

## APPENDIX 5 - PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

### A5.1 GBC CITIZENS' PANEL - OCT 2001

BMG was commissioned by Guildford Borough Council to undertake a series of Citizens' Panel Surveys covering attitudes towards a range of services that the council provides. This panel survey was concerned with leisure activities and facilities. A random sample of residents was taken off the electoral role and telephone and postal surveys were distributed. There was a return rate of 52.9%, (515 responses).

The process also included interviews of the 14 - 24 age group to ensure a representation of young people. This led to an overall response of 613 questionnaires. The young persons questionnaires took place in Guildford and Ash shopping areas, therefore whether or not the results represent the rural areas of the borough can be questioned.

The panel was questioned under certain themes

#### Leisure activities currently undertaken

The most popular leisure activity overall, among residents of Guildford, was shopping (69%). Other main activities include visiting the cinema (66%), walking (64%), reading (59%), gardening (59%), visiting the library (52%), and swimming (50%). Residents were also asked which three of the listed activities were most important to them and other household members. The main activities mentioned included walking (28%), gardening (20%) and shopping (18%). The ability of residents/visitors to engage in these activities is dependent on accessibility issues such as the distance they have to travel.

#### Leisure activities that residents had given up.

About one in five residents (21%) had members of their household who have given up a leisure activity in the last three years (1999-2001). When asked to comment on a scale of 1-5 residents said that overall, the cost of the activity (2.81 out of 5.00), and the timing of the activity (2.77) are the two main reasons why residents gave up certain activities. This is significant as these are accessibility issues therefore these were audited.

#### Sports clubs which residents have joined.

More than a quarter of residents (27%), or other household members, had joined a sports club in the past year (2002). The main type of sports clubs joined are health and fitness centres (58%). Others include sports clubs (36%) and social clubs (11%).

#### Children's leisure activities

About a quarter of residents (26%) had children under the age of 15 in their household. Therefore, as identified in PPG17, leisure facilities should cater for this group as often their needs become hidden. Resident agreement was strongest for providing safe playgrounds (3.50) and providing opportunities for learning (3.25). It is weakest for providing informal places for teenagers to meet their friends (2.45) and providing organised activities close to children's homes (2.94).

