

Appendix C: Open Space Consultation Results

The Council facilitated an open consultation survey between 12th November 2020 and 7th January 2021 on the draft strategy in which Stakeholders were invited to express their views. The responses of all respondents to each survey question were considered which went on to form:

- The basis of the redrafting proposals that aimed to address the main observations and engage respondents with the effectiveness of the strategy.
- Some of the baselines of this strategy the Council wishes to build upon for its duration.

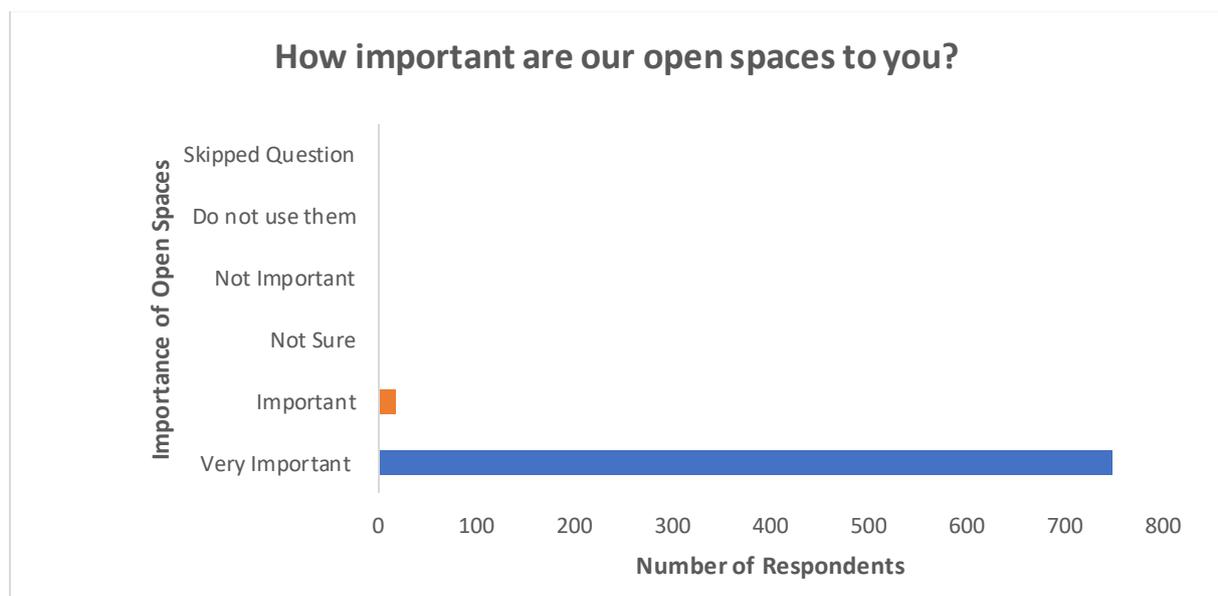
Number of responses

A Total of 838 responses were received:

- 769 responses to the survey, which form the basis of the presented graphs below.
- 69 emails from those who noted that they wished to give a greater depth of commentary. Whilst these respondents' ideas and suggestions were included in the overall analysis, they do not form part of the graphs below as they did not answer the specific questions set by the survey.

