

Monitoring and Evaluating Quality of Life for CSR 07

Final annual report 2009/10

Deliverable 7.1.2

Jake Morris and Kieron Doick

Monitoring and Evaluating Quality of Life for CSR 07

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank the following people who contributed to the project: the Flagship site staff: Luke Everitt, Tristram Hilborn, Emily Holmes, Jason Maclean and Helen Walton; the project executive board: Tony Hutchings, John Vaughan and Joe Watts.

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1. Introduction and background

Summary

This document is an interim progress report between the baseline year (2008-09) and the final report (2010-11) for the “Monitoring and Evaluating Quality of Life for CSR 07” project.

Forestry Commission England’s Corporate Plan (2008-2011) outlines a range of targets relating to ‘Quality of Place’ and ‘Quality of Life’, including increases in visits to and engagement with local woodland, quality of experience, and the personal and social benefits that people derive through woodland visits. The ‘Monitoring and Evaluating Quality of Life for CSR 07’ project aims to deliver a framework to measure performance against these targets, via:

- developing and testing an effective methodology for measuring the character and quality of visitor experience on these sites
- analysing activity and experience on the sample sites
- reviewing relationships between sample sites and their local catchment populations.

The framework has been implemented across an initial suite of three Flagship sites:

- **Bentley Community Woodland** in Doncaster (managed by the Sherwood Forest District on behalf of the Land Restoration Trust)
- **Birches Valley Forest Centre** in Cannock chase (West Midlands District)
- **Ingrebourne Hill Community Woodland** in Dagenham (East Anglia Forest District).

During its second year, framework development and testing has continued via:

- On-going data collection for the headline indicators via on-site surveys
- Extension of the framework methodology for data collection via site management practices
- A national survey, implemented through the Public Opinion of Forestry Survey in April 2009.

This document reports an update on the methodology used, presents the major findings from this year’s data, and appraises methodology performance.

Annex reports have been produced for each Flagship case study site providing detailed presentation of the data arising.

1.1 Context of report

This document reports project progress for “Monitoring and Evaluating Quality of Life for CSR 07”; it is an interim report between the baseline year (yr1, 2008-09) and the final report (yr3, 2010-11). The research and reporting are conducted by Forest Research (FR), under contract to Forestry Commission England (FCE).

Project Background

Responding to the objectives set out under **Aim 4**, the Community and Places theme of the ETWF, FCE Corporate Plan (2008-2011) outlines a range of targets relating to ‘Quality of Place’ and ‘Quality of Life’, including increases in the provision of accessible woodland (**Target 1**), and increases in visits to and engagement with local woodland, quality of experience, and the personal and social benefits that people derive through woodland visits (**Target 2**).

Through the delivery of a three year project ‘Monitoring and Evaluating Quality of Life for CSR 07’, FR are working with FCE to develop a broad monitoring and evaluation framework to measure performance against these targets. Framework delivery involves:

- establishing an initial sample set of social demonstration sites
- developing and testing an effective methodology for measuring the character and quality of visitor experience on these sites
- analysing activity and experience on the sample sites
- reviewing relationships between sample sites and their local catchment populations.

The framework will also enable the Forestry Commission and delivery partners to demonstrate the effects of forest-related inputs on societal wellbeing, to learn from successes and failures and to critically apply this learning to ongoing service delivery.

During its first year, framework development involved the selection of a set of performance indicators and the design of a suite of research methods to implement the indicators (Morris and Doick, 2009). An initial suite of Flagship sites were also selected during the project’s first year. The sites included are:

- **Bentley Community Woodland** in Doncaster (managed by the Sherwood Forest District on behalf of the Land Restoration Trust)
- **Birches Valley Forest Centre** in Cannock chase (West Midlands District)
- **Ingrebourne Hill Community Woodland** in South Hornchurch (East Anglia Forest District).

Background information for the Flagship sites is provided in the Baseline report (Morris and Doick, 2009).

During its second year, framework development and testing has continued via:

- On-going data collection for the headline indicators via on-site surveys
- Extension of the framework methodology for the collection of data for the headline indicators via two commissioned databases: the Activities and Events Database; and, the Facilities and Events Database
- A national survey, implemented through the Public Opinion of Forestry Survey (POFS) in April 2009, covering key use, engagement, quality of experience and personal and social benefit indicators as a comparator to the on-site visitor survey data.

1.2 Report structure

This report has been structured to provide an update on the methodology employed, present the major findings from this year's data and appraise methodology performance.

The report is structured as follows:

- **Methodology:** details implementation of the research methods at each of the Flagship sites and the national survey
- **Analysis of national survey:** details the results and major findings arising from the national POFS
- **Comparative analysis of Flagship site data:** details data returns for on-site surveys & management records and provides comparative analysis of 'visitor', 'visit', 'quality of experience' and 'benefits' profiles for each site.
- **Discussion and conclusions:** presents analysis and interpretation of the year 2 results, including implications of the results for on-going operational application of the methodology and implications for target setting for flagship sites.

Annex Reports

An annex report has been produced for each Flagship case study site providing detailed presentation of the data arising from on-site surveys & management records.

Towards a Corporate Indicator for QoL

A discussion paper "Towards a Corporate Indicator for QoL" has been prepared independently to and arising out of this report. The discussion paper details the need for a corporate indicator for Aim 4: Quality of Place and Quality of Life, highlights options to develop the corporate indicator and, to this end, presents practical next steps.

2. Methodology for year 2

2.1 National surveying

A survey of the national population was implemented through the 2009 Public Opinion of Forestry Survey, using the GfK NOP Random Location Omnibus survey carried out from the 5th to 10th March 2009. The survey was based on a representative sample of 1,685 adults (aged 16 or over) across England. The descriptive statistical analysis of the results presented in Section 3 covers key use, engagement, quality of experience and personal and social benefit indicators. Where appropriate, comparisons are made between national and case study results. In addition, based on a multivariate regression analysis of responses to the question covering the key use indicator ('In the last few years have you visited woodlands or forests for walks, picnics or other recreation?'), significant socio-demographic categories are identified and discussed.

2.2 On-site surveying

On-site visitor surveying was conducted at each Flagship site between July and October, 2009, which is slightly earlier than the surveying period of 2008: August and November. Questionnaires contained a range of questions covering use, engagement, quality of experience and personal and social benefit indicators. The questionnaire used in 2008 was used in 2009 for consistency and comparability. Two questions were removed from the questionnaire because they were felt by Project Board members and site staff to be redundant:

- Q12: How would you rate the site regarding its ability to provide you any of the following: Feeling safe; Happy to leave the car in the car park; Solitude, peace and quiet; Spending time with friends and family; Enjoying the scenery/views; Being able to enjoy wildlife; Offering a visit that is value for money; Being able to keep fit?
- Q15: How did your visit today compare with your expectations: Much better; A little better; As expected; A little worse; Much worse?

Surveying was conducted on week days, weekends and public holidays, and involved early morning, morning, midday, afternoon and early evening surveying sessions to ensure the capture of a representative sample of site users and uses. The surveying strategy was consciously inclusive and comprehensive, capturing as many visitors as possible. The number of surveys collected was 43, 116 and 166 at Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne, respectively. Surveys were conducted by Forestry Commission staff at Bentley and Birches Valley; a combination of contractors and staff time were employed at Ingrebourne due to limited staff time. Completed questionnaires were sent to Forest Research for data digitalisation and analysis (conducted in SPSS). The results and interpretation are presented in Section 4.

2.3 Site management data

2.3.1 Site management records

A review in the project's first year on routine on-site monitoring practices enabled identification and selection of core monitoring datasets relevant to the QoL framework. Two practices were specifically chosen for expanding the QoL methodology in year 2:

- Activities and Events Database
- Facilities and Incidents Database.

Activities and Events Database

The activities and events database was constructed in MS Access to support Flagship site staff to manage and coordinate:

- activities: organised and led by a group or an individual from outside the Forestry Commission (FC) on FC land. The group, or individual, request permission (a permit) to hold the activity on FC land.
- events: organised and led by FC staff. May take place on or off of FC land.

The database has a user-friendly interface to facilitate fast efficient data input, as well as search and query options. A range of support documents were generated including:

- Database manual
- Event booking forms
- Feedback forms for event organisers, event attendees, FC rangers
- Diversity monitoring forms
- Guidance notes for rangers on differentiating community, recreation and education activities, and ranking groups using Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

At the end of the year 2 reporting period, copies of the database from each Flagship site were collated, amalgamated and interrogated. Primary results are presented in the Case Study Annex reports.

Facilities and Incidents Database

The facilities and incidents database, constructed in MS Access, is a software tool for formalising and digitally recording and monitoring:

- site inspections: routine facilities and furniture survey conducted by District staff to identify defects
- incidents: an issue noted outside of a regular inspection; could be identified by a staff member or reported by members of the public. Details include type, location, persons involved, vehicle information, images

The database includes facilities to:

- print customised inspection sheets
- record details of facility inspections and incidents

- create inspection schedules
- view outstanding actions associated with inspections and incidents
- create a variety of management reports
- create resumption schedules
- send emails to staff with details of forthcoming checks and outstanding actions

The facilities and incidents database was developed through engagement with Flagship site staff during year 2 of the QoL project, including workshops and two iterations of test-and-revise. The database was distributed to Flagship sites in November 2009 for installation and launch.

2.3.2 Analytical functionality of the databases

The activities and events database has the in-built capacity to generate 34 reports, in support of local management reporting. Reporting for this Annual report was conducted by an experienced database user following amalgamation of the databases from the Flagship sites. This analytical approach was adopted because:

- it is not currently possible to select more than one site or sub-site within the database for reporting;
- this approach affords the opportunity to fully test the database's reporting functions for quality control.

The activities and events database has the capacity to store a wide range of information per event, including: numbers of rangers and event type; volunteering; accidents reported; event finance; partner organisation contributions; number of visits per group; group type; diversity – disability, age, ethnicity; feedback – by staff, organisers, individuals. All events are stored on the database by date and allocated a unique reference number.

Functionality of the activities and events database is severely compromised by inaccurate and inconsistent data entry by users. For example, if users habitually do not correct event status from 'provisional' to 'confirmed', the number of events reported will be inaccurate. Equally, if users neglect to collect or enter information from event attendee feedback forms the strength of the statistics reported will be weakened. Inconsistency of data entry may prove a significant issue for inter-site comparisons.

The analytical functionality of the facilities and incidents database will be assessed, following its period of full implementation, in year 3 of the QoL project.

3. National data

Summary

Use

The results of the POFS 2009 reveal that:

- 77% of the population visited forests or woodlands in the last few years for walks, picnics or other recreation.
- People who fall within social grade ABC1, are white, married, aged 16-54 yrs, working or without disability are more likely to visit woodlands than their socio-demographic counterparts.

Engagement

9 ± 1% of respondents had been involved in at least one of the following forms of engagement:

- Been involved or consulted about plans for creating/ managing or using woodlands in your area (3 ± 1%);
- Been involved in voluntary work in connection with a woodland (e.g. physical work in a wood, admin, fund raising, running a group) (3 ± 1%);
- Becoming or were already a member of a community based woodland group such as a 'Community Trust' or 'Friends of Group' (2 ± 1%);
- Been involved in an organised tree planting event (2 ± 1%).

Given that the population of England in 2008 stood at roughly 50.5 million people, the results suggest that between 4 and 5 million people have been engaged in some form of forest management or planning in the last 12 months.

Quality of Experience

Respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years were asked to consider the woodland or forest they visited most often and state whether they would recommend it as a place to visit to a friend or relative.

The results allow a 'net promoter score' for England's woodlands and forests in 2009 to be calculated at 34%.

Personal & Social Benefits

Respondents were asked a number of questions relating to the personal and social benefits of trees, woods and forests. The results reveal that:

- 3 ± 1% of the population have been involved in voluntary work in connection with a woodland in the past 12 months;
- 85% agree that 'Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood';
- 67% agree that 'Planting more trees can help us to cope with climate change by providing shade and reducing the effects of flooding';
- 57 ± 2% of the population have been involved in informal health activities in a woodland in the last few years;
- Approximately 6% of the population have attended an organised event involving physical activity;
- 91% of all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that woodlands and forests are places where people can learn about the environment;
- 68% of all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that woodlands and forests are places where people can learn about local culture or history.

