

MAYOR AND CABINET			
Report Title	Beckenham Place Park Regeneration		
Key Decision	Yes	Item No	
Contributors	Executive Director for Customer Services Assistant Director Regeneration and Place		
Class	Part 1	Date	24 th April 2019

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report to Mayor and Cabinet sets out the progress made on the regeneration of Beckenham Place Park to date, and the proposed next steps, particularly for the regeneration of the eastern side of the park.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Lewisham Council was awarded delivery stage funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Parks for People programme, in December 2016 to restore Beckenham Place Park. Since then design work was finalised, planning permission secured, works were tendered, and the restoration works in the western side of the park are now nearing completion.
- 2.2 Two contracts are currently on site – one to restore several of the listed buildings on the site, and the other to restore the landscape and create the lake.
- 2.3 The restoration of the buildings (the homestead, the stableyard cottages, the gardener's cottage and the external fabric of the gatehouse and Southend Lodge have progressed very smoothly. Several challenges have arisen on site with regards to the landscape restoration, but despite this, works will be complete by June of this year, and the transformed park will be ready to be enjoyed by local people through the summer.
- 2.4 The regeneration of the part of the park to the east of the railway line was to be carried out in conjunction with the Environment Agency (EA). The EA were leading this part of the project which was part of a large, 10 site flood alleviation scheme which sought to protect Lewisham and Catford town centres from fluvial flooding. Beckenham Place Park was to be the holding reservoir for flood waters in times of exceptionally high flow. However, in summer of 2018 the EA concluded that the cost of the scheme they had designed had risen too

significantly from initial cost estimates to be cost effective or deliverable within the government funding protocols they must work within. As a result, the scheme will not be delivered.

- 2.5 The regeneration of the east part of Beckenham Place Park was to be delivered as part of this flood alleviation scheme. Lewisham Council had committed funds to the flood scheme (- a Mayor and Cabinet decision in February 2016 committed up to £2m for this project) as the EA's key partner in the scheme, and the landscape improvements for the east side of the park would be delivered as part of this. Whilst the HLF expected that the whole of the park would be restored, and the funding bid to the HLF was made on that basis, none of the HLF project budget was committed to the eastern side of the park, as financially this stood as a separate package, to be delivered primarily by the EA.
- 2.6 The vision for the western side of the park is now coming to fruition. The park is already much busier, despite the significant earthworks, and the range of people enjoying it and the activities taking place in the park is much more diverse than it was. Key landscape features and buildings are being restored, and the park is becoming the well used and well loved community asset it should be.
- 2.7 However, as we approach the completion of the first phase of Beckenham Place Park, there is more work required to make the most of this unique open space for the community. Further investment is required for the eastern part of the park, and to ensure that the regeneration of the western part of the park is completed well and can be maintained sustainably for years to come.

3. Recommendations

Mayor and Cabinet is recommended to note the content of the report and:

- 3.1 approve additional capital programme contribution of £1.936m to secure the investment outlined in paragraph 8.
- 3.2 give approval to begin the process of obtaining a traffic management order for Beckenham Place Park, to enable the introduction of parking enforcement.
- 3.3 give approval to grant a lease of the new education centre to the Field Studies Council and to delegate responsibility to the Executive Director for Customer Services, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Place and the Head of Law, to agree final terms as set out in this report.

4. Policy context

4.1 Lewisham's Corporate Strategy set out seven corporate priorities and the work in Beckenham Place Park contributes to several of these:

- **Making Lewisham Greener** – through the preservation and enhancement of the Borough's award winning green spaces and supporting increased use of environmentally friendly transport options, including the provision of electric vehicle charging points.
- **Open Lewisham** – through the project's events, community engagement and volunteer work streams we bring the community together around shared experiences
- **Giving children and young people the best start in life** – through the creation of a new outdoor education centre which will support the ability of schools to deliver a broad curriculum
- **Delivering and defending health, social care and support** – creating opportunities for people to develop and sustain healthy lifestyles through the provision of activities and opportunities that support physical and mental wellbeing

4.2 The restoration of Beckenham Place Park will create a significant open space, venue and leisure facility that genuinely impacts the quality of life of thousands of residents. Restoration of a park of this scale and quality to achieve another Green Flag could make a substantial contribution to the regeneration of the south of borough, helping to engender a sense of place and pride in the area. Already we are beginning to see this happening. As the park's reputation, activities and events grow over the next few years, the positive impact of the open space on the surrounding areas will be felt to a greater extent.

4.3 The restoration of the park through the Parks for People project means that Beckenham Place Park is beginning to have much more relevance and a much greater positive impact on the communities which surround it. To ensure that the park makes the maximum possible positive contribution to the communities of Bellingham, Downham and Whitefoot particularly, it is important that further investment is secured to improve the eastern part of the park.

5. The park and the vision for regeneration

5.1 Two years ago (April 2017) a paper was taken to Sustainable Development Committee describing the project and its aims. The report stated

5.2 *“Beckenham Place Park is Lewisham’s largest park by far; indeed it is the one of the largest parks in London, and South east London’s biggest open space. At 95 hectares it is 30% bigger than Greenwich Park. It boasts ancient woodland, meadow, parkland, a river and several historic buildings. It was originally acquired by the London County Council to be the key amenity space for the new estates of Bellingham and Downham.*

Yet today the park is little known among the wider community and is used significantly less than many other Lewisham parks, despite its size. A usage and movement survey of the park was carried out by Building Design Partnership (BDP) in 2013. In addition, in November 2015 and April 2016 a further usage survey was carried out. Together these surveys establish a fairly robust picture of usage throughout the year. They conclude that the park currently attracts around 220,000 visits a year, which is only around a quarter of the number of visits made to Brockwell Park.”

5.3 At the heart of the vision to regenerate Beckenham Place Park and its buildings has always been the aspiration to significantly increase the use of the park, both in terms of visitor numbers and in terms of the diversity of those visitors. Already, there has been significant movement in this direction with visitor numbers doubling since closure of the golf course to more than 400,000 visitors and an increasing proportion of visitors from BAME groups. Previously few children or families visited the park; but already the age demographic visiting more closely matches that of the neighbouring populations. Please see appendix 3 for more details.

5.4 In order to engage a much broader and larger audience to benefit from the park, it is important to recognise the breadth of appeal and opportunities it affords. In order to ensure the regeneration plans built on the full breadth of the parks potential, five themes were developed:

Themes for the park’s regeneration:

- Community
- Heritage
- Outdoor activity
- Nature
- Relaxation and play

These themes have shaped the development of the park over the past two years – both in terms of the landscape change, and in terms of the activities and events which have been offered.