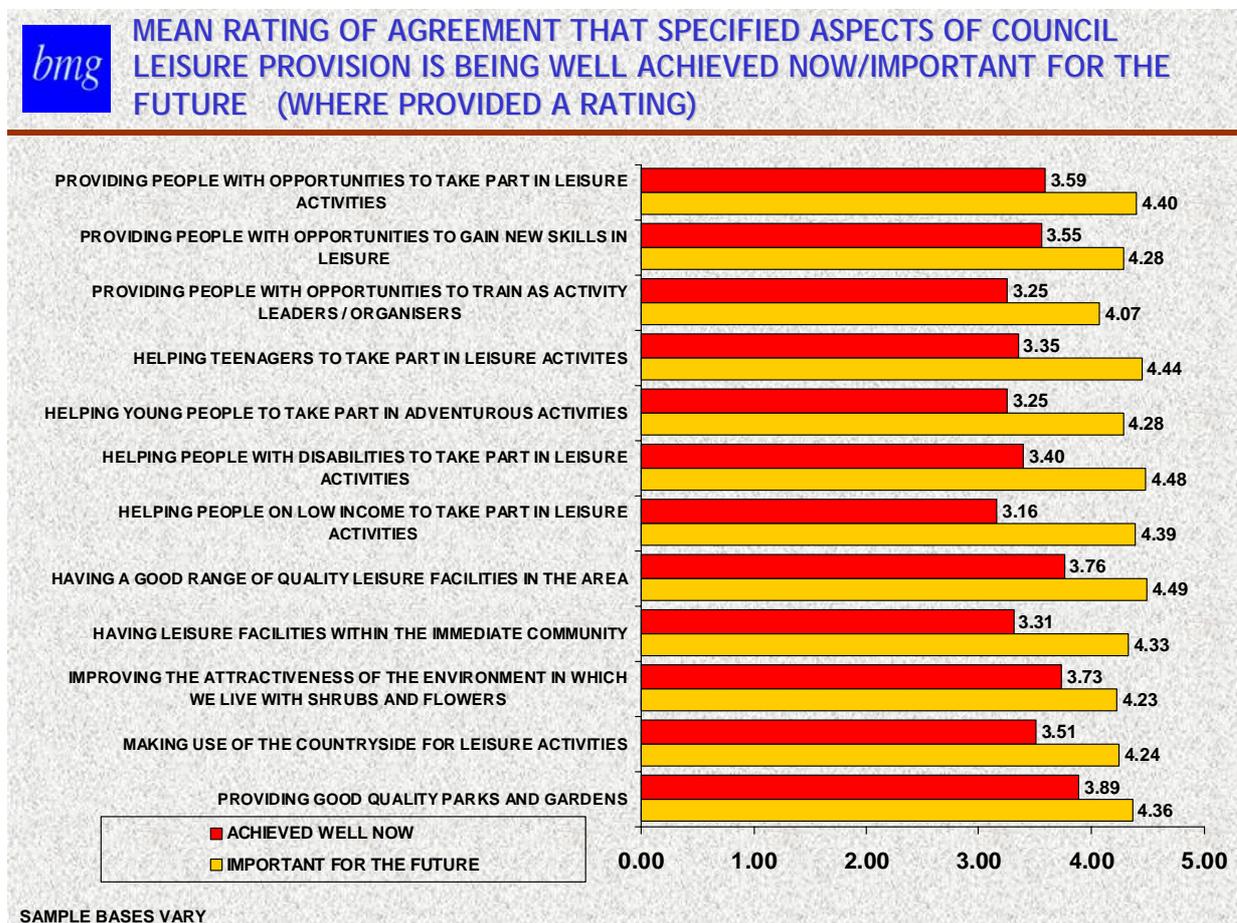
Mean scores are much higher in terms of importance for the future, with none of the statements being rated below 4.00 out of 5.00. This suggests some disappointment among residents, between what they would wish for their children and what they are receiving currently. The most important aspects of children's activities (in the future) are providing safe playgrounds (4.67) and providing informal places for teenagers to

meet their friends (4.59). The main activities undertaken by these children were, swimming (22%), football (participating 20%) and tennis (20%). Substantial numbers also mention football (attending) (14%), gymnastics (12%) and rugby (10%).

Future leisure policies for the council

Finally, all residents were asked to what extent they agreed with a list of policies for Guildford Borough Council, both in terms of activities that are achieved well now and those that are important for the future. Mean scores in terms of policies being achieved well now tend to range just above the mid point of 3.00 (3.16 – 3.89), suggesting mild agreement among most residents. The highest mean scores are for providing good quality parks and gardens (3.89), having a good range of quality leisure facilities in the area (3.76) and improving the attractiveness of the environment in which residents live with shrubs and flowers (3.73). The table below shows that there are significant gaps between issues that are important for the future and the current standard of achievement.

**Table 10** – Mean ratings (Source – GBC Citizen’s Panel 2001)



In terms of these policies being important for the future, mean scores are again considerably higher than those for current achievement. None fall below 4.00 out of 5.00, and several have particularly high mean scores, including having a good range of quality leisure facilities in the area (4.49) and helping people with disabilities to take part in leisure activities (4.48). This shows that the provision and quality of future leisure facilities need to rise significantly to meet the current aspirations for the future.

For the key activities the results showed that the focus of improvement should be on ensuring good access by public transport and providing sufficient information.

All children generally undertake some leisure activities. These may need to be further encouraged by:

1. Providing safer (better supervised) play areas;
2. Increasing the number of off road cycle paths;
3. Providing (more) out of school facilities, particularly organised team games.

Parents of teenagers in particular, are concerned that there are fewer leisure activities, which are aimed at this age group of child.

