



Wellfield South Proposed Grazing

Phase 2 Consultation - Results

London Borough of Sutton

Environment, Housing and Regeneration

Biodiversity Team

24 Denmark Road,

Carshalton.

SM5 3JG

Executive Summary

Sutton Council proposed a scheme for the introduction of conservation grazing as a site management tool for Wellfield South, a proposed Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), in Carshalton Beeches.

Following the publication of documentation on the Sutton Citizen Space Consultation Hub, the local community were encouraged to register opinions. To ensure as many people affected by the proposals were able to participate, a leaflet drop was conducted to all the houses in Wellfield Gardens and posters were positioned around the site and the adjoining Queen Mary's Woodland. Local representatives were also informed about the consultation.

The Consultation closed on Friday 9th October at 17:00.

In total, opinions were received from 25 respondents. 88% of respondents supported the proposal to graze the site with the majority of respondents (61%) preferring the fencing detailed in Option 2.

This brief summarises the results of the consultation and outlines actions which will be taken to address issues raised.

This brief concludes that grazing is deemed acceptable to the majority of respondents and that Option 2 is the preferred option. Option 2 will therefore be taken forwards, in partnership with Natural England who provide capital funds for fencing and The Downlands Partnership, who own the sheep.

Respondents, site users and other interested parties will be kept informed of the progress in implementing grazing on Wellfield South by a variety of means, including on site posters, direct email and social media.

Contact:

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Biodiversity Officer

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1.0 Summary

1.1 Total number of respondents		25
Number of people supporting the proposal to graze	22	(88%)
Number of people not supporting the proposal to graze	3	(12%)

1.2 Preference for fencing options

Option 1	5	(22%)
Option 2	14	(61%)
Option 3	4	(17%)

1.3 Details provided for grounds to object to the proposals and actions to be undertaken by the Biodiversity Team and / or our grazing partners (The Downlands Partnership)

1.3.1 “We regularly walk our dogs through this area and the sight of sheep in close proximity would be likely to excite them so that we would need to avoid the path when the sheep were present. Also there is also the remote possibility of a dog getting off lead e.g. from a broken lead or loose collar, and possibly trying to chase the sheep. If the grazing goes ahead we would like to be forewarned by email so that we can avoid the area. I think option 2 would be preferred for the fencing options.”

- Before the site is grazed, posters will be displayed notifying users of the site of what works will be undertaken and when sheep can be expected to arrive on the site.
- The Biodiversity team and Downlands Project currently utilise a number of volunteers to undertake regular (usually, twice per day) checks on the stock and fencing, to ensure that the [Five Freedoms](#) of livestock are maintained. We will aim to recruit additional volunteers and provide them with basic training to assist with stock checking on Wellfield South.
- In regards the other comments, no additional actions are to be taken. Dogs need to be kept under control on almost all nature sites, regardless of whether sheep (or other livestock) are present, as they can cause distress and damage to flora and fauna. The standard procedures adopted by the Downlands Partnership who own the sheep will ensure sufficient signage is in place to advise dog walkers that they are required to keep their dogs under control.

1.3.2 “I use this space for recreation and access to the forest. A small paddock in the corner would be acceptable.”

- The preferred fencing Option 2, involving an electric fence, will be in position for a limited period of time and will be sited to ensure unimpeded access to Queen Mary’s Woodland during the time grazing on site occurs. No additional action to be taken.

1.3.3 “I think with the two current sites that is enough. The top of the estate is very popular with less mobile dog walkers whereby dogs (including ours) can run freely off the lead. In this day and age time can be a premium and I am aware of several dog owners who use the proposed field for their dogs.”

- Noted. The preferred option will mean that fencing will be in position for a limited period of time and will be sited to ensure unimpeded access to Queen Mary's Woodland and access to other areas for recreational activity. No additional action to be taken.

1.4 Comments provided relating to 'are there other factors that would make grazing more agreeable or effective, based on respondents' experience of the area?'

1.4.1 "No, this seems an excellent proposal, and I would be happy to be involved as a volunteer."

- Noted with thanks. No additional action to be taken.

1.4.2 "Ensure enough open land for dog walkers, and safety of sheep from dogs"

- As noted, unimpeded access would be provided by Option 2 to all the site when sheep are not present and would not impede access across the site when they are on. Safety is a major concern for all urban / suburban grazing schemes and stock checkers from the local community, The Downlands Partnership and Sutton's Biodiversity Team would work on a rota to ensure the fence is intact and the sheep are safe and happy. Additional volunteers to those who check Wellfield East and West would be most welcome. Biodiversity Team and Downlands Project to provide opportunities for additional local volunteers.

1.4.3 "Access to the forest."

- Access unimpeded at all times through Option 2. No additional action to be taken.

1.4.4 "Clearly you are doing a thorough consultation and thanks for this.....however I think the current use of the space re dog walking is really important."

- Noted with thanks. Option 2 allows for full enjoyment of the site outside the few weeks sheep would graze the site, with unimpeded access to Queen Mary's Woodland when the sheep would be present. No additional action to be taken

1.4.5 "I don't think so. I am keen that the sheep continue to graze somewhere/somehow on the site. I have used photographs of them in talks to local groups about the history of the local area. I think it is an excellent scheme."

- Noted with thanks. No additional action to be taken

1.4.6 "I think the proposal provides a good balance of conservation and other uses, and will enhance area for all users."

- Noted with thanks. No additional action to be taken

1.4.7 "It is my understanding that there has been grazing on the Wellfield site in the past. Therefore, the current proposal is not new, except that the extent of the grazing might be different, depending on which option is selected. I support Option 2 because I would not to see any restriction imposed on access from Queen Mary's Woodland."

- Noted. No additional action to be taken.

1.4.8 "I'm very concerned about the electric fencing as there are lots of kids living around the Wellfield."

- Noted. The Downlands Partnership and the Biodiversity Team use electric fences extensively and are aware of the issues associated with their use and abuse in urban and suburban grazing schemes, like this. Electric fencing is used on a number of sites in Sutton without incident. The Downlands Partnership Grazing Officer will be made aware of the concerns raised, proximity of the local school and the fact that the site may be used by commuting students. Appropriate signage will be erected and regular checks of the fence and sheep will be undertaken by stock checkers.

2.0 Conclusions and further Actions

2.1 That grazing Wellfield South is agreeable to the majority of respondents to the Phase 2 consultation.

2.2 That of the options presented during the Phase 2 consultation exercise, Option 2 was deemed the most agreeable to the majority of respondents.

2.3 As such, the Biodiversity Team are now in the process of drawing up final plans for the introduction of sheep grazing at Wellfield South.

2.4 We will be consulting with our Natural England adviser and the Downlands Partnership about the specific details of grazing and fencing.

2.5 To inform residents and site users of progress made, we will:

1. Place posters on and around Wellfield South site
2. Email this report and any follow up reports or information to those people who provided their email address to the Phase 2 consultation
3. Send this report and any follow up reports to Sutton's Localities Team to distribute to Ward Councillors and other groups
4. Post this report and further updates on the Sutton Nature Conservation Volunteers website:
www.sncv.org.uk;
<https://suttonnature.wordpress.com/2015/11/06/grazing-consultation-wellfield-south/>
5. Post updates on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
6. Undertake a leaflet drop to all houses in Wellfield Gardens

2.6 We hope that we have made this consultation exercise as open and transparent as possible but if you require any further information as to the grazing proposal or, wish to know more about Wellfield South or any of the sites within the wider area, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details provided on Page 2, or the above online social media.

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Biodiversity Officer

2 November 2015