5.4.1 Community

Already we have seen

- Hundreds of volunteers involved in tree planting
- A hugely successful Straw bale garden – two years running – maintained by volunteers
- Volunteers helping with many events from the Festival of Lights to the flower and dog show, and outdoor cinema events.
- Volunteers of all ages and all walks of life – with two special schools regularly using and volunteering in the park

The new community garden, (which replaces the temporary straw bale garden) based around the gardener's cottage will create a focus for horticultural volunteers in the summer, and a base for winter activities such as wood craft and woodland maintenance.

The restoration is making Beckenham Place Park into a place where community gathers – where people from all walks of life and all ages come together to volunteer, to learn, to celebrate, to enjoy events and the great outdoors, together.

5.4.2 Heritage

Beckenham Place Park is a place full of history. Its listed buildings are much loved by local people, and the regeneration of the park aims to bring alive the stories of the park and its buildings to all park users. As the Georgian mansion and stable are the dominant buildings in the park, the regeneration looks particularly to restore the Georgian landscape and buildings for twenty-first century use. The restoration of the lake and pleasure grounds, and relocation of the car park will redefine the park's landscape creating an outstanding setting for community activities and events.

The restoration of the eighteenth century stable block and stable yard will create an historic and beautiful arrival point and hub for the park, providing a café, public toilets and an education centre, and a gateway to the gardens and park beyond.

5.4.3 Outdoor activity

As south east London's largest park, Beckenham Place Park offers many opportunities for outdoor activities that other urban parks simply cannot support. ParkRun is established on the eastern side of the park with around 170 runners each week. Once the restoration is complete, a children's ParkRun will also begin. New paths and trails will encourage park users to explore the whole park – to walk, run and (on some paths) to cycle through the landscape. The paths also increase accessibility for people with limited mobility.

Scouts groups, orienteering groups, running clubs and other sporting groups are now making use of the park, and guided family cycle rides are now taking pace. The BMX facility, built in the eastern part of the park in close proximity to the skate park, has been very successful, offering open access riding, club sessions and sessions for specific school groups and women's riding.

Perhaps the most unique and exciting sports offer the park will make is that of outdoor swimming. The project team is currently working to define the best means of safely operating the lake as a place for wild swimming – both in the summer- where potential audience is much larger – and also throughout the year.

5.4.4 Nature

Beckenham Place Park is Lewisham's most important site for nature conservation. With its varied habitats of ancient woodland, acid grassland, river and meadow, the site already supports considerable biodiversity. The regeneration of the park introduces two new habitats identified as priorities within Greater London – open water and wet woodland.

The project has already planted three hectares of new woodland following award of two rounds of funding from the Mayor of London. It is expanding the areas of meadow and improving the management of existing woodlands through removal of invasive species thereby allowing more light to reach native ground flora.

The regeneration of the park is also helping park users to engage with, and to appreciate the wealth of nature in Beckenham Place park, through new trails, interpretation, education, events and through the accessibility of the landscape itself. Many people commented in consultation events that they appreciate Beckenham Place Park as a 'piece of countryside'. This sense of openness and reconnection with nature is an important aspect of the park, and the regeneration plans seek to strengthen this special character.

5.4.5 Relaxation and play

In a busy urban area it is important that communities have places to relax; where adults and children alike can play. New timber and natural play provision is being installed as part of the pleasure grounds, close to the lake and café. A purpose built barbecue area is being provided and there will be ample opportunities to explore, to discover, and to relax in nature. Lewisham's residents enjoy attending events and the project seeks to encourage and develop a varied events programme that will introduce new users to the park.

Please refer to Appendix 1, a masterplan of the park.

6. The eastern side of the park

- 6.1 As outlined in section 2.4 above, withdrawal of the Environment Agency's flood alleviation scheme has required us to propose alternative plans. In order to bring the original vision of Beckenham Place Park's restoration to fruition, significant funding is required to provide key facilities in this part of the park. This is particularly important to help Downham residents, living on this side of the park, to make use of the entire open space and to rebuild a connection to it.
- 6.2 Facilities and investment are required that brings the east of the park up to a similar standard as the west. The original plans for the whole park placed the major play area for the space in this part of the park. Currently there is little formal play provision included in the scheme – yet we know this is a key draw – not only for children, but for their parents and carers too. If we are to realise the vision to triple use of the park and increase the connection local communities feel to the park, (therefore increasing the benefits it brings them) a major play area is needed here, as well as other key facilities – toilets, a refreshment kiosk, and a far more welcoming entrance to the open space.
- 6.3 The Environment Agency have also expressed a desire to work with us to make the most of the major natural asset in this part of the park – the River Ravensbourne. Currently park users, even those that walk along the riverside path, can scarcely see the river at all. There is significant potential to restore character and form to the parkland, enhance biodiversity, and provide modest flood storage by making small scale alterations to the river and banks, and introducing some permanent wetland areas. This part of the park could be transformed in a similar way to Ladywell fields or Sutcliffe Park.
- 6.4 Funding in the region of £1.9 - £2m is required to make this a reality. The project team is now defining a funding strategy and timeline for the project. Officers seek funding of £1.14m from the Council's Capital Programme in order to lever in funding from other institutions (Please see section 9 below for further details). It is hoped that external funds might be secured from the EA and from the GLA and discussions are underway with these organisations. Although the funds sought from the Council are substantial, they should be seen in the light of the Council's previous commitment of £2m to the anticipated flood alleviation scheme. The EA scheme brought not only flood protection benefits but major improvements to the park environment and facilities with new and upgraded, entrances, play, skate facility, wetland habitats and extensive soft landscaping.

7. Project timetable and transformation to date

7.1 It is exciting to see many years of work on Beckenham Place Park come to fruition. Restoration works on the western side of the park will be completed this summer, and we look forward to welcoming many new users to this space. The table below outlines major project milestones to date and outlines the next phase of work to complete the vision.

Milestone	Date
Golf course closed	Nov 2016
12,000 trees planted	Feb 2017
BMX track opened	Sept 2017
Planning permission granted	Oct 2017
Works started on site	April 2018
Environment Agency scheme withdrawal	Summer 2018
Works completed on western side of park	May 2019
Opening celebration	20 th July 2019
Seeking funding for eastern side of the park	2019
Programme for eastern side of the park works dependent on funding	Earliest possible completion summer 2021

7.2 Although the physical transformation of the park has not yet been completed, the change in use and popularity of the park has already been marked, providing a strong indication that the project will not only fulfil but exceed the original vision to triple use and diversify audiences. The community engagement officer has been instrumental in making this possible. Please see appendix 2 for details on the community engagement and volunteering activities in the park to date. This post is funded through the HLF project until 2021.

