



BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET

Bath & North East Somerset Green Space Strategy

Appendix D Market Research Report

Making Bath & North East Somerset
a better place to live, work & visit



BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET

Market Research Report Green Spaces

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SECTION A

ON-STREET INTERVIEWS, FOCUS GROUPS AND DAFBY

1.1 Background

Leisure & Amenity Services of Bath & North East Somerset Council are preparing a 'Green Space Strategy' which requires an assessment of green spaces in the district to

- provide the basis for the development of a Supplementary Planning Document for open space, sport and recreation
- determine the optimum levels of future service delivery and to provide a cross area approach to green space provision
- design a framework for future decisions on green space land acquisition and disposal
- bid for local and government funding to address the worst deficiencies of green space that have no prospect of being addressed through future developers contributions

In order for this to be achieved a set of 'new local standards' for green space is planned. The 'new local standards' will be applied to existing and planned green spaces to determine deficiencies and surpluses of green space provision. The 'new local standards' will be developed by taking into account the existing national standards, existing provision (all, not just Council owned), and local needs. The local needs will be established through market research and consultation.

Different forms of market research and consultation were undertaken, including consultations with certain 'equalities groups' and focus groups with residents in Bath, Keynsham and Norton Radstock. This section of the report presents the findings of 421 on-street interviews conducted in August 2004, but there are also some references and quotations from the focus groups and other research and consultations.

1.2 Objectives

Green spaces are made up of a number of distinct land types/ uses and new local standards need to be developed for each. The following descriptions characterise the different typologies:

Formal Green Spaces

These are parks and gardens, which are primarily areas of intensively maintained horticultural features e.g. lawns, hedges, flowerbeds, trees and

shrubs. Within these spaces there are often informal areas, natural areas, sports facilities and play facilities.

Informal Green Spaces

These are areas primarily for informal use, mainly consisting of grass with some tree and shrub planting e.g. recreation grounds, open spaces close to houses, village greens etc. Within these spaces there are often natural areas, sports facilities and play facilities.

Natural Green Space

These are areas primarily where people can experience the natural environment e.g. woodlands, natural and semi-natural areas and green corridors such as canal towpaths and disused railway lines etc...

Allotments

These are primarily areas for people to grow their own produce, including community gardens and orchards. They are often enclosed areas that are only accessible to people who rent a plot on the site.

Sports Facilities

These are areas for sport participation by teams and individuals e.g. pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens, golf courses, athletics facilities, netball and basketball courts etc... These facilities are usually found in both formal and informal green spaces.

Play Facilities

These are areas designed for the play and social interaction of children and young people and are often separately fenced off with specially designed equipment and surfacing. Examples of play facilities are equipped children's play areas, kick-about areas with a goalpost or basketball ring, youth shelters, skateboard areas etc... These facilities are usually found in both formal and informal green spaces.

Research was required to investigate the following aspects of each typology:

- Frequency of use
- Type of use
- Access to green spaces
- Expectations and suggested improvements
- Quality of green spaces and their facilities
- Quantity

1.3 Methodology

As discussed, an initial phase of focus groups was commissioned to explore the issues most pertinent to residents. There were no surprising results and residents were generally very positive towards green spaces in the area, with the possible exception of provision for young people, notably in Norton Radstock.

Following the focus groups a series of on-street interviews were devised that were representative of Bath & North East Somerset, although visitors to the district were also able to take part.

- 421 on-street interviews
- Sample points in Bath, Norton Radstock, Peasedown St John, Chew Magna and Keynsham
- 15 minute interview
- Interview designed by Communications & Marketing in collaboration with Leisure & Amenity Services
- Fieldwork Period: August 2004
- MSS Market Research commissioned to undertake the interviews and provide data to Communications & Marketing for analysis and reporting
- Broadly representative in terms of age, gender and area of residence

The original questionnaire that was designed was very comprehensive; however, as a consequence it was also very long, (in the region of half an hour). Thirty minutes is too long to stop people on the street and ask them questions so the questionnaire was cut down considerably. Inevitably this means that much of the information that would be 'nice to know' is missing from this report, however, we believe that the most important areas have been accounted for.

The questionnaire that was used was also modified and reduced so that it could be distributed to a representative sample of equalities groups. The results for this element of the research are considered in Section B of this report. The modified questionnaire was also distributed to a group of young people who are members of an organisation called Democratic Action for B&NES Youth. They kindly agreed to ask friends and classmates to complete the questionnaire and 65 copies were returned. Where the questions are the same as the on-street survey these results have been plotted in this section of the report. Please note when reading the results that because the survey was 'self completion' rather than interviewer led, the answers to some questions were missing on some surveys, so the base size varies.

2. Executive Summary

- 95% of those who were stopped and interviewed had visited a green space in the district in the last 12 months
- Those who live in Keynsham and Bath are more satisfied with green space provision than those who live in Norton Radstock. This is mainly due to a perceived lack of green space provision in Norton Radstock
- Formal green spaces have been visited by a larger proportion of the sample than informal green spaces. However, informal green spaces are visited more frequently.
- The results of the survey indicate that there can almost never be enough green space provision
- Informal green spaces tend to be the closest to people's homes, and are therefore the easiest to get to and the quickest to walk to.
- Royal Victoria Park is seen as the 'jewel' of green spaces provision in Bath and North East Somerset. And there is a demand for more similar provision in other areas.
- There is a perception that a majority of the time and budget of the parks department is spent in Bath in general and in Royal Victoria Park in particular
- Natural green spaces and sports facilities are the typologies that are most in need of improvement.
- Families are harder to please than non-families, as families have higher expectations that are harder to meet.
- The most important improvements to formal green spaces:
 - Provision of toilets
 - Rain shelter and sun shade
 - Sufficient good quality seating and litter bins
 - Cleanliness (free of litter, graffiti, dogs mess)
 - Managed sensitively for wildlife
 - Sense of safety

3. Use of green spaces

Of the 421 people that stopped to fill in the questionnaire, 401 (95%), had visited a green space in the district. This is much higher than the percentage recorded in a national survey, where 62% claimed to have visited a green space in the last 12 months. However, it is unlikely that there should be such significant differences in behaviour between residents and visitors to Bath & North East Somerset compared to the rest of the country. It is more likely that the differences are due to changes in methodology rather than a significant difference in behaviour:

- The definition of green space used in the national survey was narrower than the one used in the Bath & North East Somerset interview. Our definition included 'natural green space' and other areas of 'publicly accessible green space, such as footpaths.
- We asked residents about any visit to a green space in the last year. A visit was defined as *'any time you pass through a green space, be it a specific visit to an area to use it's facilities, parking your car, or just walking through on your way somewhere else, walking your dog, taking a short cut to the shops, etc...'* This very open definition would increase the percentage of people who say that they have 'visited' a green space.
- The national survey took place in January; our survey took place in August. Although the question relates to activities over the past 12 months, respondents to the Bath & North East Somerset survey are likely to have fresher memories of recent visits.
- The national survey was conducted in people's homes which would mean that respondents were a captive audience but, with our on-street method, respondents would have been much more able to simply say that they do not use green spaces and thus walk past the interviewer without leaving other details.

So, we should not draw many conclusions from the difference between Bath and North East Somerset and the national figures. But, regardless of this, the results show us that a very high proportion of those people who were prepared to be surveyed (95%) had used green spaces in the district.

Having made note of this, it is certainly possible that the use of green spaces is higher in Bath and North East Somerset than in other areas. The focus groups found that residents of Keynsham and Bath in particular were very pleased with the green spaces available to them:

"Victoria Park has it all. In terms of variety of use, you have got it all there, you have got someone there who can do first aid, you have got a lot of what people want- you've got formal [green space], open [green space], [play areas for] Kids, a warden..." –Bath

“I think we are lucky in Keynsham with the woodland and the park- it is all well maintained. I always feel so sad with the misuse of the parks with all the litter, but we are very lucky all the same” –Keynsham

However, this was certainly not the case in Norton Radstock:

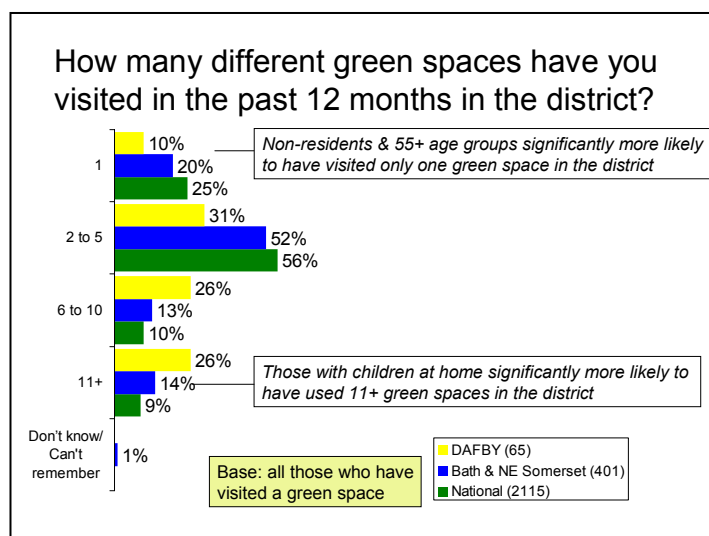
“I am new to the area, but I have not been aware of green spaces, they don’t really seem to have any shape or form, there are bits of left over grass here and there, but...I think there is a lot more thought that could be put in to it” – Norton Radstock

“There is some ‘amenity green space’ in the surrounding villages, but we have no parks and gardens that I am aware of” –Norton Radstock

“There are no parks around here- you would have to go Bath” –Norton Radstock

Of the 20 people who said that they had not used green spaces in the district, the main reason was a lack of time (19 people).

The chart below shows how many different green spaces people have visited in the district compared to the national average and the results from the questionnaire that was circulated to young people via DAFBY. The comparisons show that residents and visitors to Bath & North East Somerset go to more green spaces than the national average. However, these results should carry the caveat that the definition of green space used in this survey is slightly wider than the definition used in the national survey. The results are shown below.



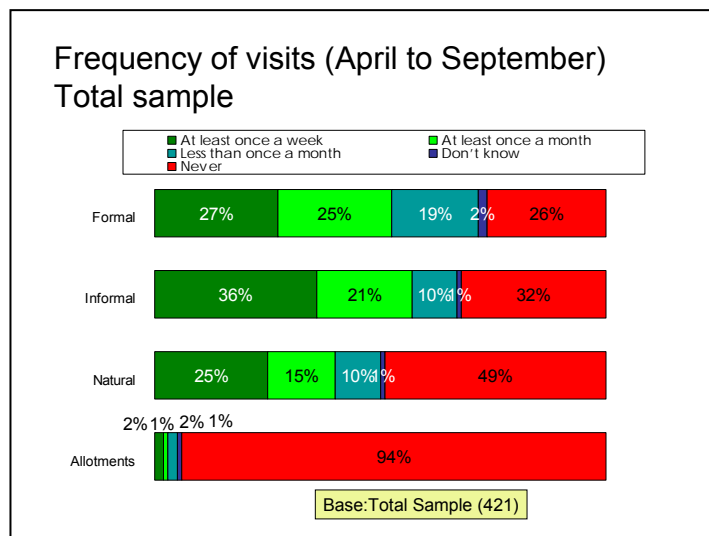
It is immediately evident that young people tend to have visited a greater number of green spaces than the general population, and further analysis of this question showed that older age groups were significantly more likely to have only visited one green space in the district in the last year. The high proportion of over 55 year olds visiting only one green space may be

explicable as this age group tend to have more mobility problems than younger age groups, and therefore a restricted choice.

Non-residents are also significantly more likely to have visited only one green space in the district in the last year than residents. We can speculate that non-residents might tend to only visit a particular part of the district (possibly near to a place of work or tourist attractions) and are therefore exposed to fewer green spaces.

In terms of those visiting a large number of green spaces (14% of people claimed to have visited 11 or more green spaces in the last year), it was particularly those with young children who were likely to be in this group.

The chart below shows that formal and informal green spaces are used by most people, natural green spaces are used by about half the population and only the minority use allotments:

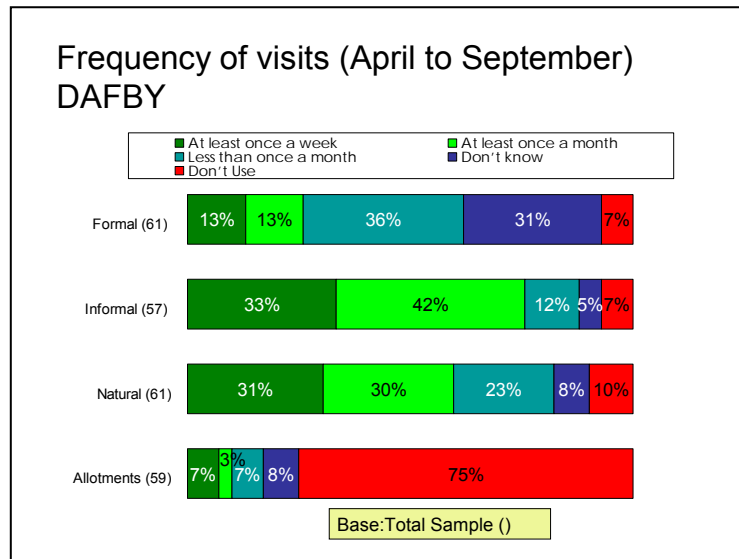


Allotments in the district had been used by 7% of the sample, this equates to 26 people. This is too small a group to draw any valid statistical conclusions from, so some of the references to allotments are not plotted in this report as percentages would be misleading. In real terms though, of the 26 people who did use allotments, 10 used their allotment at least once a week, and 6 use it at least once a month- 8 use it less than once a month.

