter
- strategy development workshop

F.2.1 On-line questionnaire

The online questionnaire “A New Strategy for Parks and Open Spaces in Barnet” was a used as a key engagement strategy tool. The questionnaire was made available on-line between July 1st and 30th September 2015 and was offered in ‘Face to Face’ interviews in parks throughout the summer of 2015. The questionnaire was 26 questions long, with 13 questions addressing attitudes to parks and open spaces and project and 13 relating to socio-economic monitoring.

The questionnaire (excluding monitoring questions) used a methodology combining both quantitative and qualitative methods for information gathering. The quantitative elements consisted of eight closed, unordered categorical (nominal-polytomous) questions where respondents had a number of fixed categories to choose answers from, three closed ordered questions, where respondents rank a series of choices in order of priority (ordinal-polytomous) and two qualitative open questions, where respondents gave their comments in response to a
question. The completion time was assessed at 15 minutes.

The questionnaire sought to:

- establish what users value about Barnet’s parks and open spaces, how they use them and why
- establish why non-users don’t use the parks
- establish whether or not users and non-users would be interested in playing a part in parks through volunteering.

A total of 260 questionnaires were either fully or partially completed. An analysis of questionnaire results appears as Appendix L.1.

F.2.2 Citizens panel questionnaire
The on-line questionnaire was sent to Barnet Citizens’ Panel. The panel is made up of 2,000 Barnet residents and is statistically representative of the population of Barnet. The panel’s membership is continually refreshed.

706 responses were received from the Citizens Panel.

An analysis of questionnaire returns from the Citizens Panel appears as Appendix L.2.

F.2.3 Parks events
Engagement was undertaken at a number of local community events and festivals across the borough throughout the engagement period to raise awareness about the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy. The objectives of this form of engagement were to:

- engage with and record the views of residents and park users in respect of Barnet’s parks and open spaces
- to completing the questionnaire ‘off-line’
- to provide advice on how to complete the questionnaire ‘on-line’
- to provide details of the how to engage with the project via social media
- to engage with individuals and community organisations to raise awareness about the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy

The events attended were as follows:

- Burnt Oak Multi Cultural Festival - September 19th
- East Barnet Festival – July 4th and 5th
- Garden Fete – Avenue House, Finchley July 9th

A number of key themes emerged from individual comments recorded by respondents at parks events and comments have been grouped in these key themes. The diagram below describes the key themes that emerged through the use of this engagement technique.

An analysis by key themes of individual comments received at parks events appears as Appendix L.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key themes</th>
<th>Number of comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilities and services</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavements and pathways</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety and anti-social behaviour</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance general</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better facilities for dog walkers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Barnet's park event comments 2015

#### FACILITIES & SERVICES 14%
- General 27%
- Cafe 35%
- Toilets 35%
- Carpark 3%

#### PAVEMENTS & PATHWAYS 1%

#### SEATING 4%

#### NATURE 3%
- Biodiversity 75%
- Water 25%

#### SAFETY & ABS 11%
- Drinking 11%
- Lighting 18%
- Police/ rangers 18%
- Bikes 14%
- Dogs 21%
- Signage 4%

#### MAINTENANCE GENERAL 10%
- Play 15%
- Dog mess 19%
- Cleanliness 35%
- Steams & ponds 31%

#### MISCELLANEOUS 22%

#### DOGS 2%

#### ACTIVITIES 5%
- Activities 43.6%
- Children 50%
- BBQ areas 7%

#### SPORTS 9%
- Skatepark 14%
- Outdoor gym 50%
- Tennis 5%
- Football 18%
- BMX 9%
- Golf 5%

#### PLAY 19%
- Teenagers 15%
- Quantity 27%
- Quality 25%
- Water 33%

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**Figure F.1 - Open Spaces Strategy Engagement: park events comments**

An Open Spaces Strategy for Barnet Appendixes to Strategy Document
F.2.4 Town centre engagement

Engagement was undertaken in a number of town centres across the borough:

• Mill Hill – the Broadway: September 3rd 11.30 -1.30 pm
• Edgware – Hale Lane: September 10th 11.30 -1.30 pm
• Chipping Barnet – High Street: September 17th 11.30 -1.30 pm
• Golders Green – Golders Green Road: September 24th 11.30 -1.30 pm

Town centres were selected to complement parks events to ensure that views and opinions were gathered comprehensively across the borough geographically.