8. Requirement for further Council funding 2019 - 2022

8.1 Funds for the eastern side of the park - £1,140,000 (2019 – 2022)

At the outset of the project it was always the Council's intention that the whole park should be regenerated, and investment should be spread across both sides of the railway line which divides the park. Officers were working with the Environment Agency to deliver the Ravensbourne flood alleviation scheme which used this part of the park as a temporary reservoir in order to hold back fluvial waters in times of high flow, to prevent Catford and Lewisham town centres flooding. The flood scheme was to be funded by the EA, with a contribution of up to £2m from Lewisham Council (dependent on the level of other funding the EA secured). Beckenham Place Park's project manager was involved in the scheme primarily to ensure the flood scheme also delivered an attractive and usable park, which was in keeping with the park on the western side of the railway line. Although it was hoped at the outset that delivery of the

schemes would be delivered concurrently, the finances of the two schemes were necessarily separate. The Heritage Lottery Funders, nevertheless, expect restoration of the whole open space, as this was set out in the Round 2 application as the vision for the park in the future.

- 8.2 In the summer of 2018 the Environment Agency (EA) withdrew the Ravensbourne Flood alleviation scheme, stating that costs had risen too far from initial estimates, and that the scheme was no longer fundable under the government guidelines in which they operate. Despite discussions with the Acting Chief Executive, officers and politicians locally, stating strongly Lewisham's disappointment with this decision, all EA funding for it was withdrawn. By this time works on the western side of the park were already underway.
- 8.3 The impact of this for Beckenham Place Park is that, (other than the new BMX track which opened in Sept 2017), there is no investment currently available for the eastern side of the park. Lewisham Council is currently in the position of not being able to complete its commitment to the HLF to regenerate the whole park, and more importantly, of failing to invest in the part of the park which is most accessible to Downham residents – having secured millions to spend on the historic heart of the park, closest to Bellingham and Beckenham.
- 8.4 There is a strong desire expressed by local councillors and residents that we should secure further funds to deliver the public investment planned in this part of the park even if the flood risk benefits are much smaller than originally planned. Officers have been having discussions with potential funders and looking carefully for funding opportunities. The previous scheme offered significant new facilities for local people which were popular when consultation was carried out in 2016. Some re-design would be required in order to adapt these ideas to the park without the large flood embankments but a new scheme would still seek to deliver the key public facilities and more modest flood benefits within the park. The regeneration plan here would be subject to further consultation with local people, but officers would expect it to include most of the elements of the previous scheme, these are:
- A re-worked entrance space at Old Bromley Road
 - New bridge over the river
 - A large adventurous play area
 - New paths and routes within the area
 - Signage and trails
 - Wetland habitats, and a better connection between the river and the open space
 - Toilets and a refreshment kiosk
 - Under-fives play

- Improvements to the skate park

The cost of this scheme in this large open space would be £1.9m - £2m.

- 8.5 Given the budget required, it is important to secure large funding pots at the outset, to ensure delivery of the scheme is feasible. Although there may be some smaller pots available (Marathon Trust, Pocket Parks etc) bids to these funds would need to be made once the core funding has been secured.
- 8.6 Officers have had discussions with the EA and with the GLA and are hopeful of securing funding from both of these organisations over the next 12-15 months. The Environment Agency have indicated they could only fund a project which offered some flood benefit, and that their funding would be unlikely to exceed £400k. The GLA currently have no capital funds available, but have been very supportive with the transformation of the west of the park, and the reinstatement of the lake, and seem keen to be involved in further work here, when appropriate new funding streams become available. Funds from the GLA would be unlikely to exceed £500k.
- 8.7 Officers therefore believe that if restoration of the whole park is to be achieved, and the vision for Beckenham Place Park fully realised – making the park accessible and attractive to all local people - that it is necessary for the Council to contribute a capital sum to make it happen. Currently the lack of investment in the eastern part of the park creates a real barrier for those from Downham enjoying the transformed space on the west.
- 8.8 Officers request Mayor and Cabinet allocates £1,140,000 from the Council's Capital programme to the regeneration of the eastern part of the park, with the understanding that the additional funding required is secured from other partners. A firm allocation from the Council at this stage would be very helpful in seeking and securing further funds, and would allow us to progress with design and consultation work.
- 8.9 **Contamination funds £300k**

Works began on the lake in early summer 2018. Prior to works and before the golf course closed intrusive surveys had been undertaken within the footprint of the lake and found no contamination. Archaeological surveys had also been undertaken and found no asbestos. Nevertheless, these surveys amounted to a small sample of the total area to be excavated and it became clear that the made ground at the western end of the lake contained cement bonded asbestos, as well as some other contaminants.

- 8.10 After restoration began and contamination was discovered a lengthy programme of testing was required to fully assess the situation, a remediation strategy was drawn up and agreed, and considerable time was lost on site. In addition, contamination in the soil had to be hand picked, air monitoring was required, and a new strategy was required for how we accommodated the spoil from the lake on site which was now considered contaminated material. Contamination has not been restricted to the lake area but has been discovered in other parts of the work site, notably the formal gardens which are another key element of the restoration plans.
- 8.11 Very considerable additional costs were incurred, which, together with smaller variations to the contract and evolution of the scheme on site (virtually unavoidable in landscape schemes) result in the contingency being exceeded.
- 8.12 Additional costs were incurred as follows:
- a) Stand still costs for 2 months
 - b) Survey costs for the contamination
 - c) Consultant costs – for the remediation strategy and its approval
 - d) Air monitoring costs
 - e) Slower excavation costs to allow workmen to continue to monitor all lake arisings
 - f) Costs to hand pick the asbestos out of the arisings and dispose off-site
 - g) Additional design costs in order to accommodate the arisings on site – no longer suitable for the creation of the mounded garden
 - h) Geotextile membrane for a large area to prevent soil mixing
 - i) Survey costs to certify clean soils to lay above the membrane
 - j) Creation of receiving sites (strip topsoil, dig a pit for containment of contaminated soils
 - k) Placement of clean cover and earth sculpting to ensure a natural topography, and seeding of these areas
- 8.13 Contingency monies will go a considerable way to cover these costs, as well as covering other arising variations on both the buildings and landscape contracts. Nevertheless, current estimates show that the landscape contract is likely to complete at £300k over budget. In order to complete the works currently on site an additional Capital Programme contribution of £300k will be required.
- 8.14 Efforts are being made continually to minimise additional costs and to recoup the currently forecasted overspend, but there is little scope to reduce costs in a landscape project of this scale without making major omissions (paths, playground) which would be to the detriment to the project.
- 8.15 **Southend Lodge internal refurbishment £65k**

