

Report for: Environment and Community Safety Panel 3rd November 2020

Title: Parks Performance Quarter 1 and 2 2020/21

**Report
authorised
by:**

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Lead

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Ward(s)

affected: ALL

1. Introduction

1.1. This report for the panel provides an update for the panel on parks performance. The period covered includes the pandemic lockdown period through to the end of September 2020. The parks service monitors four specific indicators each month across a random selection of parks.

1. The four indicators cover:-

1. Percentage of parks whose overall appearance is good or excellent (a combination of indicators 2, 3, and 4 plus hard assets such as bins, benches, paths, signs, fencing, lighting etc)
2. Percentage of grass areas that are good or excellent
3. Percentage of shrub beds that are good or excellent
4. Percentage of areas judged good or excellent for hygiene (litter, bin emptying, graffiti).

1.2. Performance can be impacted by the seasons, prevailing weather conditions and staff resources available. Performance targets set in correlation to the resources available to achieve the set standard.

1.3. This year in particular hygiene performance was impacted by the increased usage of parks during lockdown and in the period between lockdown and the start of the school summer holidays.

1.4. As part of the development of the new parks and greenspaces strategy a new set of service standards and performance indicators are being developed.

2. Performance

2.1. The following quarterly performance was achieved across each indicator.

2.2. Overall Park Presentation – Target 70% Good or Excellent

- Quarter 1 – 57%
- Quarter 2 – 62%
- YTD – 59%

- Overall, under performing

2.3. Grass Cutting – Target 90% Good or Excellent

- Quarter 1 – 88%
- Quarter 2 – 92%
- YTD – 90%
- Overall performing on target

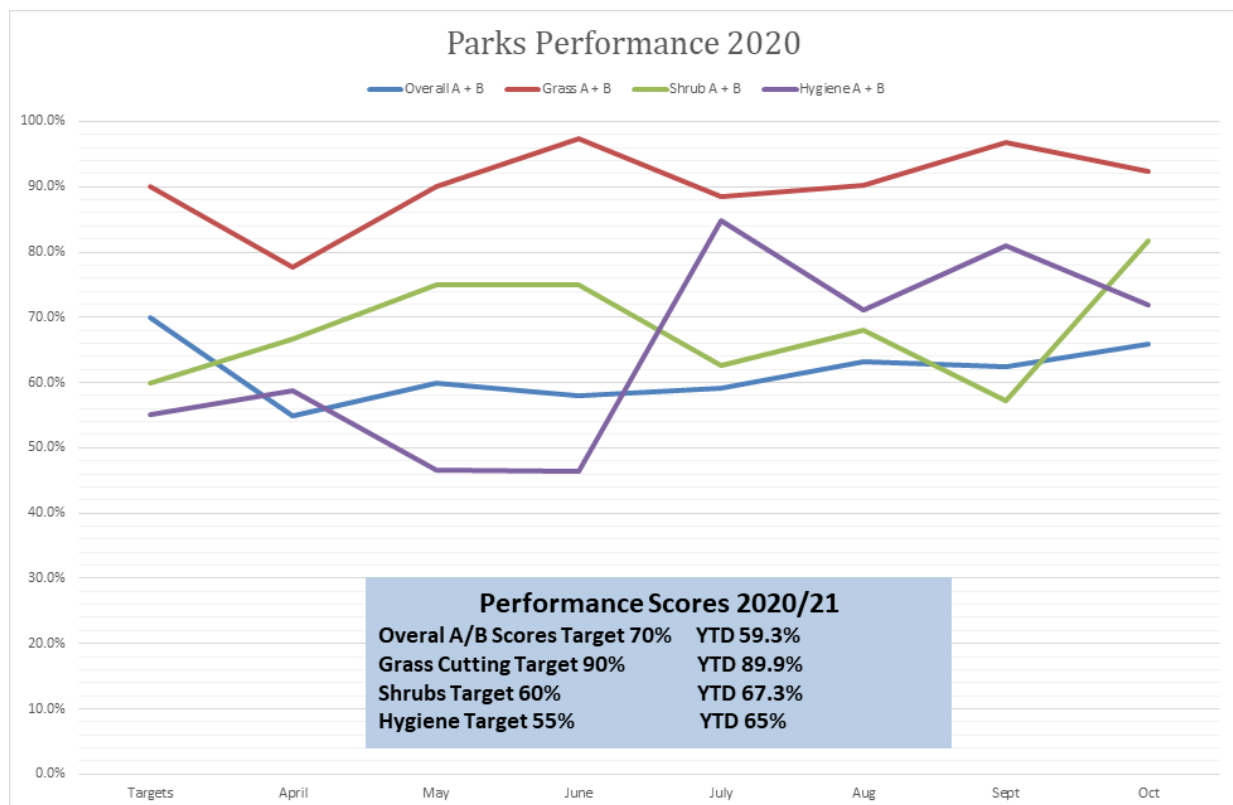
2.4. Shrub Beds – Target 60% Good or Excellent