In this section, baseline values for the national level QoL indicators are presented, drawing on the results of the 2009 Public Opinion of Forestry Survey (POFS). The presentation of results focuses on evidence of critical relevance to use (sub-section 3.1), engagement (sub-section 3.2), quality of experience (sub-section 3.3), personal and social benefits (sub-sections 3.4 and 3.5), corresponding to the following QoL indicators:

- 4 (use)
- 2 (engagement)
- 6 (quality of experience)
- 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19 (personal & social benefits).

3.1 Use and non-use

The analysis and discussion presented in this sub-section relates to headline QoL indicator 4: % population which regularly use woodlands and forests. A quantitative analysis of visitors to woodlands and forests is provided (3.1.1), and is supplemented by information relating to visitors (3.1.2) and visits (3.1.3), allowing the presentation of a detailed, national visit and visitor profile for England.

In addition, and with the aim of informing interpretations and explanations of current limitations to the use of woodlands and forests in England, an analysis of 'non-use' is also presented (3.1.4). This involves the quantitative analysis of non-visitors which is supplemented by information relating to 'barriers to use' (cited by non-visiting respondents to the POFS).

3.1.1 Use

77% of respondents said they had visited forests or woodlands in the last few years for walks, picnics or other recreation. This represents a significant increase in use since 2003 (66%) and 2005 (65%), but is similar to the results in obtained in 2007 (76%).

In 2008, the case study catchment surveys revealed that the following proportions of the catchment population had visited each site:

- 10 ± 3% of the catchment population have visited Bentley
- 13 ± 3% of the catchment population have visited Ingrebourne
- 64 ± 5% of the catchment population have visited Birches Valley.

In comparison to national visit numbers, Birches Valley emerges an extremely well used site, especially considering that the question in the POFS relates to visits to any woodland and the catchment survey question relates to visits to a specified woodland.

3.1.2 England's visitor profile

From those respondents who said they had visited forests or woodlands in the last few years), the following demographic breakdowns can be determined. The POFS was based on a representative sample of 1,685 adults across England and results have been weighted to reflect the demographic make-up of the English population. As such, demographic breakdowns in this visitor profile are presented as proportions of the national population.

Based on a multivariate regression analysis¹ of positive responses (77%) to the question 'In the last few years have you visited woodlands or forests for walks, picnics or other recreation?' those socio-demographic categories that are significant can be identified. The results show that people who fall within social grade ABC1, are white, married, aged 16-54 yrs, working or without disability are more likely to visit woodlands than their socio-demographic counterparts:

- Social grade – **ABC1 85%**, C2DE 68%;
- Ethnic Group – **white 80%**, not white 51%;
- Marital Status – **married 80%**, not married 71%;
- Age – **aged 16-54 (80%)**, aged 55+ (69%);
- Working status – **working 83%**, not working 67%.
- Disability/health problem – with disability/health problem 64%, **without 80%**.

¹ Multivariate regression analysis examines the relationship between responses and socio-demographic attributes. The model attempts to identify a set of explanatory variables that account for a large proportion of the variance of the response variable in question. The model originally includes all variables and sequentially removes the variable that has least effect on the variance, leaving only the most significant variables.

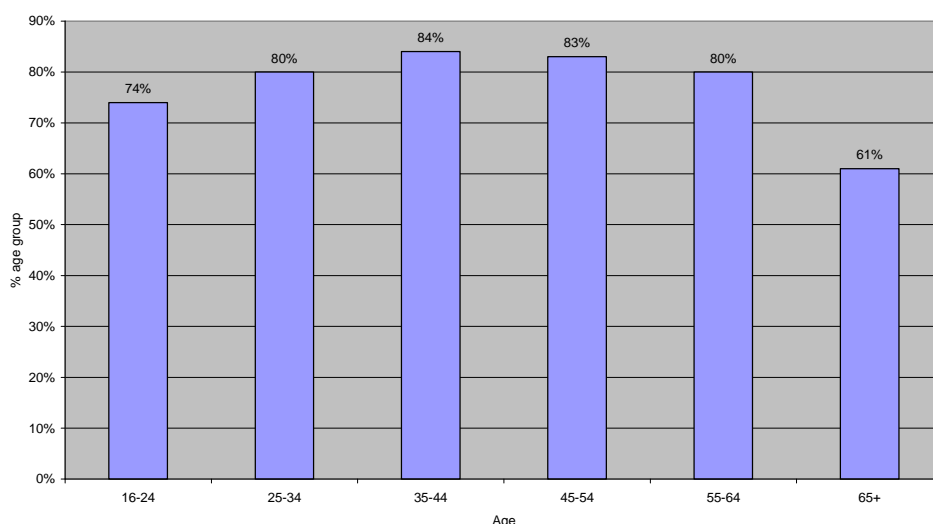
3.1.2.1 Gender

Women (77%) are just as likely to visit as men (76%).

3.1.2.2 Age

The age profile of visitors (see Figure 1, below) shows that people aged between 26 and 64 years are more likely to visit woodlands and forests than those falling within the 16-25yrs and 65+yrs age groups, who are less likely to visit. This is significant because these age groups are often targeted by specific interventions and policies aimed at increasing their use of green space, usually as a means of addressing health problems. These results are supported by the age profile of visitors to the case study sites (see sub-section 3.4.2), where the majority of visitors are aged between 26 and 64 years and where the 16-25yrs and 65+yrs age groups are under-represented.

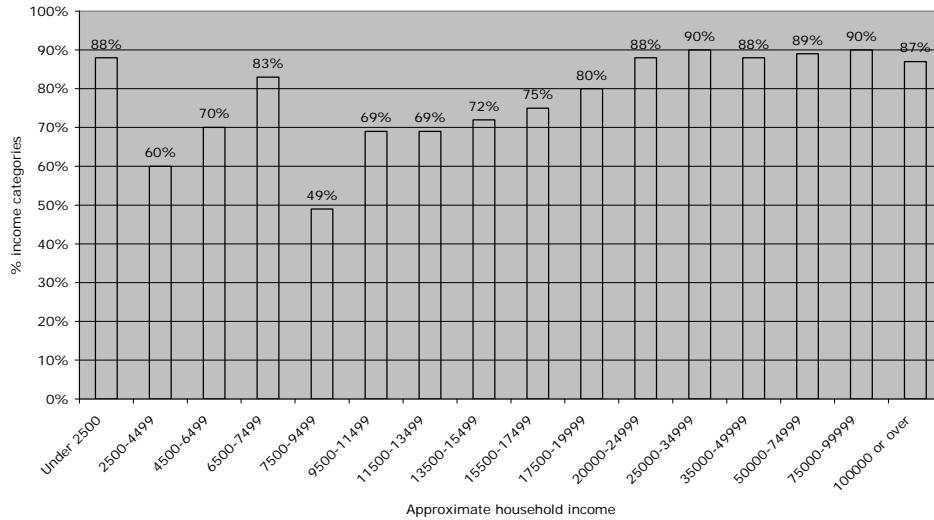
Figure 1. Age profile of visitors to woodlands and forests in England



3.1.2.3 Income

Data relating to income from the POFS 2009 should be treated with caution due to the high number of respondents who refused to give information relating to household income. However, the resulting income profile of visitors (Figure 2, below) reveals that, in general, people from high income households are more likely to visit than people from low income households. 67% of people from households with an income of less than 20k visit woodlands, whilst this proportion rises to 88% for people from households with an income of 20k and higher.

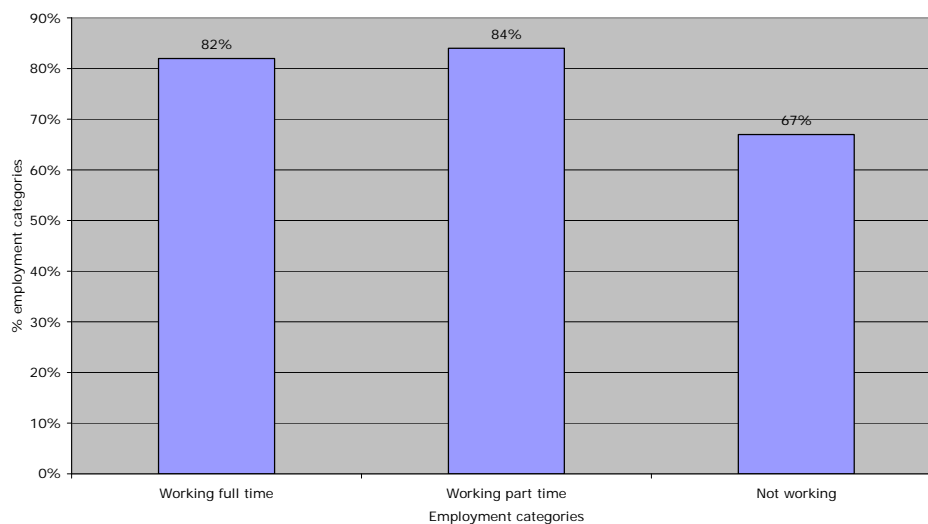
Figure 2. Income profile of visitors to woodlands and forests in England



3.1.2.4 Employment

The employment profile of visitors is presented in Figure 3, below. The results reveal that people working full- or part-time are more likely to visit woodlands and forests than those not working.

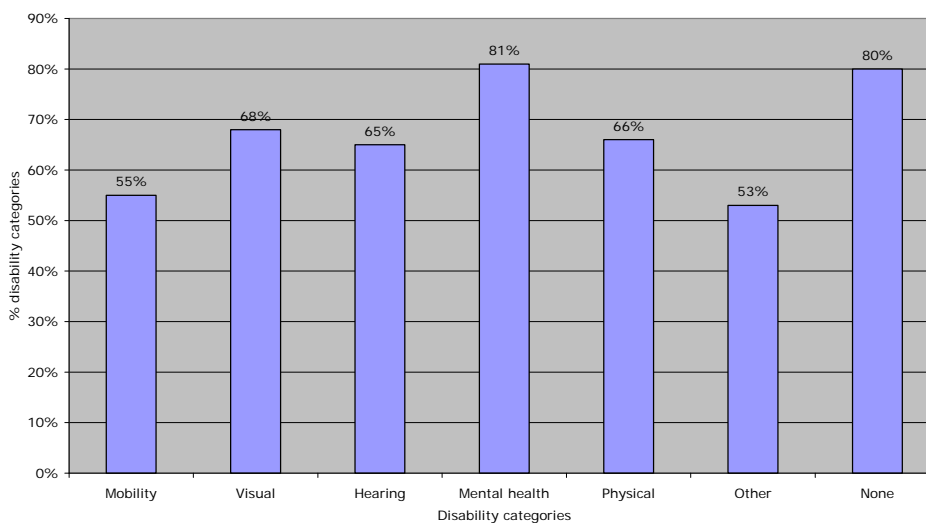
Figure 3. Employment profile of visitors to woodlands and forests in England



3.1.2.5 Disability

The disability profile of visitors (Figure 4, below) shows that people with disabilities are less likely to visit woodlands and forests, with the exception of people suffering from mental health problems.

Figure 4. Disability profile of visitors to woodlands and forests in England



3.1.2.6 Ethnicity

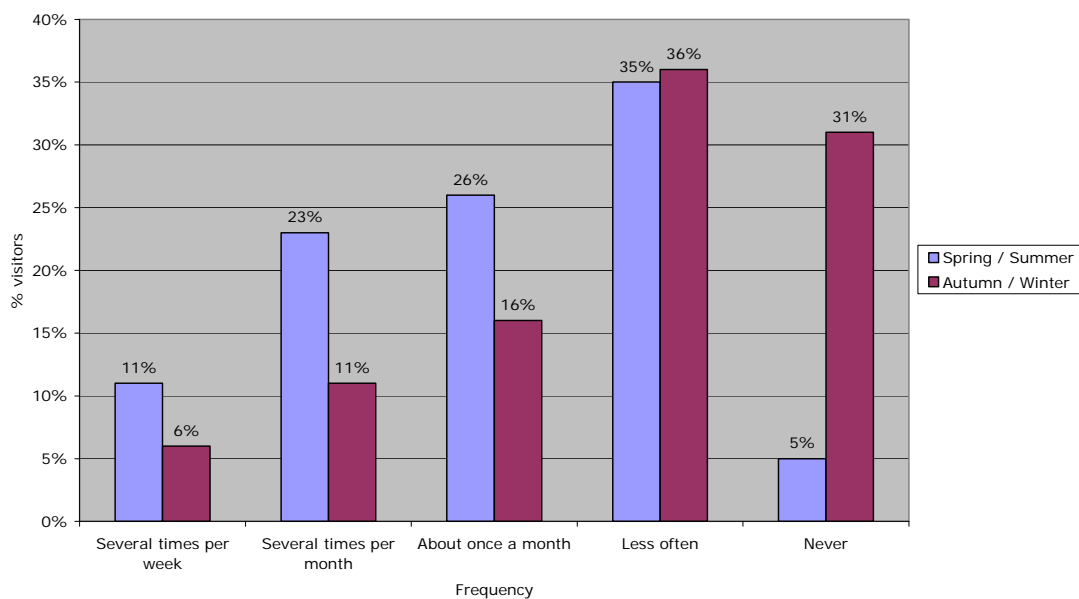
Of those respondents who had visited woodlands, 92% categorised themselves as 'White British', 1% were mixed race, 3% were Asian or Asian British, 2% were Black or Black British, and 1% were Chinese. At the last census (2001), 90.9% of respondents classified themselves as white, and 9.1% classified themselves as belonging to other ethnic categories. As such, the ethnic profile of visitors is comparable with that of the background population.

