

Summary Report: Green Infrastructure

This report contains summary findings from the public consultation on the draft London Environment Strategy, with a focus on green infrastructure. It draws together data from both quantitative and qualitative research. Detailed reports supporting this summary are available from the Greater London Authority Opinion Research and Statistics team.

1. Methodology

Green infrastructure public consultation methodology		
Quantitative Research: Surveys on views of London’s parks, and interest in volunteering, were conducted with a representative sample of Londoners, and were posted on the Talk London consultation page.		
<u>Representative polling</u>	<u>Talk London Community</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Surveys carried out with a representative sample of the London population aged 18+ on the following dates:<ul style="list-style-type: none">18th-21st September 2017, with a response of 1,044	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Surveys with parallel content to those conducted with a representative sample, ran from 11th August to 17th November 2017 on Talk LondonThe sample has not been weighted and is therefore not representative of the London populationThe findings from these surveys have been compared against the findings from representative polling, and key differences have been highlighted in the consultation reports	
Qualitative Research: A programme of qualitative research was designed to explore general attitudes to green infrastructure amongst Londoners. All qualitative research was conducted with Talk London members. This resulted in a more engaged sample than would be the case in the general population.		
<u>Offline qualitative research (focus groups + interviews)</u>	<u>Online qualitative research (discussion threads)</u>	<u>Correspondence</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Four focus groups were conducted on 2nd and 4th October in City Hall, each lasting 90 minutes, and 8 telephone interviews were conductedParticipants were recruited from the Talk London community, and were paid £40 to attendIn the focus groups participants had a garden that	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Three discussion threads ran for 3 months on the Talk London community:<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Park City (106 comments)Views on local parks (32 comments)Garden management (27 comments)Analysis of the discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The GLA received a total of 1,345 emails from members of the public either writing in as individuals or as part of a campaignEmails from individuals have been included in the analysis for

Green infrastructure public consultation methodology		
<p>they were responsible for, and the groups were split by housing tenure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the interviews participants were recruited on the basis that they did not regularly use their local park • A total of 28 participants attended the session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gender: 11 women/ 17 men ○ Age: Wide range of ages ○ Ethnicity: 24 x white participants/ 4 x BAME participants ○ Housing tenure: 26 x homeowners/ 18 x private renters/ 2 x social renters 	<p>threads, supported by key quotes, has been included in this report</p>	<p>this report</p>

2. Attitudes towards green infrastructure

Summary of views based on qualitative research:

- Green infrastructure in London is a source of pride for people
 - London seen to do better than most cities in terms of the quantity and quality of its green space
- Participants had a strong sense that London's green infrastructure is under threat
 - Across the LES qualitative research this tended to be one of the first topics raised when asked about challenges to London's environment
- The primary threat was perceived to come from the rapid rate of development, and increasing population
 - There was also concern about cuts to council budgets and 'privatisation' of public space
- Participants had a clear sense of what their ideal would look like
 - Amenities and facilities, safety, maintenance and catering to all age groups were key
- Interviews with people who don't regularly visit their local parks suggest that reasons for not using parks are varied and complex, but there are clear barriers around safety and facilities

- Not feeling safe is the most off-putting quality a park can have
- Dogs are also a source of tension in parks
- Whilst there was interest in the idea of volunteering in local parks, participants also felt that upkeep should be the responsibility of the council
 - Some said that volunteering opportunities often do not fit around working hours

“In my local area, the many new developments lack trees and decent green spaces. Some developments stick a few trees in concrete planters and seem to think that is good enough.”