About half the sample claimed to have used natural green spaces in the district. Residents are significantly more likely to have visited natural green spaces in the district than non residents. It was those people who had visited a large number of green spaces in the last year, (11+), that were more likely to have visited natural green spaces.

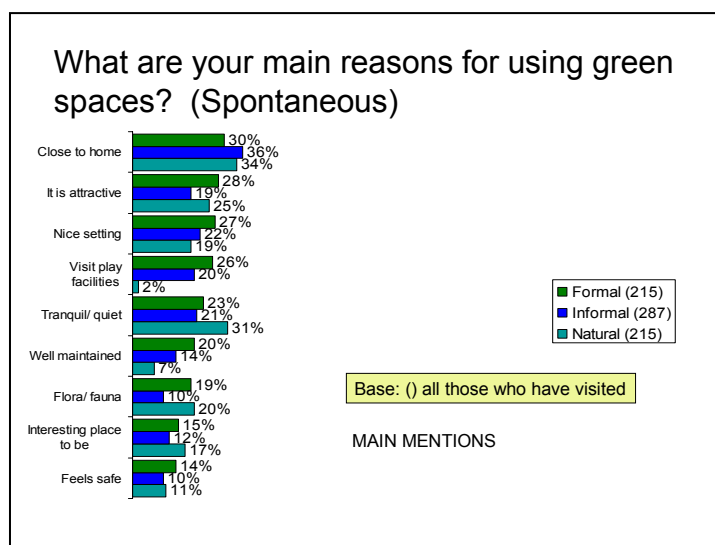
The chart overleaf shows the results for young people collected through DAFBY. The data shows that young people are also unlikely to make much use of allotments, but they make higher use of informal and natural green spaces. Perhaps the most surprising result is the low use of formal green

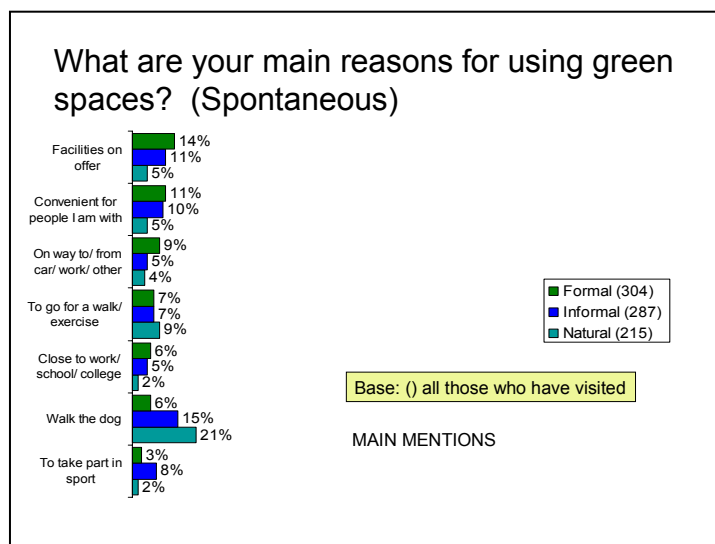
space. But it should be remembered when looking at the results from DAFBY that this is not a random sample the questionnaires were distributed amongst friends groups, so the data may be skewed as the young people may visit the green spaces together.



The Parks Section invests a considerable amount of resources in formal green space provision- and according the large on-street survey (which is our most accurate measure), more people have used formal green spaces than any other type of provision. However, it is used less frequently than informal green spaces: 27% of the sample had used green spaces at least once a week, compared to 36% of people who use informal green spaces at least once a week.

The reasons for this may be inferred from the reasons that people tend to use green spaces, (allotments not plotted):





The charts above show that the main reason that people use the green spaces that they do is that they are close to home. It stands to reason then that if there are more informal green spaces than formal green spaces, then more of them are likely to be closer to people’s homes and therefore they are likely to be most widely visited. We will see that this hypothesis is backed up by replies to other questions relating to how people tend to get to informal green spaces and how long it takes to get there.

Looking at the charts there are clear differences in the reasons for visiting the green spaces. We can say that generally people visit them for similar reasons- but they each offer something different. For example, although the reasons are the same, the order of ‘significance’ is different. For example, ‘Tranquil/ Quiet’ is less likely to be a reason for visiting formal green spaces, but it is one of the key reasons for visiting natural green spaces. People are also more likely to visit natural green spaces for the flora and fauna and to walk their dog than for formal and informal green spaces. Play facilities are also one of the main motivating factors behind visits to formal and informal green spaces.

Top 5 reasons for visiting green spaces

	Formal	Informal	Natural
1	Close to home	Close to home	Close to home
2	It is attractive	Nice setting	Tranquil/ quiet
3	Nice setting	Tranquil/ quiet	It is attractive
4	To visit play facilities	Visit play facilities	To walk the dog
5	Tranquil/ quiet	It is attractive	Flora/ fauna

'Walking the dog' is one of the main reasons for visiting natural green spaces, and this was something that was also apparent from the focus groups. Many of those who visited natural green spaces tended to be dog walkers.

"I walk my dog everyday in the park and also in the woodlands and sometimes along the river" –Keynsham (elderly)

Indeed the focus groups illustrated that there was a tangible degree of friction between those who don't have dogs, and those who allow their dogs to use formal green spaces and do not clean up after them.

"There should be an area for dogs that keeps them separate from children- and dogs and kids don't want the same thing, so that shouldn't be a problem" –Norton Radstock

"Amenity green space- isn't that another word for dog toilet?" –Norton Radstock

"I have a dog, but I don't walk it in the park- they don't mix with kids and they are not hygienic" -Keynsham

The focus groups were very successful in illustrating that, regardless of 'demographic descriptors', people felt that parks and open spaces should be for all people. The elderly group in particular felt that there should be provision for children of all ages, and many of their suggestions for improving parks were not for their need, but for the needs of children, families and young people. But the view that green spaces should offer something for everyone was apparent in other focus groups too:

"There should be a facility where dogs are welcome- a dog walking area, or a place where dogs can be off their leads" –**Non-dog owner** (Keynsham)

"I think they should have a variety of uses, not necessarily designated areas but a mix of areas; some quiet, some formal, some for dog walking, some for play. I think there are lots of different reasons why people want to use an open space, and it is important for everyone to realise what these different uses are, and it is important to realise that people go there for different reasons" –**Father** (Bath)

"You have to think it is for the young people as well. They need to build and design nicely" –**Elderly lady** (Keynsham)

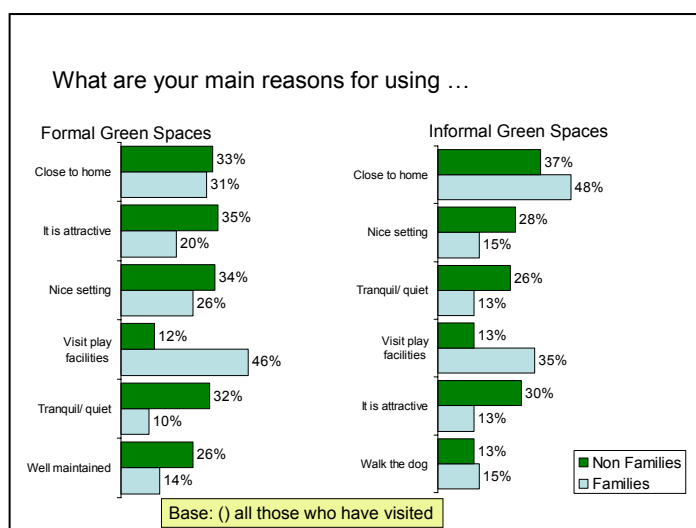
"They need to provide something for everyone" –Keynsham

"If you had a place for boules, like they do in Queen Square. That would be something for the old dears" –**Young person** (Norton Radstock)

The differences between what people use green spaces for is clear from a comparison of the 'subgroups'. This is particularly the case for families and non-families. For example, families are significantly more likely to have

visited informal green spaces than non-families, and they are also significantly more likely to use them because they are close to home or for play facilities. Non-families on the other hand are more likely to visit green spaces for the 'peace and quiet' and because 'it's attractive'.

The pattern is repeated if we look at formal green spaces, again the main reason that those with families tend to visit is for the play facilities. This also compares to non-families, where again the main reasons that people visit are for the environment and for peace and quiet.



This difference was also evident in the focus groups. The elderly group tended not to use formal green spaces as often, unless they were going for an event or if they were accompanied by their grand-children:

“The forest at the top of Manor Road is lovely for people my age to walk around in the summer, but I don’t think there are enough seats up there. I am not really interested in parks anymore, I feel a bit old for that” -Keynsham

It was generally assumed in the focus groups that ‘older people’ were more likely to want to use natural green space, because that is where they are most likely to get the things that they are looking for (e.g.. ‘peace and quiet’, pleasant environment etc). However, the figures from the survey do not support this supposition.

Research conducted in Voicebox 4 (July 2001) give different reasons for visiting parks and open spaces. The question asked in Voicebox was prompted, whereas the answers above were spontaneous. The main reasons cited in Voicebox 4 for visits to parks and open spaces were:

- Enjoy the surroundings: 70%
- To sit and relax: 51%
- Children’s play: 47%
- To attend an event: 35%
- Exercise/ play sport: 32%
- Use as short cut: 27%

- Meet friends: 21%
- Dog walking: 16%

Interestingly, this same question was given to visitors of the flower show in May 2001 and significantly higher proportions of people went to 'enjoy the surroundings' (85%), and for 'exercise/ play sport' (56%), but significantly smaller proportions of flower show attendees claimed to visit parks and open spaces to use the children's play facilities. This may tell us something about the types of people who visit the flower show, but unfortunately, demographic details were not recorded.

4. Accessibility of green spaces:

We have already seen that one of the main reasons that people visit the green spaces that they do is that they are close to home. The focus groups also illustrated the importance of having easy access to the full range of green space types, in particular this was highlighted by the spontaneous suggestion that real estate developers should be restricted by planning laws that make them provide adequate green space so that it is near to people's homes.

"It [playground] would have to be fairly local to town, because you wouldn't want your kids going too far away, because you would be worried about them"
-Keynsham

"I think this [amenity green space] needs to be near houses- when they build houses they should make sure this sort of space is there" -Keynsham

"I don't like the idea of them building on the 'Batches'. But it is not the fact that they are building all the houses, it is the fact that they are building all the houses and they have no facilities" – Norton Radstock

"The problem is that as soon as some land becomes available it goes to the developers and not to the community" –Norton Radstock

"Developers should be made to plan for the community....but they only provide for people up to the age of 7. So where does that leave us?" -Norton Radstock

"I think they [developers] should not be putting in token green spaces- they should be forced to put in areas of green space of a reasonable size- it should be part and parcel of the plan in the first place. Not an after thought" -Bath

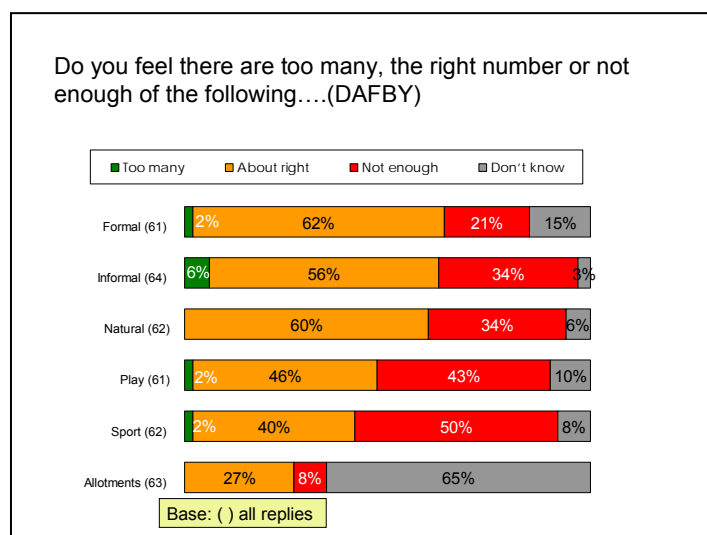
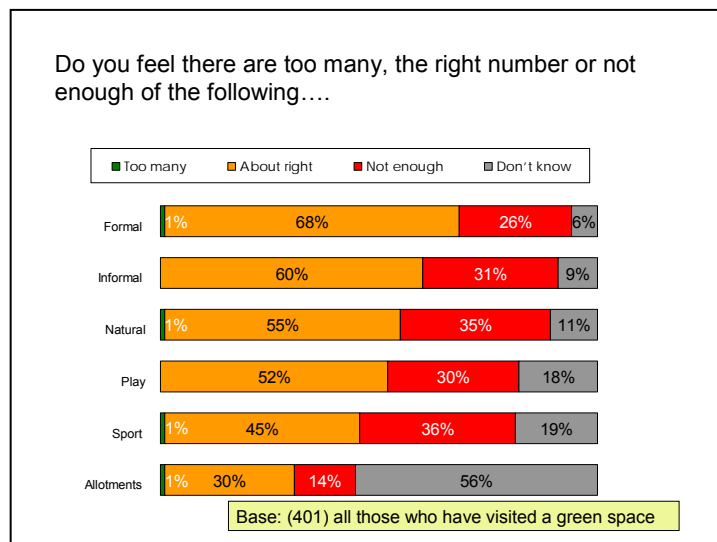
"[Developers] should consider the type of houses they are building and think; 'there are going to be a certain number of kids who are 5 and under, there will be a certain number between 5-12, and there will be a certain number of older ones who will have to be provided for'..... and if it is an executive development there will be different needs to if it is a social housing development" -Bath

"I think that planning is developer oriented rather than dweller oriented" -Bath

"The rule should be that the developers should have to do honest, open and objective market research to find out what sort of needs there are in the area in terms of green spaces etc. then they should have to submit that research in order to convince planners that they have taken the local needs into account" –Bath

It was decided that it would be relevant to get some indication of how people felt about the current provision of green spaces in terms of quantity and access.