Whilst attitudes are generally fairly positive to current provision, the quantity and quality of provision will need to increase to meet current aspirations for the future.

## **A5.2 GUILDFORD VISITOR SURVEY**

This survey of visitors to Guildford was commissioned by Guildford Borough Council and undertaken by the Research Unit of Tourism South East between July and September 2003. This is relevant to the PPG17 Audit as facilities should be for visitors as well as residents.

A similar survey was undertaken in 2000. As in 2000, the aims of the 2003 research were to

1. Provide up to date information on the origin, profile and behaviour of visitors
2. Identify characteristics and trends
3. Explore views on strengths and weaknesses
4. Evaluate opinion on specific aspects of the visitor experience
5. Identify 'Destination Benchmarks'

The methodology used to meet these objectives was a face-to-face survey over 25 interviewing sessions between 9<sup>th</sup> July and 28<sup>th</sup> September 2003. Adults were sampled at random in three locations. The following were filtered from the process to ensure consistence in defining 'visitors'.

1. Residents of Guildford
2. Non residents on day visits to Guildford for non leisure purposes

It must also be noted that this was a survey of visitors to Guildford town.

The survey asked individuals to rate scores on a 1-5 bases 5 being 'Excellent', 1 being 'poor'. Parks and open space scored high on both satisfaction and importance. The score for the up keep of Parks and Open Space was 4.19. Although it is a high score, it is below the average for the other historic towns taking part in the survey (4.37) and below the average of all destinations taking part (4.27). The 2000 survey had concluded that Guildford scored highest in up keep of Parks and Open Space, therefore there was a significant decrease in perceived quality of Guildford Parks and Open Space by visitors. The fall in scores was attributed to an increase in litter, especially around the river areas. This shows that the management issues of open space, parks and recreational facilities are important to a sites qualitative standard.

Parks and Open Spaces had scored high as a priority benchmark. The benchmarks were identified using a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very important, and 1 being very low. The relevant scores are as follows

**Table 11** – Mean Scores (Source – Guildford Visitor Survey)

Indicator	Mean Score
Cleanliness of Public Toilets	4.76
General Atmosphere	4.67
Cleanliness of Streets	4.60
Upkeep of Open Space and Parks	4.56
Range of Shops	4.54
Availability of Public Toilets	4.53

These results show that open spaces and park (particularly the river side areas), and a range of shopping facilities are important benchmarks in creating a successful destination, environment and atmosphere which is an important objective Local Authorities should be working towards that is identified in PPG17. It is important that these areas are well maintained, accessible and signed.

Importance was plotted on a graph against satisfaction of current provision. Range of shops, upkeep of open space and parks and general atmosphere scored highly in importance/satisfaction where as availability and cleanliness of toilets scored low on satisfaction and high on importance.

Therefore it was concluded that when assessing open space, sport and recreational facilities for the PPG17 audit it was necessary to identified management issues such as cleanliness, access and signage as indicators to quality.

### **A5.3 GBC CITIZENS' SERVICE REVIEW DEC 2002**

BMG was commissioned in May 2001 to manage, maintain and undertake surveys of the Guildford Citizens' Panel to assess satisfaction with a range of Council services.

1,000 panel members were sent a copy of the questionnaire on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2002. A total of 562 questionnaires were returned by post, resulting in a response rate of 56.2%. This was followed up with 40 telephone interviews in order to boost response rates. The final sample size was 602.

Stoke Park or Stoke Park Gardens is the place that the highest numbers of respondents are aware of (87%) and visit most often (54%).

Onslow Village Arboretum scores low both in terms of awareness (12%) and usage (3%). However the area that respondents are least aware of is Avondale, Old School and Shawfield Lane Open Spaces (6%).

The most common reason for visiting the Guildford parks and countryside areas is for the fresh air and relaxation (64%). The most common reason given for not visiting these areas is that the site is too far from the respondent's home (39%). Such accessibility issues (information on, location of, and physical ability to access, the site) formed part of the quantitative and qualitative assessment

Over half of respondents (54%) are either very or fairly satisfied with the facilities provided in local parks, open spaces and countryside by the Parks and Countryside Service Unit. Only a total of 4% state that they are either fairly or very dissatisfied.

