

The State of the UK's Parks.

Victorian Idylls to Paradise Lost



APSE State of the Market Survey 2015 - Parks

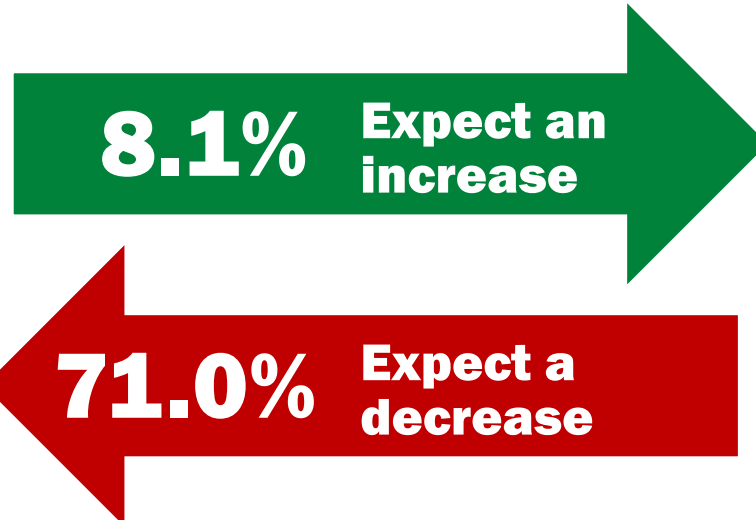


Answer Options	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	No opinion
The squeeze on public sector resources is affecting parks and green spaces disproportionately to other service areas	37.4%	37.4%	19.8%	1.1%	4.4%
Reductions in funding has resulted in a withdrawal of maintenance from some land and an increase in unmaintained land	34.1%	42.9%	20.9%	0.0%	2.2%
Lack of investment in parks and green spaces will have health and social impacts	56.7%	36.7%	3.3%	2.2%	1.1%
There is a clear link between parks/play provision and levels of crime/anti-social behaviour	31.5%	43.8%	9.0%	2.2%	13.5%
There's a limit to the extent to which volunteers can be involved in delivering parks and green space services	61.8%	25.8%	7.9%	2.2%	2.2%

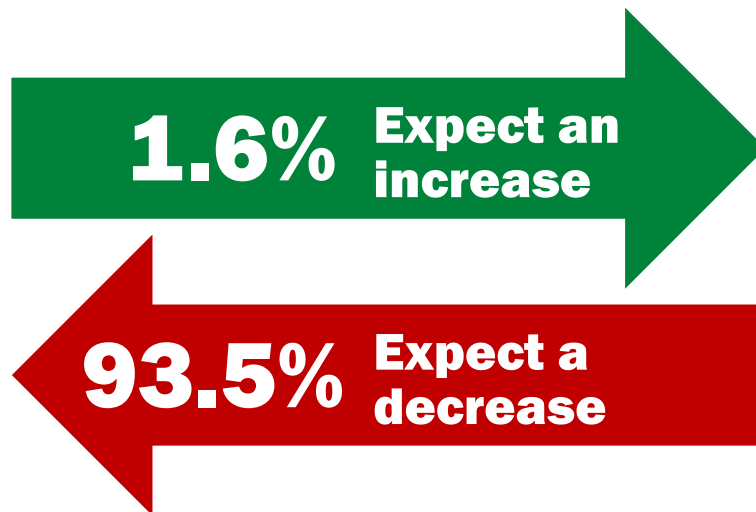
How do you expect the parks and green space budget to change over the next year?



Capital expectations



Revenue expectations



What is your expectation of the level of funding in your service budget in the coming five years?

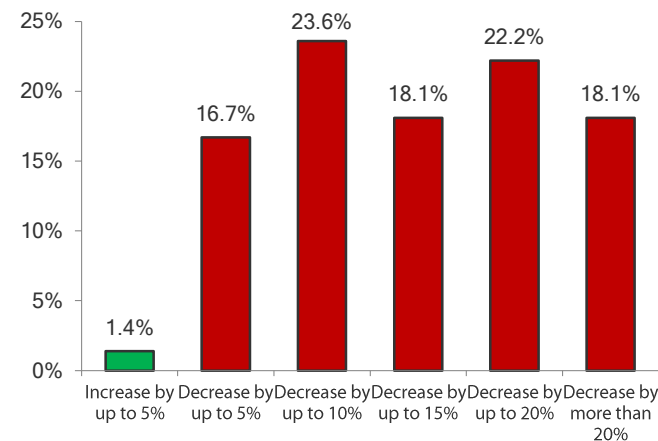


80.5%

of respondents expect to lose between 5% and 20% of their budget over the next 5 years.