Southend Lodge, (the larger gatehouse to the park located just off Beckenham Hill Road) is used as a depot building and mess rooms for the grounds staff in the park. Its external refurbishment (together with the small gatehouse opposite) is part of the HLF project, but no HLF funds are available for internal works. Refurbishment is required, not only as a means of investing in the staff who are crucial to maintenance and development of the park, but also to comply with welfare at work regulations. Until recently the grounds staff at Beckenham Place Park were all male. Now there is one female permanent member of staff and two female apprentices. Welfare at work regulations require that separate changing is available for men and women. More than one toilet is also required for the 7 members of staff who currently work there, and the shower needs locating in an area which is accessible to both men and women.

8.16 As a result of this some internal reconfiguration is required. Refurbishment will create a modern and functional space for breaks and work – creating an office space with new wifi, a meeting room, a kitchen and good quality changing and showering space. Drawings have been prepared and priced. Listed building consent will be sought once funding is secured.

8.17 **Landscape maintenance equipment £273k**

The landscape of Beckenham Place Park has changed markedly through the regeneration scheme. In 2015 the park was still used as a golf course, and most of the maintenance was focused on golf. The restored park introduces a lake, increases the area of meadow, seeks to better maintain the ancient woodland to maximise ground flora and habitat value, and increases the area of formal gardens. In addition, the scheme has already doubled visitor numbers, and it is likely that these will double again in the next 3-5 years.

8.18 The west side of the Beckenham Place Park is the only park in the borough that is not managed through the Glendale grounds maintenance contract, this is due to the park's past use as a golf course and the problems associated with contracting those arrangements. The grounds staff at Beckenham Place Park have access to mainly aged equipment that was required to maintain the golf course but is not suited to changing maintenance needs.

8.19 Whilst the staff resource is available to manage these changed priorities, the different landscape tasks require different tools and machines to maintain it from the golf course. Similarly, the dramatic increase in visitor numbers means that litter collection and maintaining safety (play equipment, trip hazards, trees) become more significant elements of management, which demands different vehicles and types of equipment.

8.19 The following table shows the equipment and machinery the grounds staff require in order to effectively and sustainably maintain the restored park.

Item	Reason required	Cost
Chipper	Increase in woodland and tree maintenance	£10,200
Rotary ride on mower, cut and collect	Small scale mower to access pleasure grounds and collect arisings in the 7 acre gardens	£16,500
Gator utility vehicle	Necessary for the woodland maintenance and to tow key equipment such as chipper and trailer	£18,000
Boat with electric motor and buoyancy aids	To maintain the lake	£1500
2 tonne trailer	To transport waste from litter bins, arisings from chipper and shredder	£5000
Shredder	To properly deal with prunings from the gardens and pleasure grounds allowing effective on site composting	£6000
Combination mower, scarifier, roller (pedestrian)	To mow new lawns in the formal gardens that are inaccessible to vehicle mowers, and the carriage drive	£12,000
Pedestrian flail	For removing extensive bramble and dealing with areas of undergrowth	£10,000
Various items of handheld equipment – strimmers, chainsaws etc	Electric chain saw and other equipment needed, as more environmentally sensitive and quieter than two stroke	£6000
Total		£85,200

8.20 In addition to these items necessary to maintain the new landscape, the maintenance of the park would benefit from investment in the larger machinery which has not been replaced for many years. Some vehicles are on hire arrangements which would cease; others would simply be replaced with new models.

The vehicles in need of replacement are listed below:

Item	Cost
Utility vehicles (buggies) x 2	£20,000 (£10,000 each)
50 HP tractor with front loader	£40,000
Compact tractor	£20,000

Wide area ride on mower x 2	£76,000 (£38,000 each)
Out front ride on mower	£20,000
Tractor mounted blower	£5000
Tractor mounted leaf sucker	£7000
Total vehicle cost	£188,000
Grand total vehicle and equipment cost	£273,200

8.21 Restoration of the Foxgrove Club £150k

The Foxgrove, situated on the edge of the park's ancient woodland, was built in the 1930s as a golf club house. It is an attractive, spacious lodge, and following use as a golf club house, became a private social club for many years. The building has been owned by Lewisham Council since the whole park came into Lewisham ownership in 1971. After accumulating significant rent arrears, the social club, who had leased the club for decades ceased to operate in 2015, and the Council took back the building. However, a legacy of underinvestment by the social club mean that the building was in a very poor state of repair. To secure the building with minimal costs the Council has let the building to property guardians during the parks' restoration phase.

8.22 Officers recommended that the Council should look to re-let the building once restoration was underway and there was increased visitor numbers in the park and optimism around reuse of the building. In the interim the Foxgrove was let to property guardians, however its condition is not good and even securing continued occupation by guardians has proved challenging.

8.23 Officers recommend that carrying out the works listed below prior to marketing the building to potential tenants would attract the best results for the Council both in terms of rents accruing, and in terms of being able to choose a tenant which is suitable for the location and helps to draw new audiences into the park.

Item	Cost
Electrical rewire	£25k
Renewal of heating	£30k
Structural repairs	£10k
Window repairs	£10k
Door repairs	£5k
External repairs and decoration	£20k
Renewal of plasterwork and treatment of damp and mould	£30k
Inflation and contingency	£20k
TOTAL	£150k

8.24 If these works (costed in the dilapidation report carried out on the Foxgrove in 2015) were carried out, the tenant would be left with those costs typically

incurred at the beginning of a new tenancy – fit out, decoration and flooring costs. Nevertheless, in a substantial building such as the Foxgrove, these costs are large, and expecting a new tenant to do more than this would limit the market to those with significant reserves or the ability to secure significant financing, and may not result in the best return for the Council in the longer term, nor the best fit in terms of use of park building.

8.25 Currently the Foxgrove is a significant Council asset which is not offering the Council the commercial return it could, nor drawing new audiences to the park. As part of the restoration of Beckenham Place Park, it is important that the Council takes action to ensure the Foxgrove delivers both a social and financial return in the next few years.