The first of these questions asked those who had visited a green space in the last year whether they thought that there was enough, too much, or not enough of each type of provision.



There are no significant differences between the opinions collected through the on-street survey and the DAFBY results. The results show that very few people feel that there is too much of any type of green space provision: the implication for planners being that *there can almost never be enough green space*. However, some members of the public may feel that their green spaces might be under threat and this might influence how they answered the question. The focus groups brought this to light:

"I feel that the more that we use the parks, the less likely they are to put houses on it" -Keynsham

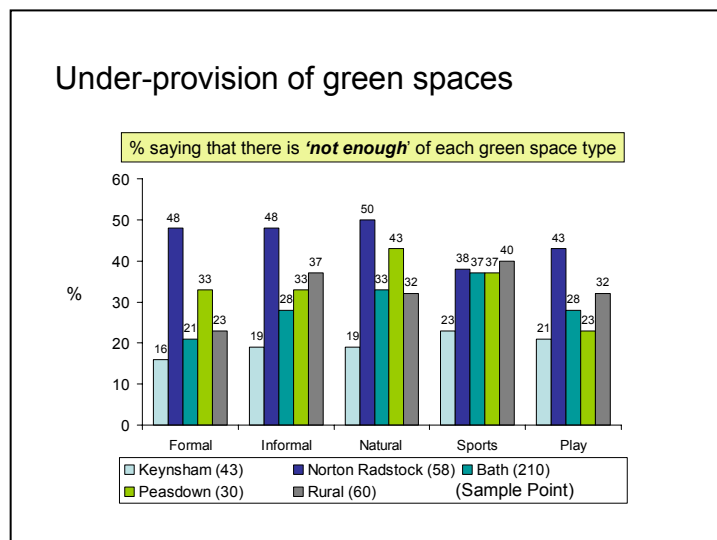
"We ought to make sure that we keep open space- protect it!" -Keynsham

"We are quite content so we are scared that we might lose some of the space that we are talking about" –Keynsham

Furthermore, in hindsight, it might have been better to phrase the question in relative terms for each green space. So for example ‘in relation to formal green spaces, do you feel there are enough, not enough or too many allotments in Bath and North East Somerset?’

Looking at the responses to the question that was asked, it is perhaps most useful to look at the proportion of people saying that there is ‘not enough’. In these terms it appears that Bath and North East Somerset is in most need of space for sports, followed by natural space, and informal green space. The best provision is in formal green spaces as only 26% of people said that there were not enough formal green spaces in the area.

It is interesting to look at the proportion of people who feel that there is ‘not enough’ of each type of green space provision and compare it to the ‘sample point’ – i.e. the place where the interview was conducted. This data is shown in the chart below:



The data shows us that green space provision in Keynsham appears to be most complete. This contrasts dramatically with the results from the Norton Radstock interviews where very high proportions were claiming there is not enough green space provision. The results show that this is particularly the case for natural, informal and formal green space provision; our focus group in the area highlighted a lack of all green space types, but particularly for older children and young people:

“When we were campaigning for a skate park we found out that Norton Radstock has one of the largest percentages of under 18s in BANES. But they only provide for people up to the age of 7”.

“There are lots of footpaths and bridle ways and things like that, but there is no green area where dogs aren’t allowed, or where people can just sit, feed the ducks, or whatever. There isn’t anywhere for kids or young people –the ‘forgotten generation’ to meet” –Norton Radstock

“Maybe you need a separate area where the kids can go. For the youngsters, that would solve a lot of problems in this town.”-Norton Radstock

The general feeling from the Norton Radstock group was that provision of green spaces should be defined or categorised in terms of their ‘market’, for example ‘provision for older people’, ‘provision for dogs’, ‘provision for young children’, ‘provision for families’, etc. And the thought was that it is sometimes best to keep these separate.

But, whether you look to the focus groups or the on-street survey, the fact remains that there appears to be a perceived under provision in the Norton Radstock area and that local residents feel this should be addressed. The survey also shows that In Peasdown St. John there is perceived to be a lack of green space types, particularly natural green spaces, although no focus group was conducted in Peasdown.

The table below shows how far away people live from their nearest green spaces.

Distance (from home) to nearest green space

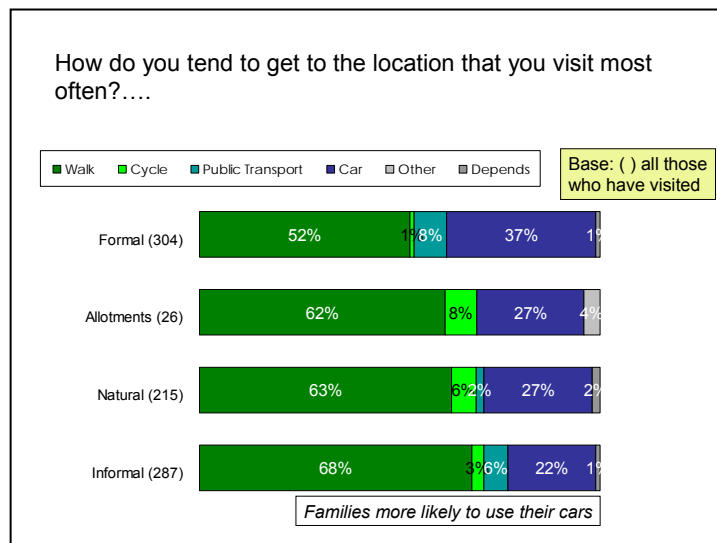
Distance	Formal	Informal	Natural	Allotments	Sport	Play
Under half a mile	27%	42%	32%	14%	17%	38%
0.5-1 mile	17%	18%	18%	9%	15%	15%
1-2 miles	10%	6%	7%	6%	13%	7%
2-3 miles	6%	2%	4%	2%	7%	2%
3-5 miles	6%	3%	2%	2%	5%	1%
5+ miles	11%	3%	4%	1%	6%	1%
Don't know	5%	7%	13%	45%	18%	17%
N/A	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%

Base: (401) all those who have visited a green space

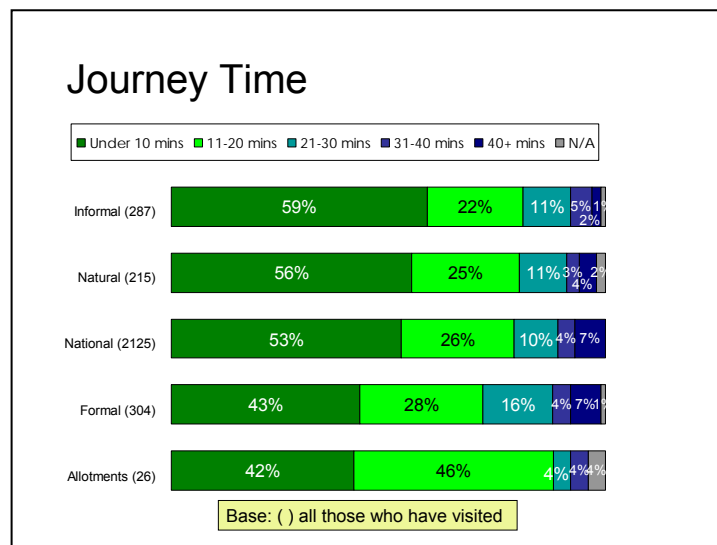
We hypothesised in section 3 that one reason that informal green spaces are visited more frequently could be that there are more of them, and hence they are more likely to be nearer to home. The table above appears to back up this assertion, as 42% of respondents said that they lived within half a mile of an informal green space, and 60% live within 1 mile. This is followed by play facilities and formal green spaces as the typologies that people are most likely to live near. Sports facilities (17%) and allotments (14%) are the typologies that fewest people are likely to live near to.

After asking how far people live from their nearest green space- the ones that had visited in the last year were asked how they tend to get there. As would be expected, the results reflect the distance that people have to travel, so as so many people tend to live close to informal green spaces, they also tend to walk there. Fewer people live near formal green spaces, meaning that, a larger proportion take their cars. The result for allotments should be

considered with care, as the base size (i.e. the number of people with allotments) is very low, so the percentages may be misleading. The results are shown below.



As well as the majority of people walking to informal green spaces, they are also the quickest to get to. Again, this is probably because they tend to be closer to people’s houses. The other journey times are shown in the chart below:



The focus groups showed that people were prepared to travel by car to green spaces that were of particular interest. One of the spaces mentioned was Blaise Castle in Bristol, but also some natural and formal green spaces in the district. One of these was Victoria Park, which was considered to be worth travelling to, although many thought it a shame that more local parks were not as good:

“I think it is a shame that you have to get in a car to get to the best park in the area. I think it is nice if you can separate the car from the park” -Bath

“I can’t get to Victoria Park- the transport is a bit long winded and the parking isn’t great. My daughter is getting to the age where she wants to be alone with her friends, but I am not happy letting her walk to Victoria Park because there are too many busy roads to get there” –Bath

Indeed, it became clear that there was a perception that much of the Council’s budget was invested in Royal Victoria Park in particular and in Bath in general. Although all agreed that Royal Victoria Park is a fantastic facility, there was a fear that this comes at the cost of investment in and maintenance of other areas.

“I get the sense that B&NES sort of concentrates on Victoria Park, and many other parks suffer as a consequence of that. I think that some of the local areas may suffer from a lack of maintenance as a result” -Bath

“The local parks are not the very latest, and I think that is maybe where the local parks fail- they are not putting in the very latest equipment. They are the old style and that is why they are not used as much”- Bath

“Don’t keep all the eggs in one basket- they need to incorporate more of the facilities in Victoria Park in other parks- more skateboard stuff and things” – Bath

“It seems like Bath City is where all the money goes. At the expense of us” – Norton Radstock

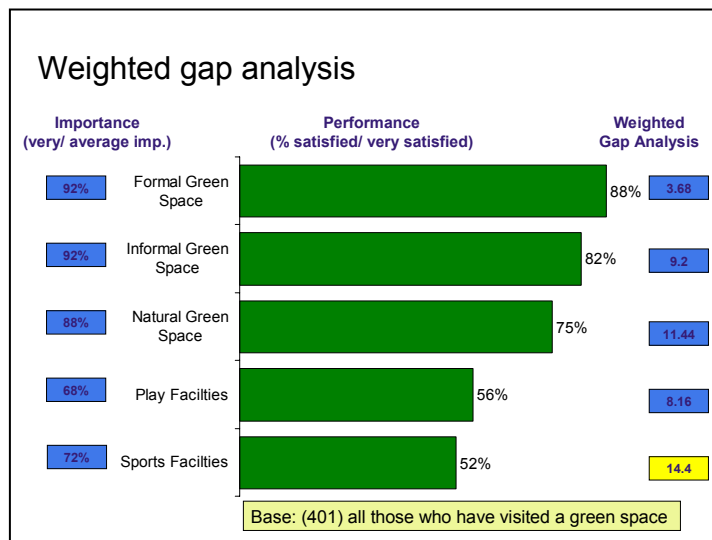
5. Quality of Green Spaces

In order to get a general idea about the quality of green space provision, in the survey respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the overall quality of the various types of green spaces in the area. Satisfaction with formal green spaces was very high (88% satisfied), and satisfaction with informal green space and natural green space was also high at 82% and 75% respectively. Satisfaction with play areas and sports areas is not as high (56% and 52%).

However, the fact that respondents are less satisfied with a certain type of green space does not necessarily mean that this is where resources should be concentrated. Respondents were therefore asked how much value they placed on each of these green space types: How important they think they are. The relationship between the performance and the importance can be studied in terms of what is called their 'weighted gap'. Weighted gap analysis takes the importance a sample attaches to a facility compared to its performance (in this case level of satisfaction). It also takes in to account how meaningful that gap is to the sample. A weighted gap is calculated as follows:

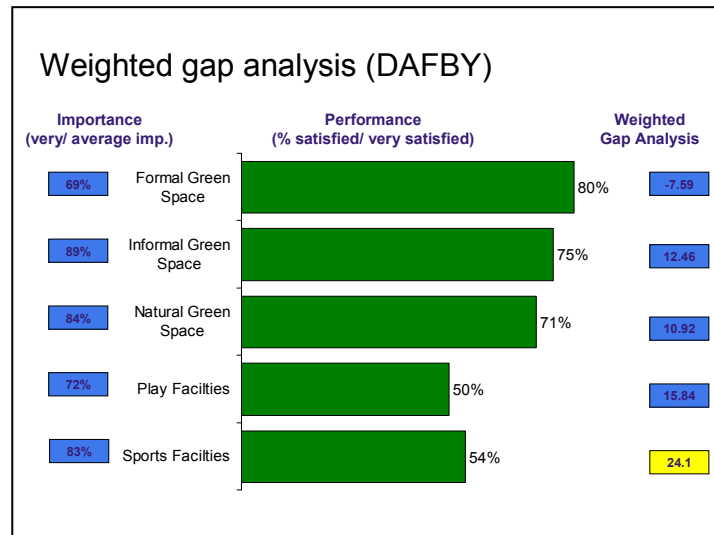
$$\frac{((\text{Importance-performance}) \times \text{importance})}{100}$$

The higher the weighted gap score, the bigger the shortfall in meeting expectations. The chart below shows weighted gaps for the green space typologies:

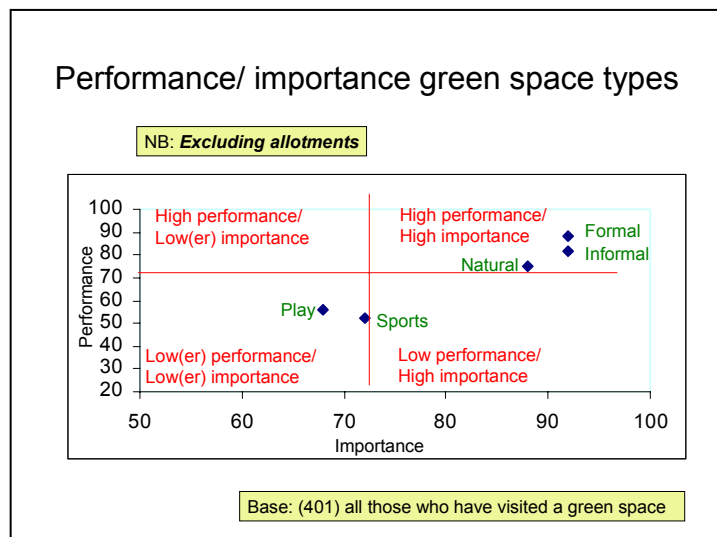


According to this analysis, the typologies that are most in need of improvement are natural green spaces and sports facilities (the highest weighted gaps). Play facilities should not be as much of a priority because the sample takes the view that they are less important than natural green spaces, (even though satisfaction with play areas is actually lower than satisfaction with natural green spaces).