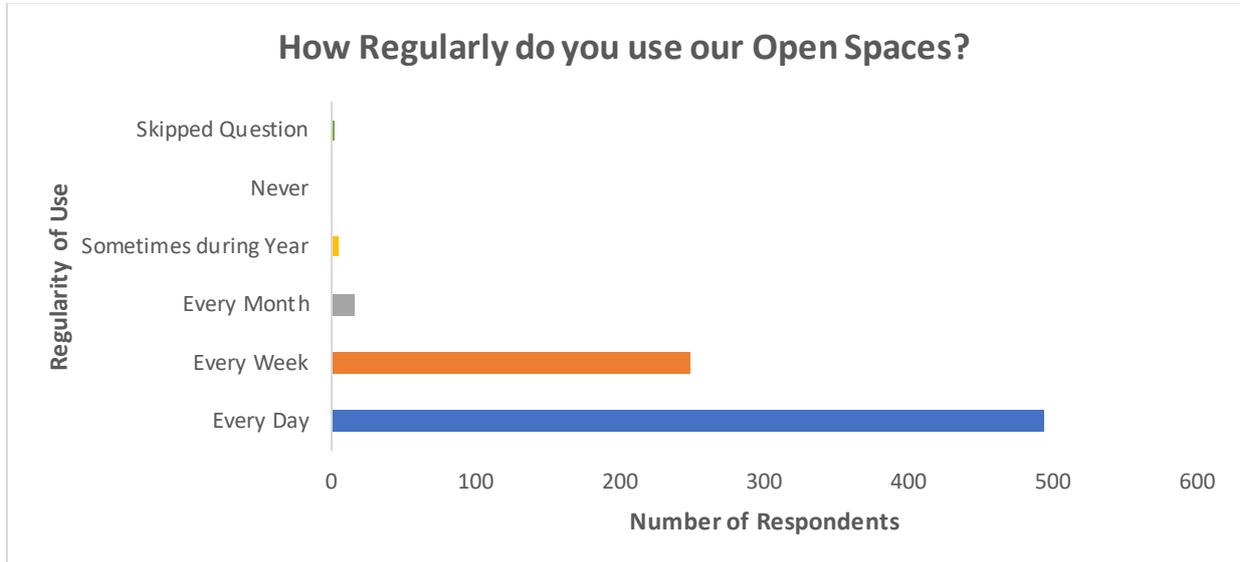
Importance of open spaces

The Open Spaces were important to all 769 Survey Respondents.



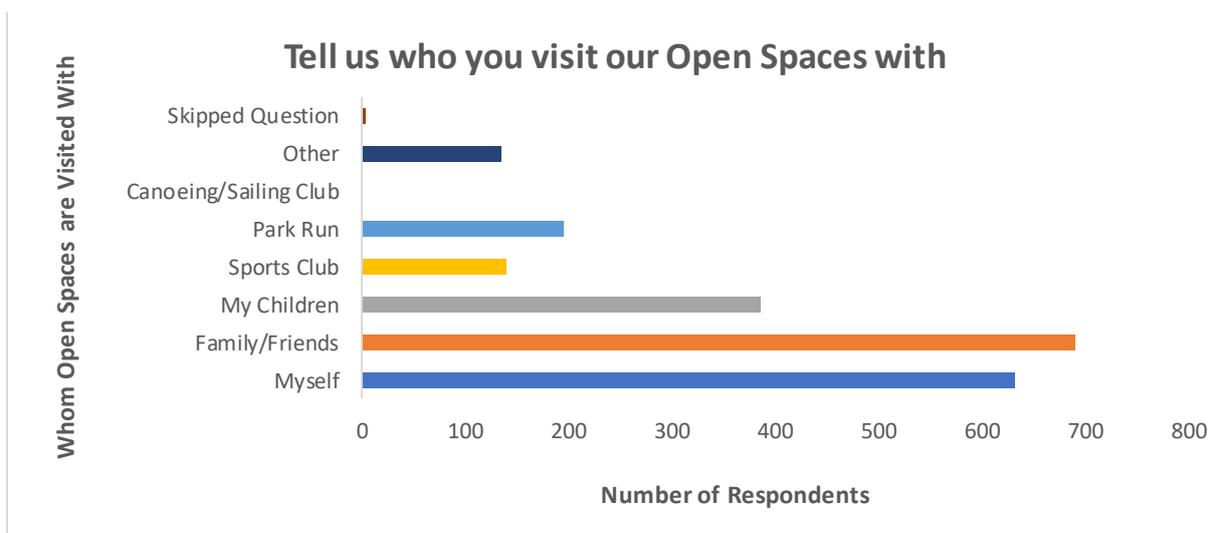
Usage of open space

A significant majority of the 769 Survey Respondents (around 90%) noted that they used the borough's Open Spaces regularly (either daily or weekly).