3.1.3 England's visit profile

Respondents were asked how frequently they had visited forests or woodlands during spring / summer (between April and September 2008) and during autumn / winter (between October and March 2008/09). The results are shown in Figure 5 (below) and show that, not surprisingly, more people make weekly and monthly visits during spring/summer than during autumn/winter. Only 5% of people never visit during spring/summer, but this rises to 31% in autumn/winter.

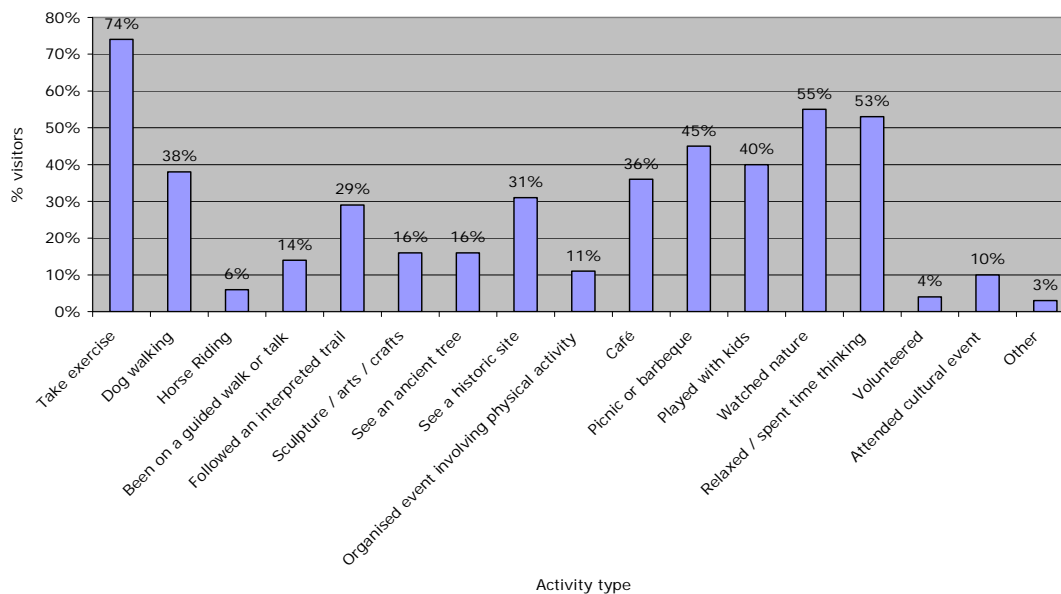
Figure 5. Frequency of visits to woodlands and forests (POFS)

Respondents were asked whether they visit woodlands and forests in the countryside, in and around towns, or both. Respondents who had visited woodlands and forests in the last few years were more likely to visit ‘woodlands in the countryside’ (39%) than ‘woodlands in and around towns’ (16%). Nearly half of respondents (45%) reported visiting woodlands and forests in both locations.



Respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years were asked to state what activities, if any, they had taken part in during their visit. The most popular activity undertaken (see Figure 6, below) was ‘exercise e.g. walking, running, mountain biking’ (cited by 74% of those who visited), followed by watching nature (55%) and relaxing/spending time thinking (53%). Other popular activities included having a picnic or BBQ (45%) and playing with the children (40%).

Figure 6. Activities in woodlands and forests in England



3.1.4 Non-use

23% of respondents said they had not visited forests or woodlands in the last few years.

Based on a multivariate regression analysis of negative responses to the question 'In the last few years have you visited woodlands or forests for walks, picnics or other recreation?' those socio-demographic categories that are significant can be identified. The results show that people who fall within social grade C2DE, are not white, not married, aged 55+ yrs, not working or disabled are less likely to visit woodlands than their socio-demographic counterparts:

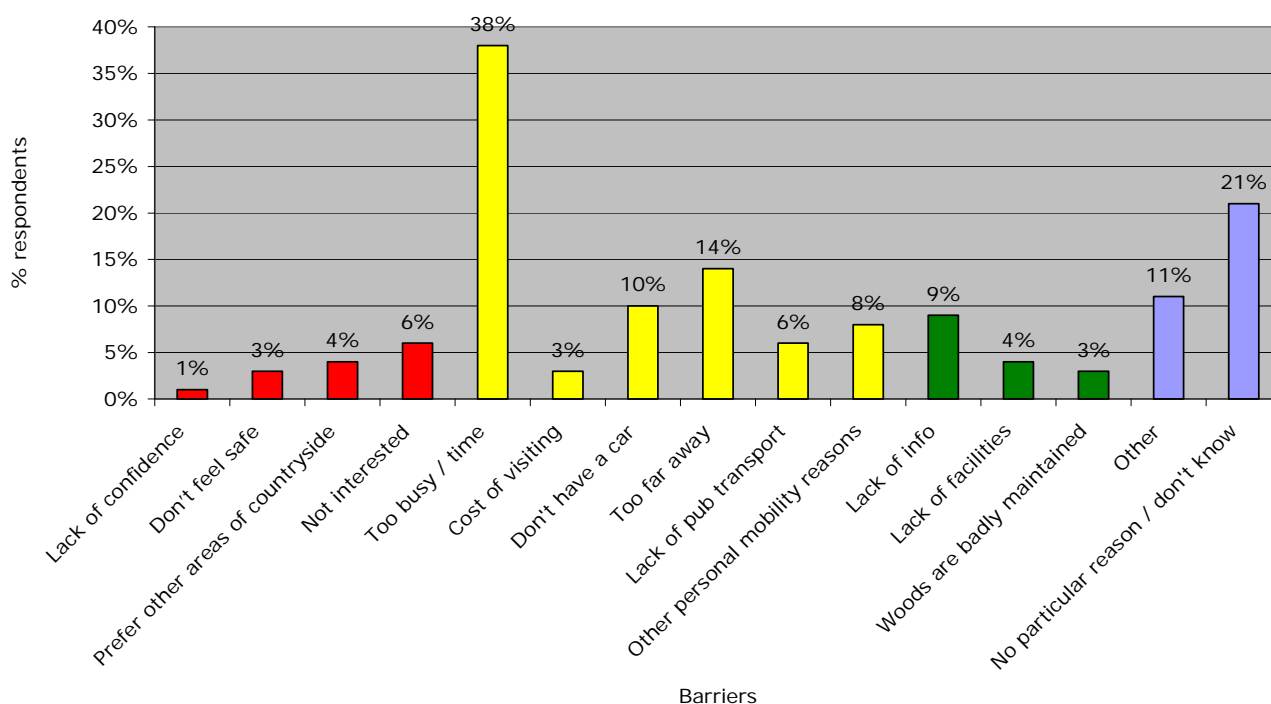
- Social grade – ABC1 15%, **C2DE 32%**;
- Ethnic Group – white 20%, **not white 49%**;
- Marital Status – married 20%, **not married 29%**;
- Age – aged 16-54 (20%), **aged 55+ (31%)**;
- Working status – working 17%, **not working 33%**.
- Disability/health problem – **with disability/health problem 36%**, without 20%.

All respondents were asked about factors that prevent them from visiting woodlands and forests more often (visitors) or at all (non-visitors). The results in Figure 7 (below) are grouped into the following categories of barrier:

- **Red** = Psychological
- **Yellow** = Structural – personal & social
- **Green** = Forest management
- **Blue** = Other / don't know

The results show that few visitors identified aspects of woodlands and forests themselves as barriers to use. As such, the research results suggest that factors external to woodland management (Structural – personal & social) are the most significant limits on visits. One conclusion to draw is that although improvements to woodland facilities and infrastructure may deliver some gains in visitor numbers, visit frequency and duration, more significant gains may be delivered by focusing attention on those off-site factors (lifestyles, health, transport) that seem to have a stronger determining influence over visiting habits, but which are further from the direct influence of site managers.

Figure 7. Barriers to visiting woodlands and forests more often / at all.



3.2 Engagement

The analysis and discussion presented in this sub-section relates to headline QoL indicator 2: % population involved in or consulted about forestry planning & management.

POFS respondents were asked whether, in the last 12 months, they had been involved in woodland consultations, volunteering or any organised activities associated with woodland management. Working with a 95% confidence interval, $9 \pm 1\%$ of respondents had been involved in at least one of the following forms of engagement:

- Been involved or consulted about plans for creating/ managing or using woodlands in your area ($3 \pm 1\%$);
- Been involved in voluntary work in connection with a woodland (e.g. physical work in a wood, admin, fund raising, running a group) ($3 \pm 1\%$);
- Become or are a member of a community based woodland group such as a 'Community Trust' or 'Friends of Group' ($2 \pm 1\%$);
- Been involved in an organised tree planting event ($2 \pm 1\%$).

Given that the population of England in 2008 stood at roughly 50.5 million people, somewhere between 4 and 5 million people have been engaged in some form of forest management or planning in the last 12 months.

Comparable results were obtained in an omnibus survey run in Scotland in 2006, where 8.7% of the Scottish population had been involved in a similar range of forestry-related management and decision-making activities over the same time period (12 months).

The results of the catchment survey at each case study (2008) show that engagement amongst Birches Valley's catchment population is comparable to the national level ($9 \pm 3\%$). However, engagement amongst the catchment populations for Bentley ($3 \pm 2\%$) and Ingrebourne ($4 \pm 2\%$) is lower than the national level.

3.3 Quality of experience

The analysis and discussion presented in this sub-section relates to headline QoL indicator 2: Net promoter score given to site / feature.

Respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years were asked to consider the woodland or forest they visited most often and state their level of agreement (on a 5 point scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree') with the statement: 'You would recommend it as a place to visit to a friend or relative'.

94% of respondents either strongly agreed (39%), or agreed (55%) with the statement. 5% of respondents were 'detractors' (those neither agreeing nor disagreeing (3%)),

disagreeing (1%), or strongly disagreeing (1%). As such, the net promoter score for England's woodlands and forests in 2009 can be calculated at 34%.

Quality of experience at all three case study sites is significantly higher than the national average. In 2008, the results of the catchment and on-site surveys revealed net promoter scores of 65% for Bentley, 71% for Birches Valley, 69% for Ingrebourne. In 2009 the results of the on-site surveys revealed net promoter scores of 88% for Bentley, 84% for Birches Valley and 43% for Ingrebourne. Despite the apparent fall in quality of experience at Ingrebourne between 2008 and 2009, this comparison indicates that the site is still performing above the national standard.

3.4 Personal and social benefits

The analysis and discussion presented in this sub-section relates to QoL indicators 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19. These results are summarised in Table 1 (below) and then discussed in detail.