A similar analysis was performed on the results collected through DAFBY. It is interesting to compare the weighted gaps to see where similarities and differences between the views of the samples lie. The most striking figure is the negative gap for formal green spaces, which receive a score of -7.59. However, on consideration this is hardly surprising, firstly because formal green spaces tended not to be used very much by this particular group (as was shown previously), but formal green spaces also has the lowest gap of all the typologies in the on-street survey. As would be expected, the areas of greatest need for this group are sports and play facilities:



A second way of looking at the relationship between satisfaction and importance is in a scatter chart- where the importance of a factor is plotted against its performance. This is demonstrated for the on-street sample below:



The factors in the top right hand quadrant are considered to be the most important and those that are performing best. The factors in the bottom left hand corner are considered to be of less importance so are not required to perform so well, therefore their lower performance scores are not concerning. If there were any factors in the top left hand corner this would be more

concerning, as it would imply that the Parks Section is investing more time and effort than is necessary, (as they would be performing well but would be less important). If there were any factors in the bottom right hand corner the Parks Section would want to address this as a priority, as they would be of high importance, but unsatisfactory performance.

In the example of the weighted gaps, 'natural green spaces' were observed to have the second highest weighted gap. According to the grid above, the Council should concentrate on natural green spaces and sports facilities, as they are the nearest to the bottom right hand quadrant.

As we have said, factors in the bottom left hand corner are perceived to have a lower level of importance on the whole. Therefore it is less important that the Council performs well in them. The position of 'play areas' and sports facilities' again indicates that the council is meeting expectations in terms of provision of these types of areas. This is because the performance generally matches the importance. The overall impression then is that the park typologies are being very well managed.

Work in the focus groups showed that it is more complicated than the results above seem to indicate. When respondents in the groups were asked what was important about formal and informal green spaces, they would frequently mention the provision of good quality sports and play facilities. Therefore it is perhaps misleading to make comparisons between sports and play facilities and formal and informal green spaces as they are not perceived to be (and nor are they) mutually exclusive.

"I think it is sensible to have separate areas for different activities and for people who want to use open spaces for different sorts of things. But it is important to mix it up as well- so it can do lots of jobs, like the park in Keynsham"

If we return to the results from the on-street survey and look at the results in terms of sub-groups it becomes obvious that some groups of people are more demanding (harder to please) than others. The table below shows that this is particularly the case with families.

Hard-to-please families

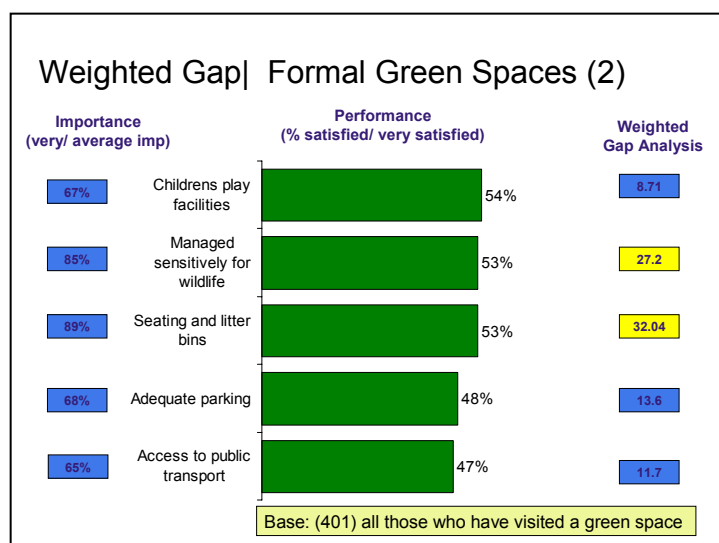
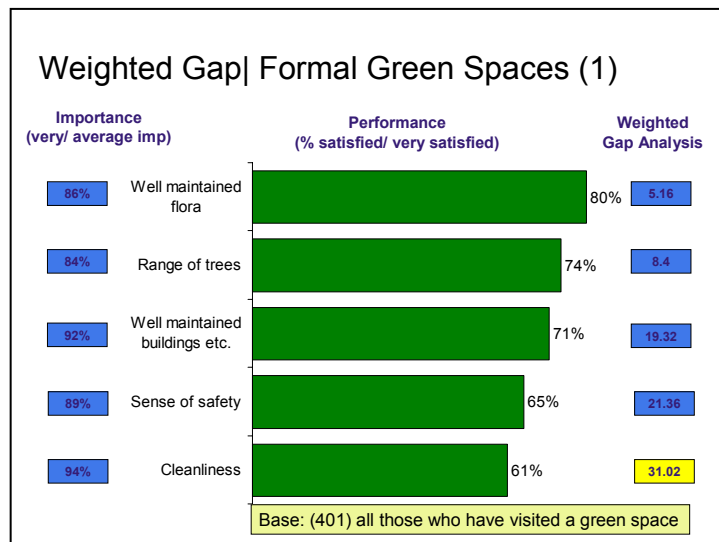
Green Space Type	% 'Very Satisfied'		% 'Very Important'	
	With children (96)	Without children (171)	With children (96)	Without children (171)
Formal	34%	46%	65%	61%
Informal	26%	41%	72%	66%
Natural	23%	32%	57%	70%
Play	16%	19%	65%	29%
Sports	10%	11%	49%	33%
Allotments	5%	8%	16%	18%

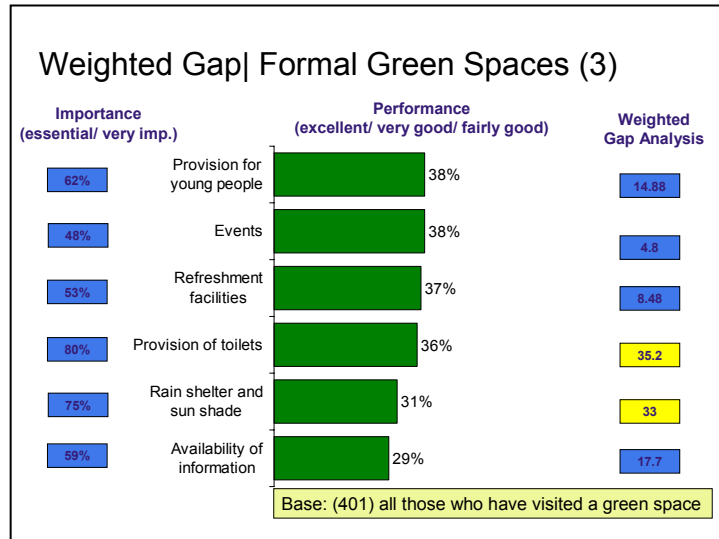
With the exception of natural spaces and allotments, those with families attribute higher importance ratings and lower satisfaction ratings than those without families

Because families tend to have higher expectations, they also have lower satisfaction scores. This is the case for formal, informal, play and sports areas. Inversely, non-families have lower expectations of these typologies and therefore their satisfaction with them is higher. However, non families have higher expectations of natural green spaces and therefore their satisfaction ratings with natural green spaces are lower than families' satisfaction with natural green spaces.

There are many factors that will contribute towards satisfaction scores that need to be understood. These factors might include the provision of sports and play facilities (which in turn will have elements that either make them satisfactory or not). In order to gain a better understanding of what these contributing factors are for formal green spaces, and how important they are- a more detailed analysis of them was included. Again an 'importance vs. performance' route was chosen.

A weighted gap analysis was performed, concentrating on formal green spaces. The factors are shown in order of performance:





According to the weighted gap analysis, the priorities for improvement are:

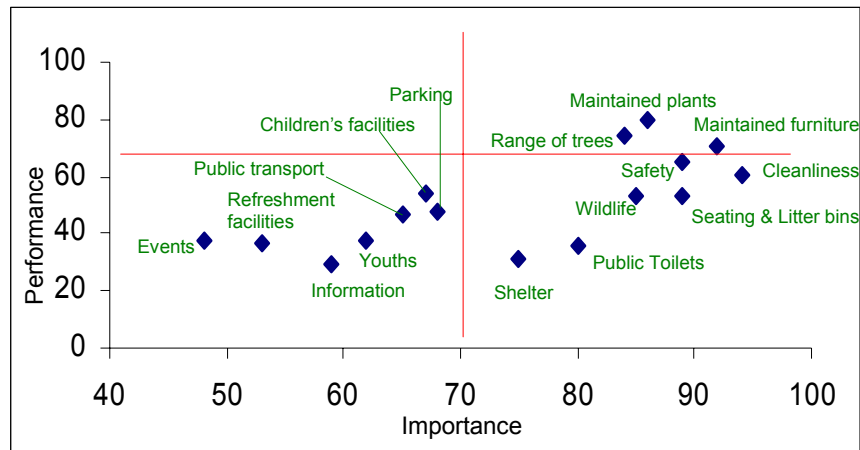
1. Provision of toilets
2. Rain shelter and sun shade
3. Sufficient good quality seating and litter bins
4. Cleanliness (free of litter, graffiti, dogs mess)
5. Managed sensitively for wildlife

Clearly, to decide to install public toilets at a time when the Council is reducing the number of public conveniences due to under use, expensive maintenance and attracting anti-social behaviour would be a very difficult decision. Furthermore, a separate study commissioned for an Overview and Scrutiny review found that a large proportion of residents, when shown the costs associated with maintaining public toilets, thought that the money was not being well spent¹.

However, if the Parks Section was to concentrate on improving the less expensive priorities, this should have an impact on overall satisfaction with formal green spaces. This would more especially be the case if the equivalent cost of introducing public toilets was spent on rain shelter and sunshade, seating and bins and cleanliness. The scatter chart below gives an overall picture of where the factors lie in terms of overall priorities for formal green spaces.

¹ 193 on-street interviews, conducted November 2003. This can be made available if the Parks Section wish to consider introducing more public toilets

Importance/ Performance | Facilities at Formal Green Spaces



Base: (401) all those who have visited a green space

Again, the scatter chart confirms the results of the weighted gap analysis, indicating the same priorities, (those with high importance and lower performance, in the bottom right hand quadrant). The additional factor of a 'sense safety' also fits in to the list of priorities, this is a widely recognised issue of importance in most public opinion surveys, and it is no surprise to see it relevant here.

6. Suggested improvements

One of the final questions in the survey asked for any suggested improvements to each type of green space. Since the question was open, and totally spontaneous there were few suggestions that were made by enough people to really make an impact in terms of quantity. The results to this question are available, a summary table appears below:

More of them	More of them	Cleanliness	Cleanliness	Cleanliness	More of them
Security	More swimming pools	More information	More seating	Toilet facilities	Keep them clean
Maintenance	Young people	More of them	Toilet facilities	More seating	Raise awareness
More facilities	Refurbishment	Keep them more natural	More bins	More play areas	Better maintenance
Cleanliness	Cleanliness	More bins	Play equipment	Security	

This type of information is better recorded in focus groups where respondents are given more time to properly consider what improvements would really make most difference. The quotations below give some impression of the sorts of things that were suggested in the focus groups conducted in March/April 2004, and the reasons why they were suggested.

Formal Green Spaces

"They are very important to us- if they are safe and well kept" Bath

"They need to be interesting. Like in Sydney Gardens where you can see trains go by" -Bath

"I think you need something different, something unique" -Bath

"Perhaps something in the educational/ historical side of things. Something about what it used to be, some local history or interest" -Bath

"Somewhere for the kids to cycle; a cycle track for kids. A tarmac road with some lines on it" –Bath

"Some cafes, or an ice cream van or something that you do not have to cross over roads to get to" –Bath

"Some quieter areas- for parents and people without kids" –Bath

"I was just thinking that in terms of planting they are often very formal –which is nice, but it might be nice to have some more wilder places- or evergreen places for the kids to hide" –Bath

"Somewhere for the adults to play pool, or some games, (near to the kids where you can see them), - or a bar!" –Bath

"More wildlife to encourage the birds" –Keynsham

"There is lots of vandalism- they [older kids] need to be supervised" - Keynsham

"Water features, ponds, seats and rubbish bins" –Keynsham

"If parking was available for elderly people and seats near them. You need disabled spaces." –Keynsham

"I would like less graffiti" –Keynsham

"A pond, somewhere where you can go and feed the ducks. Or a woodland walk- where there is more planting and structure in it. Somewhere where you can just go and relax" –Norton Radstock

"A covered areas for when it is raining. Somewhere you can hang out when it is raining" –Norton Radstock

"I would like a scrambling track or a bmx track, because you are not allowed on the batches" –Norton Radstock

"There are lots of footpaths and bridleways and things like that, but there is no big green area or something where dogs aren't allowed. Or where you can go and just sit, feed the ducks or whatever" –Norton Radstock

"There are none of those [formal green spaces] around here, you would have to pay to go to Bath" -Norton Radstock

"It would be nice to have something like what they have built around Safeway." -Norton Radstock

"It would be nice to have some sort of flowers or trees. Maybe they could look at using some of the older open land that is not used at all for anything.