- Quarter 1 – 72%
- Quarter 2 – 63%
- YTD – 67%
- Overall performing above target

2.5. Hygiene – Target 55% Good or Excellent

- Quarter 1 – 50%
- Quarter 2 – 79%
- YTD - 65%
- Overall performing above target

2.6. The follow graph shows the performance by month over the first two quarters of the year.



- 2.7. The graph shows that in terms of Overall Park Presentation this has consistently performed under target for both quarters. Primarily this because for most of this period (April to late July) many parks facilities were closed, including playgrounds, sports courts, outdoor gyms, café's and there was a lull in undertaking some hard landscaping repairs due to the COVID-19 restrictions. It is also the case that whilst good levels of staffing have been maintained throughout the initial six months of this financial year, around 15% of staff were shielding during this period and a smaller portion were periodically self-isolating this has impacted overall performance.
- 2.8. In addition, a significant amount of officer resource has been expended on closing down facilities, keeping them secured and then reopening. Alongside this the introduction of social distancing measures has used up further capacity. Not to mention ten weeks of daily patrols to remind the public not to gather, to refresh people on the rule changes and to keep people as safe as possible while they exercised or met up with friends and family. This function couldn't have been completed without the help of the council's Enforcement Team, redeployed Civil Enforcement Officers and the Police.
- 2.9. In terms of Grass cutting apart from a typical under performance in April as the grass cutting seasons gets underway the remaining performance has been on target or above.
- 2.10. For shrub beds the graph shows strong performance during quarter one, with a drop off in performance as the presence of more weeds and summer growth impacts the presentation of the shrub beds. Although performance falls under target in September to 57% there is a strong rebound in October as the summer / autumn maintenance visits are completed and performance rises to almost 82% against a 60% target.
- 2.11. Performance of the hygiene function has been the most challenging part of the service delivery during the COVID-19 Period. In the first part of lockdown when people were only allowed out for an hour a day there was little impact in terms of increased waste in parks. However, as lockdown eased, and the only place people could meet was outdoors this led to a significant rise in the waste being left in parks. At one point it was like every day the usage of parks was equivalent to an August bank holiday weekend, in terms of people and the waste they left behind. This increased rapidly when cafes / restaurants could open and started serving takeaways. Overall, the increase in waste in parks is calculated to be an increase of 70% of that removed from parks in 2019.
- 2.12. In response to 70% increase in waste and wanting to avoid adding extra staffing cost to the council budget, a social media and banner campaign was designed to alert people to the emerging issue and to encourage park users to either put their rubbish in a bin or take it home with them.

- 2.13. Parks are very weather dependent in terms of visitor numbers. A combination of more places opening up for people to go to and significant downturn in the prevailing weather conditions meant there was a noticeable drop in park users' numbers during the summer litter campaign period. Therefore, it is hard to tell if the campaign impacted litter levels or the change in the number of things for people to do or the change in the weather or a combination of all these factors kept litter within the capacity deployed to deal with it.
- 2.14. What we do know is that generally the campaign was well received by residents. The campaign got the most attention on social media of all council posting during August. The Finsbury Park litter posts/photos got the most reactions on Facebook and Twitter. We will use what we have learnt from this year to improve our campaign next year but will integrate the parks elements within a wider Haringey Litter Campaign. Feedback from the public also encouraged the council to do more enforcement in parks to get the message home to more people that they should not be dropping litter in parks. This is being investigated.

3. Summary

- 3.1. Given the operating circumstances of the last six months it is a credit to all the Parks Staff and those colleagues and partners who have supported the parks service. It has been fantastic that we have been able to keep parks open, to accommodate the unprecedented usage and to return the closed facilities in a COVID-19 secure manner. As a service we look forward to a successful autumn winter period where people continue to make use of their local parks which will support them to maintain good physical and mental health.