When asked to choose the facilities that needed to be improved and those which needed to be provided, from a given list, toilets were highlighted as requiring the most improvement and provision. Poor parking facilities were also raised as an issue for improvement.

Below is a table showing the awareness and usage of key open spaces and parks in the Borough.

**Table 12 – Awareness of Major Sites**

<b>PARKS, OPEN SPACES, COUNTRYSIDE OR PLAY AREAS WHICH THE RESPONDENT OR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS ARE AWARE OF/MOST FREQUENTLY VISIT – PROMPTED</b>		
	<b>AWARENESS</b>	<b>USAGE</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
STOKE PARK OR STOKE PARK GARDENS	87	54
RIVERSIDE PARK	39	20
CASTLE GROUNDS, CASTLE CLIFFE GARDENS OR RACKS CLOSE	80	49
LAKESIDE PARK, HOLLYBUSH PARK OR TONGHAM DISUSED RAILWAY	13	7
SUTHERLAND MEMORIAL PARK	28	16
CHANTRY WOOD	44	27
ALLEN HOUSE GROUNDS	27	10
CHILWORTH GUNPOWDER MILLS	32	16
QUARRY STREET GARDENS, WESTNYE GARDENS OR QUAKER'S ACRE	30	12
SHALFORD MEADOWS OR SHALFORD COMMONS	45	24
WOODBIDGE ROAD SPORTS GROUND	43	11
MERROW COMMON	37	16
STOKE, STOUGHTON OR ONSLOW VILLAGE RECREATION GROUNDS	29	12
BULLSWATER, PIRBRIGHT OR NEWBRIDGE COMMONS	14	6
WAVERLEY MEAD OR WALNUT TREE CLOSE	22	9
THE MOUNT, PEWLEY DOWN, MERROW DOWNS OR ST CATHERINE'S HILL	55	34
TILEHOUSE OR BELLFIELDS OPEN SPACES	16	4
GUILDFORD NATURE TRAIL	21	7
ONSLOW VILLAGE ARBORETUM	12	3
ANY CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA PROVIDED BY THE PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE DIVISION	24	15
KINGSTON MEADOWS OR ST MARTINS COURT, EAST HORSLEY	11	4

**A5.4 BVPI GENERAL SURVEY – APRIL 2004**

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) are part of the performance management framework for local authorities introduced by the Government since 1997. As part of the duty of Best Value introduced in the Local Government Act 1999, authorities are required to seek continuous improvement in their services. Best Value Performance Indicators are designed to monitor service improvement with regard to the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of service delivery

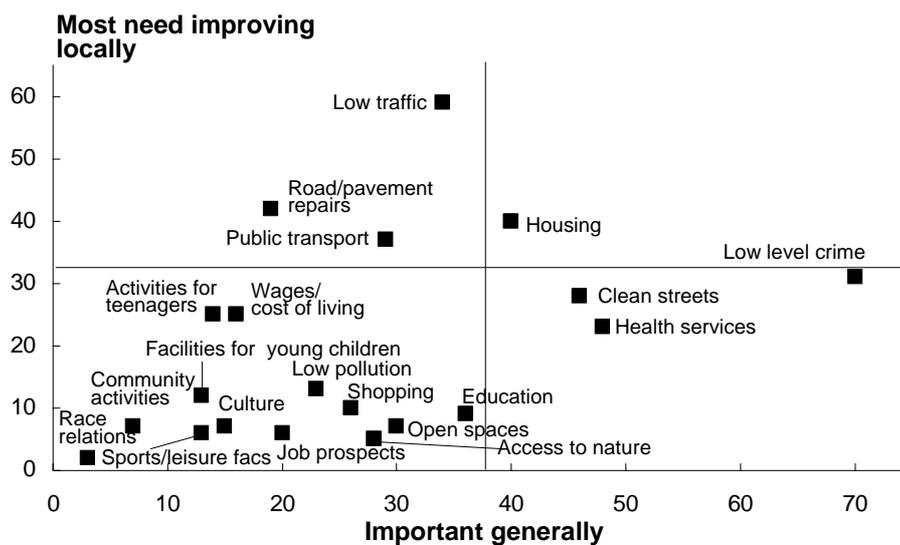
A postal methodology was used as this was judged to be the most appropriate for the needs of the authority, in terms of its cost effectiveness and ease of administration