"What about if they used some farm land" –Norton Radstock

"..Or in Radstock there is a huge area they want to regenerate, they could have some park land there. Around the old railway" –Norton Radstock

Informal Green Spaces ('Amenity' Green Spaces)

"The term [amenity] is so uninspiring....From my point of view it would be nice if it had more of the elements that we have talked about with parks in amenity green spaces to stop them from becoming amenity green spaces" –Bath

"You want things there that people can identify with- plants or a cycle track or something that gives it something to offer" –Bath

"You notice joggers running through areas like that, so why not put a 'trim track' there. Make it less of a nothing sort of a place" –Bath

"I would walk across it, but I would never think about bringing my kids there. There are not even any seats there" –Bath

"Some of these places have stunning views across Bath- but there is nothing to tell you that, and there is no reason to go there- there is no benches. If you had some nice seating or a bit of cover or something like that."- Bath

"One thing that strikes me is that I am hearing about places that I was never aware of, so maybe they should go about publicising these things a bit more. Even if there was just a leaflet" -Bath

"Maybe you could put some badges or signposts telling people about places of interest like this"-Bath

"It is important to keep these places open, but they need to do more to attract people in" -Bath

"If the wardens or the people who were responsible for these areas were more visible then you might start to visit it" –Bath

"I think there could be more stuff like the skateboard ramp [at Victoria Park]. I think children are well catered for, but I think that as you get older there is less for you" –Bath

"Equipment is one part of it- but my daughter really likes going to the parts without the equipment. My daughter likes the Dell; she can use her

imagination and see different plants, waterfalls, the sort of thing that kids are able to go and explore” –Bath

“You need a concrete surface for when it is raining- don’t want to get muddy” –Keynsham

“Good toilets in parks, with an attendant” -Keynsham

“They don’t need goal posts, they can make it themselves- this is freedom.

They don’t like to be controlled- they were having a great time” –Keynsham

“We also need green space like this too” –Keynsham

“I don’t think it should take the place of parks and gardens; it should be in addition to what we have got already” –Keynsham

“I think it is important for young people- it is not easy for them to ruin” –Keynsham

“You don’t need to provide facilities- perhaps just a few seats for people who cant sit on the grass” –Keynsham

Natural Green spaces

“I think these places, like rainbow woods are fantastic. My kids love that just as much as play areas” –Bath

“Brokers wood as well- it is a cross between a woodland area and a play area

“They are very important” -Bath

“I certainly think that on the edge of town these areas are more important” –Bath

“I think there is nothing wrong with letting a small area of a park go a bit wild that would produce a bit of extra excitement” –Bath

“They don’t have to be too close by” –Keynsham

“I think they should be within walking distance” –Keynsham

“Do you think that the issue might be that a lot of people do not know where they are allowed to go- perhaps the issue could be to publicise where people can go for a walk” –Keynsham

“I think you need one area that is like a woodland walk that the old people can enjoy but maybe you need a separate areas where the kids can go” –Norton Radstock

Sports Areas

“There seems to be a lack of organisation with the use of football pitches [on Lansdown] - there are 26 of them, but hardly any of them are being used, but you can never get one when you want one”- Bath

“It sounds as though it would be nice to know what there is available, not just council stuff, but everything. Let us know who is allowed to use it and how to go about using it if you want to” –Bath

“I think the Council should know what the space could be better used for”

I think the pitches are being wasted- they could be used in the morning and the afternoon and in the summer” –Bath

They need to be more joined up with other groups- like bowls clubs or whatever” –Bath

"They should organise it so that the same pitch can be used for different sports. A football pitch could be used for rugby, hockey, baseball or cricket at different times of the day or year" –Bath

"I think they need to work more with local clubs and teams to make this more of a sports area" –Bath

"I am not particularly a sporty person, but I would like to see a wider variety of games being played" –Bath

"Why don't they put running tracks going round- you don't want to pay to use the university. I would love to have a running track, but I don't want to use the university" –Bath

"We have got the parks for the little ones, but we need more for the older ones- the teenagers. Basketball, netball, bmx, skateboards- and variety. But so long as it is not too expensive" Keynsham

"You should have public bowls, like you have public pitch and putt, so you don't have to join a club" –Keynsham

"How about a running track- a track for athletes" –Keynsham

"There is absolutely nothing for older children to do- a trampoline or something?" - Keynsham

"Why can't we use the school facilities?" –Keynsham

"A floodlit football pitch- on concrete" - Keynsham

"The idea of being able to kick a ball about on a hard court, flood lit, even if it is in a school. Why shouldn't you use a school for more than one thing after school hours?" -Keynsham

"Would like open flat spaces for football, both grass and tarmac" - Norton Radstock

"Tennis courts that you don't have to pay for" -Norton Radstock

"There is nowhere you can go for a game of sports, there are no goals for football or hoops for basketball, or cricket pitches." –Norton Radstock

"If I want to play football I go up to Tescos with a few mates, and I see the kids racing around on their bikes- it is a playground" –Norton Radstock

Play Areas

"Children are not the same as young people- my perception is that young people would rather not be in places where there are younger children" –Bath

"Younger children need a place where there is a greater ability for parents to supervise" –Bath

"Older children want a bit more independence –you don't want older children terrorising kids on the slides. As soon as it gets dusk all the older kids will go there and start wrapping swings around the frames" –Bath

"I think there should be somewhere for the youngsters, or people in our age group can go and make as much noise as we want and not get in trouble, or confrontations because of that. And on the flip side, people who want peace and quiet, know that they can go and get it without being disturbed" –Norton Radstock

Allotments

“Not enough in BANEs all they want to do is take them away and build on them” –Keynsham

“They have got rid of the ones at Fry’s and they wanted to take another 10. I do believe that the Allotment Association says that the Council has to replace any allotments that they take away, but that is not to say that they will be in the right place” –Keynsham

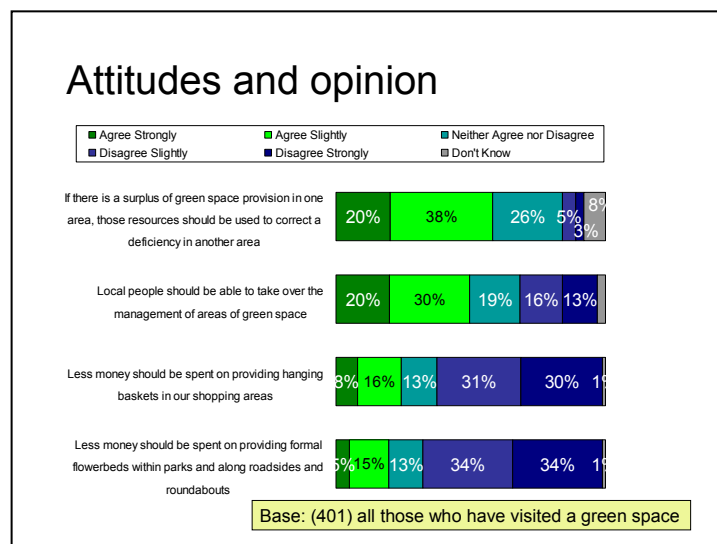
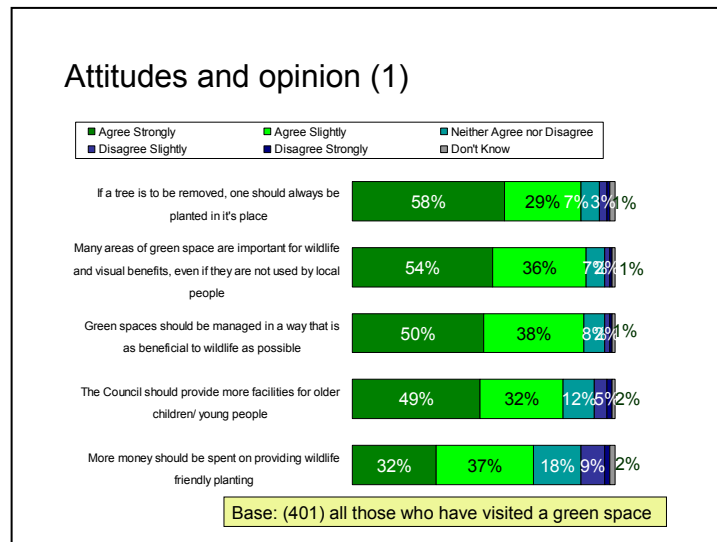
“The allotments are on the other side of the town. If they were to take them away where would they put the new ones?” –Keynsham

“In Bristol they do much more maintenance- we don’t get sheds or any support. It is all up to you to take care of it. But I think people are generally ok with that” –Keynsham

7. Attitudes and opinions

At the end of the on-street questionnaire, respondents were read a list of 'attitude statements' about various elements of the Parks Section and the facilities it provides. The results give an interesting picture of how those who have visited green spaces feel about maintenance and provision of open spaces and other activities that the Parks Section are involved in.

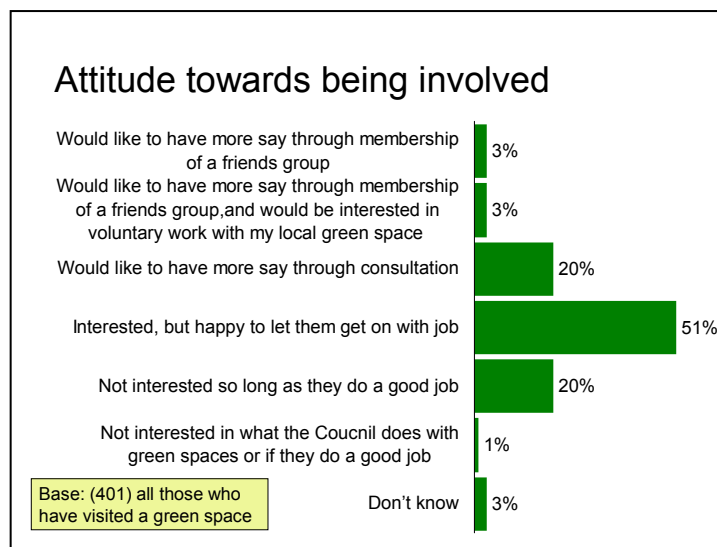
The charts below show the levels of agreement/ disagreement to the statements that we tested:



The level of agreement to several of these statements helps to affirm the importance people attribute to the bio-diversity of natural green spaces and that parks should be managed with this in mind. There is also a high level of agreement that more facilities should be provided for older children or young people (82%). This was particularly the case for women and those with children at home.

There is a far lower level of agreement with the statements that suggest that less money should be spent on areas where the Parks Section is involved outside of recognised parks; 24% of people thought that less money should be spent on hanging baskets in shopping areas and 20% thought that less money should be spent on providing formal flowerbeds within parks and along roadsides and roundabouts. It was particularly those in lower age groups and those from lower socio-economic groups that were likely to be those agreeing that less money should be spent.

One final question asked individuals how they felt about being involved in decision making about parks and green spaces:



About half those who had visited green spaces, (51%), are interested in what the Parks Section does, but are happy to let them get on with the job. The other two large groups, (20% would like to have more say through consultation and 20% are not interested so long as the Council does a good job), are also more 'middle of the road'. As they are not interested in becoming 'hands on' but they do want the Council to be doing a good job; they want the Council to be in some way accountable.

The idea of becoming more 'hands-on' in terms of parks and green spaces was discussed in the focus groups. One or two of the respondents in the groups had been involved in, or had known people who were involved in, such schemes (including Manor Road Woods). However, friends groups were not universally thought to be a good idea:

"I think any open spaces should be managed by the Council, not little demi-gods who have committee meetings for this and committee meetings for that-they go on and on" –Bath

"I think there is no harm in that [setting up friends groups], but you are going to have to get people interested in it- you are going to have put the effort and resources into setting up meetings and keeping them going" –Bath

“I think ultimately the Council is responsible, but they should also involve people. This, [focus group] is quite a good way to involve people because it is not very exclusive” –Bath

8. Demographic Profile of Sample:

The following data was collected:

- 45% male, 55% female
- 7% disabled, 8% had family member who was disabled
- 2% non white British
- broadly representative in terms of age:
 - 16-24 16%
 - 25-34 19%
 - 35-44 17%
 - 45-54 15%
 - 55-64 14%
 - 65-74 13%
 - 75+ 6%
- broadly representative in terms of socio-economic group
 - AB 20%
 - C1 33%
 - C2 15%
 - DE 31%

SECTION B: Other Research Conducted for the Green Space Strategy

1. Background

As well as the focus groups and the on-street survey, which is our most accurate source of quantitative information, a shortened version of the survey was produced for distribution to parish councils, equalities groups and DAFBY. The DAFBY initiative attracted enough responses to be able to plot the key results against those from the on-street survey, and so they have been reported on in the first section. However, the responses from the other equalities groups were too low for any quantitative analysis to be impossible. Nevertheless a commentary has been included in this section.

Firstly this section looks at the very successful parish council element. Parish clerks were asked to answer on behalf of their whole parish (as opposed to as individuals) and because it includes some very specific information and some different questions, it is recorded separately below rather than reported as part of the main report.

2. Parish Councils

Questionnaires were sent to the parish clerks of each parish in the Bath & NE Somerset District. The questionnaire covered each type of green space provision, and clerks were asked to answer the following questions about each typology on behalf of their parish:

- Do your parishioners have access to each type of green space,
 - if not, do you perceive a demand for access,
 - if so, how do you rate (various aspects of) them?