8.26 **Match funding for Pocket Parks Plus bid £8k**

Stumps Hill Pond is situated close to Beckenham Hill Road. It is a spring fed pond which appears on maps from C18th, but has been neglected and fenced off from public for almost two decades. The Friends of Beckenham Place Park have been particularly keen, in the past couple years, to see this pond restored as part of the regeneration of the park. The Friends group have submitted a bid to Pocket Parks Plus (GLA) fund for £25k to dredge and de-silt the pond, remove the current chain link fencing and carry out significant tree works to allow more light into the pond. This will not only restore the pond for public use and enjoyment, but will also re-establish an important habitat which can be used by the park's education centre.

8.27 It was hoped that the HLF project would be able to match fund the bid, but the call on the project's contingency for other elements of the work has been so significant that this is no longer feasible. If the Pocket Parks bid is successful, the Council's £8k will lever in a further £25k investment for the restoration of this historic feature.

8.28 **Summary of funding requirements**

Area of need	Investment required
Regeneration of the eastern side of the park	£1,140,000
Allocation to assist with contamination costs	£300,000
Internal refurbishment of Southend lodge	£65,000
New equipment for transformed park maintenance	£273,200
Repairs to Foxgrove to achieve lettable standard	£150,000
Match funding for Pockets Park bid to restore Stumps Hill Pond	£8,000
TOTAL investment	£1,936,200

If the additional funding above is made available the Council's contribution to the overall Beckenham Place Park project would rise from 24% of the total

investment currently being made, to around 37-40% of the total investment following restoration of the eastern side of the open space as well.

	Current Funding	Future funding if all additional LBL funds secured *
LBL contribution	£1,688,745	£3,624,945
External funding	£5,269,380	£6,219,380
Total	£6,958,125	£9,844,325
LBL % contribution	24%	37%

*This assumes £950,000 further funding is secured from GLA/ EA/ other external sources for the eastern side of the park

This demonstrates that despite the loss of the Environment Agency major scheme funding the project continues to leverage a large amount of external funding.

9. Parking

- 9.1 Since closure of the golf course in October 2016 there has been a noticeable increase in use of the park and an increase in the number of cars using the car park. Car parking capacity will be increased slightly, rising from 72 to 108 spaces when the car park is relocated from in front of the mansion to opposite the stable block. But demand for space is likely to increase as new facilities are completed and opened to the public. Demand for parking space often exceeds availability, in particular at weekends when significant amounts of people park in an ad hoc fashion along the drive and on grassy verges, despite signage requesting that they should not park in these areas. This unauthorised parking can cause problems with access and egress along the drive and causes damage to the grassed verges.
- 9.2 The new car park, relocated opposite the restored stable will provide electric vehicle charging and a new enforcement regime will be necessary to ensure that motor vehicles do not park in these spaces. Demand for parking in the park has increased and is likely to increase further, and the unregulated nature of the parking is resulting in visitors parking outside of authorised spaces causing damage and obstructions. It is therefore recommended that in order to secure the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities free from obstructions to use that the Council should begin the process of obtaining a traffic management order for Beckenham Place Park. Once complete this would enable the introduction of parking enforcement and a new charging regime.
- 9.3 The new car park with 108 spaces will be opening in June and will replace the one that is being removed from outside the mansion. If charging and enforcement is introduced to help manage demand and reduce unauthorised parking this should also reduce damage and disruption in the park. A reduction in demand, in particular at peak times, would also help the Council with its

Travel Plan objective of reducing the percentage of overall trips to the park made by car from 19% to 10% within 5 years. It will also help encourage visitors to use more sustainable modes of travel when visiting. The travel plan includes a package of measures which should over time help achieve a modal shift, with more people walking, cycling or using public transport to visit the park.

- 9.4 For this reason, officers seek the Mayor’s approval to begin the process to obtain a traffic management order for the park. The statutory process of consultation will be followed, and, if the traffic management order is implemented, the car park would be included within the Council’s enforcement regime. Income from parking will help meet the enforcement costs and upkeep of the parking facility.

10. Future income streams and revenue savings

- 10.1 Income streams which could be earned through the park’s assets are not guaranteed, and are difficult to estimate accurately at this stage of the project. However officers believe that the following income could be forthcoming in the next few years.

Income stream	Estimate per year	Caveat
Café income	£30k	
Foxgrove rents	£45k	Requires capital funds of £150k to be agreed
Cottages rents	£35k	
Events income	£40k	On the basis of 2 larger scale events a year
Private parties, hire of stable block, weddings/marquee income	£10k	
TOTAL	£160k	

- 10.2 If the capital bid in this report is not agreed, future income to the park is likely to be lower than predicted above:
- a) Visitor numbers will not be as high if the eastern side is not regenerated, this may affect events and private hire income. Visitor numbers could also have a knock on impact on rents earned, as commercial rents are dependent on achieving high footfall in the space.
 - b) Rental income for the Foxgrove may not be forthcoming at all, or may be significantly delayed if the Council does not make restoration funds available to repair and restore the building prior to marketing.

Revenue costs and savings

- 10.3 Maintenance costs for the western side of the park are likely to remain as they are currently, with the in-house grounds team managing the changed landscape. However, the eastern side of Beckenham Place park is currently maintained by Glendale at a cost to the Council of £150k pa. If funding is made

available for the replacement equipment required for the maintenance of the new landscape, the in-house maintenance team would be able to maintain the eastern part of the park as well, this could realise an ongoing revenue saving of £150k pa. over the contracted out arrangements.

- 10.4 The combination of enhanced income and cost savings would place the park on a much more sustainable footing.

