

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park Committee	15 th April 2013
Subject: Results of a face-to-face survey of users and non-users of the City's open spaces	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Information
<p>Summary</p> <p>To ensure that satisfaction results remain consistently high, and to gather information to inform the review of the City of London Open Space Strategy planned for autumn of this year, City Gardens undertook over 1000 face to face user questionnaires at a variety of locations around the City during November and early December 2012.</p> <p>The findings from the user survey were very positive, with 79.4% of users rating the City Gardens service as good or very good.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report 	

Main Report

Background

1. With responsibility for over 200 widely differing gardens, churchyards and areas of open space within the Square Mile, it is important for the City Gardens section to ensure that each of these best serves the City's community according to its individual situation and potential.
2. City Gardens last undertook a user survey in 2009 as a direct response to the Government's *Place* survey and as a follow up to a user survey in 2004; the former had identified some areas for improvement. To interrogate these findings and to ascertain satisfaction levels, the City Gardens Service commissioned a research consultant, Ask for Research, whose findings evidenced that the main dissatisfaction from respondents was due to lack of green space rather than to City Gardens Services.
3. To ensure that the City Gardens Section continues to maintain high levels of satisfaction from current users and to ascertain any current dissatisfaction

levels that need to be addressed, research consultant Ask for Research was commissioned to undertake a repeat consultation exercise throughout November and /early December of last year. In the main, the questions asked were the same as in 2009. However two additional questions were posed, such as whether there was genuine interest in people taking part in volunteering and green gym activities within the open spaces in City Gardens.

4. The exercise captured data from over 1000 members of the City's core community groups including residents, workers and visitors from outside the City, both from Britain and overseas. Ask for Research were also tasked with evaluating any differences that were found between the 2009 survey and the current 2012 findings.

Methodology

5. Based on the success of the survey conducted in 2009, it was vital to ensure that the results produced were thorough, representative and robust. In order to do this, it was agreed in consultation with Ask for Research at the start of the project that:
 - (i) The most comprehensive survey method was face-to-face street-based interview;
 - (ii) Both users and non-users of the City's gardens would be targeted;
 - (iii) Minimum quotas would be set for respondent type of 300 visitors, 500 workers and 200 residents being representative of the City daytime population;
 - (iv) The catchment area would be the boundaries of the Square Mile, and interviews for each sample group spread geographically across this area;
 - (v) Interviews would take place during weekdays, weekends, morning and evening shifts;
 - (vi) Ask for Research would use interviewers that spoke a variety of languages, so that it was possible to capture non-English speakers also.
6. Between November and early December, 1015 interviews were conducted. Interviewers used a simplified map of the City Gardens for reference, and the questionnaire included a self-completion equal opportunities monitoring section.

Results

7. Of the 1015 people who were interviewed:
 - (i) 50% were male, 50% female (a slight increase in females since 2009);
 - (ii) 12% were under 25 years old (a slight decrease since 2009), 53% were aged between 25 and 44, and 35% were 45 and over. There has been a 10%

increase in the upper age bracket at a small expense to the other two categories since 2009;

- (iii) 55% were white British, 17% white European and nearly 21% of respondents spread over 15 different ethnic groups, (no significant difference since 2009 survey);
 - (iv) Nearly three-fifths of people travelling to the City did so from elsewhere in London, with a further fifth from elsewhere in the UK and the final fifth from abroad (similar findings from 2009);
 - (v) 85% of respondents stated the week day as their main time of their visit (15% increase since 2009) and 15% the weekend as their main time of visit, (15% decrease since 2009) both results could have been a reflection on the type of user and/or the time of year.
 - (vi) The results of the project have provided a useful indication of satisfaction levels with the services provided by the City Gardens team, and will help to inform the City of London Open Space Strategy review. The level of detail provided by the survey can help decide the ranking of competing service priorities in a climate of budgetary restrictions and to concentrate on issues that voters and tax-payers feel are important.
8. In terms of overall user satisfaction ratings 99.1% - rate their satisfaction with the spaces as either fair (19.7%), good (45%) or very good (34.4%). These ratings are similar to those identified in 2009.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

9. This report clearly supports key strategic aims within the Community Strategy, notably supporting our communities, and protecting, promoting and enhancing our environment.
10. It also supports the City of London Open Space Strategy, notably:
- Strategic Objective 1: To maintain and increase public access to existing open spaces and enhance the quality of these spaces, in terms of both design and management.
 - Strategic Objective 3: Ensure that all open spaces are designed and managed to be safe and accessible to all and, where appropriate, to provide opportunities for different activities at different times of the day and year.

Conclusion

11. In terms of overall satisfaction ratings 99.1% - rate their satisfaction with the spaces as either fair (19.7%), good (45%) or very good (34.4%). This compares to similar ratings from 2009.
12. Specific results within the survey provide high levels of satisfaction with accessibility, cleanliness, litter clearance and staff attitudes. Three

consecutive London in Bloom Gold awards between the years 2010-12 supports this evidence and also indicates continuous improvements in service standards.

13. The evidence uncovered through the 2012 City Gardens will be used by officers to support future open space provision and to help prioritise services. It is hoped to continue to revisit in-depth user consultation in this way in future years, the 5-yearly window being appropriate for reviewing service quality levels in this detail.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Page 7 to 13 Summary of City Gardens Survey Results 2012

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