This method facilitated contact with members of the community who, because of family, work and other commitments, are less likely to attend more formal events and to contact a greater proportion of non-users.

A number of key themes emerged from individual comments recorded by respondents at parks events and comments have been grouped in these key themes. The diagram below shows the key themes that emerged through the use of this engagement technique.

The table below shows the number of comments regarding key themes from both the park events and the town centre events.

A full analysis by key themes off individual comments received at town centre events appears as Appendix L.4.
Figure F.4: Open Spaces Strategy Engagement: town centre events comments

Barnet's town centre events comments 2015

- **FACILITIES & SERVICES**: 26%
- **MAINTENANCE GENERAL**: 9%
- **SPORTS**: 9%
- **DOGS**: 9%
- **KEEP PARKS**: 13%
- **MISCELLANEOUS**: 4%
- **PARKING**: 4%
- **PAVEMENTS & PATHWAYS**: 0%
- **NATURE**: 0%
- **SEATING**: 0%
- **SAFETY & ABS**: 22%
- **PLAY**: 4%
- **ACTIVITIES**: 0%
## Table F.3 - Schedule of contacts made with parks ‘Friends of’ groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site address</th>
<th>Type of organisation</th>
<th>Type of group/ Named individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Love Burnt Oak</td>
<td>Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>BORA Burnt Oak Resident Association</td>
<td>Residents Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grahame Park Way</td>
<td>Heybourne Park Residents Association</td>
<td>Residents Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friary Lane</td>
<td>Friends of Friary Park</td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granville Road, London, NW2 2AT</td>
<td>Friends of Childs Hill Park</td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkside Gardens, East Barnet</td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summerlee Avenue, East Finchley</td>
<td>Friends of Cherry Tree Woods</td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Suburb</td>
<td></td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princes Park Manor, New Southgate, London, N11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Named Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watford Way, Hendon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Named Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbotts Road</td>
<td></td>
<td>Named Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great North Road, A1000, Hadley Highstone</td>
<td></td>
<td>Named Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daws Lane, Mill Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadley Road</td>
<td></td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Street, High Barnet, Underhill</td>
<td></td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballards Lane, Finchley</td>
<td></td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens Road, NW4</td>
<td>Friends of Hendon Park</td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgeworth Crescent, Hendon, West Hendon</td>
<td>Friends of Malcolm Park</td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyrell Way</td>
<td></td>
<td>Named Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgess Avenue, Brent Cross</td>
<td></td>
<td>Friends of Park Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F.2.5 Residents forums

As part of the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy Engagement short briefings were given to the following Neighbourhood Fora meetings on July 2nd 2015:

- Chipping Barnet
- Finchley and Golders Green
- Hendon

The aim of these briefings was to raise awareness about the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy and to encourage residents to participate and engage with the process.

Questions from audiences attend in these events focused on the following issues:

- the council’s overall intention in respect of the future management of Barnet’s parks and open spaces.
- issues with the care and management of individual parks and open spaces (specific sites in each of the Community Forum areas)
- the Open Spaces Strategy engagement process – several invitations were issued to the consultant team to attend individual meetings

F.2.6 Friends groups

A database of Friends Groups was provided by Barnet Parks Department. All 23 Barnet Parks Friends Groups on this list were contacted by email in May 2015 to inform them about the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy, to seek their views and allow them to participate in the process. On-line links to the questionnaire were circulated to all of the groups contacted.