A random sample of 5,000 addresses in Guildford was downloaded from the ODPM website. Guildford Borough Council wished to mail-out to less than 5,000 addresses, so 3,000 addresses were randomly selected. The final total response rate was 45%, 1,345.

The survey identified that parks and open spaces, and sport and leisure facilities were perceived to be getting better, the diagram below shows the different issues and their importance plotted against the need to improve locally.

**Table 13 – Quality of life against needs improving**

**Quality of Life - Ideal vs Needs Improving**



Base: All valid BVPI responses

Source: MORI

79% of residents surveyed stated they were satisfied with the parks and open spaces and 63% were satisfied with sport and recreation. Users of the facilities had increased satisfaction, with parks and open space 80% and sport and leisure facilities 80%.

When asked if the provision was getting better then only 9% thought sports and recreation was improving and 8% parks and open space. As the population increases satisfaction levels could decrease, therefore it is important to increase both the quantity and quality of facilities.

#### **A5.5 ALLOTMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2004**

The Allotment Strategy included a detail consultation exercise. The consultation was undertaken by confidential postal questionnaire. Guildford Borough Council's Parks and Countryside Service, and the Allotment Societies wrote the questionnaires.

The quantity, management and location of the allotments in the borough were already known so the consultation concentrated on the qualitative and access issues.

The results found that most visitors used their allotment 3-4 times a week, and would travel mainly by car or walk. Interestingly only 0.4% of visitors travelled more than 5miles and most travelled one mile. The consultation asked specific questions on management issues regarding water supply, vandalism and management. An overall satisfaction rate of 76.5% was recorded.

The consultation showed that most of the dissatisfaction was in the areas of fencing and the condition of paths; these are addressed in the Allotment Strategy which sets out what works will be undertaken in the next ten years.

#### **A5.6 RESIDENTS SURVEY 2002**

The Residents Survey is used to address 'areas of public opinion that are fundamentally important to the Council and which will ultimately help the Council address any weaknesses that may be apparent'

The research method adopted in 1993, 1995, 1997 and 2000 was repeated again in 2002, with respondents being interviewed in their own home, using a structured questionnaire.

A random route methodology, with multiple start points was used to ensure that the resulting sample was a fair reflection of the population as a whole. In total 1027 interviews were conducted. Only one member of each household was interviewed. The table below shows groups of people who are significantly less or more likely than the average to use those services with the greatest overall use. It also shows that between 1995 and 2002 use of parks and open spaces increased by

**Table 14 - Usage of Parks**

SERVICE	OVERALL USAGE (last 12 months)				RELATIVELY LOW		RELATIVELY HIGH	
	1995 (%)	1997 (%)	2000 (%)	2002 (%)		%		%
Parks/Open Spaces etc	42	47	50	50	Retired	32	Looking after home	65
					Rural	42	Part- time workers	59
							35-44	67
							Urban	58

Those who had used particular services were generally satisfied with the quality of those services, including open space and parks and leisure facilities such as the museum and lido: what is interesting to note is that rural people use parks and open space less than urban. This may be because rural residents live closer or in accessible countryside so the demand for formal open space and recreational facilities may be decreased.