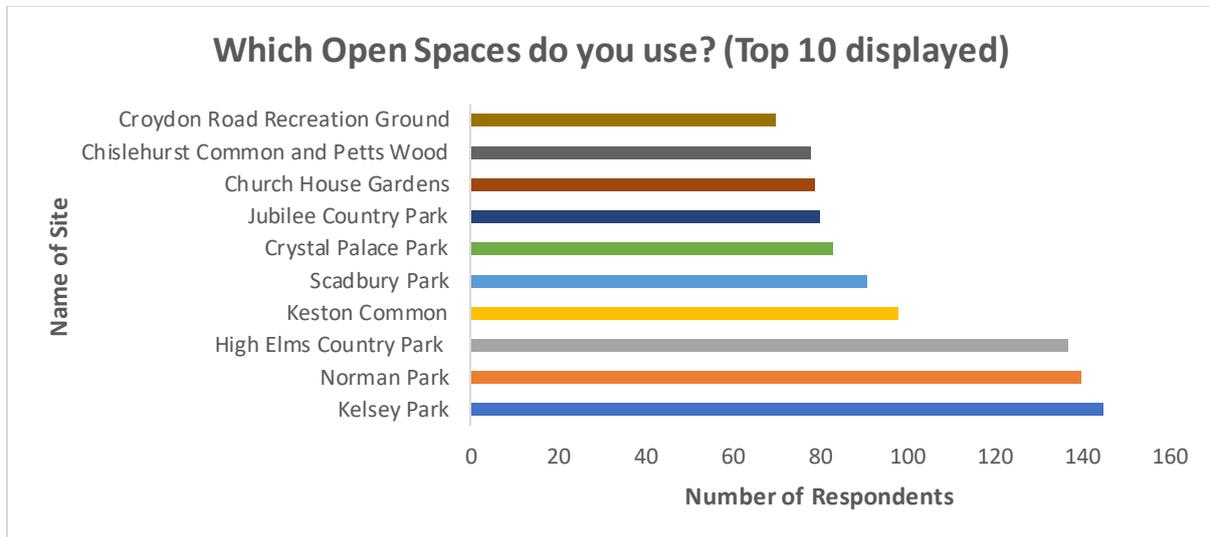
The Council's Open Spaces are a significant social outlet for the 769 survey respondents, with over 75% indicating that they visit them with family and friends. 45% also indicated use of the Open Spaces for a sporting interest. Those who selected 'Other' included those that use them for Dog walking or visited with a community or sports group, some of which corresponded to the specialist nature of some sites.

[Please note respondents could select all options that applied with this question]



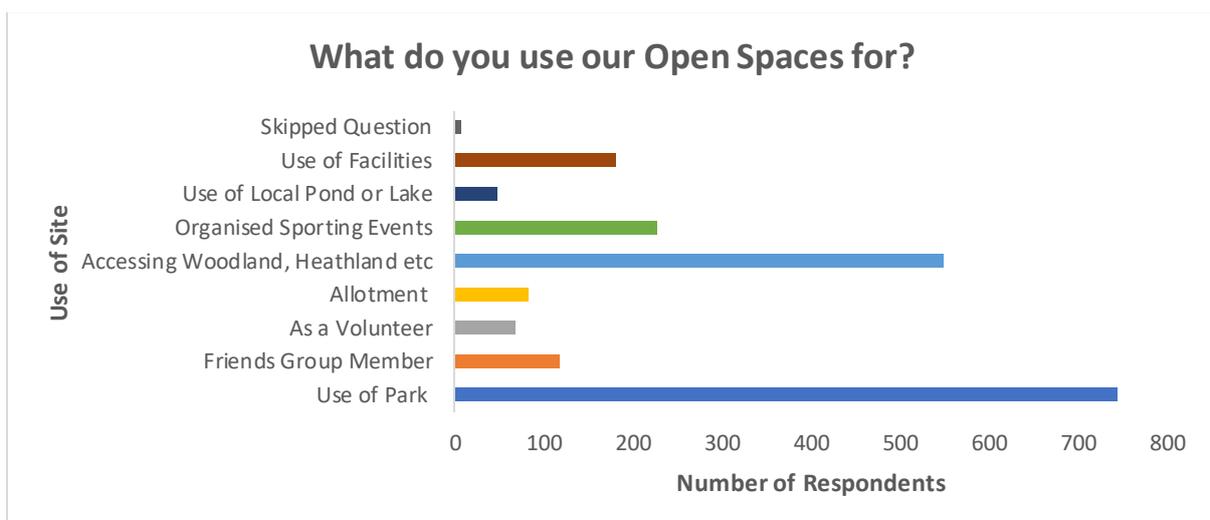
The 10 most frequently visited Open Space sites by the 769 survey respondents are the more prestigious sites within the borough and where leisure activities dominate over