18.1%

expect to lose anywhere from 20% up to 50%!



And the worries go on.....

- **46 % of local authorities are considering selling or transferring the management of parks**
- **81% of parks services have lost skilled management staff since 2010 and almost as many (77%) have lost frontline staff**

(HLF Figs)

Yet.....

- **68% of park users say spending time in parks is essential to their quality of life, rising to 71% in urban areas**
- **Parks are considered to be essential to 81% of parents with young children**
- **30% increase in Friends and Users Groups since 2010**
- **Public satisfaction levels remain high**
- **80% of UK'S population is urban**

c. 34 million people a year visit parks - estimate



Putting a value on a Parks and Greenspaces

- **Difficult to measure**
- **Identifying benefits**
- **Senior management/Political support**
- **'Easy target'**
- **Non-statutory**
- **Low profile**

- **Change the perception !**

APSE – Supporting the Nation’s Parks and open spaces

- **Research – ‘*Park Life Street Life*’ – nudge-budge demand management.**
- **Lobbying – e.g. Party conference representation, Government reviews.**
- **National Advisory Groups – local authority service providers network.**
- **Performance Networks – benchmarking, costs, productivity and outcomes**
- **Briefings – State of the market surveys/topical issues**
- **National Parks Seminars – promoting innovation and sharing best practice.**
- **Annual Awards – London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.**

Valuing Green Spaces

Build on growing recognition of cross cutting values of green spaces and their ability to deliver multiple benefits simultaneously

- Physical and mental health value estimated at £2.1 billion in reduced health costs (c. 7 million people have been diagnosed with mental illness in UK).
- Reduction in sickness means increased labour productivity - impacts on national GDP.
- Help ameliorate urban heat island effect in hot weather.
- Flood alleviation benefits.
- Filtering of local air pollution.
- Carbon sequestration.
- Increased biodiversity.
- Recreational value and well-being.
- Important to national environmental strategies e.g. Pollinator Strategy.
- Cultural, historical and societal value
- **Develop a register of natural capital for which the local authority is responsible.**



What is the value of the UK's Natural capital?

Woodland planting - Peat land restoration - Wetland creation
Creating inter tidal habitats - restoring commercial fish stocks.



£1,573 billion

4% lower than figures for 2007



Plugging the gaps



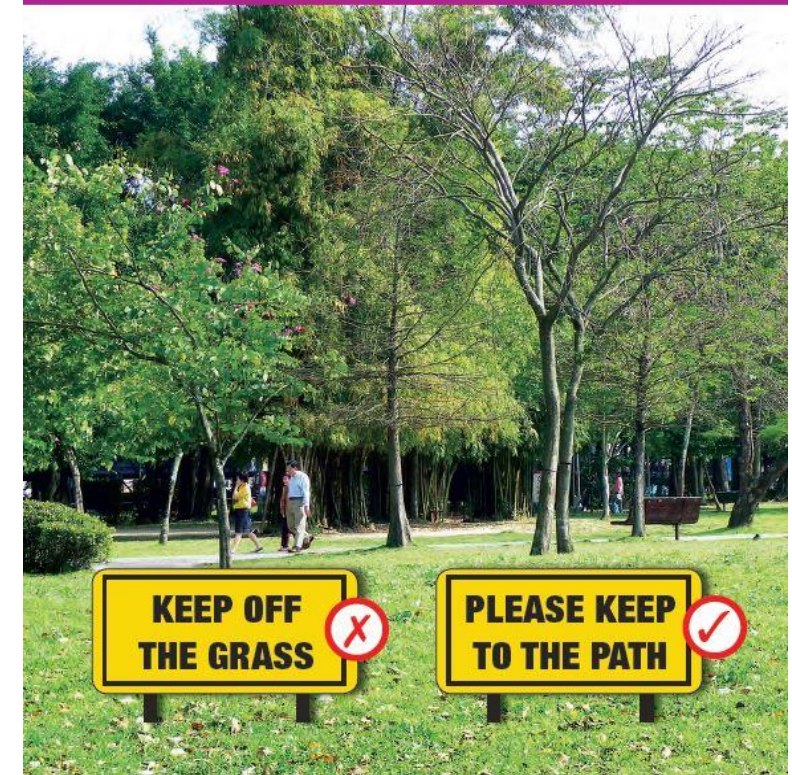
- Ongoing reductions in public funding means alternative sources of income are needed.
- Capital funding (HLF), funding from concessions and events, fundraising, sponsorship, commercial developments, endowments etc.
- Recent APSE State of the Market survey for Parks (2015), recorded over 30 different types of local authority activities in parks and greenspace which were generating income streams – *‘municipal entrepreneurialism’*
- CABE Space’s *Paying For Parks* (2006) highlighted 8 common income streams for UK parks
 - Traditional local authority funding (reducing despite growing recognition of value of parks and greenspaces)
 - Multi-agency public sector funding (growing area – NHS)
 - Taxation initiatives (not popular with government – extra burden on populace)
 - Planning and development opportunities (S106/ CIL – but growing competition)
 - Bond’s and commercial finance e.g. BIDS (rarely used to fund parks)
 - Income-generating opportunities
 - Endowments (limited)
 - Voluntary sector involvement (needs careful management and support)



