



PECT

CREATING SUSTAINABLE PLACES

WERRINGTON BROOK PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

FINAL REPORT FOR PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL, MARCH 2018

THE GREEN HOUSE | 4-6 COWGATE | PETERBOROUGH | PE1 1NA

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WERRINGTON BROOK PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

PECT was approached by the Werrington Brook project team to undertake an engagement survey aimed at residents and users of Werrington Brook and surrounding tributaries.

Results of this engagement work will be used to help inform the benefits assessment as part of the improvements work, specifically about how the improvements have and can benefit the local economy. The information will also be used to capture the awareness of the improvements and the wider benefits of the scheme, including the monetary value placed on these by residents.

The engagement work was undertaken using surveys with a range of qualitative and quantitative questions to capture the required information. The aim was to survey a sample size of between 100-150 people within each reach of the improvement work to allow data to be extrapolated, using demographic data from the census for each of the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) within the proposed work. Postcode data was collected from individuals to assess if they are local residents or from further afield.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The project team developed a questionnaire based on the questions and results obtained from the initial survey undertaken in early 2017. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in **Appendix A**.

Over a two-week period, PECT staff undertook engagement surveys with members of the community, varying times and days to get a wide cross section of users and therefore views and opinions.

Surveys were carried out at the following times:

-  Friday 9 March – 8.30am -12
-  Tuesday 13 March – 1.30 – 4.30pm
-  Friday 16 March – 3.00-6.00pm

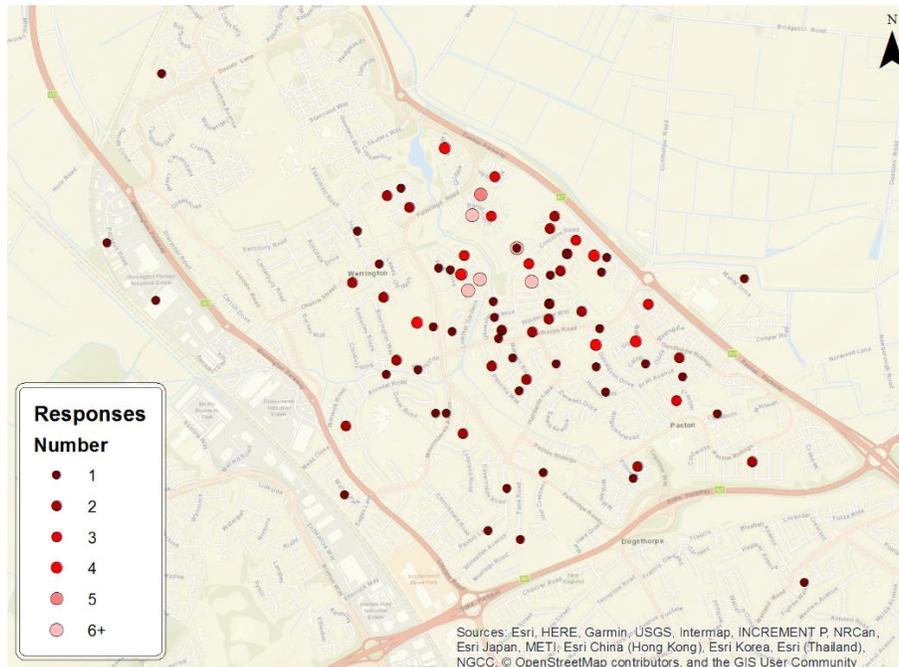
As requested by the Werrington Brook project team, PECT staff engaged with residents who were using the amenities within the vicinity of the reaches being surveyed along the latest phase of the works near Aubretia Avenue. 193 people responded to the survey.



Given the positive response rate, there was no need to carry out door-to-door surveys or undertake data collection over the weekend. Surveys were manually undertaken, with results transferred to a secure online excel file. No personal data was collected.