Talk London Member, 53 years old, male, Greenwich

Summary of quantitative findings (representative polling):

- 10 per cent of Londoners visit a park or green space every day, whilst 48 per cent do so at least once a week.
 - 9 per cent never visit a park or green space.
 - Male, white, ABC1 Londoners are more likely to regularly visit a park; women, under 25s, C2DE and social renters visit parks less often.
- 84 per cent of Londoners say they have a park within roughly a 10 minute walk of their house.
 - This rises to 92 per cent for those aged 65+.
 - ABC1 and white Londoners are more likely to have a park nearby, as are those who own their home.
 - 93 per cent of home owners have a park within roughly a 10 minute walk of their house, compared to 82 per cent of private renters.
- Of those who have a park within roughly a 10 minute walk of their house, 88 per cent like visiting their local park whilst 5 per cent don't like the park, but still visit it or pass through it.
 - For those who don't regularly visit their local park (49 per cent), by far the most common reason for not doing so is not having enough time (54 per cent).
 - This is followed by not feeling safe (15 per cent), the parks not offering the desired facilities (11 per cent) and not being well maintained (9 per cent).
 - Women are almost three times as likely to cite not feeling safe as a reason for not visiting parks (22 per cent), as are home owners and Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnicity Londoners. As would be expected, full time workers are more likely say they don't have enough time.

Talk London polling indicates that Talk London members are more likely to live near a park and visit one regularly and less likely to have a barrier to visiting

3. Garden Management

Summary of views based on qualitative research:

- Participants agreed it was highly desirable to have a garden in London, but also felt that having a garden was not without its drawbacks
 - Gardening is time consuming, sometimes costly, and difficult if you are new to it
 - Gardens can be messy e.g. leading to mud being brought into the house
 - Garden waste a hassle, especially if you have to pay to have it taken away
- There was recognition of trend towards paving, and spontaneous concern about the impact of this on flood risk
 - Benefits of paving are seen to be reduced maintenance and increased space for parking
- Most participants said they had not thought of their garden as part of a wider network of green infrastructure in the city, and did not have a strong sense of the contribution gardens could make
 - The opposite was true of keen gardeners, for whom biodiversity and positive environmental impacts are key goals, and seen as a mark of their skill as gardeners
- Participants thought that garden management strategies often prioritise convenience and aesthetics, and this can cause tension with environmental impact
 - Participants noted the increasing trends in use of plastic grass, tree removal and paving
- Amongst novice gardeners, there was nervousness around planting trees
 - Concern over how big the tree would grow and what impact it would have on property
- Renters felt that they were quite restricted in what they could do in their garden
 - Unlikely to be there for long, so not worth expending a lot of time/ effort/ money into changing things
- Participants showed interest in getting more support/ information to help them manage their garden in a way that makes a positive contribution to London's green infrastructure
 - For example lower costs for recycling of garden waste, advice given out at garden centres, tree planting schemes
- There were also ideas on how to broaden access to London's private gardens
 - Garden sharing schemes e.g. matching an elderly person with a garden with someone who doesn't have a garden but enjoys gardening

"How about a grant scheme to change front gardens from off-road parking spaces back to gardens."

Talk London Member, 66 years old, female, Lambeth

4. 'Greenest global city'

Summary of views based on qualitative findings:

- Participants liked the idea of London being the world's 'greenest global city', but want the focus to be on 'keeping what we've got'
 - Participants were mostly happy with the current level of green infrastructure in the city, but wanted assurances that this will not be eroded/ will be maintained to high standards
- There was strong support for the idea of turning London into a 'National Park City'
 - Participants wanted this to apply to all of London, not just central London
 - Interest in how Londoners can be involved in making this happen
- Participants felt that this ambition was in tension with house-building targets, and many thought that one would inevitably come at the expense of the other
 - Participants were split on what they wanted to see prioritised, with homeowners more likely to want to see green infrastructure prioritised and renters more likely to want to see house-building prioritised
- Many participants had the impression that tree cover in London is being reduced, and thought that more needed to be done to protect London's trees
 - There was strong support for increased tree planting
- Participants saw 'green' building as an exciting opportunity area for London, but did not want this to replace provision of accessible green space on the ground
 - Most accepted that there would need to be some element of compromise
- Participants had a number of ideas for how to make London a greener city:
 - Use trees or plants in containers instead of bollards to separate pedestrians and vehicles
 - Create green corridors for pedestrians and cyclists, along the lines of the High Line in New York, to connect existing green spaces and create a green network
 - Encourage the creation of green areas that allow for community activities e.g. food growing
 - Greater protection for green infrastructure built into the planning process

"Try saving some of the green we already have, rather than felling mature trees for immature development."

Talk London Member, 29 years old, male, Lewisham