The results are summarised below:

Formal Green Spaces

- Of the 39 parishes that responded to this section, only 9 said there was a publicly accessible park or garden in their area. These 9 parishes tended to be areas with a higher and more concentrated population, or near to one (including Keynsham, MSN, Paulton, Saltford, Whitchurch)
- Only 2 of the parishes that did not have a formal green space thought that there was a demand for one. These are Norton Radstock (where the Memorial Garden is being developed) and Freshford (in the Limply Stoke area). In the instance of Freshford, a site has been identified (Freshford Mill) but as yet final work has not been assured. Market Research in the Norton Radstock area also identified a need for improved provision there.
- In terms of the parishes that do have a formal green space, on the whole they are rated well, and no aspects were rated poorly:
 - Size: good x6, ok x3

- Location: good x8, ok x1
- Access: good x8, ok x1
- Quality: good x4, ok x5
- Range of features: good x3, ok x6

Informal Green Spaces

- Informal green space provision is more wide-ranging. Of the 42 responses to this section, 29 had informal green space within their parish
 - Of the 13 areas where there was no informal green space, 12 said that there was no demand, and 1 (Publow) thought that local residents would like an informal green space. Those areas that do not have and do not want informal green spaces are also more rural/ smaller parishes, e.g. Norton Malreward, St Catharine, Chelwood, with no major built up areas
 - Where provision exists it is rated quite well, with the main exception being Whitchurch:
 - Location 24 x good, 4 x OK (busy road at Norton Radstock) 1 x poor (Whitchurch)
 - Size: 18 x good, 10 x OK, 1 x poor (Whitchurch)
 - Access: 24 x good, 4 x OK, 1 x poor (Whitchurch)
 - Quality: 18 x good, 10 x OK, 1 x poor (Whitchurch)
 - Range of facilities: 10 x good, 15 x OK, 3 x poor (Clutton: Area not fenced and more seats required also Whitchurch and Hinton Blewitt)

Natural Green Space

In terms of natural green space, of the 40 parishes that responded to this section, 16 did not have access to natural green space (a mix of larger and smaller parishes) and 24 did. Of the 16 that did not have access, only 1 (Freshford) thought that there is a perceived need.

Thinking about the quality of natural green space that does exist, generally it was well rated with the main exception being Whitchurch

- Location, 18 x good, 5 x OK and 1 (Whitchurch) said it was poor
- Size, good x 18, 4 x OK, 1 x poor (Whitchurch)
- Access, good x 16, OK x 6, poor x 2 (Whitchurch and Hinton Blewitt)
- Quality : good x 17, OK x 5, poor x 1 (Whitchurch)
- Range of facilities: good x 12, OK x 6 poor x 4 (Whitchurch, Camerton-riverside site, Hinton Blewitt, St Catharine)

Allotments

Of the 41 parishes that responded to this section, 17 had allotments in their area. The more populated areas in particular were more likely to have allotments, whereas more rural communities were unlikely to say that they had them. Where allotment provision does not exist, nor on the whole is it required, with the exception of Wellow (which is investigating the option as part of the parish plan, and in Freshford, where there is a limited demand).

In terms of rating the provision of the allotments

- Location: good x 13, OK x 4

- Size: good x 12, OK x 3, poor x 2 (Saltford and Paulton: demand exceeds supply)
- Access: good x 13, OK x 3, poor x 1 (Batheaston)
- Quality (good x8, OK x7, poor x2 (Batheaston- neglected plots, Saltford- no water
- Range of facilities, good x 5, OK x 9, poor x 3 (Batheaston, Saltford, Peasdown (also needs mains water)

Sports Areas

Looking at sports area provision: Of the 42 parishes that responded to this part of the questionnaire, 27 had sports areas, and 15 did not, of those that did not have sports areas, these were much smaller parishes, and only 3 thought that there was a perceived demand: Freshford, Hinton Blewitt (any green space to kick a ball about in), Norton Malreward (a football pitch)

In terms of the quality of the provision:

- Location good x 19, OK x 7
- Size: good x17, OK x 6, poor x 3 (Norton Radstock- not enough pitches, Batheaston and Camerton)
- Access, good x 19, OK x 5, poor x 2 (Norton Radstock- schools pitches not used by community, and Camerton)
- Quality, good x 14, OK x 9, poor x 3 (Peasdown St John, Batheaston and Stanton Drew)
- Range of facilities: good x 8, ok x 10, poor x 6 (Peasdown poor accommodation for changing, High Littleton, Batheaston, Stanton Drew, Corston- football only, Wellow- goal posts but no pavilion)

Provision for Children

Looking at provision for children, 41 parishes responded, of which 25 had provision and 16 did not. Those without provision tended to be smaller parishes, and only 4 thought that there was a perceived demand. These are Stanton drew (negotiating a lease), Hinton Blewitt, Norton Malreward and St Catharine, which is so small the facilities would be underused, so the parish clerk would support a scheme near by (e.g. Batheaston/ Northend).

Those that do have them rate them well, in terms of

- Locations- good x 22, OK x 3
- Size, good x 15, OK x 9, poor x 1 (Camerton)
- Access, good x 20, OK x 5,
- Quality: good x 14, OK x 10, poor x 1 (Camerton, attracts drink/ drugs)
- Facilities: good x 9, OK x 14, poor x 2 (Camerton and Hinton Charterhouse)

Provision for youths

Turning now to youth provision, of the 37 parishes that responded, 8 had youth provision (larger parishes)

- But many that said they had provision noted that it was insufficient and that there was a need to improve it.
- 29 did not have any provision for youths.
- 13 of the 29 that had no provision thought that there was a need (mainly bigger parishes)

Looking at the areas where there is existing provision, it was rated as follows:

- Size: good x 4, OK x 3, poor x1 (Camerton)
- Access, good x 4, OK x 2, poor x 2, (Clutton via driveway) and Camerton
- Quality: good x4, OK x 2, poor x2 (Paulton and Camerton)
- Facilities: good x1, OK x 5, poor x2 (Paulton and Camerton)

Cemeteries

Of the 40 parishes that responded to this section, 35 had a cemetery, 5 did not, although in some instances cemeteries were reaching capacity. Where a cemetery exists, in general they were rated well:

- Access: good x 29, OK x 5, poor x 1 (North Stoke)
- Quality: good x 25, OK x 9, poor x 1 (North Stoke)
- Use: good x 24, OK x 9, poor x 2 (Timsbury and North Stoke)

Parts of the community not catered for

Finally parishes were asked if there was any section of the community that was poorly provided for. Of the 43 that responded, 16 said that there were some sections of the community that were not well provided for in their parish. These tended to be in the larger parishes and also tended to centre on provision for age groups: In particular young people.

Parish Councils: Conclusions and Recommendations

This summary gives a useful insight in to the local needs perceived by Parish Councils. Some of the councils are democratically elected, but more targeted consultation should be undertaken within the parishes before changes are made to provision.

Very generally where there is not provision of a green space typology, more often than not, there is no demand for it. The notable exception is in the case of provision for youths and improvements in the provision of a number of green space typologies in Whitchurch and Freshford. Looking at the results in more detail:

- Formal Green Space Provision is required in Norton Radstock and Freshford
- Informal Formal Green Space provision required is in Publow and improvements are sought in Whitchurch

- Natural Green Space is required in Freshford, improvements demanded in Whitchurch in particular, but also in other areas
- More allotments are required in Wellow and Freshford, and improvements to existing provision required in Saltford, Paulton, Batheaston and Peasdown St John
- Sports Areas are required in Freshford, Hinton Blewitt, Norton Malreward and improvements to sports facilities required in Norton Radstock, Batheaston, Camerton, Stanton Drew, Peasdown, High Littleton, Corston and Wellow
- Provision for children is required in Stanton Drew, Hinton Blewitt and Norton Malreward and improvements required to existing provision for children in Camerton and Hinton Charterhouse
- Provision for youths required in a number of different parishes and improvements to existing provision for youths is called for in many others

All parishes were given the opportunity to make further comments. For example on occasion parishes noted that although there might be a demand they understand that actually making changes might not be possible due to amount of space available and lack of funds. Other comments included references to litter, dog fouling and anti-social behaviour.

3. Other Groups

Background

The Focus Group composition was based on stage of life and geographic location, and the outcomes of these groups and the on-street survey are covered in the first section of this report.

Before convening the Focus Groups and commencing the on-street surveys, comments on the approach being taken were invited from the Council's Equalities Team. There was particular concern from the Equalities Officer that there was no mechanism in place to ensure representation of minority groups on the Focus Groups. Regrettably, arrangements for the Focus Group meetings were well advanced at this stage, so the Project Manager made the decision to proceed as originally planned.

A meeting was then arranged between the Equalities Officer, the Community Consultation Officer, the Market Research Co-ordinator and the Project Manager, to ensure that the views of minority groups were represented in the Green Space Strategy. At this meeting it was acknowledged that there was a lack of corporate guidance on the proper involvement of minority groups in market research and consultation, and that it was this that had led to the current position. It was agreed that this needed to be put right for future projects and that a compromise position was needed to keep the Green Space Strategy on track.

It was agreed that a select list of groups would be directly consulted to ascertain the views of their members. The list of groups recommended by the Equalities Officer, to ensure fair representation of a range of minority groups, was:

- Bath & North East Somerset Racial Equality Council – if this group could not be engaged it was suggested that the Corporate Black Workers Group be considered as an alternative.
- Black & Ethnic Minority Senior Citizen's Association
- Islamscope
- STAR
- Democratic Action for B&NES Youth
- West of England Coalition of Disabled People
- Gay West – if this group could not be engaged it was suggested that the Corporate Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Workers Group be considered as an alternative.

A 3 page questionnaire was developed, based on a selection of the questions from the on-street survey to ensure cross comparison of findings was possible. There was also the opportunity for respondents to record what improvements to accessibility and other changes could be made to improve each type of green space for them. Freepost envelopes were supplied to ensure a reasonable response rate. Unfortunately the Parks Section postal service was interrupted during the response period, which may have reduced the number of replies received from some groups.

The groups were contacted with varying degrees of success, and in some cases alternative groups were approached. The following is a summary for each group:

Bath & North East Somerset Racial Equality Council

120 copies of the survey were sent to members of the Black Families Education Support Group. 13 replies were received equating to 11%; the postal problems may have affected this figure.

- A base size of 13 is not enough to provide reliable comparative information and more qualitative data is required for a group of this size. The main trends from the survey follow, but should be read with caution as they can not be said to fully represent the views of the members of the group:
- Of the 13 replies, 11 were residents, 1 was a non-resident worker and 1 was a resident of a neighbouring local authority. All had visited green spaces in the previous 12 months with the majority (9) visiting between 2 and 10 different green spaces. The most regularly used type of spaces were formal and informal green spaces.
- In terms of quantity, a greater number of respondents felt that there were enough formal and natural green spaces than not enough. However, a greater number of respondents felt that there were not enough informal green spaces, allotments, sports facilities or children's play facilities.
- In terms of quality the majority of respondents were satisfied. This was particularly the case with formal green space where all respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied.
- There was almost unanimous agreement amongst respondents that all types of green space were either important or very important to them.

Black & Ethnic Minority Senior Citizen's Association

Contact with this group was very difficult. Eventually a lunch time appointment was arranged via the Equalities Team, to enable a Project Board member to speak to the group and leave surveys to be completed and returned. 15 copies of the survey were left for the lunch time guests to complete, and an additional 50 were left in pre-franked envelopes to be sent to other members as agreed. Unfortunately no replies were received; the postal problems may have affected this group.

Islamascope

30 copies of the survey were passed to Islamascope to distribute. 5 replies were received equating to 17%; the postal problems may have affected this figure.

- A base size of five is not adequate to provide reliable comparative information and more qualitative data is required from such a small group. The main trends from the survey are as follows, but should be read with caution as they can not be said to fully represent the opinions of the Islamic community in the area:
- Of these, 4 were residents and 1 was a non resident. All had used and continue to use green spaces in the area with a varying degree of frequency.
- In terms of quantity, quality and access of green spaces attitudes were mixed, but overall satisfaction with them was generally good with the exception of play facilities. There were mixed feelings as to how important each type of green space is.
- There did not appear to be any features highlighted by the survey that suggest that green space provision is under-performing or not delivering on aspects particular to Islamic people.

STAR

Despite some early contact, consultation was not possible with this group as the period coincided with the school summer holidays when this group do not meet. It was felt that as there was consultation with younger children already being co-ordinated by the Children's Society, and previous consultation with this age group already existed (see below), that STAR could be dropped from the list.

West of England Coalition of Disabled People (WECODP)

120 copies of the survey were sent to members of WECODP and the Disabilities Equalities Forum. 23 replies were received equating to 19%; the postal problems did not affect this figure. During the survey period concern was raised that members with learning difficulties may have difficulty in completing the survey. It was agreed that the Project Manager would give a presentation to i2i, the advocacy group for adults with learning difficulties. See below.

- 21 of the responses came from residents of the district and a variety of different green space types were used by the majority. Only 1 respondent had not visited a green space in the district in the last year. Formal green spaces were the most regularly visited typology.
- Quite high proportions felt that there are not enough informal or natural green spaces.
- Many suggested improvements to accessibility (no qualitative data available)
- Satisfaction with overall quality of green spaces quite high, with exception of sports provision
- All Types of green space provision were considered important

Gay West

Contact with this group was very difficult, with the only available telephone number being a helpline. Eventually it was decided to drop this group and approach the Corporate Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Workers Group. See below.