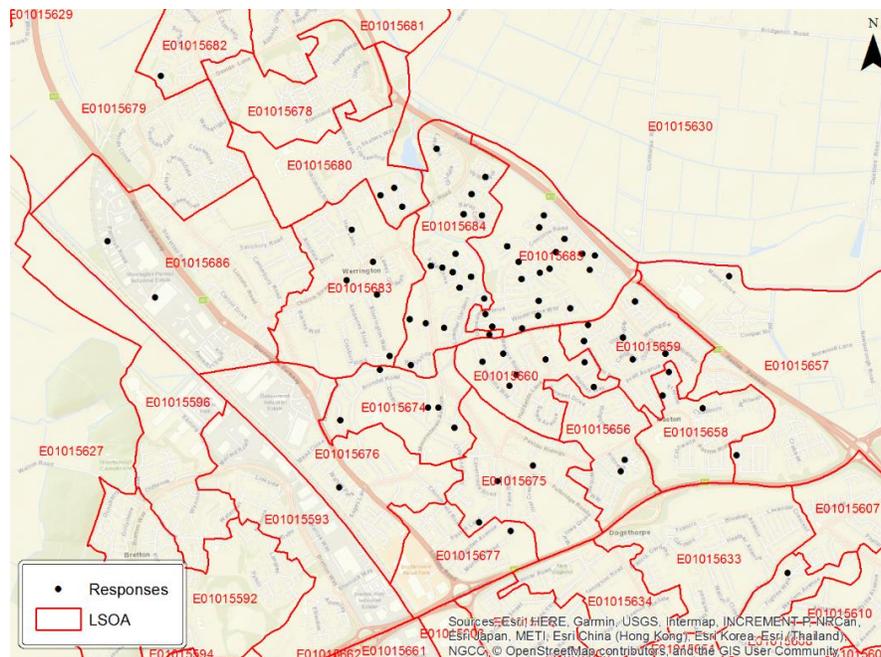
PROJECT RESULTS

SURVEY COVERAGE



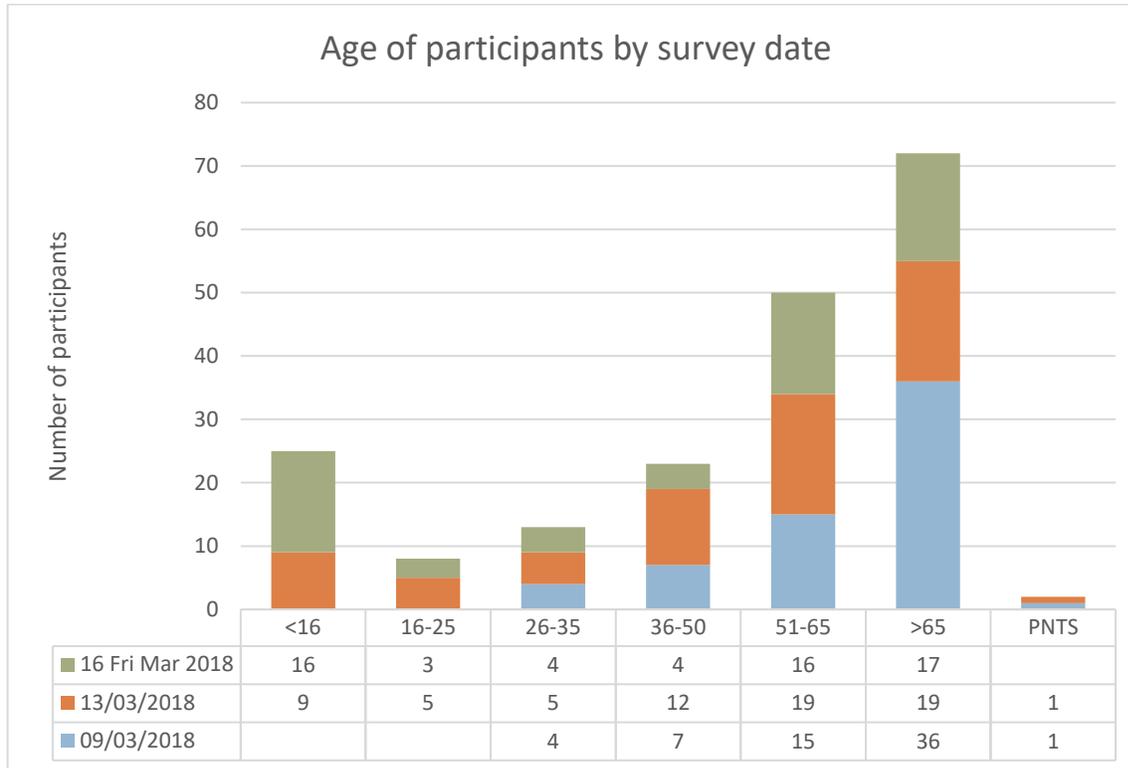
We successfully engaged with a wide spread of people, including those who did not live in the immediate vicinity of the works. Almost all respondents were within half an hour walking distance of the site. The map shows the location of postcode data and the number of responses based on each postcode.