**Table 15 – Usage of specific sites and satisfaction**

SERVICE	2002 USAG E LEVE L (%)	RATING (+2 = V Satisfied, -2 = V Dissatisfied)					% DISSATISFIED				
		1993	1995	1997	2000	2002	1993	1995	1997	2000	2002
Lido	18	+1.	+1.	+1.	+1	+1.4	5	4	4	1	1
Museum	14	+1.	+1.	+1.	+1	+1.4	5	2	4	1	1
Tourist	13	+1.	+1.	+1.	+1	+1.3	3	2	2	1	2
Refuse	96	+1.	+1.	+1.	+1	+1.3	6	4	6	8	6
Electric Theatre	11	NA	NA	+1.	+1	+1.3	NA	NA	4	0	0
Spectrum	48	+0.	+1.	+1.	+1	+1.3	21	7	7	7	4
Park & Ride	18	NA	NA	+1.	+1	+1.3	NA	NA	7	7	2
Crematorium	11	NA	NA	NA	+1	+1.3	NA	NA	NA	1	2
Electoral	46	+1.	+1.	+1.	+1	+1.2	2	1	1	1	0

Guildford	5	+1.	+1.	+1.	+1	+1.2	5	0	0	5	8
Guildford House	9	+1.	+1.	+1.	+1	+1.2	6	1	5	1	3
Guildhall	10	+1.	+1.	+1.	+1	+1.2	6	1	0	2	1
Parks/Open	50	+1.	+1.	+1.	+1	+1.1	8	5	6	8	7
Sheltered	2	+0.	+1.	+1.	+1	+1.1	16	9	10	8	4
Environmental	9	NA	NA	+1.	+0	+1	NA	NA	16	16	13
Housing Advice/	12	+0.	+0.	+1.	+0	+1	20	16	13	18	7
Housing	6	NA	NA	+0.	+0	+1	NA	NA	26	24	12
Taxi Licensing	9	NA	NA	+1.	+0	+0.9	NA	NA	5	8	10
Recycling	76	+1.	+1.	+1.	+0	+0.9	16	9	11	19	13
Civic Hall	30	+1.	+1.	+1.	+0	+0.8	4	3	6	12	11
Planning/ control	17	+0.	+0.	+0.	+0	+0.6	29	15	21	29	21
Car Parks	68	+0.	+0.	+0.	+0	+0.6	26	26	24	27	21
Cycle Routes	11	NA	NA	+0.	+0	+0.6	NA	NA	25	27	23
Street Cleaning	66	NA	NA	+0.	+0	+0.5	NA	NA	21	21	24

### A5.7 CONSULTATION FOR THE CULTURAL STRATEGY 2003

Consultation for the Cultural Strategy was wide reaching. Community groups were contacted and invited to write in with their comments. Comments were then analysed and broken down into themes.

Key issues identified were,

1. Lack of play schemes for 10-14 year olds
2. Need to expand after school clubs
3. Lack of sports opportunities in schools
4. Provide improved facilities for young people in Parks and Countryside areas
5. The need to investigate physical access to Leisure Services buildings
6. Look to address litter in parks and countryside
7. Improve crime prevention and security in parks involve young people in sports to decrease anti social behaviour
8. Give the public more say in parks and Countryside provision
9. Keep play facilities affordable

### A5.8 ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

The issues and option consultation for the Guildford Development Framework took place in the spring of 2005. It invited any resident of the borough to comment on a number of issues and vote on options for dealing with the issues.

#### Options preferences

The four options listed are not really alternatives therefore it is hard to identify a preferred option however there is overwhelming support for Option 3

Support for the options is as follows:

Option 3 (protection of facilities) **189** references

Option 1b (additional facilities in villages) **67** references

Option 1a (additional facilities in urban areas) **34** references

Option 2 (delivery of additional facilities by Council or other organisations) **24** references.

### Main themes

There is considerable support for the protection of existing facilities, especially open space and recreation facilities.

The need for protection and enhancement of community facilities in the villages is highlighted to avoid the need for transport to town centre for entertainment and to keep communities alive in villages

Support for facilities for youth/teenagers both in suburban areas and villages are a key issue.