Table 1: Summary of personal & social benefits in England

Indicator	% visiting respondents	% national population
7. Number of WF-based volunteers	n/a	3 ± 1% (1 – 2 million people)
10. % population aware of services & functions provided by TWF	n/a	85% agree that 'Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood'. 67% agree that 'Planting more trees can help us to cope with climate change by providing shade and reducing the effects of flooding.'
11. % population involved in WF-based informal health activities	74%	57 ± 2%
12. % population involved in formal health activities	8%	6 ± 1%
14. % population involved in led TWF-based learning events / initiatives	14% said that they had been on a guided walk or talk. 29% had followed an interpreted trail.	11 ± 1% (guided walk or talk) 22 ± 2% (followed an interpreted trail)
17. Number of visitors to WF-based cultural sites/ features	16% enjoyed sculpture or arts or crafts.	12 ± 2% (sculpture or arts or crafts)

	16% had been to see an ancient tree.	12 ± 2% (ancient tree)
	31% had been to see an historic site.	24 ± 2% (historic site)
19. Number of participants in WF-based cultural events.	10% had attended a cultural event or activity	8 ± 1%

Indicator 7. Number of WF-based volunteers

Volunteering is an indicator of both personal and social benefits. Personal benefits, such as learning, skills acquisition and improved employment prospects can accrue to the individual through participation in voluntary work. Furthermore, there are often positive physical environmental and social outputs and outcomes of volunteer work which benefit wider society.

The results of the POFS reveal that 3 ± 1% of the population have been involved in voluntary work in connection with a woodland in the past 12 months (e.g. physical work in a wood, administration, fund raising, running a group). Given that the population of England in 2008 stood at about 50.5 million people, this equates to between roughly 1 and 2 million woodland and forest based volunteers.

Indicator 10. % population aware of services & functions provided by TWF

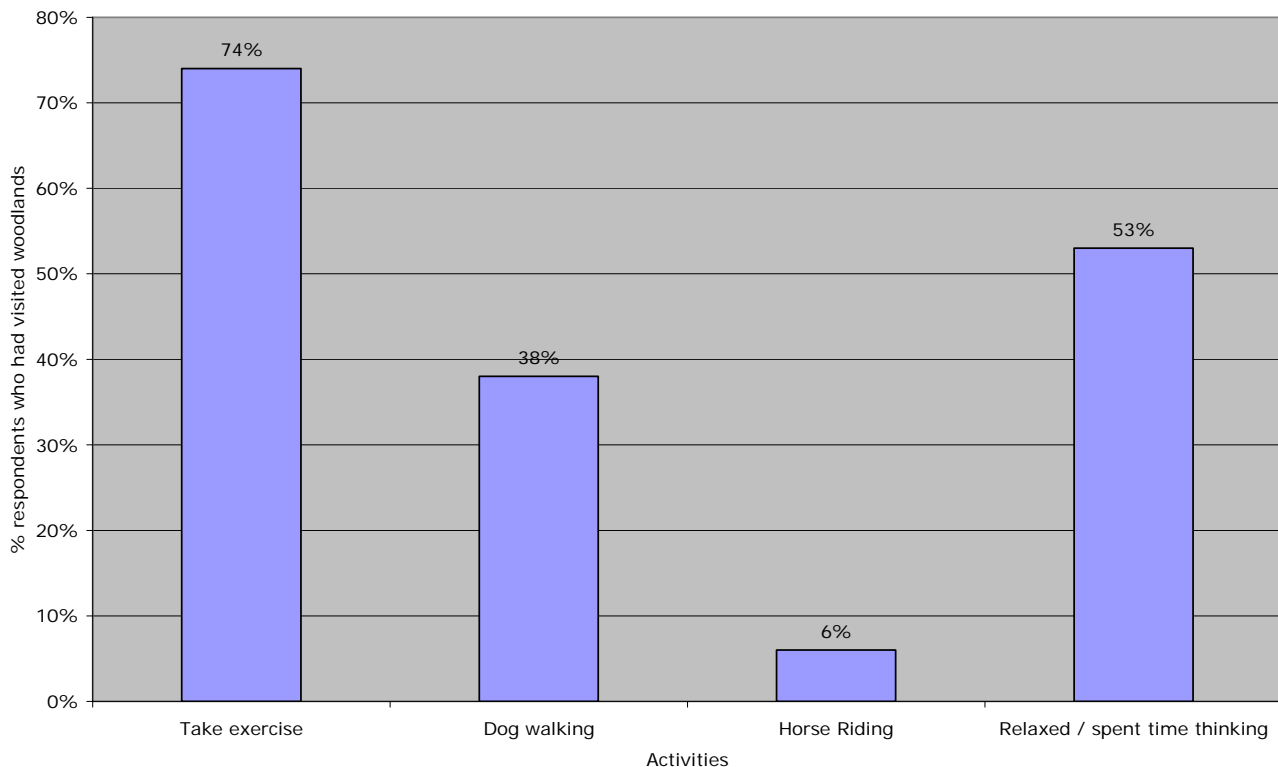
The 2009 POFS placed a particular emphasis on gauging the public's awareness and knowledge of the role that woodlands and forests can play in addressing the problems caused by climate change. As such, respondents were asked about their level of agreement with a set of statements regarding the ways in which forests and woodlands in the UK can impact on climate change.

85% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood'. 67% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'Planting more trees can help us to cope with climate change by providing shade and reducing the effects of flooding.'

Indicator 11. % population involved in WF-based informal health activities

Respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years (77%) were asked which activities they had taken part in. The proportions of visitors who had participated informally in activities that are associated with mental and physical health benefits are displayed in Figure 8 (below). 74% of visitors said that they had taken exercise during their visit. This equates to approximately 57 ± 2% of the total population.

Figure 8. Participation in informal health activities



Respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years (77%) were asked to state their level of agreement with a list of statements about ways in which woodlands and forests benefit them personally. 84% of visitors either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'They are places where I can exercise and keep fit'. 94% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'They are places where I can relax and de-stress'. This equates to approximately 65% and 72% of the population, respectively.

Indicator 12. % population involved in formal health activities

Respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years (77%) were asked which activities they had taken part in. 8% said that they had attended an organised event involving physical activity. This equates to approximately 6% of the population.

Indicator 14. % population involved in led TWF-based learning events / initiatives

Respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years (77%) were asked which activities they had taken part in. 14% said that they had been on a guided walk or talk. 29% had followed an interpreted trail. This equates to approximately 11 ± 1% and 22 ± 2% of the population, respectively.

Respondents were also asked to state their level of agreement with a list of statements about ways in which woodlands and forests benefit them personally (visitors, 77%) and ways in which woodlands and forests are important to the public (all respondents).

81% of visitors (approx. 62% of the population) either agreed or strongly agreed that woodlands and forests are places where they could learn about the environment.

91% of all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that woodlands and forests are places where people can learn about the environment.

Indicator 17. Number of visitors to WF-based cultural sites/ features

Respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years (77%) were asked which activities they had taken part in. 16% said that they had been to enjoy sculpture or arts or crafts. 16% said they had been to see an ancient tree. 31% said they had been to see an historic site. This equates to approximately $12 \pm 2\%$, $12 \pm 2\%$ and $24 \pm 2\%$ of the population, respectively.

All respondents were also asked to state their level of agreement with a list of statements about ways in which woodlands and forests are important to the public (all respondents). 68% of all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that woodlands and forests are places where people can learn about local culture or history.

Indicator 19. Number of participants in WF-based cultural events

Respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years (77%) were asked which activities they had taken part in. 10% said that they had attended a cultural event or activity (e.g. an exhibition, performance or ceremony). This equates to approximately $8 \pm 1\%$ of the population.

4. Comparative analysis

Summary

Engagement

Respondents to the on-site surveys were asked about their involvement in management-related activities at each of the sites in the last 12 months, including being involved in, or consulted about plans for the site, organised tree planting events, or voluntary work. The results show that a higher proportion of visitors to Bentley (16%) are engaged in management-related activities than visitors to Ingrebourne (6%) and Birches Valley (5%).

Quality of Experience

The research demonstrates that, based upon net promoter score, quality of experience has improved at Bentley and Birches Valley, but has dropped at Ingrebourne. The net promoter scores the net proportion of visitors who would definitely recommend each site to friends or family, and were calculated as:

- 88% for Bentley (65% in 2008/09)
- 84% for Birches Valley (71% in 2008/09)
- 43% for Ingrebourne (69% in 2008/09)

Personal Benefits

Respondents to the on-site surveys were asked about ways in which they personally benefit from the relevant site. The results reveal that:

- High proportions of visitors to Bentley and Birches Valley benefit in terms of relaxation, exercise, and general enjoyment, and these are consistent with the results obtained in the baseline year;
- There has been a drop in the personal benefits delivered by Ingrebourne in comparison with the baseline year.

Social Benefits

Respondents to the on-site surveys were asked about ways in which the relevant site benefits their local community. The results reveal:

- A general increase in perception of the social benefits delivered by all three sites in comparison with the baseline year;
- Significant increases at Ingrebourne for three social benefit categories ('It contributes to the local economy', 'It's a place where people can learn about the environment', 'It gets people involved in local issues'), and at Birches Valley for 'It contributes to the local economy'.

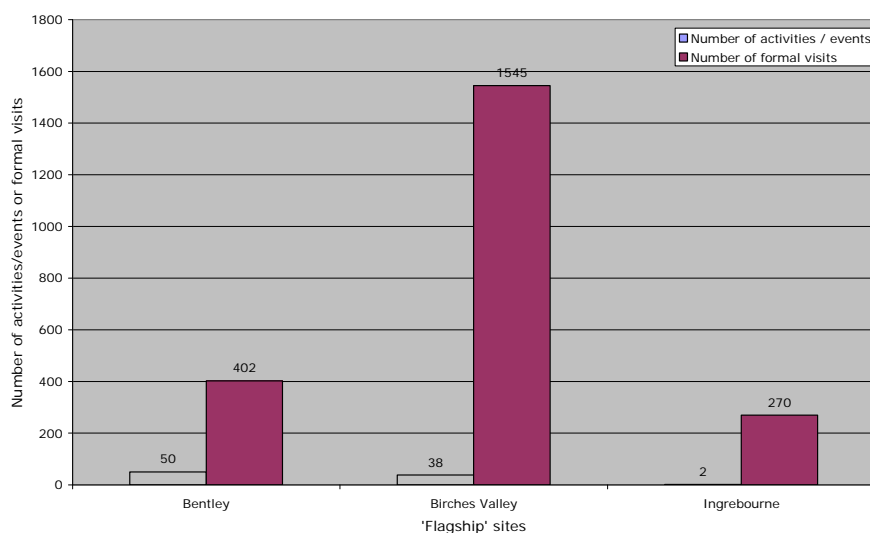
In this section, a comparative analysis of the results from Year 2 research activities at each of the three 'Flagship' case study sites is presented, drawing on the research findings reported in each of the three case study annex reports. The analysis focuses on evidence of critical relevance to the headline indicators, namely use (4.1), engagement (4.2), quality of experience (4.3), personal and social benefits (4.4). Comparisons are drawn with the baseline values established in Year 1 (2008/09) and are also made between the 'visit' (4.5) and 'visitor' (sub-section 4.6) profiles from each of the sites.

In addition, and with the aim of informing interpretations and explanations of current limitations to the use of the sites by certain social groups (and, therefore, to the benefits derived by the local / regional population), a comparative analysis of 'non-use' is presented in sub-section 4.7, focusing on the 'barriers to more frequent use' cited by visitors surveyed. For non-use, comparisons are made with the national survey results.

4.1 Use

In Year 1 (2008/09), use of the three sites was analysed through a survey of the catchment population, only. During Year 2, analysis focused on the formal use. Data was gathered using the events database for ranger-led events and self-led (permissions) activities (1st April to 30th November 2009). For each, the number of participants was recorded enabling the total number of formal visits to be calculated for each site. The total number of formal visitors can not be determined as regular events may attract repeat participants (e.g. to health walks) who will be duplicated in the calculation.

Figure 9. Formal use of Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne



The results show that Birches Valley had the most formal visits during the reporting period, with a mean of 41 participants per event. Events at Bentley were attended by a mean of 8 participants. One of the two events held at Ingrebourne was attended by 230 participants.

Geographic distribution of visitors

During the on-site visitor surveys respondents were asked how far away they lived from the site and to provide their road name and town, or postcode. Postcodes were plotted using GIS (Geographic Information System) to determine the geographic spread of visitors to each Flagship site (see Figures 10-13, inclusive).

For the two community woodlands, visitors were recorded from further afield in the current reporting period than in the baseline year 2008-09. For example, at Bentley visitors were recorded from near Ollerton and from Nottingham, both of which are notably further south than Retford, the furthest recorded visitor in 2009 (Figure 10). The majority (67%) of visitors to Bentley live within 2 miles of the site (2 mile = 3.22 km). However, this also demonstrates that a significant proportion (33%) of visitors live outside the catchment (> 4km from Bentley). Of those providing a postcode (14% of respondents), half were from within the 4km catchment area of Bentley, half were regional visitors and one visitor was from Scotland.