COVERAGE BY LSOA



The image above shows the location of responses based on Lower Support Output Areas (LSOA). The map shows that approximately 70% of respondents lived in LSOA areas E01015684, E01015685 and E01015659, which is next to the works.

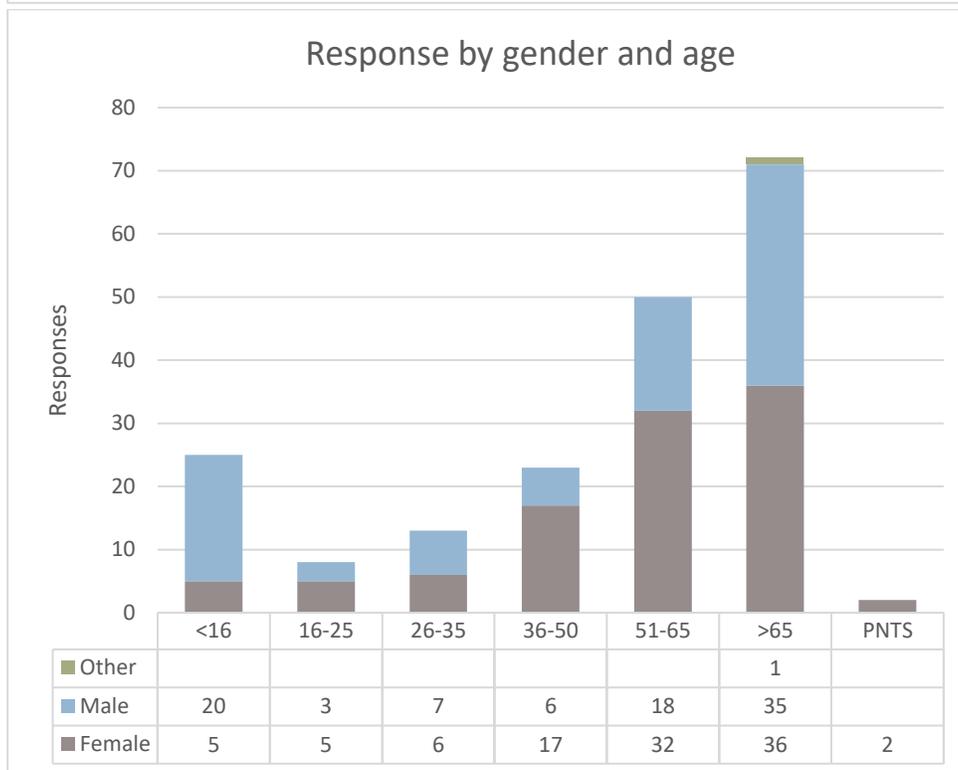
DEMOGRAPHIC



Survey participants ranged in age from under 16 to over 65. The vast majority of users fell into the over-65 category. As would be expected, under 16s were not using the space during school hours. However, it is worth noting that most of the young people surveyed were commuting home from school. Very few said they used the space for recreational purposes.