Need for community infrastructure to expand in line with the population increase and change. Facilities should be provided at the same time as new residential development takes place.

The need for efficiency of use of facilities is emphasised. The efficiency of underused facilities should be increased, e.g. dual use of school and University facilities should be encouraged.

Accessibility is a key issue. Facilities should be in easily accessible locations.

Several references are made to specific community facilities including need for replacement Civic Hall and improved library.

A specific targeted consultation exercise was undertaken where questionnaires were sent to organisations and clubs within the borough. The questionnaire was a mix of questions relating to different quantitative and qualitative aspects. For the qualitative elements the respondents were asked to rate certain themes on a scale of very poor to very good.

### Leisure and recreational groups

A broad cross section of leisure and recreational groups responded including numerous uniform groups, youth groups, and music, drama, environmental and history groups and societies.

Over a third of the clubs that responded had over 50 members, only 23% had less than 10 members. The age ranges of the members were relatively diverse with 17% under 18, 10% aged 18-24, 21% 25-44, 26% 45 to 60 and 23% over 60. Most groups meet in a community hall or in a private residence. Only 30% of the groups stated that they required further facilities. Those that did needed further storage, access to venues for performances and rehearsals and large venues due to a rise in membership. 69% of the groups undertook their activities in the urban areas; none of those that responded however meet in the Ash Urban Area.

Only 18% of respondents stated that the quantity of facilities provided is poor or very poor and none of the respondents stated that the condition of facilities was below 'OK'. 25% of respondents felt that affordability is 'Ok' or below, with the majority stating that it is 'Good'. This is also reflected in the view of the location of facilities, as 50% felt the locations were 'Good' and none felt they were worse than 'Ok'. Information about facilities was generally considered 'Ok' with 61% of respondents

stating that or above. Availability is the only real issue where concern is expressed, with only 37% of respondents stating that availability is 'Ok' or above.

68% of the groups shared their facilities with one or more other groups. Such as other leisure or recreational groups and societies and sports groups.

### Sports groups

A number of organisations and groups responded to the consultation from a wide cross section of sports, including tennis, football, bowls and swimming. 83.9% of the clubs that responded had over 50 members, with none having less than 10. The age ranges of members of the clubs were evenly spread with the proportion of members in each age range is around 20%.

Out of the facilities used only 29% of facilities had no allocated car park, 23.5% no toilet, 30% no changing room, 42% no pavilion, and 84% no visitor stand. This shows that many of the sites/facilities used by sports clubs in the borough lack basic facilities such as a changing room.

Only 6.5% of clubs were not charged to use the site/facility, therefore 93.5% of clubs charge their members. 74.2% of clubs stated that they require further facilities. Many clubs said that current facilities were old and in a state of disrepair and increases in membership were putting significant pressure on the facilities they use. Other issues raised were storage facilities access to facilities and marginalisation of certain sports such as boxing and martial arts. Many clubs felt that to increase participation in sport a choice should be provided, therefore more or improved sports facilities are required, and existing sites should diversify and increase the capacity of use. There is also a need for better communication between the Council and sports clubs, for example many clubs see the need for pre season pitches for training.

70% of sporting activities take place in the urban areas, centre on Guildford. There is scope therefore to improve facilities and use of rural facilities/sites. This could be done by improving rural facilities.

47.8% of respondents rated the quantity of sporting facilities as 'Ok' or less. Access and affordability also scored poorly with 47% and 58% respectively rating these indicators at 'Ok' or less. This trend is also reflected when clubs were asked about the information about the site, the location, condition and availability of facilities/sites, with most clubs rating provision/quality as 'Ok'. When asked why, most clubs stated that facilities were not keeping up with membership increases and the range of sporting facilities reduced choice.

### Schools, Parish Councils and Residents Associations

The consultation also included a questionnaire sent out to schools, parish Councils and resident associations asking them to identify what sites/facilities there are or they are aware of and to comment on provision. All sites identified were audited and there comments used to inform the quantitative assessment recoded on the database.