Consultation Undertaken by the Children's Society

During the summer holidays of 2004 the Play Rangers undertook consultation with children in the Children's Fund age range i.e. 5 - 13 years. The consultation was very informal, based on discussions on the same subjects as covered in the questionnaires used for the older age groups. The main themes coming out were:

- Local green space provision is crucial for children as they are limited to how far they can travel alone. This distance increases with age, but parents (and children's) perception of the safety of a green space and the route to it is also critical.
- Some children said that they will only use their local green space when the Play Rangers are there, and others said they can only go to certain areas with their parents.
- It appears that children want a range of types of green space and activities, from informal (kicking a ball around), natural (playing and cycling) and play facilities.
- Children make the most of what's around them. As they get older, if the local green spaces don't satisfy their need for challenge and adventure, they turn to playing in places that adults prefer they didn't.

- When asked how they would improve green spaces, children said they would like more football posts, more play equipment and more trees. *"If I was in charge of the council I would bring in more football posts and more for the little ones. Us lads want a BMX track. We want to speak to that lady from the council"* (boy, 13) *"I'd like more trees. The park's a bit boring up here"* (girl, 9)
- Children from Peasedown St John made the following comments about their local green spaces:
- *"The new equipment they've put in at Beacon Field is fun and we like the big space"* *"We like the green because it's near but we need a park on it!"* *"The woods the best place to do (bike) ramps - it's good fun there. We go down there near enough every day"*
- *"The green's boring and there's nothing to do on it"*
- *"I don't like how they've done the (bike) ramps at Beacon Field - they need to be made of wood or plastic, not mud"* *"I don't go to the cricket club because there's glass there"* *"The rec's too far back - if it was further forward then we'd go"*
- *"I'd keep the two trees on the green at Frederick and Albert Avenue and get rid of the grass by planting more trees, turning it into a wood. That'd be wicked!"*

Consultation Undertaken with i2i

This took the form of an informal daytime meeting at which 7 group members were present with 2 helpers. The session was also attended by Lynda Deane of Active Leisure, who was interested to find out what could be done to increase member's levels of participation in active recreation. The main points coming out relating to green spaces were:

- Members prefer to use local facilities that they are familiar with. If there aren't local facilities they don't tend to use that type of green space.
- Members are keen to use new areas and types of green space, but are likely to need help in finding and using them. To this end, small groups of 2 or 3 with a helper are preferred, rather than bigger groups.
- Some members have specific physical needs that are often overlooked in the provision of facilities – this could be a handrail on both sides of a set of steps as members might have a weakness in one arm only.

Beyond these specific points, members' needs and expectations of green spaces appeared to be very similar to everybody else's.

2 copies of the survey were filled in by members with the help of the Project Manager. A further 13 copies were left for other members to complete, but it was understood that they would be unlikely to be returned unless help could be given in working with members to complete them.

- No issues particular to members of i2i were identified here
- Clearly, 2 surveys is never going to be a representative sample, so the results are of no quantitative value and there is no additional qualitative data to add. The results of these surveys have however been recorded elsewhere.

Consultation with the Corporate Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Workers Group

Copies of the survey were sent to 29 members of staff via the Equalities Team. Unfortunately no responses were received. It was noted that a presentation to the group on the work of the green space strategy would have been a more effective way of ensuring responses were received.

Other Groups Consulted

Bath & North East Somerset Action for Pensioners

Due to the publicity around the Green Space Strategy, this group requested the opportunity to comment. 30 copies of the survey were sent to members. 5 responses were received, equating to 17%; the postal problems may have affected this figure.

- In survey terms, 5 responses is not sufficient to provide reliable comparative information, especially as more detailed, wide ranging research and representative market research with over 65's had been undertaken through the focus groups and the on-street survey.
- No additional insight in to the needs of pensioners was picked up through the completion of these surveys that had not already been recorded in the market research, although a number of useful and interesting comments were made.

Bath & North East Somerset Allotment Tenants

Due to the Council's regular contact with its 800 allotment tenants, the opportunity was taken to raise the profile of the green space strategy with them. The strategy was mentioned in the Allotments Newsletter along with the availability of the survey. 12 copies of the survey were requested and returned. The postal problems did not affect this figure. Extensive consultation had been undertaken with allotment tenants in 2002 and this may explain the low interest shown on this occasion. Due to the low response rate making comparisons with this group against the representative sample would have no value. As allotment holders it was not surprising to find that all respondents thought that allotments are very important to them.

Telephone and Internet

The survey form was also made available to telephone enquirers and internet users, following extensive publicity via the local press and radio.

11 telephone enquiries were taken and surveys sent out. 3 replies were received equating to 27%; the postal problems may have affected this figure.

- No issues were identified here that have not been identified elsewhere in the research and consultation process.

8 internet replies were received.

- No issues were identified here that have not been identified elsewhere in the research and consultation process.

Conclusions Drawn from Consultation with Other Groups

In retrospect the method of consultation used with many of the groups was not the most suitable. Because of the relatively low numbers of responses received it was

not possible to provide reliable comparative information; more qualitative data is required from these smaller groups.

However, despite the low number of responses from some groups, many respondents did include extensive additional comments that have all been recorded and add significantly to our understanding of each groups needs. This improved understanding will be a great asset as the green space strategy is developed.

SECTION C: OTHER RELEVANT DATA

1. Background

As well as research conducted for the Green Space Strategy a number of other research projects have been conducted which may help to inform the strategy and could help to put the importance of green spaces in to perspective. One of the main sources of information is Voicebox. Voicebox, established in 1999 is the Council's citizen's panel. It is made up of around 1500 residents from across the district, surveys are usually sent to panel members who complete them and return them to a market research agency. The market research agency will then process and weight the results before feeding them back to the Council.

Other research includes work carried out by the Parks Section in to satisfaction with the play equipment at Royal Victoria Park, and a survey about satisfaction with parks and green spaces which was conducted at the flower show in May 2001. Other research that is relevant includes the ODPM general survey and an Overview & Scrutiny survey about access to services and facilities.

2. Summary of Research

2.1 Parks and Green Spaces as important to quality of life

There are a number of statistics that illustrate the importance of green space to the local population. Many of these have been recorded in Voicebox and are illustrated below:

Please note when looking at Voicebox figures that some of the surveys were conducted a long time ago and it is likely that the data would look different if this exercise was repeated.

Voicebox 1, (July 1999):

- In response to the question "*What would improve your neighbourhood as a place to live?*" The option with the highest response was 'Conserving Greenery and Open Space' (approximately 1 in 3 respondents identified this).
- In response to the question "*What kind of developments do you think are most needed for Bath & NE Somerset as a whole?*" the option with the highest proportion of answers was 'Better/ cheaper public transport', second to this with 14% was 'Recreational facilities' which was thought to be more worthwhile than other factors including 'improved traffic congestion', and 'affordable housing'. However,

'recreational facilities' include leisure centres, museums, swimming pools, ice skating rinks, etc, as well as parks and green spaces.

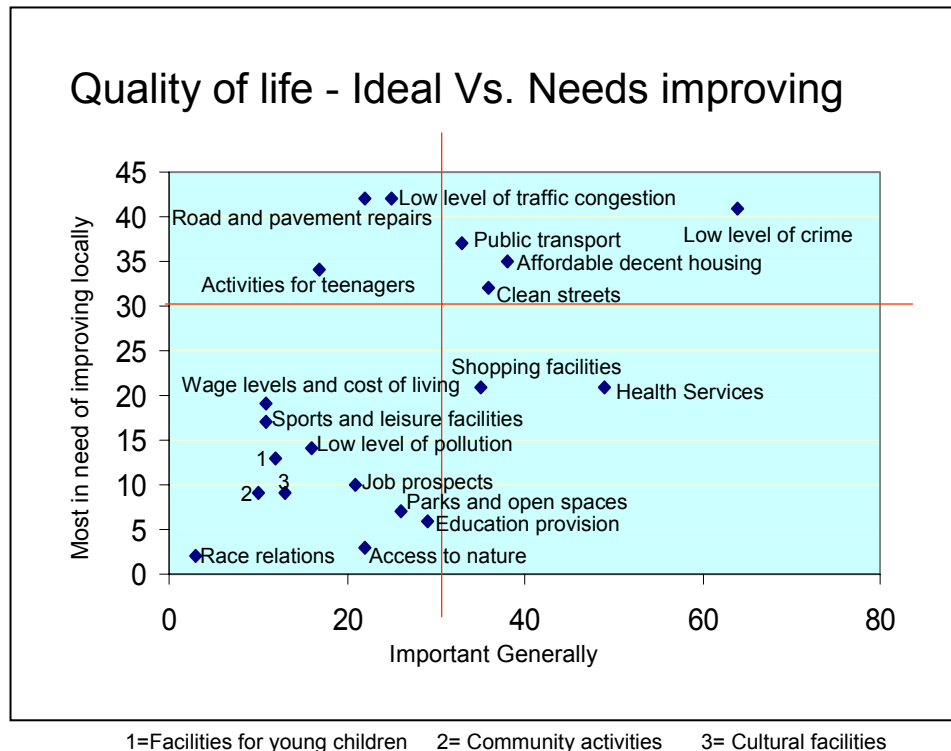
Voicebox 2, (February 2000)

- In response to the question “*what would you like to be the top priority for Bath & NE Somerset Council?*”, 24% said ‘protecting and improving the environment’ this was more than any of the other options including ‘Improving the public transport system’ (21%) and ‘improving education standards’ (8%). However, this may relate as much to issues such as waste and recycling as parks and green spaces.

Voicebox 4, (July 2001)

- In response to the question “*How important do you think it is to protect our local wildlife and natural habitats?*”, 77% answered ‘very important’, and 21% answered ‘quite important’

More up to date research carried out as part of the ODPM general survey in November 2003 showed that since the Voicebox surveys were carried out a few years ago, the importance of parks and open spaces in relation to other factors may have fallen. The issues of most concern are crime, affordable decent housing, clean streets and public transport. Parks and open spaces are in fact one of the areas least in need of improvement.



It is important not to draw out strong conclusions from this perceived change of importance as the questions that have been asked are different and

therefore the answers are not directly comparable. However, the public agenda does change with the times, so it is not surprising not to find parks and green spaces as one of the top priorities for the Council or as important generally.

It is also very important to say that local people are very satisfied with the parks and green spaces in the area and that quality is perceived to have improved over the last 3 years. This is discussed in the next section.

2.2 Satisfaction with Parks and Green Spaces

Most of the research conducted that includes the topic of parks and green spaces in the district shows high levels of satisfaction (with the possible exception of the Norton Radstock area). Some of the results collected in the ODPM general survey back this up:

- 20% of the sample of 1121 said that parks and open spaces had got better over the last 3 years, 73% said that they were the same and 7% said that they had got worse. This compares very well with other services:

Factor	Better	The same	Worse
Access to nature	13%	82%	5%
Parks and open spaces	20%	73%	7%
Education provision	16%	76%	9%
Race relations	10%	80%	10%
Cultural facilities	8%	79%	13%
Sports and leisure facilities	8%	77%	15%
Community activities	8%	74%	18%
Facilities for young children	14%	67%	19%
Shopping facilities	7%	64%	29%
Health services	11%	60%	29%
Job prospects	7%	63%	30%
Clean streets	10%	57%	33%
Public transport	5%	53%	41%
Activities for teenagers	6%	51%	43%
Low level of pollution	3%	45%	52%
Road and pavement repairs	9%	35%	56%
Wage levels and cost of living	2%	39%	59%
The level of crime	4%	31%	62%
Affordable decent housing	4%	31%	65%
The level of traffic congestion	2%	23%	76%

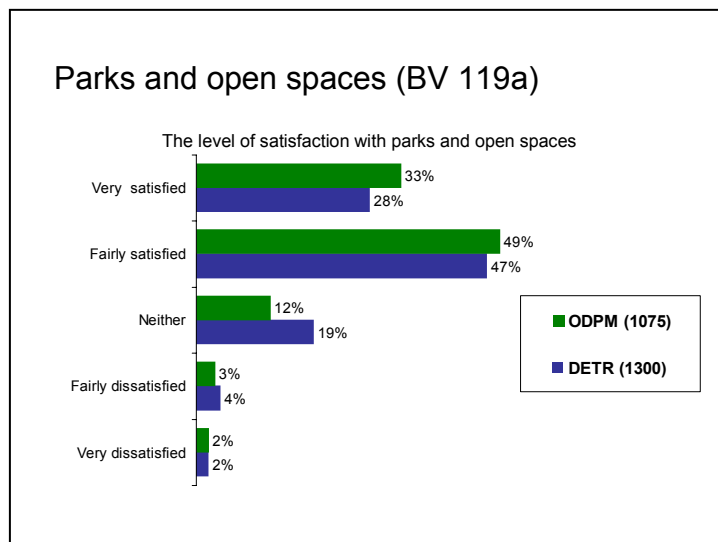
- 83% were satisfied with parks and open spaces in Bath & NE Somerset, this is an improvement of 8% from the previous DETR survey and is higher than all NUB authorities.

As well as benchmarking against the NUB group it is possible to benchmark against regional LA's, National LA's and Unitary LA's. The data is shown in the table below:

Level	2000/01	2003/04	+/- change
Bath & NE Somerset	75	82	+7
Unitary Authorities	69	74	+5
South West Authorities	63	72	+9
National Authorities	63	71	+8
75th Percentile	70	77	+7

This data confirms that Bath & NE Somerset parks and open spaces are well above average in terms of comparisons against unitary authorities, regional authorities and the national level.

The chart below shows the level of satisfaction for Bath & NE Somerset in the 2000 survey compared to the 2003 survey.



Those aged 18-24 are significantly less likely to be satisfied with parks and open spaces- as are those living in rural areas and Norton Radstock. These statistics back up much of the research that has been conducted for the green space strategy, suggesting that improving provision in Norton Radstock and for young people are certainly the areas that the strategy should be concentrating on.