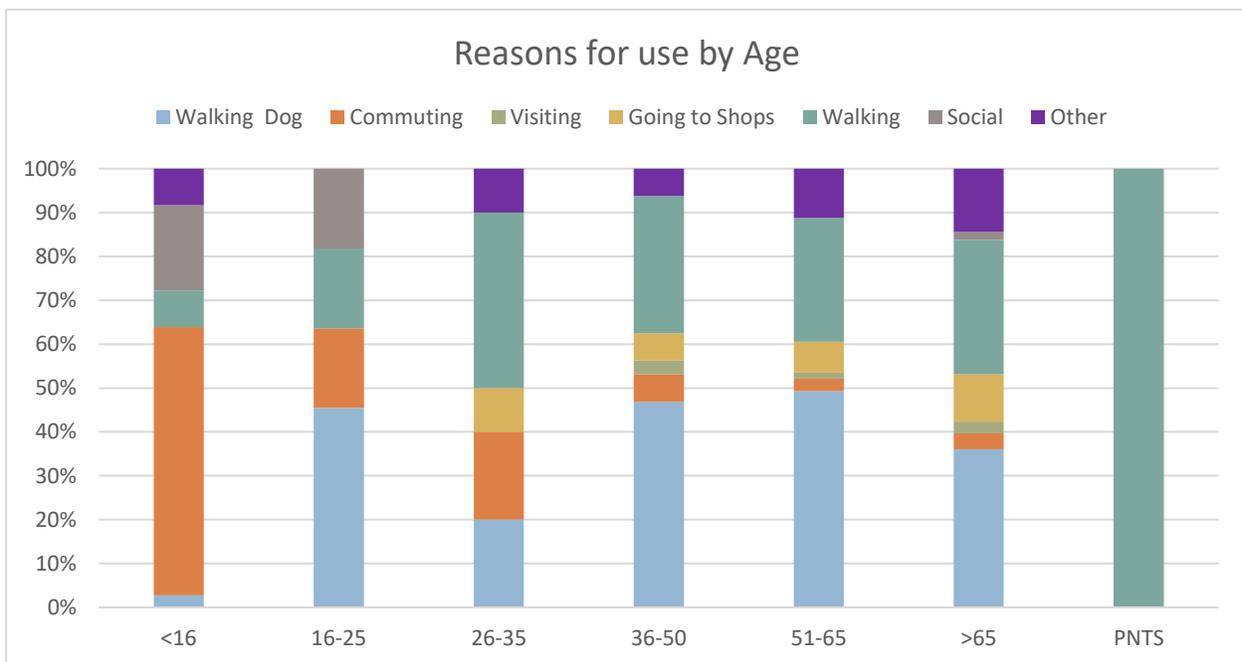
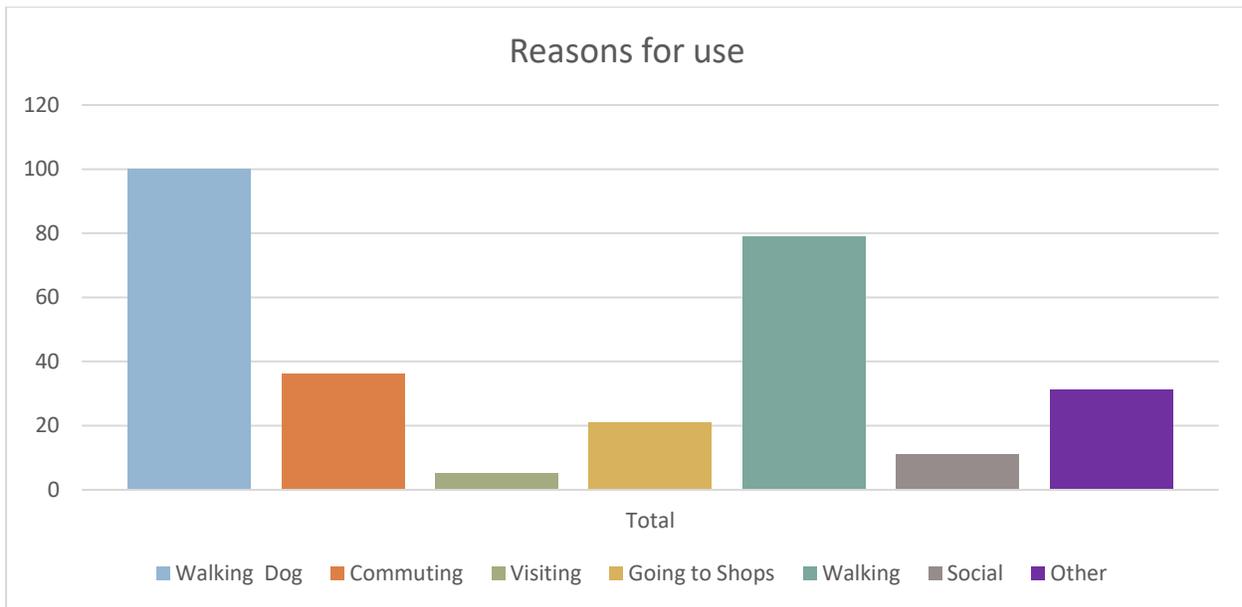
28.5% of respondents in the three LSOA areas mentioned above were above 65. Analysis of the 2012 census data from ONS for these areas show that this is a higher than expected representation from this age group as only 20.1% of people in these areas is over 65.