sporting interests. The strategy has ensured that it has either earmarked these sites for improvement works or referenced past success within them. Overall a total of 135 sites were named at least once as being one that respondents visited and 47 by at least 10 of them. This further demonstrates the need for the strategy to ensure that any benefits derived from it are equally spread across both the portfolio and the borough.



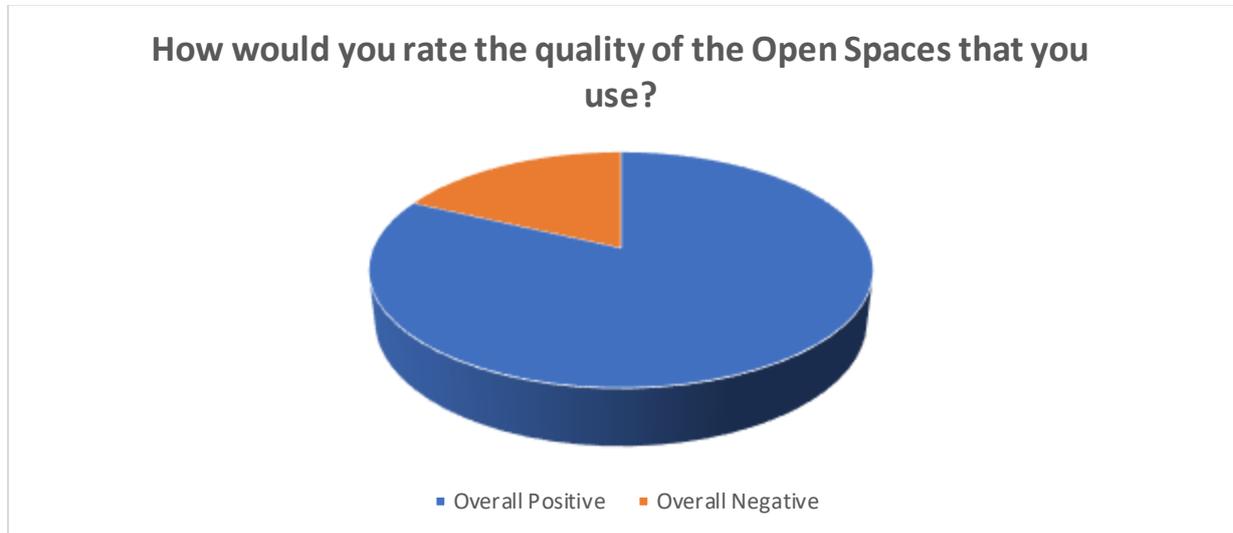
Almost all the 769 survey respondents noted that they use Open Spaces for exercise, recreational activities or relaxation. There were also many specialist activities mentioned by respondents including Ornithology, wildlife counts, painting and photography. Many respondents noted how Open Spaces had taken on a greater importance in the wake of the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

[Please note respondents could select all options that applied with this question]



Quality of open spaces

Around 85% of the 769 survey respondents noted that they were satisfied overall with the quality of the Open Space Portfolio and the amenities within them.



Analysis of those who responded

The consultation elicited considered and well-intentioned responses but did also detect that certain groups opinions may have been under-represented in the survey such as younger respondents and those with disabilities, hence the Council's attempt to reach out to these groups in the redrafting process.