Work conducted for Voicebox 4 (July 2004) and a questionnaire carried out at the flower show in May 2001 asked about satisfaction with individual elements of parks and green spaces. The results are shown in the table below:

Service	SATISFACTION (Voicebox 4 Flower Show Research)									
	Very satisfied		Fairly satisfied		Neither		Fairly dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied	
Standard of Maintenance	33%	79%	52%	21%	10%	-	4%	-	1%	-
Accessibility	30%	65%	47%	20%	16%	15%	5%	-	2%	-
Tree Management	24%	54%	48%	29%	23%	17%	4%	2%	1%	-
Children's play	28%	40%	43%	19%	23%	38%	4%	2%	2%	-
On site facilities	12%	46%	49%	33%	23%	19%	13%	2%	3%	-
Events programme	8%	25%	29%	27%	50%	46%	11%	2%	2%	-
Information	6%	33%	30%	25%	52%	38%	11%	4%	2%	-

Base: Voicebox 4 (July 2001) c. 1300, Flower show (May 2001) c. 50

The most striking pattern is the significantly higher level of satisfaction with elements of parks and park management from visitors to the flower show than in the Voicebox survey. This should certainly be taken in to account if and when more surveys are planned at events where attendees are likely to have unrepresentative opinions. The second main point is the low proportion of people dissatisfied with any factor included in the question. The issues over information provision and organised events were noted in the focus groups, but although satisfaction with these elements is slightly lower than other factors, overall satisfaction is still high.

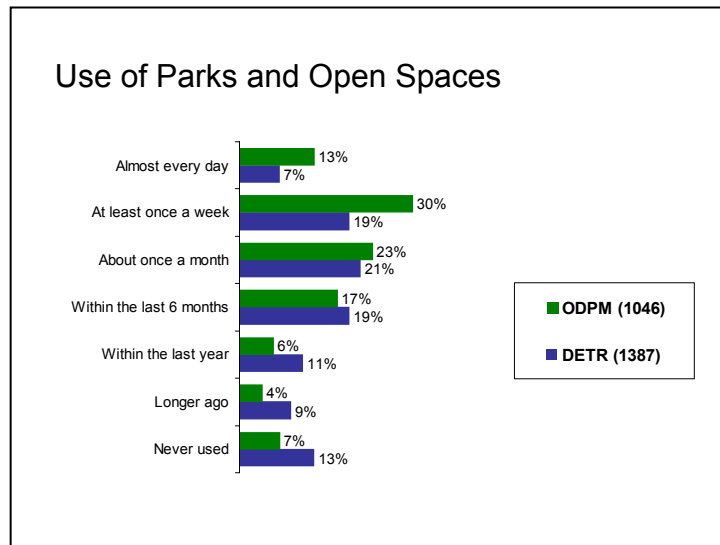
In Voicebox 4 residents were also asked what improvements they would like to see to parks and green spaces. The main suggestions were in line with the many of the suggestions from the focus groups:

- Extra seating: 50%
- Extra dog mess bins: 46%
- Improved security: 37%
- Increased sport facilities: 23%
- More information signs: 19%
- More children's play areas: 19%
- More frequent grounds maintenance: 16%

2.3 Use of Parks and Green Spaces

High levels of satisfaction can be attributed to two main factors: high levels of usage and good quality parks and green spaces. We have already seen that parks and open spaces are visited by the majority of the population, data from

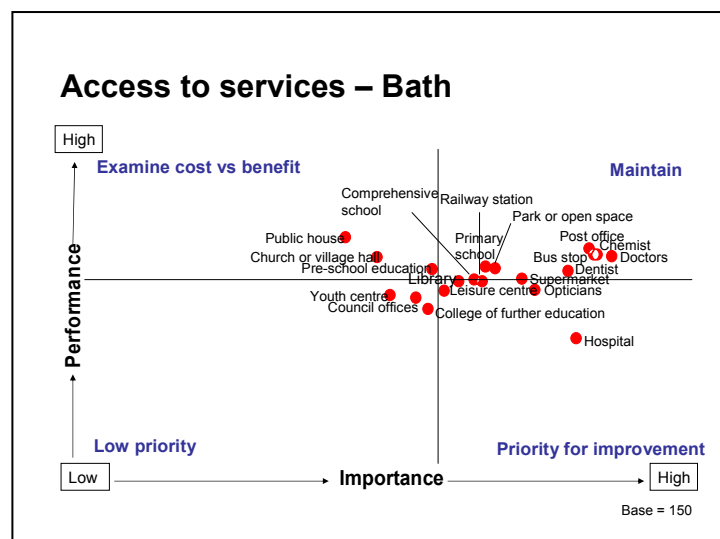
the ODPM General Survey backs this up and suggests that usage has increased over the last 3 years:



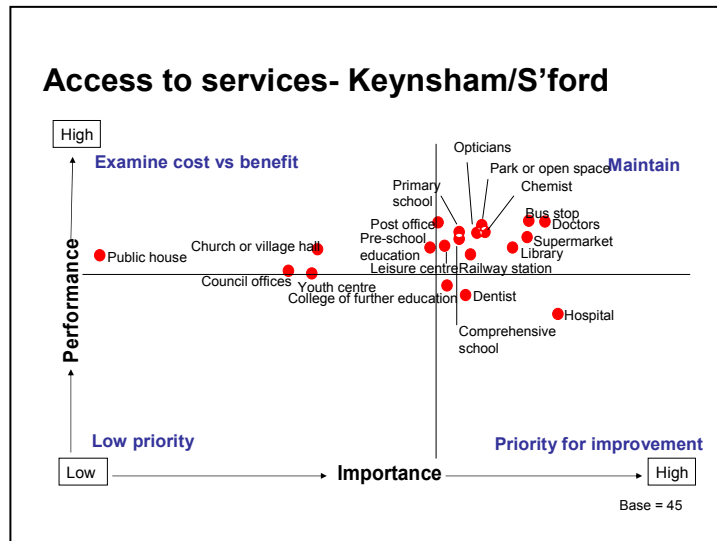
It is not clear why there has been such a growth in use of parks and open spaces. But high levels of satisfaction are often connected to high levels of usage as there will be a smaller proportion of people who do not give an opinion.

2.4 Access to Parks and Green spaces

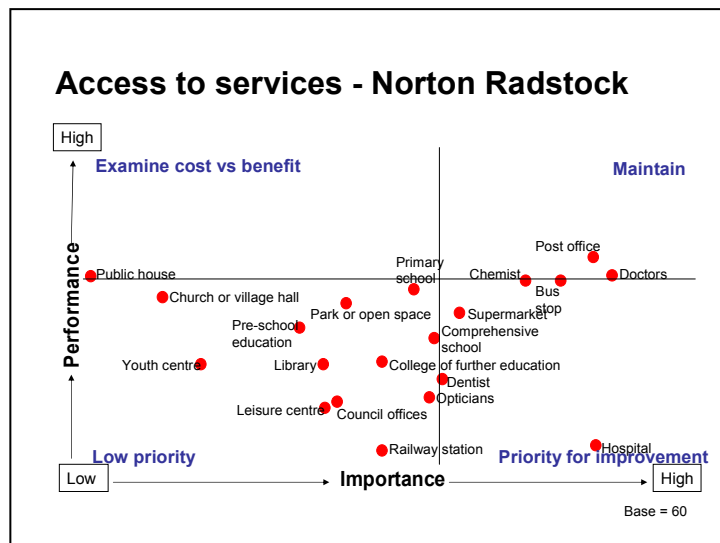
One of the larger elements of the green space strategy is to consider access to green spaces. A project undertaken in November 2004 looked at access to a range of different facilities and services. The project was undertaken on-street amongst a sample of 300 residents which broadly reflected the demographic profile of the district. The question of relevance to the green space strategy asked respondents to think about how important it is to have access to a particular service or facility (without the use of a car or taxi) and then compared this to how easy or difficult it is to access that service or facility (without the use of a car or taxi). The results below are split so that different geographical areas can be considered individually; the base sizes therefore are different for each chart.



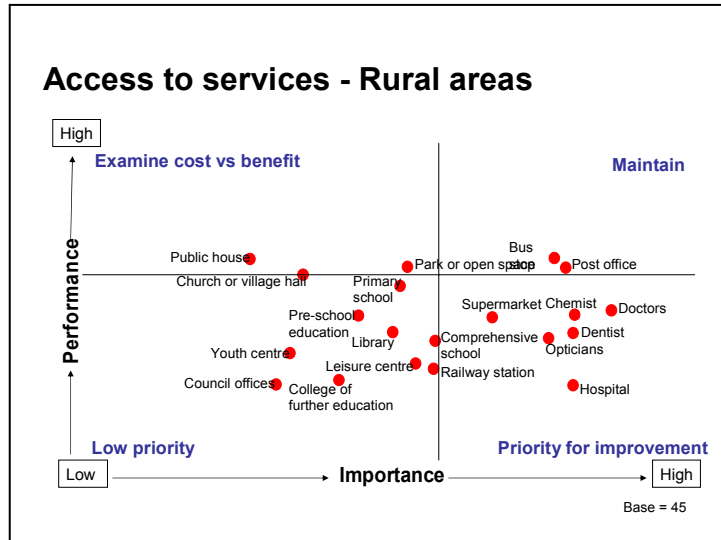
The previous chart shows that in terms of access to parks and open spaces, the needs of residents of Bath are generally being met.



The above chart shows that in terms of access to parks and open spaces, the needs of residents of Keynsham and Saltford are generally being met.



The above chart shows that the access needs of residents in Norton Radstock to parks and open spaces are not being met. This fits with research conducted for the green space strategy, where residents in Norton Radstock were less satisfied with the quantity of provision than in other areas of the district.



The above chart shows that those in rural areas are satisfied with their level of access to parks and open spaces.

2.5 The role of Green Spaces in Leisure Activities

Voicebox 5 (Nov 2001) asked people about leisure habits and the activities that they take part in. Some of the most frequent mentions of activities that people take part in as individuals or as part of a group are dependent on or connected to parks and green spaces, notably people who undertake exercise/ active sport (37% individually and 26% with family or friends) and people who enjoy hiking/ walking (28% individually and 43% with family or friends). In terms of frequency of taking part, those who undertake exercise/active sport do so frequently (85% at least once a week) and those who enjoy walking/ hiking do so less frequently (25% at least once a week)

The survey also asked; 'what are the most important factors in choosing what leisure activity to take part in?' The main factors were quality of service/ facility, availability of parking, cost and distance to travel. We know that, generally speaking, parks and green spaces in the district (with the possible exception of Norton Radstock) perform well in most of these areas.

2.6 Royal Victoria Park Play Area

A separate survey in to visitors' opinions of Royal Victoria Park Play Area was conducted amongst users in 2002. The survey was conducted between April and August and attracted 175 responses. The results are particularly valuable as RVP accounts for a large proportion of the budget available for play areas in the district. The results are summarised below:

- 21% of the sample said that RVP was their local play area. Around 1/3 of the sample lived in Bath, 1/4 lived in Bristol and 13% lived in Bath & NE Somerset but outside Bath.

- 1/3 of visitors were in a party of 3 people or less and 42% were in a group of 4-6 people. The remaining 25% were in groups of 7 or more people
- 59% travelled to RVP by car and 18% (a similar percentage to the number of people who counted RVP as their local play area) walked. 20% took the bus to the park
- In terms of duration of visit, the majority of visitors stayed wither 1-2 hours (31%), 2-3 hours (30%), or 4-5 hours (20%). The remaining 19% stayed for longer than 4 hours
- There was a large variation in the frequency of visits that people make. 13% said that they visit more than once a week, 1/5 said that they go to RVP once a week, 1/3 said that they visit about once a month, and only 1% said that this was their first visit
- Respondents whose local play area was not RVP were asked to comment on it. For 31% their local play area was too small, for 18% it was described as being in 'poor condition' and for 11% it was basic. However, for 45% their local play area was 'OK'. These results support the theory that RVP is 'above average' in terms of quality
- The following table summarises the best and the worst features of the play area in RVP, please note that the figures are in total number of responses and are not calculated as percentages:

Facility	Best	Worst
Tube Slide	10	1
Mound & Slide	48	19
Climbing Webs	38	4
Safety/ Security	12	0
Skate Park	14	26
Sand Area	10	9
Special Needs	2	21
Discovery Units	10	5
American Museum	1	21

The table shows some interesting dichotomies: Firstly, that it is very hard to please everybody: for example 48 people said that the mound & slide was one of the best features, whereas 19 said that it was one of the worst features of the play area and similar numbers of people liked the sand area to the number that disliked it. Again; 14 people said that the skate park was one of the best features of the play area, but 26 said that it was one of the worst features. The focus group research in Norton Radstock found that young people would prefer it if a skate park was separate to the area for young children- it seems that for some users of the play area this is also the case.

However, the consensus was clearer on some of the other features; the American Museum area and provision for special needs were both thought of as amongst the worst areas of provision while the climbing webs were a very popular feature.

- Finally respondents were asked for their additional comments. 42 respondents suggested additional parking, 24 suggested replacing old wooden equipment and 19 expressed a desire for a café. Other suggestions included cleaner toilets, separate areas for toddlers, more seating, increased shelter, and better paths. Some of these issues will have been addressed since the survey was carried out.

2.7 Attitudes to Wildlife

Questions in Voicebox 6 (November 2002) asked about attitudes to wildlife. The results showed a high level of interest in activities associated with wildlife, especially activities that require less exertion: 85% had watched or listened to wildlife programmes and 83% had fed birds in their garden or put up nest boxes. However, many are restricted by what they are able to do due to lack of time (56%) and lack of information about how to (32%). Therefore it is of little surprise to see that 59% would like to receive more information about wildlife events.