GENDER AND AGE



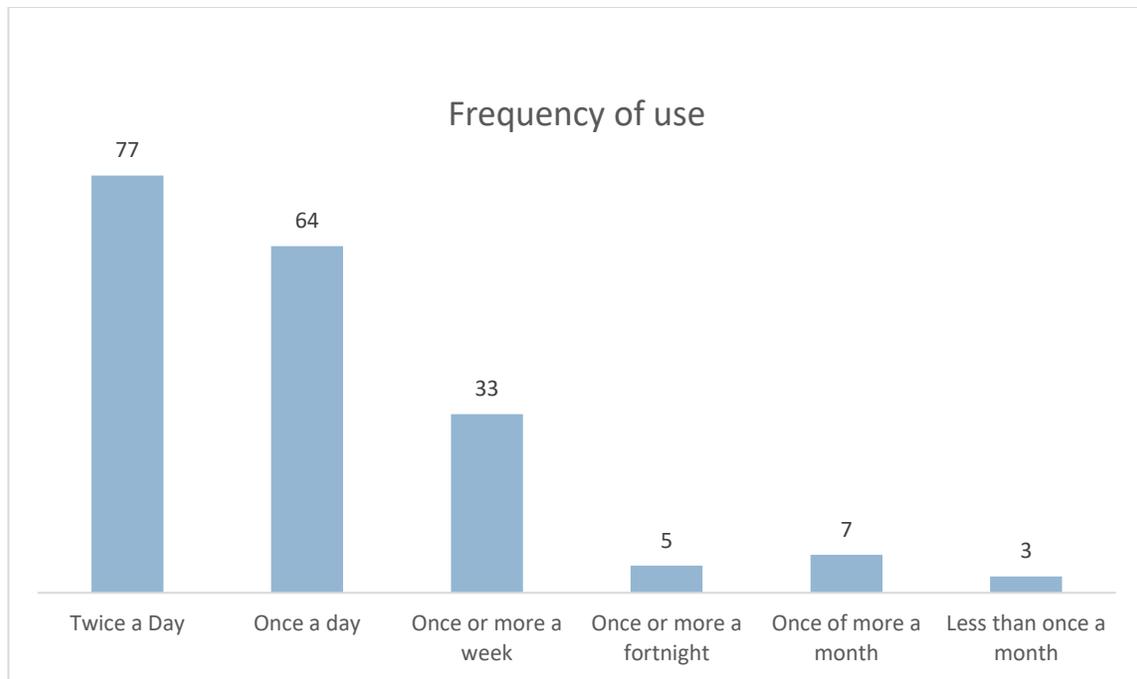
Respondents were split relatively evenly by gender, although when this is broken down by age, there are a number of variances worth noting: 80% of respondents aged under 16s were male and 64% of respondents aged between 51-65 were female. The even split amongst respondents over the age of 65 could be explained by the fact that many used the space as a couple.

USE OF THE SPACE



Unsurprisingly, the vast majority (over 92%) of respondents used the space for walking or walking the dog. Only 11 respondents (5%) used the space socially, indicating an opportunity for initiatives to engage with increasing numbers of people through expanding activities in this area.