Respondee recommendations

Clarity

Many of the 838 survey and email respondents indicated the need for clarity around the following themes and ideas:

What you said	What we've done
Improve the layout and legibility of the Strategy	The redrafted strategy presents key points legibly and consistently.
Improve the accessibility of the Strategy	The strategy is clear on how its outcomes will be disseminated to as wide a section of the community as possible.
Clarify what you mean by the terms 'Repurposing' and 'Commercial Activity'	The term 'repurposing' has been replaced with wording that better explains the Council's objectives, whilst Commercial activity has been defined with examples.
Improve cross referencing, relation to other key elements of the strategy and simplify any terminology used	The strategy clearly outlines its National, Regional and local context, and terminology has been simplified and explained where appropriate.
Improve referencing to 'Biodiversity' and 'Climate Change' and include more challenging objectives	The strategy has explained where it will obtain its baseline data and has undertaken a review of its climate change and biodiversity targets.
Improve the Open Space Maps and Categorisation.	The strategy now explains its categorisations and has corrected any omissions or errors.
Provide focused SOs.	Each SO now outlines what it wants to achieve, how it will achieve it and completion timescales in language that is easily understood.
Be clear on how the Strategy will be funded	The strategy demonstrates how the Council will both provide active investment and source external funding.
Use of Case Studies	The strategy now only contains case studies located within the borough.
Include mechanisms for consultation with Stakeholders.	The strategy has now outlined its consultation process for the life of the strategy.

Policy recommendations

The 838 survey and email respondents made several strategy policy recommendations:

Respondent Policy Recommendation	Council Action
Facilitate means for Active forms of Transport to Open Spaces	The strategy makes provision to create new and strengthen existing Green Travel networks for Pedestrians and Cyclists.
Greater investment into Open Space Amenities.	The Strategy contains significant provision to improve the playscape, sports, catering and facilities offering across the portfolio.
Greater Reference to Tree Planting and Maintenance	The strategy outlines a woodland creation scheme.
Attention given to smaller Open Spaces	The strategy makes provision for management plans for all sites in the portfolio.
Greater Support given to Friends and Volunteer groups.	The strategy makes clear the Council's commitment to its Friends and Volunteer Groups including via its review of Open Space governance models. Its case studies champion their success.
Greater attention given to Cleanliness and public safety in Open Spaces (e.g., fly-tipping, littering and vandalism)	The strategy contains details of a recycling pilot to improve park cleanliness and outlines how it will maintain the safety of Open Space users throughout its duration.
Inclusion of Land outside Open Spaces (e.g., Grass Verges)	The strategy details a proposed grass verge programme.
Improvement of the service provider operations.	The strategy details how Idverde has improved its operational activities and will continue to do so via its educational programme.
Parks Heritage Assets	The strategy contains a comprehensive plan to restore sites with Heritage assets which now includes assets such as water features.
Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic	The strategy lists the ongoing impact as a challenge driving it and acknowledges the portfolios importance for residents during periods of restrictions.

Respondent Policy Recommendation	Council Action
Expansion of Educational Provision	The strategy makes a clear commitment to both expanding the programme outside of High Elms Country Park and providing other types of education.
The Management of Cemeteries and Allotments	The strategy includes these sites within its audits to identify opportunities for investment and includes them as part of its renewal of governance models.
Greater attention given to Crystal Palace Park	The strategy emphasises the importance of the parks status and links directly to Council policies concerned with its regeneration.
Investment in Water Bodies	The strategy contains a significant water body project (Glassmill Lane Reservoir) and includes all blue spaces within sites as potential opportunities for investment.
Provision for Local Food	The strategy makes provision to increase the number of community gardens in SO3 and for local food growers to sell their produce via SO4
Greater Reference made to Conservation designations	Where sites with special conservation designation are mentioned within the strategy they are referenced and will be managed in line with the requirements of these designations.
The challenges of an aging population	The strategy refers to an aging population as a challenge and gives due regard to this in its policy development.
The ability to 'Gift' to Open Spaces	The strategy explores this idea under SO5.
Sustainable Building Practices	The strategy contains provision to explore energy efficiency and smart technology solutions in Open Space buildings.