11. New environmental education partner

- 11.1 Wide Horizons had been named as a partner organisation within the Parks for People project since its inception, and the HLF were eager to see the opportunities Beckenham Place Park offers for environmental education and outdoor learning, fully utilised through this partnership.
- 11.2 Unfortunately, in July 2018, Wide Horizons went into administration. Officers were keen to find an alternative partner, not only to ensure commitments made to the funding body could be achieved, but, even more importantly, to ensure Beckenham Place Park achieves its potential as a community asset.
- 11.3 Planning permission has been secured to use part of the restored stable for education (use class D1) and the provision of outdoor learning opportunities is one of the key requirements of the HLF funding the Council have received so a search was begun to find a replacement education provider. Contact was made with all known local environmental education organisations to discuss the potential opportunity of expanding their programmes into Beckenham Place Park. Several organisations were interested, visited the park and discussed the potential it offered.
- 11.4 All interested parties were invited to complete a structured pro forma setting out clearly their offer in terms of environmental education delivery in Beckenham Place Park and their business plan assumptions. Officers were then able to compare the offers being made simply and transparently. Despite initial interest only two submissions were made. The Field Studies Council made the strongest offer with the most certain financial position, they were keen to commit to the site for longer, and are confident to offer delivery of a significant volume of schools work within Beckenham Place Park.
- 11.5 None of the bidders (nor Wide Horizons prior to their collapse) had been able to offer rent for the education centre. By inviting offers from a range of potential education providers for use of the building for outdoor education as outlined in the Council's grant funding application we have marketed the opportunity publicly. Despite the Field Studies Council's offer of nil rent, it is the view of the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Place that having tested the market for this specific use we can be confident that this is the best consideration that the Council can achieve for this use.
- 11.6 It is therefore recommended that Mayor and Cabinet delegates responsibility to the Executive Director for Customer Services, in consultation with the Assistant

Director of Regeneration and Place and the Head of Law, to agree lease terms and an operational agreement with the Fields Studies Council to facilitate outdoor learning programmes in Beckenham Place Park.

12. Legal implications

- 12.1 The Council has a wide general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals generally may do. The existence of the general power is not limited by the existence of any other power of the Council which (to any extent) overlaps the general power. The Council has express powers under the Open Spaces Act 1906 to maintain and improve parks and open spaces. The Council also has express powers under the Ministry of Housing and Local Government Provisional Order Confirmation (Greater London Parks and Open Spaces) Act 1967 to provide and maintain for or in connection with any purpose relating to the open space such buildings or structures as they consider necessary or appropriate.
- 12.2 In accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, except with the consent of the Secretary of State, a council shall not dispose of land under this section, otherwise than by way of a short tenancy, for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained. The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Place has confirmed that this is the case in connection with the proposed lease to the Field Studies Council.
- 12.3 In considering whether to make the additional funding referred to in this report available, Mayor and Cabinet should have regard to the Council's statutory powers referred to in paragraph 12.1 above, the matters referred to in this report, the Council's fiduciary duty to the Council Tax payers and to all other relevant considerations.
- 12.4 The Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 ("the Act"), enables the Council as the traffic authority for the area to make Traffic Regulation Orders to control or regulate vehicular and other traffic and can be made so as to apply to particular parts of an area. In addition where for the purposes of relieving or preventing congestion of traffic it appears to a local authority to be necessary to provide suitable parking places it may do so pursuant to Section 32 of the Act. Section 35 enables the authority to charge for such parking places and to attach conditions as to their use. The Act and associated regulations sets out the procedure, including statutory consultation, that has to be followed when making such orders.
- 12.5 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age,

disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

12.6 In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.7 It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed at 10.3 above.

12.8 The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made. This is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.

12.9 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has recently issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled "Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice". The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

12.10 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

- The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
- Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
- Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities
- Objectives and the equality duty. A guide for public authorities
- Equality Information and the Equality Duty: A Guide for Public Authorities

12.11 The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance#h1>

13. Financial implications

13.1 Capital

13.2 This report recommends that Mayor & Cabinet allocates an additional £1,936k of General Fund capital resources in order to finance the investment as summarised in paragraph 8.28. The Council has limited General Fund capital resources, and therefore by making this contribution towards this scheme, there will inevitably be less resources available to deliver other schemes in the future that may help to deliver other corporate priorities. As per paragraph 8.6, officers are also seeking additional grant funding from the Environment Agency and the GLA.

13.3 Revenue

13.4 This report recommends that officers are given approval to begin the process of obtaining a traffic management order for Beckenham Place Park, to enable parking to be charged for and enforced. It is envisaged that parking revenues would support the costs of the new enforcement regime and maintenance of the new parking facility.

- 13.5 Paragraph 10.1 outlines estimates of future income streams, which may be forthcoming following investment over the next few years. Also, as per paragraph 10.3, it is expected there will be reduced maintenance costs on the eastern side of the park following the landscaping works and purchase of the additional equipment.
- 13.6 This report also recommends that Mayor & Cabinet give approval to grant a lease of the new education centre to the Field Studies Council and to delegate responsibility to the Executive Director for Customer Services to agree final terms. Further details are set out in section 11 of this report.

14. Environmental implications

- 14.1 Investment in Beckenham Place Park has positive environmental implications. New priority habitats are being created, woodlands and meadows are being expanded, and the relaxation of former golf course maintenance allows more ecologically sensitive maintenance to be undertaken, reducing mowing, herbicides and fertiliser use. In addition, the 3 hectares of new woodland already planted will, in time, have a beneficial effect on air quality in the area. If work to the east side of the park is progressed, then further environmental benefits will result these are likely to include smaller scale flood storage, new and enhanced habitats and further tree planting. Our interpretation and community engagement work also means that we will increase public understanding and appreciation of the environment at Beckenham Place Park.

15. Equality implications

- 15.1 In regenerating the park, officers are seeking to address issues which hinder use and enjoyment of the space by the widest section of the community. A number of physical interventions to enhance facilities and accessibility will be implemented through the project, addressing key issues such as inaccessible toilets, poor quality paths etc. These physical improvements will be combined with outreach to target groups who might otherwise feel reluctant or unable to use the park to understand and break down any further barriers to use.
- 15.2 Events and activities are being developed to appeal to local people, and, at times, to deliberately reach out to particular sectors of the community who are not yet accessing or are underrepresented the park. A mid-term user survey to be completed this summer will allow officers to compare usage of the park prior to works with that that occurs after completion with the aim of ensuring that usage is more reflective of the surrounding population.

16. Crime and disorder implications

- 16.1 Increasing the use of Beckenham Place Park is key to reducing anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in this open space. Investing in the park and removing damaged and derelict features will also deter anti-social behaviour, helping people to feel safer and discouraging casual vandalism.
- 16.2 In addition, our activities and volunteering programmes actively engage residents and school pupils extensively in the park. As volunteers have invested in the open space, and continue to do so, the sense of ownership and pride in the park is growing considerably. This in turn moves them to actively look after the space, and deters anti-social behaviour.

17. Human Rights implications

There are no specific human rights implications arising out of this report.