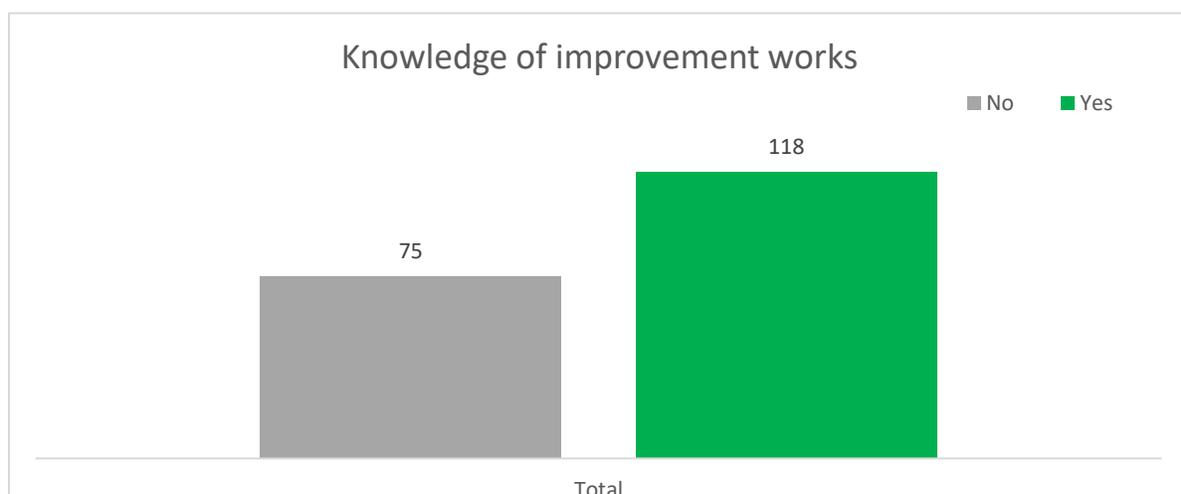
It is worth noting however, that surveys were carried out during the working week in March. Whether the space is used for more social reasons at the weekend or during the warmer months may be worth exploring.



Over 90% of respondents said they used the space on a regular basis, with 40% using it twice a day or more. This is unsurprising given the high number of dog walkers that responded to the survey. Of those that used the space less frequently, most did not live in the immediate neighbourhood.

“There is a great community in the area. Everyone enjoying the space gets along; it’s a real social place to meet new people.” Resident

KNOWLEDGE OF IMPROVEMENT WORKS

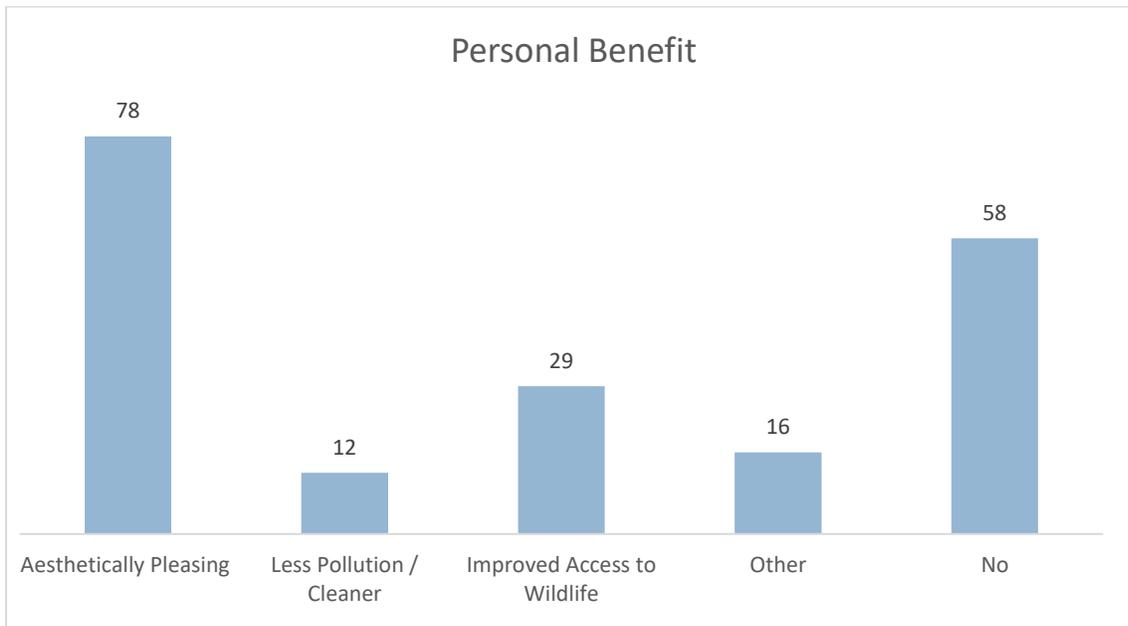


61% of people surveyed were aware of the improvement works which is evidence that the promotional campaign carried out by the Werrington Brook team was successful. This is a particularly impressive result, given the number of people who do not live in the immediate vicinity of the works.