At Ingrebourne, on-site surveys for 2008/09 demonstrated that 77% of visitors came from within 2 miles and none lived more than 20 miles away. In contrast, visitors came from a more geographically dispersed area in the current reporting period: 68% lived within 2 miles of the site, a further 23% and 5% lived within 6 and 20 miles of the site, and 3% lived >20miles away. Of the 116 survey respondents, 71% of visitors provided postcodes. Figure 12 demonstrates the geographic spread of these visitors.

In contrast, visitors to Birches Valley came from a more geographically dispersed area than for either of the two community woodlands (Table 2). Approximately 8% of visitors came from within the 4km catchment nominally appointed to the Flagship site. By far the greatest percentage of visitors travelled between 7 and 20 miles. The site also attracts a small number (2%) of holiday-makers (Table 2). Of the 166 survey respondents, 52% provided postcodes; these are plotted in Figure 11 to illustrate the spread of visitors to the site for the current reporting period. Figure 13 illustrates that some visitors will travel a greater distance to go to Birches Valley, rather than visit Bentley or Ingrebourne which may be a closer destination.

Table 2: Distance travelled to Birches Valley (% of survey respondents)

< 1/3rd mile	1/3rd to 2 miles	3 to 6 miles	7 to 20 miles	>20 miles (day-trippers)	>20 miles (on holiday)
1%	7%	21%	41%	28%	2%

Figure 10. Visitor map for Bentley Community Woodland (n = 7 postcodes). Three visitors came from within the 4km catchment area (these are not shown in Figure 10). One visitor also came from Edinburgh, Scotland.



Figure 11. Visitor map for Birches Valley in Cannock Chase (n = 87 postcodes). Visitors also came from further afield, including Bristol and East Anglia (see Figure 13 Aggregated visitor map).



Figure 12. Visitor map for Ingrebourne Community Woodland (n = 82 postcodes). Visitors also came from further afield, including Middlesex, Chelmsford and East Sussex (see Figure 13 Aggregated visitor map).

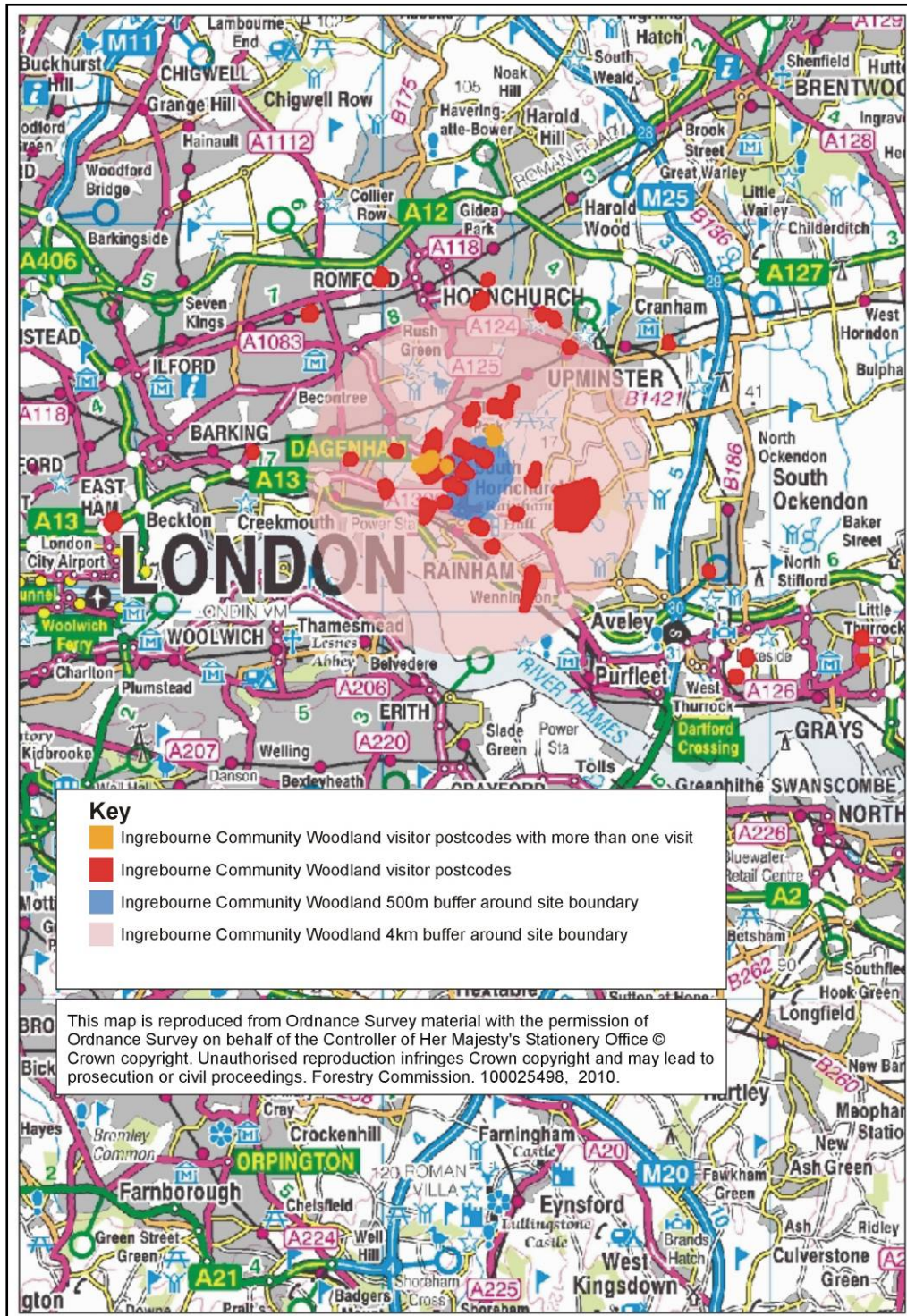
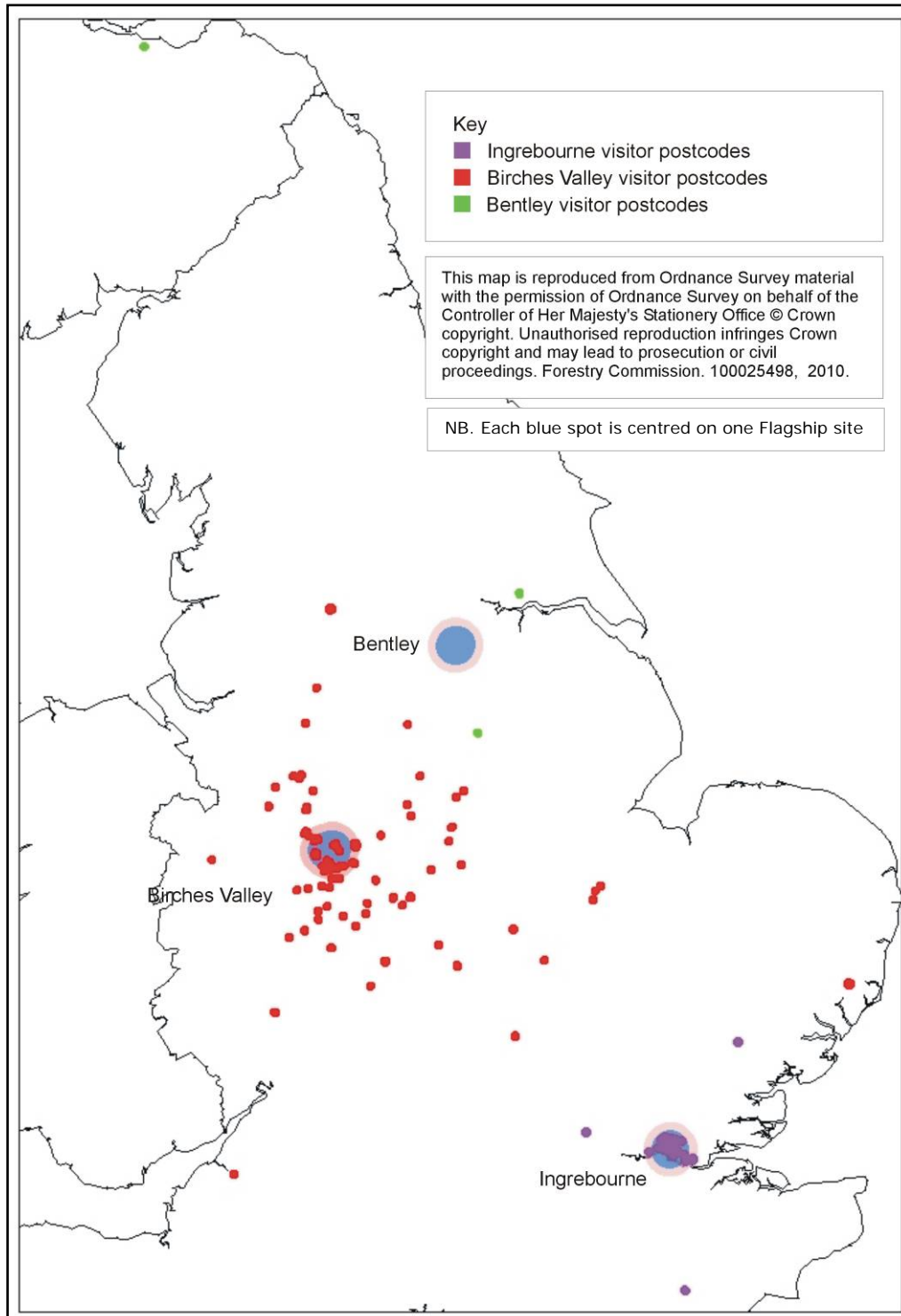


Figure 13. Aggregated visitor map (England) for Bentley Community Woodland, Birches Valley Forest Centre and Ingrebourne Hill Community Woodland (n = 176 postcodes)



4.2 Engagement

One of the key objectives stated in the Communities and Places theme of ETWF is to encourage local people to get involved in planning and managing local woodlands. There is, therefore, an assumed causal link between increased levels of 'engagement', on the one hand, and improvements in people's QoL on the other. This link is made explicit under Aim 4 'encourage healthier, happier and interested individuals through direct engagement with their local woodland'.

Respondents to the on-site surveys were asked about their involvement in management-related activities at each of the sites in the last 12 months, including being involved in, or consulted about plans for the site, organised tree planting events, or voluntary work. The results show that a higher proportion of visitors to Bentley (16%) are engaged in management-related activities than visitors to Ingrebourne (6%) and Birches Valley (5%). Similar levels of engagement were recorded in 2008/9 where 17%, 9% and 4% of visitors were engaged.

For the activities and events database reporting period (April to December 2009) there were 23 formal community engagement events at Bentley, which were attended by 154 participants. There were no formal community engagement events at either Birches Valley or Ingrebourne, with the implication that those visitors who said they had been involved must have done so outside the reporting period (before April 2009).

4.3 Quality of Experience

In this sub-section, values for the key quality of experience indicator are compared across the three sites. The analysis relates specifically to the net promoter score for each site, calculated as the net proportion of visitors (from on-site surveys) who said they would recommend each site as a place to visit to friends or family.

Of the total number of visitors surveyed at each site, the net proportion who would recommend each site to friends or family can be calculated at 88% for Bentley, 84% for Birches Valley and 43% for Ingrebourne. This marks a significant improvement in quality of experience at Bentley and Birches Valley which received net promoter scores of 65% and 71% respectively in the baseline year. The results indicate that quality of experience has dropped at Ingrebourne which received a baseline net promoter score of 69%.

Further comparative analysis of responses to additional questions relating to quality of experience is presented as part of the comparison of visit profiles in sub-section 4.5.

4.4 Personal & social benefits

In this sub-section, values for the key personal and social benefit indicators relating to the objectives set out under Aim 4 of the ETWF are presented and compared. The analysis involves a summary presentation of results from the on-site surveys where respondents were asked about ways in which each site benefits them personally and their local community. For each category of benefit, respondents were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with statements relating to the delivery of a range of benefit categories. By calculating the percentage of respondents who either strongly agree or agree with each statement, the proportion of visitors to each site deriving a given benefit type can be presented and compared. Results are not only compared across the three case study sites, but also with the baseline results from the on-site survey in 2008/09. This reveals whether there have been any significant changes in the delivery of benefits at each site.

