

State of the Market Survey 2008

Local Authority Parks Services





The state of the market survey was conducted by Debbie Johns, APSE Principal Advisor for Environmental services

For any enquires in relation to the survey, Debbie may be contacted on:

Tel: 0161 772 1810

Email: djohns@apse.org.uk

LOCAL SERVICES
LOCAL SOLUTIONS



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



ISO 14001
REGISTERED FIRM



ISO 9001
REGISTERED FIRM



ISO 27001
REGISTERED FIRM

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
email: enquiries@apse.org.uk
web: www.apse.org.uk

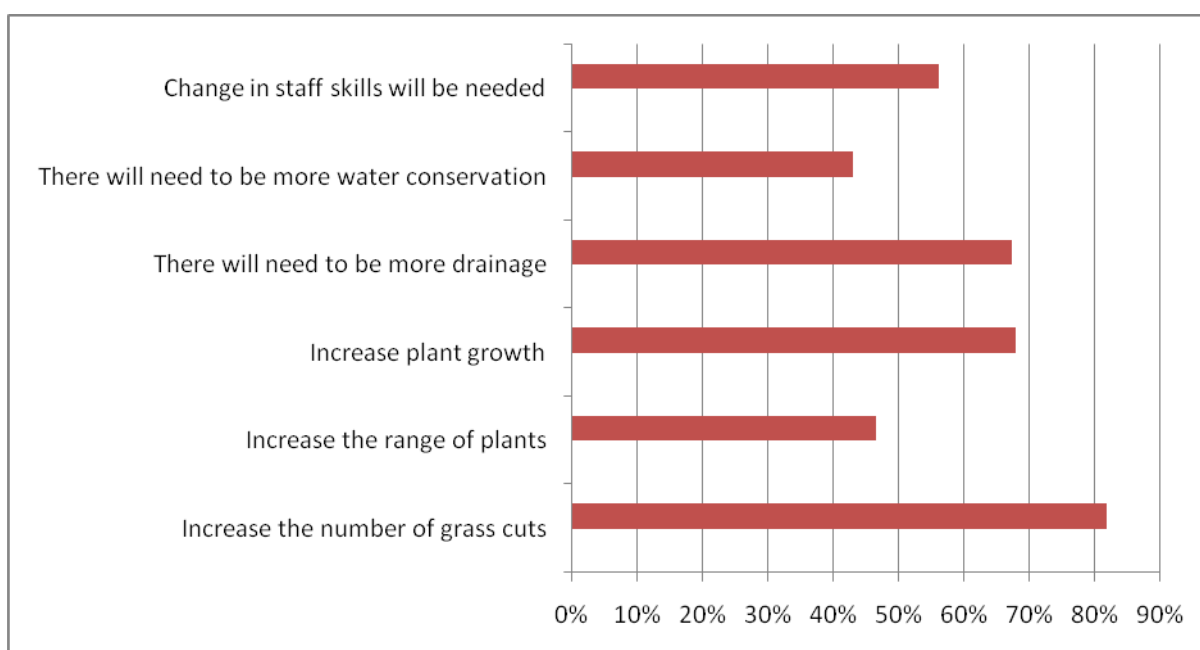
Local Authority Parks Services State of the Market 2008

APSE conducted an on-line survey during September and October 2008. A series of questions were asked covering attitudes to the issues currently facing parks services, the operation of these services and challenges for the future. 153 responses were received from local authorities throughout the UK. This report identifies the key findings of the survey.

Results from the survey

a) Climate change

Members were asked how they thought climate change will affect parks. The responses are shown in the chart below:



b) How the service is delivered

- 86% recycle green waste
- 57% already have parks rangers and 3% stated that this would be introduced within the next 2 years
- 74% have seasonal labour
- 79% think the community sector involvement in managing parks is increasing

- 52% sell services to other public sector bodies and 28% sell services to the private sector

c) Your opinions

The table below shows the number of respondents who agree/disagree with the statements.

Answer Options	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	No opinion
There needs to be stricter controls on pesticide use	8	58	52	20	4
The resurgence of allotments is just a fad	34	83	19	1	5
We lock our park gates at night for safety reasons	19	51	47	11	14
Risk should be brought back into childrens play	5	19	64	49	5
The public should get free access to all parks	5	11	55	69	2

d) What do you expect?