People knew about the improvements through:

- 🌿 Seeing the works being done as walking by
- 📧 Receiving information in the post
- 📢 Posters in the neighbourhood explaining the works
- 👥 Community events
- 🗣️ Speaking to workmen on-site

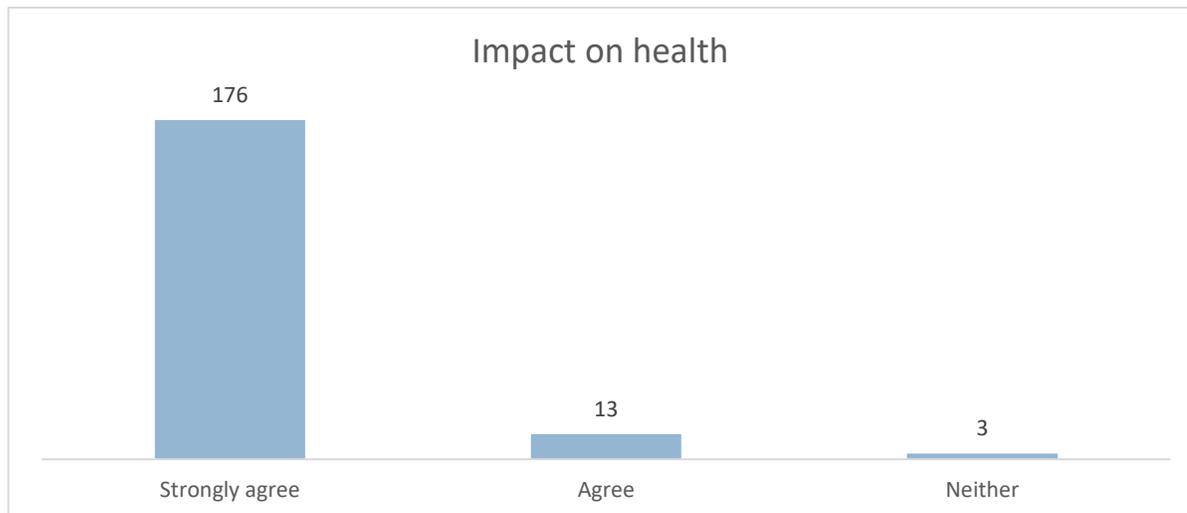
Most of those who had heard about the works knew the general aim was to improve the flow of the brook. Those people who did not know anything about the works were informed by us of the benefits, so were only asked if they felt the works will benefit them personally. 118 people said they were aware of the improvement works; of these, 101 (85%) felt the works would provide benefits to the river, environment and the area in general.



70% acknowledged that the improvement works could benefit them personally in some way, with the majority of these (58%) feeling that the improvements would be purely aesthetic. Interestingly, there were a number of respondents who felt that the works would not benefit them in any way, yet still felt the improvements would be more aesthetically pleasing.

This focus on the visual aspect of the works could be an indication that people are not fully aware of the environmental benefits of the changes taking place. A couple of respondents felt that the benefits to them personally would take time to become evident. Some of those that didn't feel the works will benefit them personally, felt the work would still be of benefit to wildlife and the environment. This would seem to indicate a lack of understanding between the link between health and the environment yet nearly all respondents felt having access to green spaces had a positive impact on their health.

HEALTH BENEFITS



Nearly all participants agreed on the positive impact having access to green space has on health, not just on the physical aspect of being able to exercise in pleasant surroundings, but also on mental health.

176 people strongly agreed that green space had a positive impact on their health. A number of beneficiaries made a point of highlighting the positive impact on their mental health that the space had, specifically depression; one mother said it was particularly beneficial to her young daughter who had special needs.