4.4.1 Personal benefits

Respondents to the on-site surveys were asked about ways in which they personally benefit from the relevant site. The proportion of visitors deriving personal benefits from each site can be calculated, using positive responses (strongly agree / agree) for each benefit category. The results of this calculation for all three sites are presented in Table 3, below. For each site, the results from the baseline survey year are also presented, allowing the dynamic analysis of benefit delivery at each site.

The results show that at Bentley and Birches Valley, high proportions of visitors benefit in terms of relaxation, exercise, and general enjoyment, and these are consistent with the results obtained in the baseline year. Interestingly, at both these sites the proportion of visitors deriving social benefits ('It's a good place to socialise', 'It brings the community together', 'It gets me involved in local issues') have dropped significantly. This may be a reflection of the drop in visitor numbers observed at Bentley, but it is unclear why this result was also obtained at Birches Valley where visitor numbers have remained stable. The results for Ingrebourne suggest a drop in the benefits delivered by the site in comparison with the baseline year. This negative change is corroborated by the drop in the net promoter score reported in sub-section 4.3. At Ingrebourne, however, personal benefits accruing to formal users of the site (those that attended organised activities and events) were also analysed using feedback forms distributed by ranger staff. The results, displayed in Table 4 (below) show that significantly higher proportions of formal users derive personal benefits than is the case with informal users. This suggests that organised activities and events have a significant positive impact of participants' perceptions of the benefits delivered by the site.

Table 3. Personal benefits accruing to visitors.

Categories of personal benefit	% visitors who strongly agree / agree					
	Bentley		Birches Valley		Ingrebourne	
	2008 results	2009 results	2008 results	2009 results	2008 results	2009 results
It helps me to earn a living or make ends meet	12%	5%	10%	1%	1%	2%
It's a place where I can relax and de-stress	99%	100%	95%	94%	99%	72%
It's a place where I can exercise and keep fit	99%	100%	100%	99%	95%	65%
It's a place where I can have fun and enjoy myself	96%	100%	100%	99%	95%	67%
It's a good place to socialise	76%	68%	91%	85%	76%	53%
It's a place where I can learn about the environment	83%	82%	75%	72%	59%	47%
It's an important place for wildlife	98%	100%	86%	92%	95%	65%
It brings the community together	54%	37%	75%	62%	66%	48%
It makes this area a nicer place to live	95%	93%	85%	82%	97%	63%
It gets me involved in local issues	34%	20%	48%	31%	36%	24%
It's a place where I feel at home	81%	93%	73%	76%	93%	51%

Table 4: Personal benefits at Ingrebourne (event feedback forms)

Categories of personal benefit	% formal users who	
	Strongly agree / Agree	Disagree
It's a place where I can relax	100%	
I can exercise and keep fit here	100%	
I can have fun and enjoy myself	95%	5%
It's a good place to socialise	100%	
I can learn about the environment	100%	
It's an important place for wildlife	100%	
It brings the community together	100%	
It gets me involved in local issues	88%	12%
It's a place where I feel at home	94%	6%

4.4.2 Social benefits

All respondents to the on-site survey were asked about ways in which the sites are important to their local community. As with personal benefits, the proportion of visitors who feel that the relevant site delivers benefits to the community can be calculated, using positive responses (strongly agree / agree) for each benefit category. The results of this calculation for all three sites are presented in Table 5, below. For each site, the results from the baseline survey year are also presented, allowing the dynamic analysis of social benefit delivery at each site.

The results show a general increase in perception of the social benefits delivered by all three sites. Significant increases were observed at Ingrebourne for three social benefit categories ('It contributes to the local economy', 'It's a place where people can learn about the environment', 'It gets people involved in local issues'), and at Birches Valley for 'It contributes to the local economy'. As with personal benefits, at Bentley there was a fall in the perception of the impact of the site on social cohesion and participation ('It brings the community together', 'It gets people involved in local issues'). Again, this may be a reflection of the observed fall in visitor numbers at Bentley during the reporting period. It is worth noting that the increase in perceptions of social benefits at Ingrebourne is in contrast to the decline in personal benefits (see Table 2). This suggests that while an individual may not perceive the site to be of direct personal benefit, this does not preclude the perception of benefits to the wider community.

Table 5. Social benefits accruing to local communities

Categories of social benefit	% visitors who strongly agree / agree					
	Bentley		Birches Valley		Ingrebourne	
	2008 results	2009 results	2008 results	2009 results	2008 results	2009 results
It contributes to the local economy	15%	17%	57%	99%	35%	72%
It's a place where people can relax and de-stress	100%	100%	98%	99%	95%	100%
It's a place where people can exercise and keep fit	99%	100%	99%	100%	94%	99%
It's a place where people can have fun and enjoy themselves	97%	100%	98%	100%	93%	97%
It's a place where people can learn about the environment	92%	93%	85%	97%	75%	92%
It's an important place for wildlife	95%	100%	91%	99%	92%	99%
It brings the community together	58%	42%	81%	91%	68%	87%
It makes this area a nicer place to live	95%	95%	87%	99%	92%	98%
It gets people involved in local issues	46%	36%	80%	91%	49%	72%

4.5 Visit profiles

This section presents a comparative analysis of 'visit profiles' for each site. In a first sub-section (4.5.1), comparisons between basic visit characteristics for each site are drawn, focusing on frequency and duration of visits, the social character of visits (who people visit with) and activity types. The second sub-section (4.5.2) presents an analysis of visitors' actual experiences on-site, focusing on feedback provided in relation to particular features, facilities and other factors that shape the visitor experience, with the intention of providing explanations for the overall net promoter scores presented in Section 4.3 (above).

4.5.1 Comparison of basic visit characteristics

On-site survey respondents were asked how often they tended to visit each of the sites during spring/summer and autumn/winter. The comparative analysis of the results (see Figure 14 and Figure 15) shows that more frequent visits are made to the community woodlands than to Birches Valley. For example, weekly visits during spring/summer are made by 80% and 57% of visitors to Bentley and Ingrebourne, respectively, while weekly spring/summer visits are made by only 17% of visitors to Birches Valley. In autumn/winter, weekly visits are made by 81% and 55% of visitors to Bentley and Ingrebourne, respectively, and by only 12% of visitors to Birches Valley. This corroborates findings from the baseline year where the two community woodlands were visited more frequently than Birches Valley.

Figure 14. Frequency of visits to Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne in spring/ summer

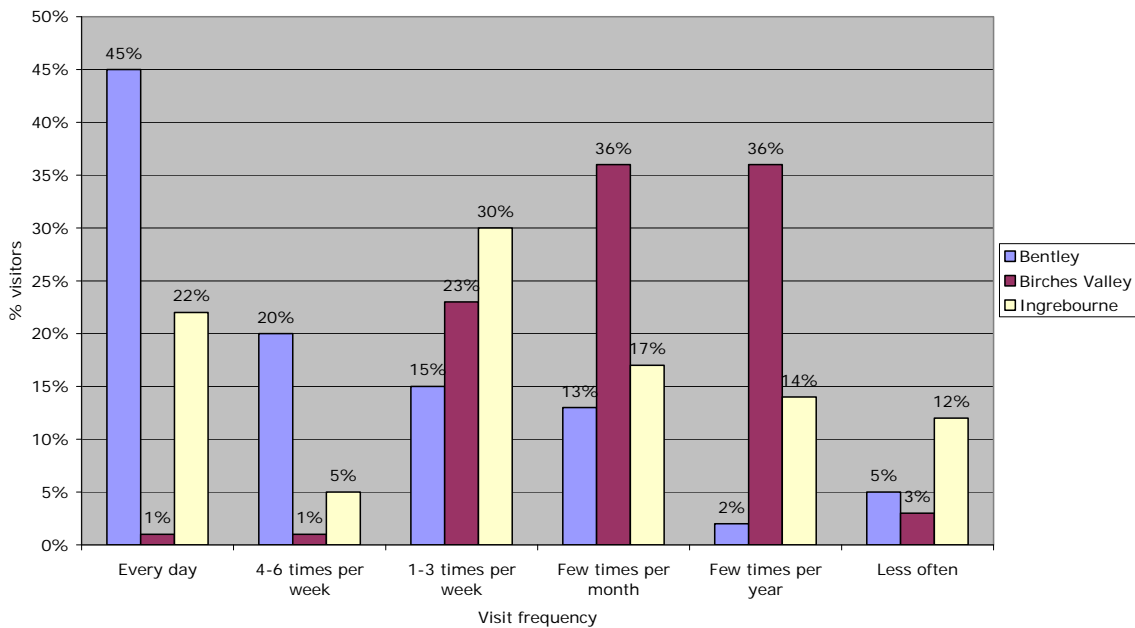
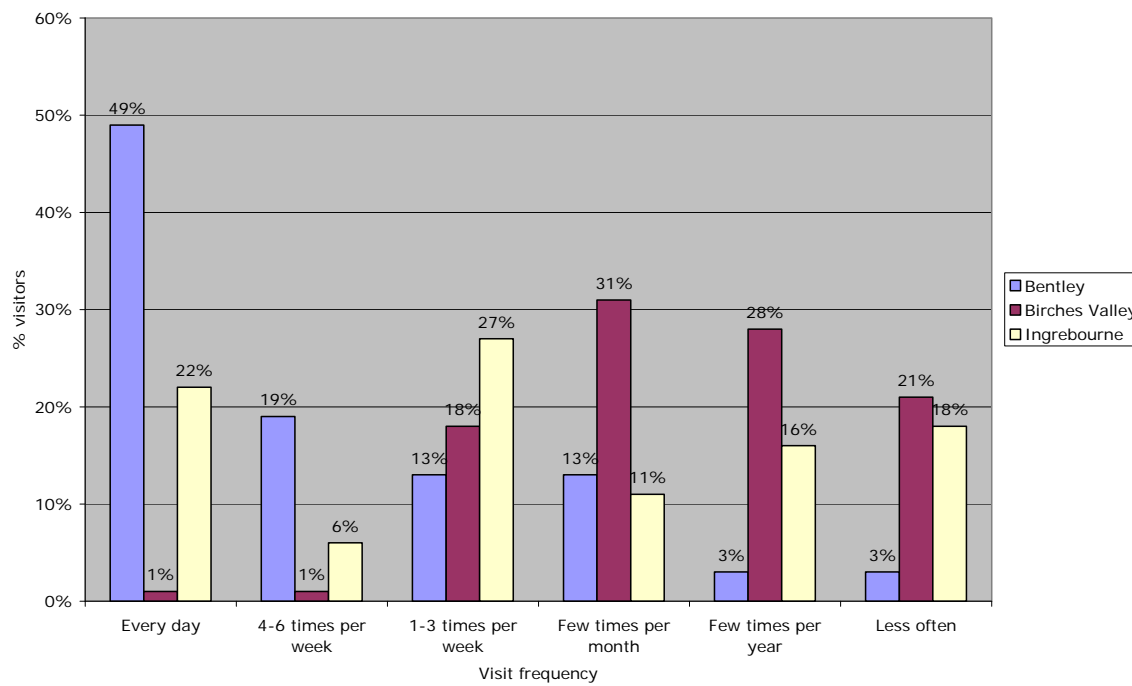