Individual responses were received from the following Friends of organisations:

- Friends of Mill Hill Park
- Friends of Childs Hill Park
- Burnt Oak Residents Association
- Friends of Friary Park
- Friends of Oakhill Park

As a consequence of these contacts, ‘Friends of’ meetings were attended at Childs Hill Park and Oakhill Park. The consultant team attended the Burnt Oak Multicultural Festival event organised by the Burnt Oak Residents Association.

### Table F.4 - Schedule of contacts made with special interest groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group name</th>
<th>Type of group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability Action in London Borough of Barnet</td>
<td>Voluntary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age UK Barnet</td>
<td>Voluntary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghan Association Paiwand</td>
<td>Voluntary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnet Seniors Assembly</td>
<td>Community Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnet Mencap</td>
<td>Voluntary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Barnet</td>
<td>Voluntary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnet Asian Women’s Association (BAWA)</td>
<td>Voluntary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnet Cyclists</td>
<td>Community Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnet Refugee Service</td>
<td>Voluntary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Sobel Jewish Community Centre</td>
<td>Community Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutmeg Young People Group</td>
<td>Community Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond Fellowship</td>
<td>Voluntary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight Impaired Barnet</td>
<td>Voluntary sector</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F.2.7 Special interest groups

In total, eleven special interest groups were contacted including organisations supporting people with disabilities (e.g. Barnet Sight Impaired, Barnet Disability Forum and Age UK Barnet), organisations who support people at different stages of life (e.g. Barnet Seniors Forum, ‘Nutmeg’ and the Barnet Youth Board) and organisations working with people from BAMER groups (e.g. Barnet Asian Womens’ Network and Barnet Refugee and Migrant forum).

The purpose of this engagement was to capture the views of this cohort of residents and to capture any barriers to their use and enjoyment of parks and open spaces in Barnet.

Groups were all contacted by phone and email and offered workshops and focus groups to facilitate discussion around the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy. Where groups were not in a position to participate in a workshop or focus group, telephone interviews were offered to key personnel within the organisation. Failing this copies of the telephone interview questions were sent for organisations to complete themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special interest group</th>
<th>Key theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnet Youth Board Discussion (30 July 2015)</td>
<td>Larger parks should have a ‘feature’ whether it’s a lake or lido or specialist sports facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More should be done to encourage festivals, events and community facilities in Barnet parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Every park should have, as a minimum, a good playground and outdoor gym, toilets, parking, refreshments and available drinking water, free WiFi in at least some areas, and be safe and clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parks can be the places which change how you feel about an area. Using parks to change perceptions and reputations is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnet Asian Womens’ Association (BAWA)</td>
<td>Parks allow community workers to take their message (e.g. health promotion) to hard to reach groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parks are an important community resource and can form a nucleus for community activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parks should have reasonably spaces for the community to meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The council should have officers to facilitate community activities in parks in co-ordination with groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The council are often an obstructive rather than positive force when trying to arrange activities and events in parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutmeg Young People Group</td>
<td>Safety is a big concern for young people as young people are often the victims of crime and anti-social behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better lighting is crucial to helping young people feel safe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of those organisations that were able to participate, focus groups were held with:

- Barnet Youth Board
- Sight Impaired Barnet

Telephone interviews were held with:

- Barnet Asian Womens’ Network
- Nutmeg.

Details of focus group and telephone interview findings appear as Appendix L.5

A number of key themes emerged from these discussions. Table F.5 identifies these themes.

### 6.2.8 Schools

As part of the engagement programme for the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy 25 schools were contacted with an offer of a pupil workshop focusing on Barnet’s parks and open spaces. Two schools responded positively and 45 minute workshops were held at:

- Brunswick Park Primary School (primary)
- St Mary’s High School (secondary)

A workshop was also held for the Barnet Youth Forum. The Barnet Youth Board The Barnet Youth Board is made up of representatives aged 13-19 (up to 25 with disabilities) across all Barnet’s state
schools as well as community groups/clubs aiming to give young people a voice.

The Board designs campaigns and projects, consults young people to find out their views and engages with decision makers to ensure young people in Barnet are heard. The group works closely with Barnet members of the Youth Parliament and together they work to ensure the meaningful engagement of young people in Barnet.