"It does me the world of good!" Resident

VALUE



The question about the economic value of the green space was hard for people to answer, either because they felt this kind of space was priceless, or because they felt paying for walking in a public area was beyond comprehension; 162 people out of 193 answered the question.

Although people evidently valued the space enough to want to move nearby, they were not prepared to pay for access. In fact, some said they chose to move nearby because the green space was free. A number of people who lived in the area felt the improvements would add value to their houses.

“The improvements being carried out are phenomenal and will bump the house prices up. I can visualize just how good it will be!”

Additional comments from residents who did not put a price to the space include:

“It’s a lovely space to have access to. You can’t put a price on it!”

“I would hesitate to put a value on the site, it has immense value.”

“[The space] is the reason we bought the house and would pay whatever it costs.”

OTHER

Respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the improvement works. Of those who were not convinced by the improvement works, the main concerns were:

- ⑧ **The cost** - One person questioned the cost of the changes and the rationale for them, stating that *“the swans look perfectly happy as they are”*. Someone questioned the costs stating they would prefer more nurse or teachers, but understood it was a different pot of money.
- ⑧ **The maintenance** - Maintenance and upkeep was a concern for some respondents, with the self-maintaining/self-cleaning aspect of the project met with scepticism from a small number of people. A couple of respondents commented on the previous works carried out which they considered to already be muddy and overgrown.
- ⑧ **Effectiveness of the works** – One respondent was not convinced the works would improve water quality.

The need for more facilities, such as benches, was mentioned by a number of people who felt that the space would be used by more elderly walkers if there were higher numbers of spaces to rest.

However, others felt that increased numbers of benches in the area would encourage teenagers to loiter and cause vandalism. The need for more dog poo bins and the addition of water bowls for dogs was mentioned as by a number of dog walkers.

LESSONS LEARNT

For future surveys a pilot of the questions could be undertaken. During the survey the question around understanding of the works was used as an opening line to engage with residents rather than being the third question on the questionnaire

The question about attaching an economic value to the green space was perceived differently by a range of people. People did not fully understand why the question was being asked and were slightly alarmed at the prospect of being charged for using public space, despite being told there are absolutely no plans to charge for using the space.

Future surveys will use age categories in line with those used by the ONS to facilitate data analysis by LSOA and age.



CONCLUSION

The response to the improvement works has been overwhelmingly positive. It is to be noted, however, that the vast majority of people surveyed lived within the vicinity of the works or were regular users of the site.

The site was used predominantly by dog walkers/walkers and young people commuting to and from school. The ability to let dogs off the lead without the risk of cars is evidently a massive draw for dog walkers. One person walked from Dogsthorpe to enjoy the space with his dog.

Most people seemed very keen to give us their views, particularly those who lived in the vicinity who were mainly delighted by the proposed changes. However, it would be useful to know why people aren't using the space and this could work through door-to-door surveys, or online engagement work.



APPENDIX A – SURVEY QUESTIONS

Werrington Brook Improvements

1. What are your general reasons for using this area near Werrington Brook?

- Walking my dog
- Commuting to school/work
- Visiting a friend/relation
- Going to the shops
- Going for a walk
- Social/community e.g. picnics
- Other

2. How often do you use this area near Werrington Brook?

- Twice a day
- Once a day
- Once or more a week
- Once or more a fortnight
- Once or more a month
- Less than once a month

3. Are you aware of the river improvement works that have been taking place on the Werrington Brook?

- Yes (please provide details below)
- No

If 'Yes' could you tell us what you know about them?

4. Do you think these changes will benefit the following and how?

The river

The environment and wildlife

People using the area

5. Do you think these works will benefit you and how?

6. Would you agree that having access to quality green space has a positive impact on your health?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

7. There is no intention to charge for using the Werrington Brook areas, however, we are interested in people's views on its value. In monetary terms how much do you value having access to this green space annually?

- 0
- Under £10
- £10 – 20
- £20 – 30
- £30 – 40
- Over £40

To help with our analysis we now have a few questions about you.

8. What is your postcode?

9. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

10. What is your age category?

- Under 16
- 16-25
- 26-35
- 36-50
- 51-65
- Over 65
- Prefer not to say

11. How good do you feel your health is?

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very poor