Managing Demand- ‘Nudge and Budge’



- APSE Report – *Park Life, Street Life: Managing demand in the public realm (2015)*
- *Calls for local authorities to look at ways of reducing demand by applying behavioural change tools and techniques.*
- *Enforcement – unpopular, education campaigns often too costly.*
- *Introducing behavioural change to reduce the need spend scarce resources on clearing litter, graffiti, dog fouling and preventing vandalism.*
- *Promoting public and private involvement and investment in parks maintenance and decision making thus engendering public ownership and sense of pride.*
- *‘Respect’ and ‘Care’ key objectives as they will help reduce unnecessary spend which can then be used more productively.*
- *Case studies of pioneering councils such as Lambeth Council’s Co-operative Parks Programme.*



New Funding?



£30 Million HLF a year over the next 2 years -regeneration works, new community facilities and a range of activities that will generate income and involve volunteers.

Other **proposals** include:

- Parks Improvement Districts- funding long term maintenance and improvements
- Park levy in top of council tax – introduced in some areas of London
- Public Health Funding – green prescribing to address mental illness and obesity
- Council tax rebates for residents who help maintain green spaces
- Diversifying the commercial productivity of parks for food production and renewable energy
- Leasing sites for different but compatible uses e.g. animal grazing.

➤ Problem is many of these are still ideas and proposals and even if implemented, are unlikely to redress the loss of previous and projected funding losses.

➤ **Only 19% of local authorities report that efficiency improvements will be enough on their own to deal with challenge of ongoing budget cuts**

Creating Parks of the future - hyperfunctionality



- No longer seen merely as ‘pretty places’ to walk.
- New approaches to parks management to deliver multiple uses in a confined space – ‘*natural health service*’
- Resources to improve public well-being and reduce impacts of living in densely populated areas.
- Ecosystem services identified, valued and paid for.
- Realistic and affordable maintenance – linked to local climatic and environmental conditions as well as cultural history, ‘*uniqueness*’.
- Key mitigators in relation to climate change, flooding, pollution filters.
- Community hubs – free access, empowerment, involvement.
- Biodiversity sanctuaries.
- Identifying urban park opportunities – remnant land e.g. the High Line NYC



Sustaining the success



- Real challenge is to **maintain** and **sustain** income levels to ensure the value of capital investments are not lost.
- Many local authorities are generating substantial income streams- both tried and tested and innovatory.
- Real challenge is to involve local communities to become involved in decision making and maintaining these valuable assets.
- Local business and developers are being encouraged to include greenspace and park areas in their development plans.
- Other organisations which benefit from parks are being approached to invest in greenspaces – NHS, Police and Crime Commissioners.
- Corporate Natural Capital Accounting – putting a value on assets but also identifying losses.

Avoiding the ‘tipping point’

- Government needs to truly recognise the cross-cutting values of parks and green spaces rather than saying how important they are whilst continuing to cut funding to local authorities.
- There is a point at which income from innovation and efficiencies is not enough to meet critical funding levels – the ‘tipping point’.
- **Public funding for public benefit.**
- If we are to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than we inherited it, then the reality of the problem needs to be acknowledged and addressed before a spiral of decline is unavoidable.

‘Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell’, - ‘Paradise Lost’ John Milton



LOCAL SERVICES

LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Contact details

Wayne Priestley, Principal Advisor

Email: wpriestley@apse.org.uk

WWW.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



GB 11409



GB 11132



GB 14074

Association for Public Service Excellence

2nd floor Washbrook House, Lancastrian Office Centre, Talbot Road,
Old Trafford, Manchester M32 0FP.

telephone: 0161 772 1810

fax: 0161 772 1811

web: www.apse.org.uk