The objective of the workshop process was to allow pupils and young people the opportunity to discuss:

- their assessment of the quality of the spaces and facilities in local parks
- their views on what would make parks and open spaces more attractive to young people
- their priorities for the future

Full accounts of the workshop processes for Brunswick Park School appear as Appendix L.6.

F.2.8.1 School workshop conclusion

The pupils expressed a variety of ideas about what would make a park work for children. These included a range of activities and spaces for children of all ages, and for adults. High on the priority list were high quality sports facilities that had good equipment and proper markings giving a ‘professional’ feel. Also important were play spaces including open areas to run around and well defined paths for cycling and walking, as well as more formal children’s playgrounds.

Nature featured heavily in the discussions with ponds, animals, trees and flowers all mentioned. The children were also concerned about conservation and expressed a wish for their parks to be places where wildlife was protected and looked after.

Creative opportunities were also discussed with art gallery spaces and fairy gardens being proposed – places to let your imagination run wild and discover new things.

F.2.9 Barnet parks Facebook page

Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. The site includes public features such as:

- groups - allows members who have common interests to find each other and interact.
- events - allows members to publicize an event, invite guests and track who plans to attend.
- pages - allows members to create and promote a public page built around a specific topic.
A project Facebook page address was widely publicised on leaflet, posters and display banners distributed at all of the engagement opportunities and attached to email communication with stakeholder organisations and special interest groups. Visitors to the page were invited to ‘like’ the pictures and post comments.

By the close of the engagement process, 83 people had ‘liked’ the page and six people had left comments which have been incorporated into the engagement results. These comments appear as Appendix L.7.

F.3 Key stakeholder discussions
Appendix A of the strategy sets out the policy context within which the Open Spaces Strategy is being developed.

The strategy is one element in a range of policy initiatives being developed by Barnet Council to deliver the council’s overall objective of improving the ‘satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study.’

A number of face to face interviews with key internal stakeholders have been held to ensure that this strategy complements and reinforces the other strategic initiatives that the council is initiating. These discussions included:

• The Sport and Physical Activity strategy (SPA) and forthcoming leisure management contract. This will include a number of key performance indicators in respect of health outcomes. Barnet residents have identified parks as a key offer in term of adopting active lifestyles and these discussions focused upon how the Open Spaces Strategy and the SPA should be complementary. A number of value assessment criteria around significant disease groups have emerged from these discussions and have been used in assessing the value of individual open spaces.

• The emerging Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy will seek to address the marked differences in health and wellbeing outcomes, between places and different demographic groups within Barnet. The strategy will continue the emphasis on prevention and early intervention including secondary prevention, (slowing the progression of disease), aims to join up services so residents have a better experience and to strengthen partnerships to effect change and improvement. Discussions with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy team have focused on the role that parks and open spaces can play in delivering these policy objectives.

• Education: the role that increased access to parks can open spaces can support enhanced educational outcomes was discussed. Currently, the Parks service derives income from schools offering access to parks and open spaces. The extent to which this acts as impediment to further schools use of open spaces should be evaluated. It was recognised that there are opportunities for schools close to parks and open spaces to make greater use of these spaces for ‘forest school’ and outdoor

31 Barnet Corporate Plan 2015-20
learning and that this Strategy and any operational and investment decisions that follow should develop these opportunities.

- **Community Safety**: The degree to which residents feel safe in using parks and open spaces can vary significantly across the borough. Perception of personal safety can significantly affect the degree to which parks services are taken up by residents. Discussions with the Community Safety team and the Metropolitan Police ‘Secure by Design’ officer have highlighted individual spaces with high incidences of anti-social behaviour and/or crimes against the person. An additional list of sites has been identified in areas with high burglary rates (where parks have been used to gain access to homes). Having identified these sites, the capital investment strategy forming part of this strategy can address these issues by ‘designing out’ specific crime and anti-social behaviour risks.