18. Conclusion

- 18.1 Projects of this scale, complexity and duration often encounter challenges. But the loss of the key partners like Wide Horizons and the withdrawal of the Environment Agency's flood alleviation project in summer 2018 whilst the works to the west side of the park were already underway has created major challenges. This report sets out the steps that are being taken to address these challenges and to address problems encountered during works with the aim of completing the original vision for the restoration of the whole of Beckenham Place Park so that it can fulfil its potential to be not just the biggest but the best park in the borough.

17. Background documents and report author

- 17.1 Alison Taylor - Project Manager x48758

- Appendix 1- Masterplan – emerging landscape design for the park
- Appendix 2 – Community engagement highlights
- Appendix 3 – emerging trends on the use of the park

If you require any further information about this report please contact Alison Taylor on alison.taylor@lewisham.gov.uk

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

Location plan



The homesteads



The Mansion House



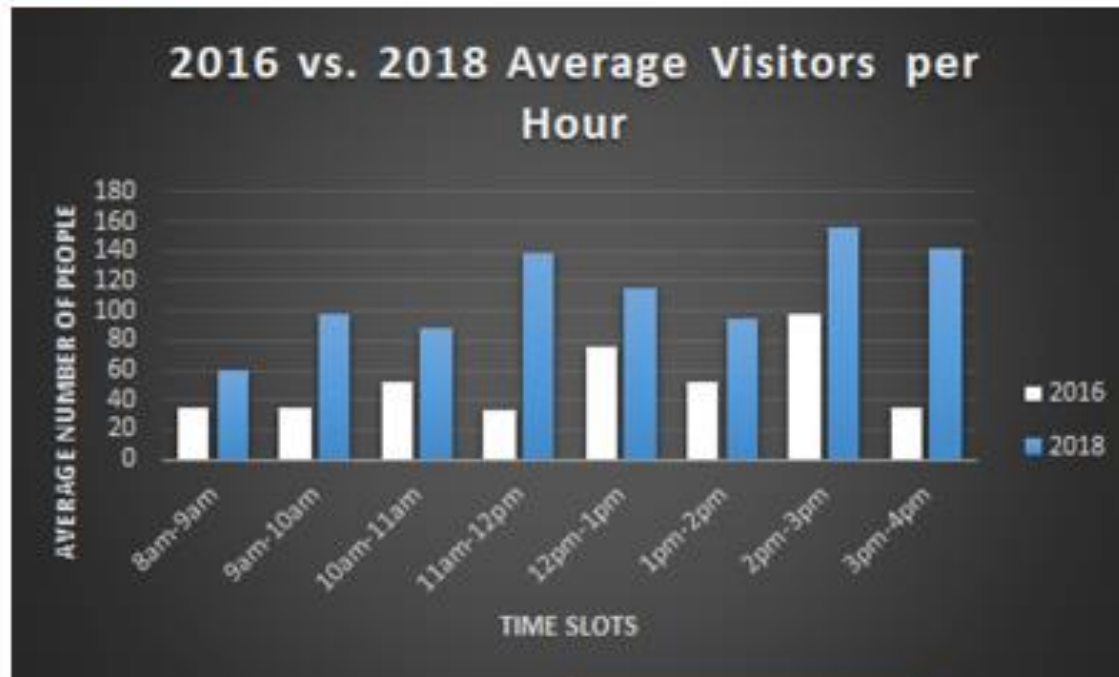
The Foxgrove Club



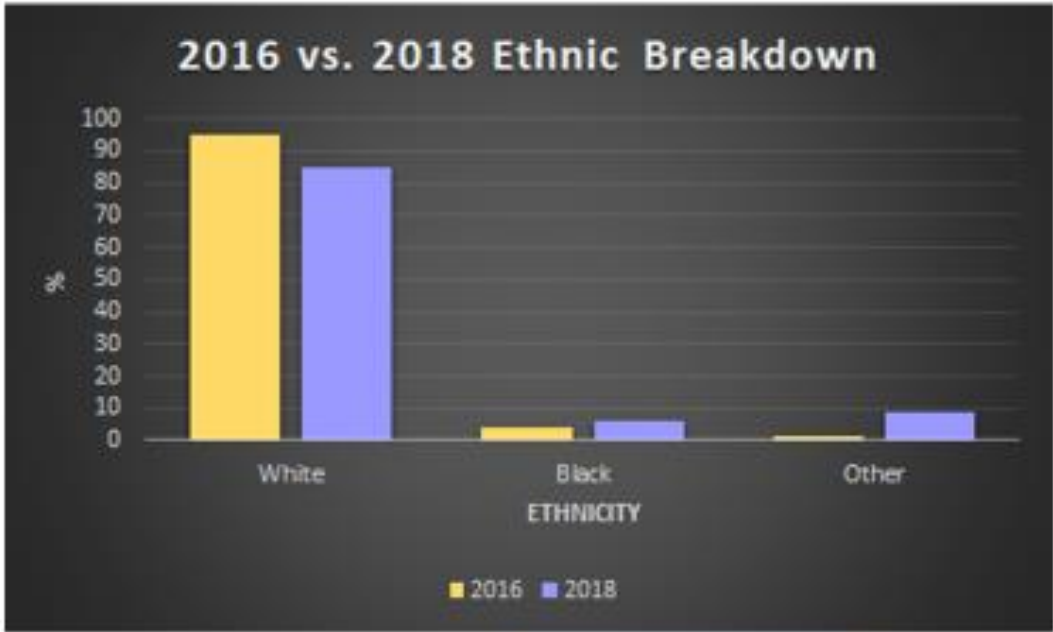
Beckenham Place Park

Observed changes since closure of the golf course

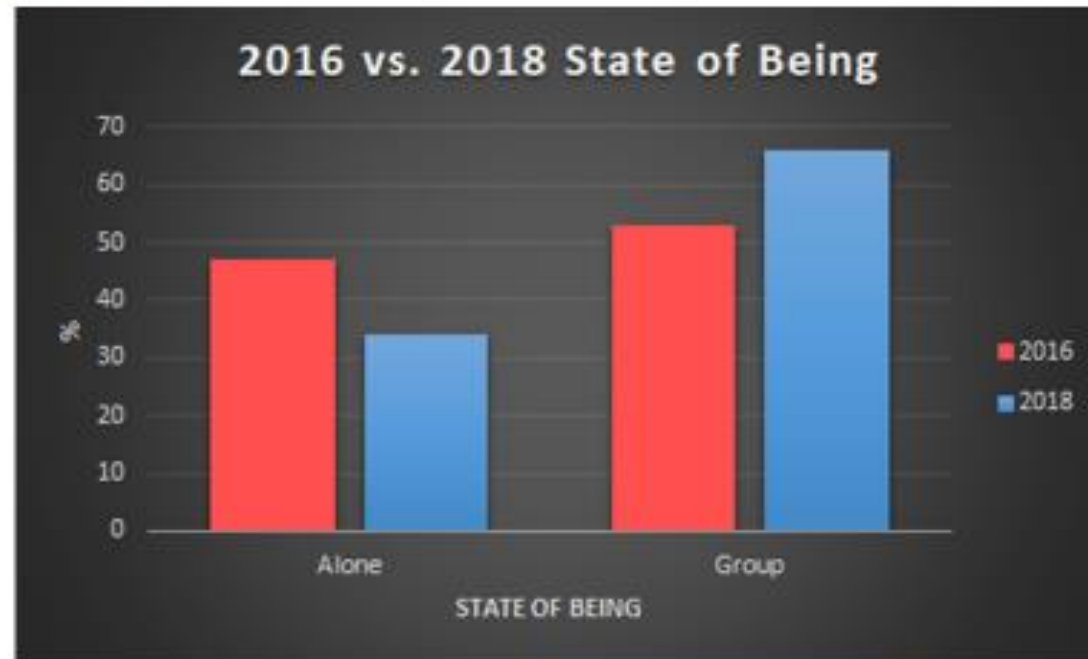
Comparisons



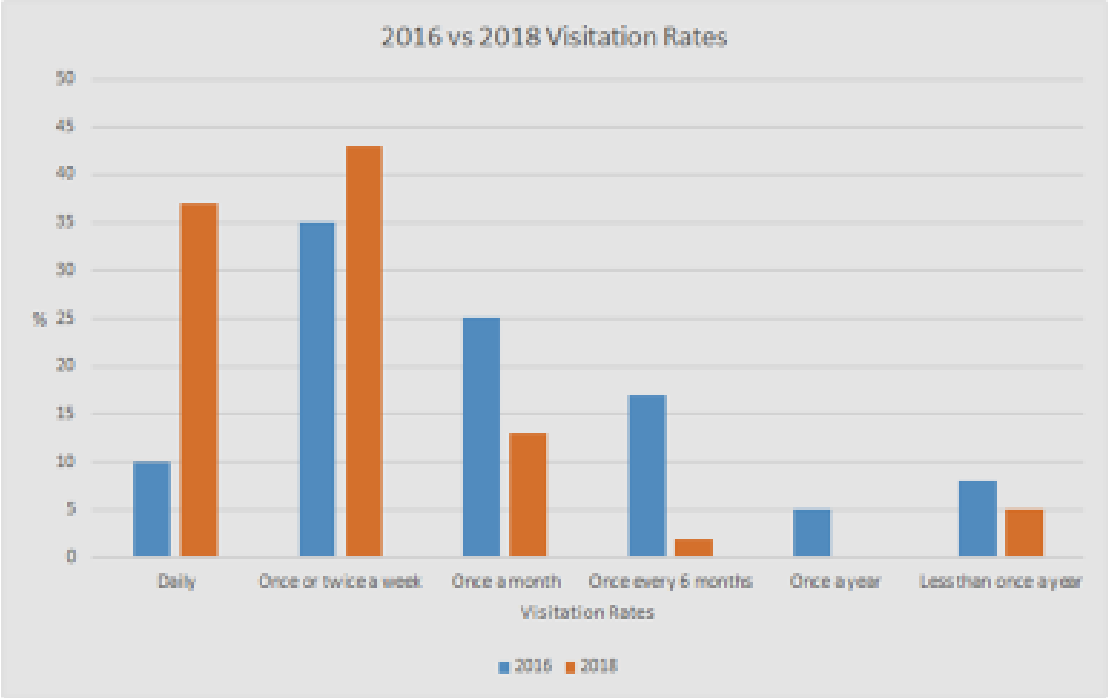
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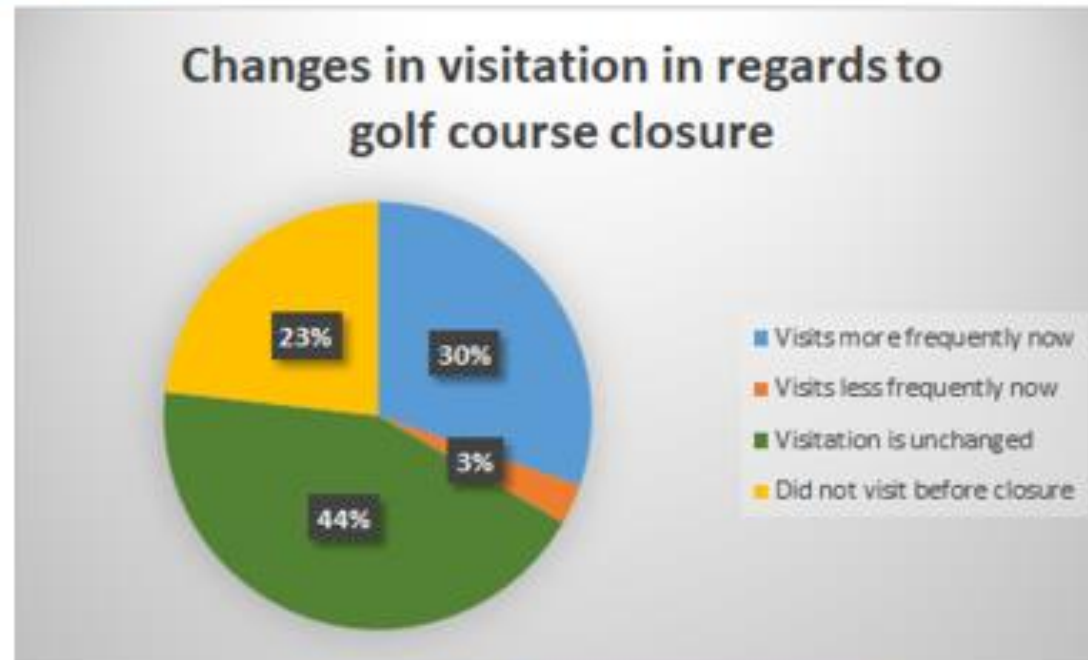
Comparisons



Improved statistics



Improved use



Improved use per year

	Aug-13	Nov-15	16-Apr	Mar-18
Weekday Visitors	72,253	123,714	114,840	260,478
Weekend Visitors	90,376	64,584	72,501	145,860
Total Visitors	162,629	188,298	187,341	406,338



Improved opinions