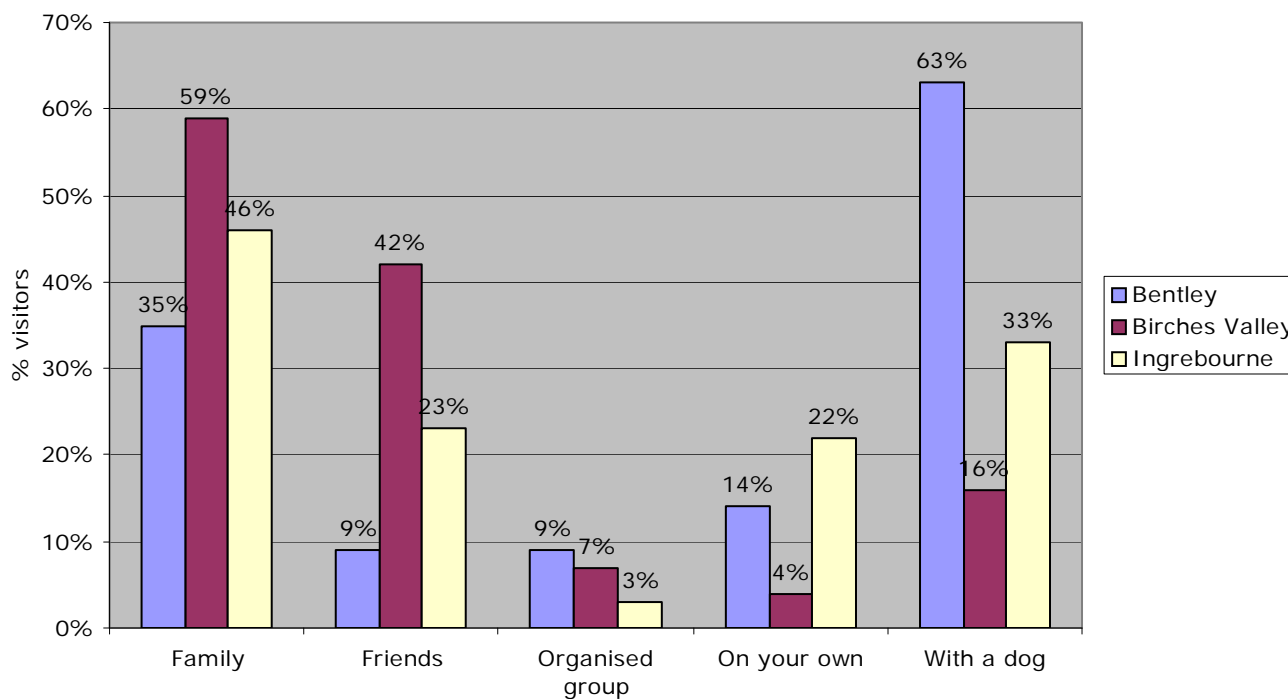
Figure 15. Frequency of visits to Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne in autumn/ winter



Respondents to the on-site surveys were also asked how long a typical visit lasts. The results show that visits to Birches Valley (mean duration = 2 hours 38 minutes) tend to be much longer than visits to either Bentley (mean duration = 1 hour 21 minutes) or Ingrebourne (mean duration = 1 hour 8 minutes). Again, similar results were obtained during the baseline year.

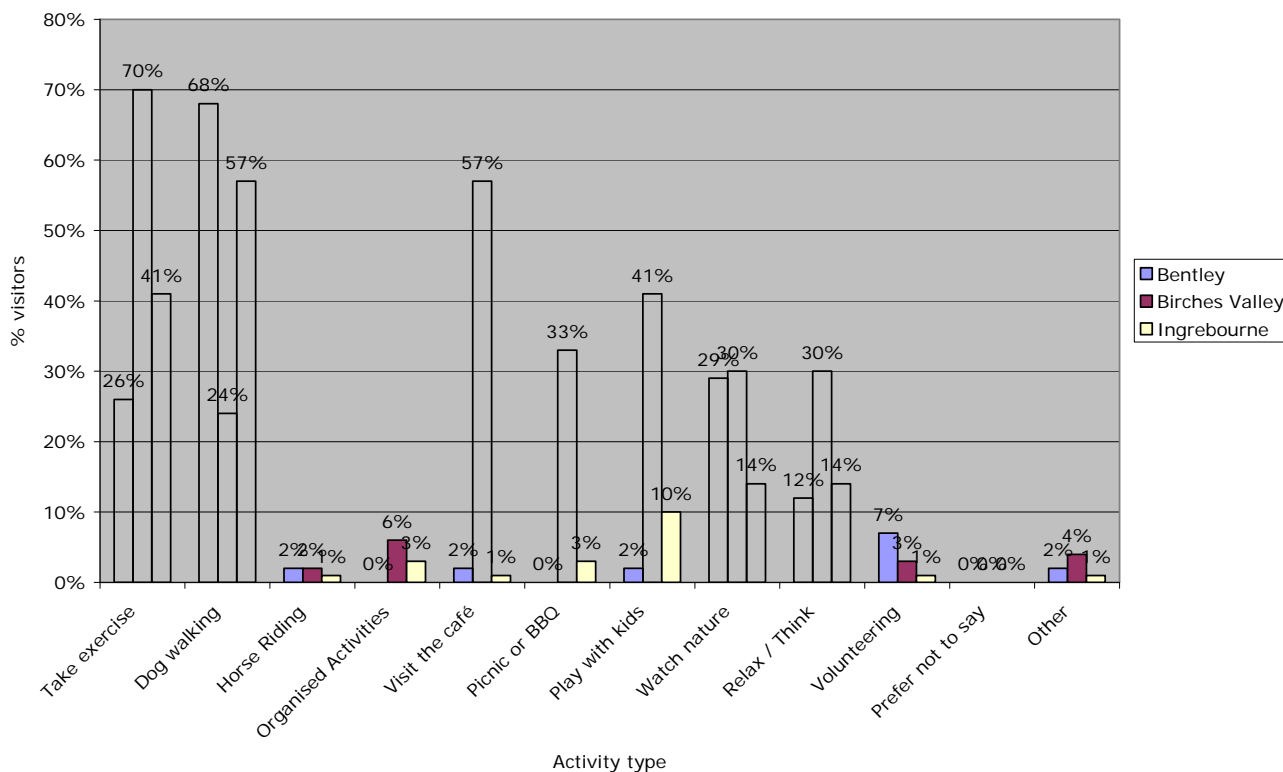
Respondents to the on-site surveys were asked who they tend to visit a site with (multiple responses were permitted). The results shown in Figure 16, below, provide a general picture of the social character of visits to each site. They show the highly social nature of visits to all three sites, where the vast majority of visits are made with friends or family, particularly at Birches Valley and Ingrebourne. Solitary visits are relatively uncommon, particularly at Birches Valley. Visits with a dog are also relatively popular, particularly at the two community woodlands. Dog walking has risen in popularity at Bentley, from 39% in 2008 to 63% in 2009. In general, however, these results reveal little significant change in the social character of visits since the baseline year.

Figure 16. Who do you tend to visit with?



Visitors were asked what they tend to do at each of the sites. The proportion of visitors engaging in each of the activity types can be calculated. The results show that dog walking is the most popular activity at the two community woodlands, whilst taking exercise and visiting the café are popular at Birches Valley. In 2008, taking exercise was the most popular activity at all three sites. The results show that many visitors are taking part in multiple activities at Birches Valley.

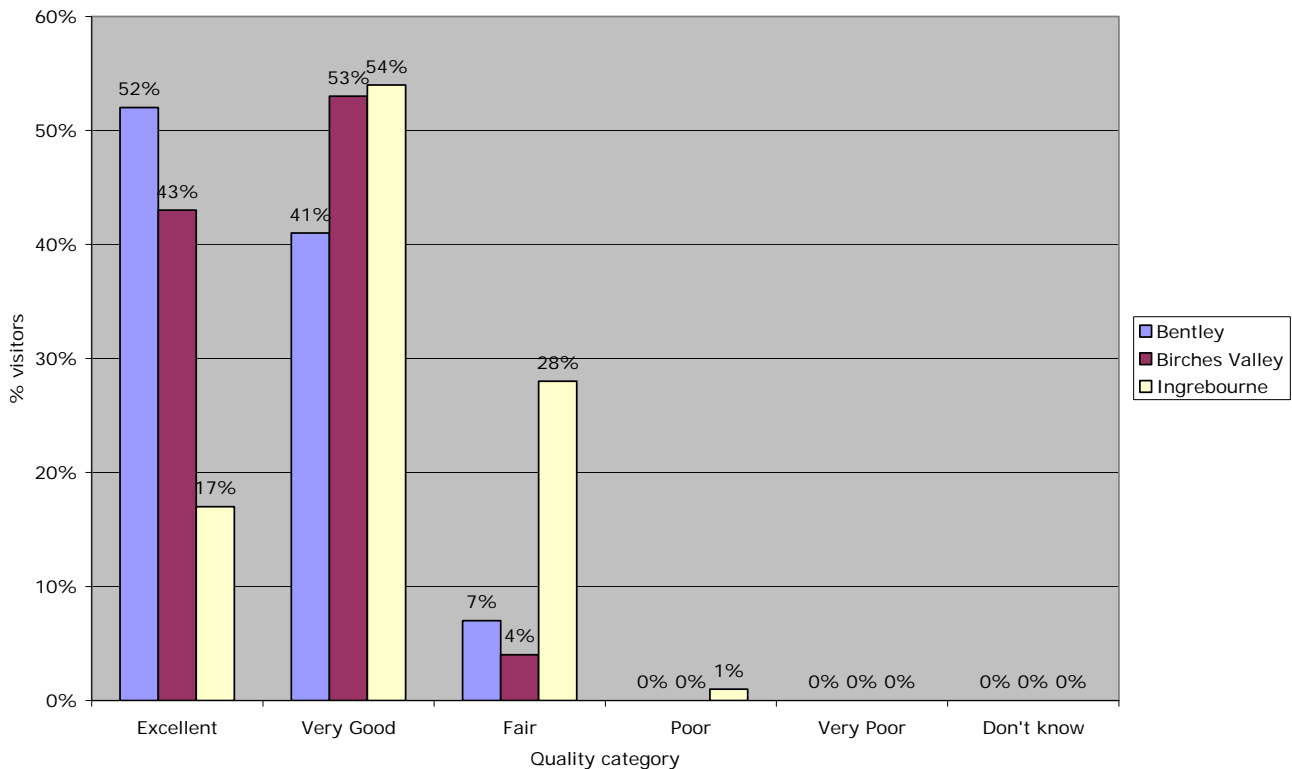
Figure 17. Activity types at Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne



4.5.2 Comparison of visitor experiences

Visitors surveyed on-site were asked to give an overall quality rating for the sites as a place to visit, using the following quality scale: Excellent, Very good, Fair, Poor, Very poor, Don't know. The results from all three sites are compared in Figure 18 (below) and show that the vast majority of visitors to Bentley and Birches Valley rate the sites as either 'excellent' or 'very good' (Bentley 93%, Birches Valley 96%). At Ingrebourne there has been a slight fall in the number of people rating the site as either 'excellent' or 'very good' (falling from 81% in 2008 to 71% in 2009). This corresponds with an increase in Ingrebourne visitors rating the site as 'fair'. These results accord with the drop in net promoter score at Ingrebourne.

Figure 18. Overall quality rating for Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne



To understand what aspects of each site might be contributing to the overall quality ratings, visitors were also asked to rate the quality of individual features and facilities at each site, using the same quality scale. Mean scores for each feature / facility were calculated, where a score of 1=Excellent, 2=Very Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor, 5=Very Poor.

The results in Table 6 (below) show that nature conservation, the design of the site, site maintenance, and the trails and paths are largely responsible for the overall high quality ratings at Bentley. Very similar results were observed in 2008. At Birches Valley 'trails and paths', 'sports facilities', 'visitor facilities', 'kids facilities' and 'nature conservation' are rated highly. Again, similar results were obtained in the baseline year. Ingrebourne visitors were much more likely to give neutral or negative quality ratings than in 2008. In particular, 'visitor facilities' and 'kids facilities' attracted negative ratings.