- **Entrepreneurial Barnet**: Entrepreneurial Barnet is an initiative by the council and its partners to consider ways in which their concerted actions can enhance Barnet’s economy. The strategy recognises that ‘the economic success of an area is associated with its attractiveness as a place to work and invest, but also whether it’s a good place to live and to visit.’

  This strategy is concerned with improving the current parks and open spaces offer across the borough. Appendix D of the strategy demonstrates the positive effect that this can have upon office rental values and attracting and retaining staff. The capital investment strategy will identify opportunities for a range of physical interventions to improve both the quality and distinctiveness of Barnet’s parks and open spaces and some of these will be focused on town centres as parts of the borough that are significant to the borough’s economy.

  The strategy will also focus on options for governance models based on town centres and these have been discussed in the context of the Entrepreneurial Barnet strategy.

- **Planning**: The Barnet Core Strategy provides an overarching local policy framework for delivering sustainable development in Barnet through a number of separate documents and policies. These include a suite of policies around Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land, children’s play, sports pitches and natural green spaces all of which provide the strategic context for this strategy. The core strategy also establishes minimum levels of provision for each of these types of open space in the context of proposed development.

  Discussions have focused on current and future designations, the potential for the creation of a regional park in Barnet (as proposed in the All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance) and the use of Section 106 funds for parks capital projects.

- **Environment**: Appendix C of this Strategy identifies ways in which parks and open spaces can benefit Barnet’s communities by protecting bio-diversity and mitigating the effects of climate change. The borough’s Infrastructure Plan identifies flood risk as a major green infrastructural impact on the borough. Discussions have focused on the value of parks and open spaces in mitigating against flood risk impacts and this potential is expressed as a value indicator in the assessment of individual spaces. The Mayor’s Green Infrastructure Taskforce will be reporting in the autumn of 2015 and the further recommendations of this report in respect of the incorporation of green infrastructure management systems into infrastructure planning in Barnet may follow.

32 Entrepreneurial Barnet: The public sector contribution to Barnet’s economy 2015-20
F.4 Engagement – key themes and findings

Improvements to Facilities and Services
From the Barnet park events engagement, improvements to facilities and services were one of the key themes identified with 14% of people engaged with raising this as an issue. The main improvements that people wanted to see were improvements to toilets (35% of those who discussed improvements to facilities) and new cafe facilities (also 35% of those who discussed improvements to facilities).

Improvements to play and sports facilities
27% of people at the Barnet parks events wanted to see an improvement to sports and play facilities. 15% of those who spoke about play facilities wanted to see improvements for facilities for teenagers, 27% wanted to see improvements in the quantity of play provision and 25% wanted improvements in the overall quality of the play offer. The desire for water play facilities was mentioned by one third of the respondents who discussed play. These findings were echoed in the engagements with local schools. Green gyms were also a sports improvement that many people would like to see in the parks.

Anti-social behaviour
At the Barnet town centre events 22% spoke about the negative impact of antisocial behaviour (ASB). 11% wanted to see improvements in anti-social behaviour statistics. However stakeholder interviews show that the degree to which residents feel safe in using parks and open spaces can vary significantly across the borough.

Improvements in maintenance
At both the town centre and the park events, approximately 10% of people wanted to see improvements in park maintenance. However comments from the both the park and town centre events and the questionnaire show that respondents feel that maintenance of the parks across the borough is highly variable.

Flooding was also raised as an issue and 31% of people at town centre events who discussed maintenance referred specifically to improved maintenance of ponds and streams. A number of people also commented on excessive levels of litter in parks following formal sports club sessions.

Partnerships with voluntary sector groups
From key stakeholder interviews, voluntary sector groups highlighted the importance of parks within their outreach programmes. They however highlighted the lack of affordable space for rent within the parks and noted that they often found difficulty in liaising with the parks department concerning joint activities such as arranging events and volunteering.