- 76% expect the number of parks (including playgrounds) to stay the same (33%) or increase slightly (43%)
- 50% expect the parks budget to decrease next year, whilst 27% expect it to stay the same
- 75% expect the service to be in-house within next 2-3 years
- When asked 'Do you expect to be part of an integrated street scene service?', the responses were as follows:

Answer Options	Response Percent
Yes - We are already	45.4%
Yes - within 12 months	9.2%
Yes - within 2 years	12.3%
No	25.4%
Other (please specify)	7.7%

e) Job evaluation

- 66% have completed job evaluation

- How has job evaluation affected wage costs?

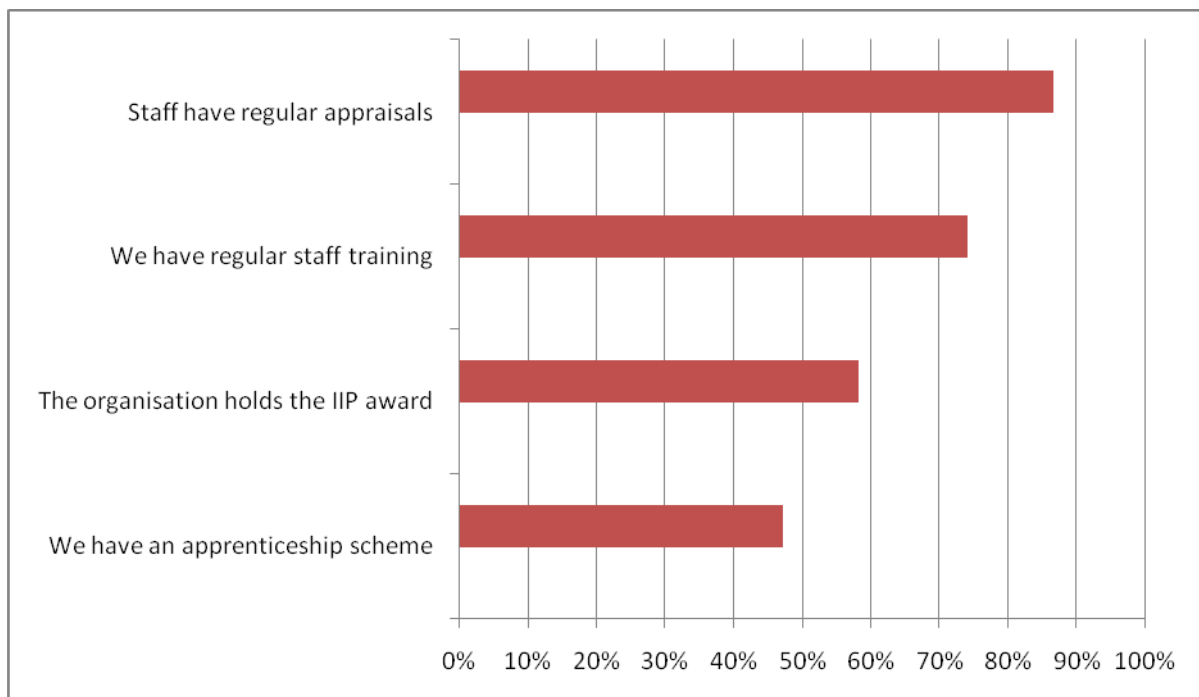
Increased a great deal	19%
Increased slightly	43%
About the same	25%
Decreased slightly	10%
Decreased a great deal	3%

f) Staffing

Members were asked whether they thought that staff absence levels are at an acceptable level. The responses are shown in the chart below:

Answer Options	Response Percent
Too high	19.4%
Slightly above average	20.2%
About average	38.8%
Slightly below average	14.7%
Very low	7.0%

The staff training responses were as follows:



The Association for Public Service Excellence

APSE member authorities have access to a range of membership resources to assist in delivering council services. This includes our regular advisory groups, specifically designed to bring together elected members, directors, managers and heads of service, together with trade union representatives to discuss service specific issues, innovation and new ways of delivering continuous improvement. The advisory groups are an excellent forum for sharing ideas and discussing topical service issues with colleagues from other councils throughout the UK.

Advisory groups are a free service included as part of your authorities membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE advisory group meetings and would like to be added to our list of contacts for your service area please email enquiries@apse.org.uk.

Our national advisory groups include:-

- Efficiencies, procurement and service transformation
- Building cleaning
- Citizen engagement
- Local authority, police and fire authority partnerships
- Community safety and security
- Housing management, construction and building maintenance
- Parks, horticultural and ground maintenance
- Roads, highways and street lighting
- Social care
- Leisure management and community venues
- Vehicle maintenance and transport operations
- Waste management, refuse collection and street cleansing
- Workforce strategy and employee relations