F.5 Consultation
The draft Open Spaces Strategy was presented to the council’s Environment Committee on January 11th 2016. At this meeting it was resolved that the Environment Committee ‘approved and instructed that the Commissioning Director for Environment release the draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy for public consultation.’

A considerable amount of data and a wide variety of stakeholder views had been gathered during the engagement process that preceded the completion of the draft strategy. The purpose of the formal consultation process was thus to:

- gather responses to the conclusions reached within the strategy and the proposals that emerged from these
- continue the dialogue with residents and stakeholders to encourage a sense of ownership of the strategy and to stimulate further debate about the future of parks and open spaces in Barnet
A number of different methodologies were employed to consult residents and stakeholders:

• an on-line questionnaire
• face to face interviews with key stakeholders and organisations
• focus groups for groups with protected characteristics
• a workshop event targeted at ‘Friends of’ organisations in Barnet
• a workshop for council officers

The consultation ran from January 18th to March 13th inclusive.

F 5.1 On-line questionnaire

An on-line questionnaire ‘Parks and Open Spaces Strategy’ was publicised as a principal consultation tool. The questionnaire was accessible from January 18th to March 13th inclusive. The questionnaire contained 22 questions, 15 of which addressed use of and attitudes to parks and open spaces in Barnet and aspects of the strategy. Seven questions related to socio-economic monitoring.

The questionnaire (excluding monitoring questions) used a methodology combining both quantitative and qualitative methods for information gathering. The quantitative elements consisted of five closed, unordered categorical (nominal-polytomous) questions where respondents had a number of fixed categories to choose answers from, 27 bounded continuous questions, where the respondents were presented with a continuous scale and were asked to state whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed with a given statement and three qualitative open questions, where respondents gave their comments in response to a question. The completion time was assessed at approximately 12 minutes.

The questionnaire sought to:

• identify which of Barnet’s parks are most popular
• identify the activities and uses that parks in Barnet support
• suggest how investment resources should be targeted in Barnet’s parks
• capture views on the options for future funding and governance proposed in the draft strategy

A total of 157 questionnaires were either fully or partly completed. An analysis of questionnaire results appears as Appendix M.

F5.2 Face to face interviews with key stakeholders and organisations

Interviews with and/or presentations to the following organisations were actioned during the consultation period:

• Friends of Childs Hill Park
• Friends of Friary Park
• Mill Hill Neighbourhood Forum
• Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust
• Community First Barnet
• Barnet Youth Forum
• Friern Barnet and Whetstone Residents Association
• Finchley Society

F5.2.1 Friends of Childs Hill Park

This meeting focused on the possible development of a pilot project based in Childs Hill Park and the feasibility of social enterprise as a model for future funding and governance in Barnet. The Friends of Childs Hill Park have submitted a detailed response to the strategy and this appears as Appendix M.

F5.2.2 Friends of Friary Park

The meeting with the Friends of Friary Park included a discussion of the purpose and principal proposals of the strategy and the possibility of a
major externally-funded park restoration project being progressed at Friary Park.

**F5.2.3 Mill Hill Community Forum**
The meeting with the Mill Hill Community Forum included a presentation on the draft strategy and a Q & A session. Topics for discussion included the protection of the current quantum of greenspace across the borough and the importance of preserving the borough’s natural heritage sites.

**F5.2.4 Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust**
A meeting took place with officers of the Trust, setting out the objectives that the strategy was focused on and the issues faced by the council in delivering open spaces services across the borough. The meeting included a detailed discussion of the criteria used to determine the quality and value assessments undertaken in the course of preparing the strategy and a consideration of the future role that the Trust might play in managing public open space within the Garden Suburb.

**F5.2.5 Community First Barnet**
Community First Barnet is based in Friary Park. The meeting focused on the role played by Community First in delivering a variety of outcomes for local people. The potential role of Community First as a partner in a forthcoming restoration project was also discussed.

**F5.2.6 Barnet Youth Board**
Discussions with the Youth Board focused upon the ways in which the strategy had responded to the issues that the Board had raised in an initial meeting:
- Improved facilities in parks
- Reasonably priced refreshments and free drinking water
- Safety in parks for young people
- Areas with a poor reputation – especially Burnt Oak and Colindale
- Free wifi in parks
- Better toilets and baby changing facilities
- Dog control
- Better managed spaces especially under-used spaces
- More festivals, funfairs and carnivals
- Car parking to encourage use

Members of the Board were interested in understanding how a park improvement project is designed and implemented.

**F5.2.7 Friern Barnet and Whetstone Residents Association**
The Association has requested a presentation on the strategy and this will take place in April.

**F5.2.8 The Finchley Society**
The Society has requested a presentation on the strategy and this will take place in April.

**F5.3 Focus Groups with groups with protected characteristics**
Two focus groups were held with the following:
- Barnet Sight Impaired
- A general focus group with a number of different groups with protected characteristics

**F5.3.1 Barnet Sight Impaired Workshop**
The meeting focused on very specific aspect of park design and management including:
- Problems attached to sharing surfaces with cyclists
- Risks of slipping and tripping
- Obstacles in parks – bollards, white edging for steps
- Overhanging branches

The meeting also discussed the benefits that parks can have for people with disabilities if
access could be better supported. Of particular importance are issues of loneliness and the need for companionship. The meeting expressed strong support for more and better maintained sensory gardens.

Many felt that signage should be improved.

F5.3.2 General Focus Group – groups with protected characteristics
This meeting discussed ways in which parks and open spaces could be adapted to address users with special needs. The meeting discussed in detail the need for people to feel safer using parks and open spaces. There was strong support for the creation of fenced refuge areas that would be dog-free. The meeting suggested that several of these sites could be created across the borough so that one would always be locally available. Cycle free areas were also discussed as the interaction with cyclists travelling at speed can undermine a sense of personal safety.

The meeting considered that more support should be given to ‘Friends’ groups so that people would be encouraged to use parks more frequently. Impediments to use because of issues around insurance cover were specifically mentioned.

The provision of training opportunities for people with disabilities was also discussed and Forest School initiatives were strongly supported. Signage and a lack of facilities specifically targeted at people with disabilities were identified as significant issues.

F5.4 Parks ‘Friends of’ forum meeting
Representatives of ‘Friends of parks’ organisations were invited to a discussion forum. The purpose of the strategy and its principal elements were presented to the meeting and detailed discussion of specific aspects ensued.

The following issues were raised by attendees:

- The challenges of sustaining an improvement in maintenance with a limited Parks department staff cohort
- Saving money on vandalism by having more park keepers
- The difficulty of communicating with the Parks department, which is very short-staffed
- The disappointment of taking initiatives in parks only for these to be inadvertently destroyed by council operatives
- The need for a forum through which to channel communication between Friends organisations and the council
- The need for better (and less confrontational) signage
- The need for enhanced horticulture
- The need for the strategy to include natural greenspaces as well as parks and to promote habitat and bio-diversity
- The possibility of better lighting in parks
- The loss of greenspace in and around York Park as a consequence of new housing developments

There was general consensus that the meeting had been useful and that further meetings of Friends organisations would be useful.

F5.5 Council officers’ workshop
A workshop was convened to discuss the strategy and to develop detailed policy and action plan proposals for inclusion in the strategy. The workshop was attended by:

- The Commissioning Director - Environment Commissioning Group
- Strategic Lead - Clean and Green - Environment Commissioning Group
- Interim Lead Commissioner - Parks and Green Spaces Commissioning Group
- Open Spaces Strategy lead officer: Re
And representatives from:

- Parks
- Planning
- Public Health
- Finance
- Sport and physical activity
- Community safety
- Community engagement
- Trees

A series of bi-lateral meetings were held with individual department following the workshops at which specific policies and action plan objectives were developed.

These appear from page 30 of the strategy report.
For more information please visit: http://engage.barnet.gov.uk.

If you would like to request this consultation in an alternative format please e-mail @barnet.gov.uk or phone 020 8359