Table 6. Mean quality ratings for facilities / features at Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne

Facilities / features	Mean quality rating		
	Bentley	Birches Valley	Ingrebourne
Car Park	2.8	2.3	2.2
Design of site	1.7	2	2.2
Site Maintenance	1.9	1.9	2.3
Trails and paths	1.8	1.7	2.3
Visitor facilities	2.7	2	3.3
Nature Conservation	1.7	1.9	2.4
Kids Facilities	n/a	1.9	3.1
Sports Facilities	n/a	1.9	2.8
Info Available	2.3	2.4	2.7

1=Excellent, 2=Very Good, 3=Fair, 4=Poor, 5=Very Poor

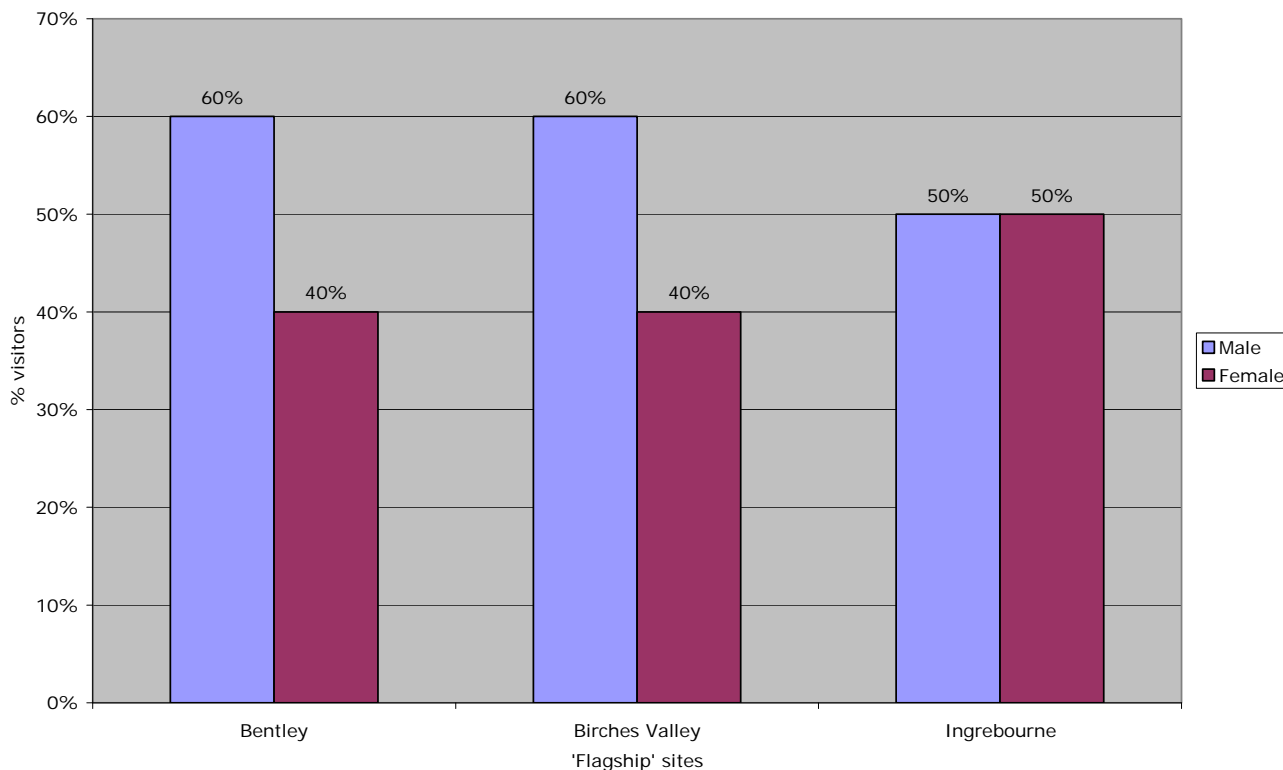
4.6 Visitor profiles

This sub-section presents a comparative analysis of the 'visitor profiles' for each site, drawing on the results from the on-site surveys and activities and events database. The discussion is oriented towards a comparative analysis of the socio-demographic make-up of informal and formal visitors to each site, focusing on gender, age, household income, disability and ethnicity. For each socio-demographic category, comparisons are also made with the baseline visitor profiles established in 2008. Comparisons are also made with the estimates presented in the profile of each site's catchment population carried out in 2008, in order to assess the 'representativeness' of each visitor profile. Analysis relates to Indicator 9: 'Extent to which use reflects diversity within local community'.

4.6.1 Gender profiles

The gender profile of informal visitors to each site is presented below (Figure 19). The results show that, at Bentley, informal male visitors (60%) outnumber informal female visitors (40%). This is in contrast to the results of the baseline survey which revealed that female visitors slightly outnumbered males. Formal visitors to Bentley were fairly evenly split (49% male, 51% female). At Birches Valley male visitors (60%) outnumber female visitors (40%). However, there is a slightly higher representation of females when compared to the results of the baseline survey, which also revealed that males (67%) outnumbered females (33%). There were many more recorded formal female visitors (71%) than formal male visitors (29%). Visitors to Ingrebourne are evenly split between males and females. This is in contrast to the baseline survey, which revealed that males (62%) outnumbered female visitors (38%). There was no data relating to the gender of formal visitors to Ingrebourne for the reporting period.

Figure 19. Gender profile of visitors to Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne



The profiling of all three of the sites' catchment populations revealed approximate parity between females (estimated at Bentley 51%, Birches Valley 51%, Ingrebourne 52%) and males (estimated at Bentley 49%, Birches Valley 49%, Ingrebourne 48%). Working with a 95% confidence level, the results show that females at Bentley ($40 \pm 15\%$) and Birches Valley ($40 \pm 7\%$) are under-represented amongst informal visitors.

4.6.2 Age profiles

The age profile of visitors to each site is presented in Figure 20. For each site, the approximate age profile of the catchment population (adjusted to exclude the under 16 year old category) is also presented, enabling comparisons between visitor and catchment profiles. As was the case in the baseline year (2008), the results suggest that the proportion of visitors from the 16-25yrs and 65+yrs age groups is slightly lower than in the catchment populations, with the implication that these age groups are slightly under-represented amongst visitors to all three sites. Working with a 95% confidence level, statistically robust evidence of under-representation is provided for 65+yrs age groups at Bentley ($10 \pm 9\%$), Birches Valley ($5 \pm 3\%$) and Ingrebourne ($11 \pm 6\%$), and for 16-25yrs at Bentley ($3 \pm 5\%$) and Birches Valley ($9 \pm 4\%$). This is significant because these age groups are often targeted by specific interventions and policies aimed at increasing their use of green space, usually as a means of addressing health problems.

Figure 20. Age profiles of informal visitors to Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne.

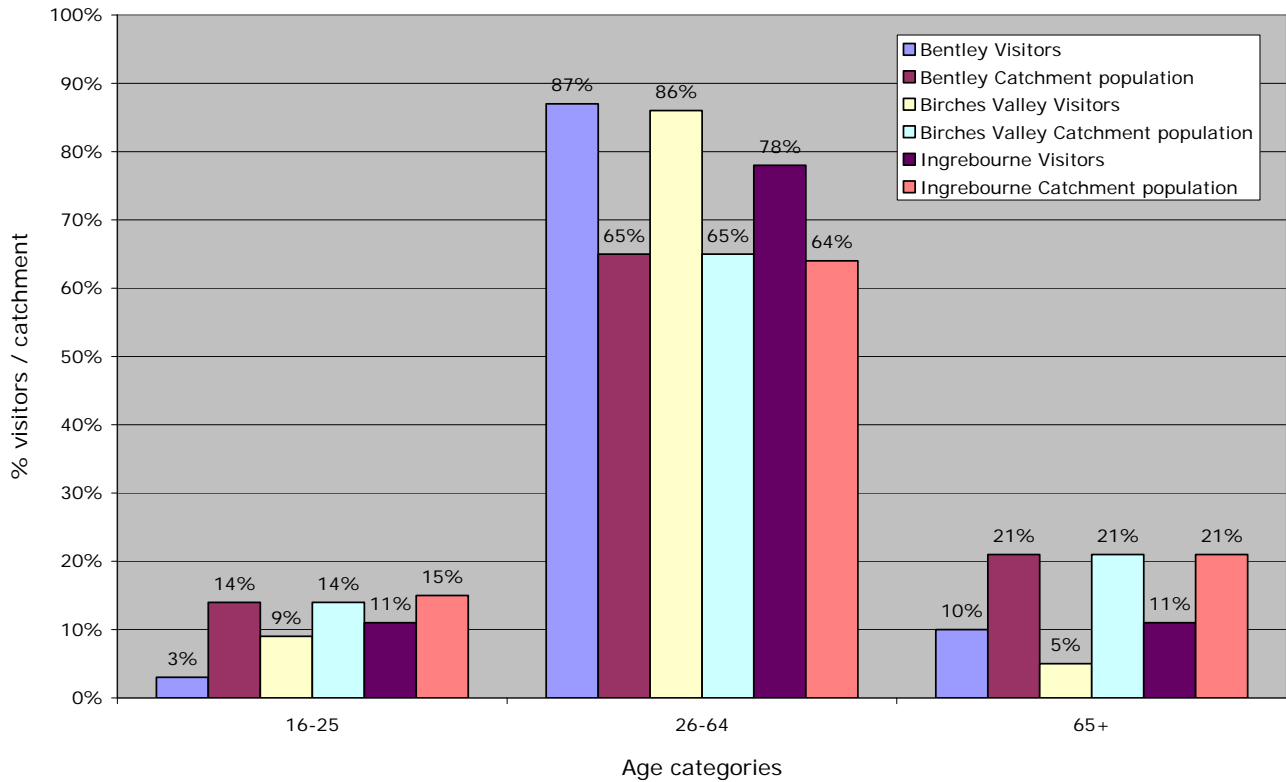
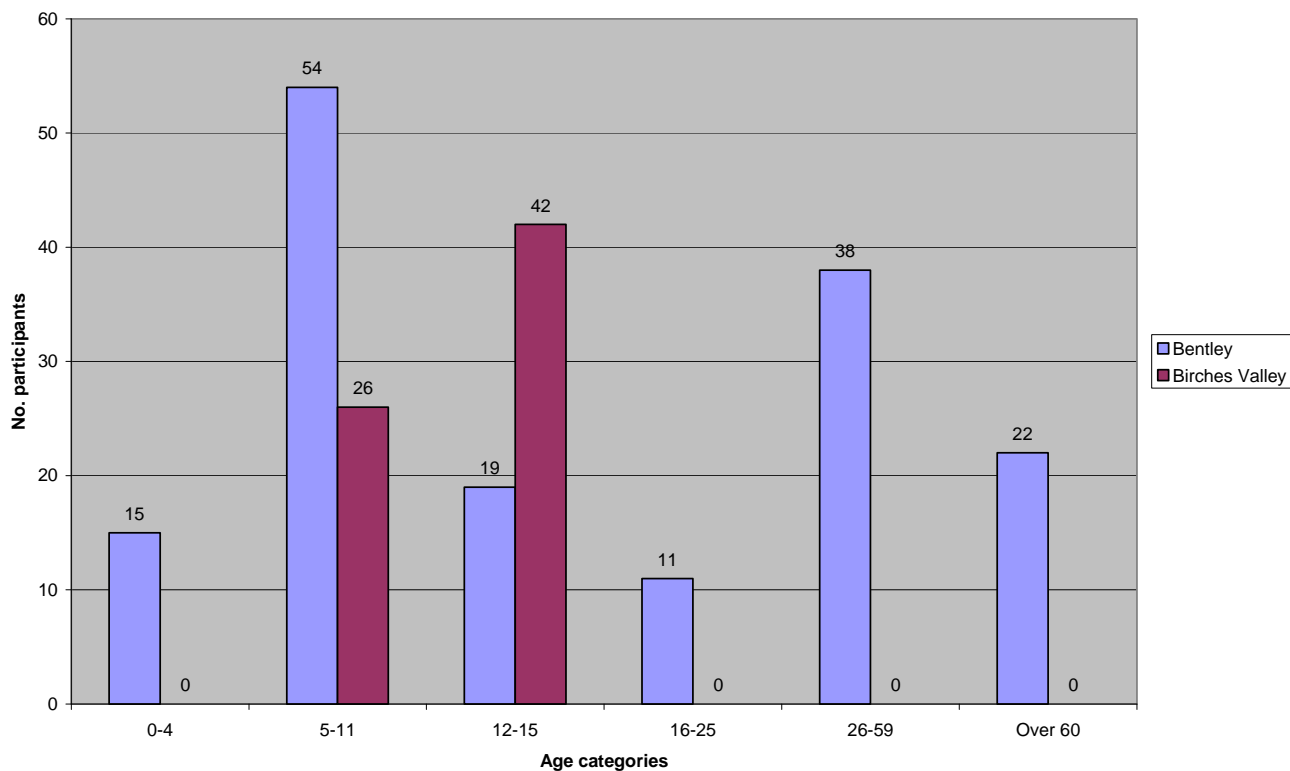


Figure 21 shows the ages of formal visitors to Bentley and Birches Valley (no relevant data was returned from Ingrebourne). Both sites have worked with significant numbers of children (under 16yrs). At Bentley, 22 people aged 60+yrs have been involved in formal activities and events. It will be interesting to see whether these participants are encouraged to make informal visits to Bentley.

Figure 21. Age profiles of formal visitors to Bentley and Birches Valley

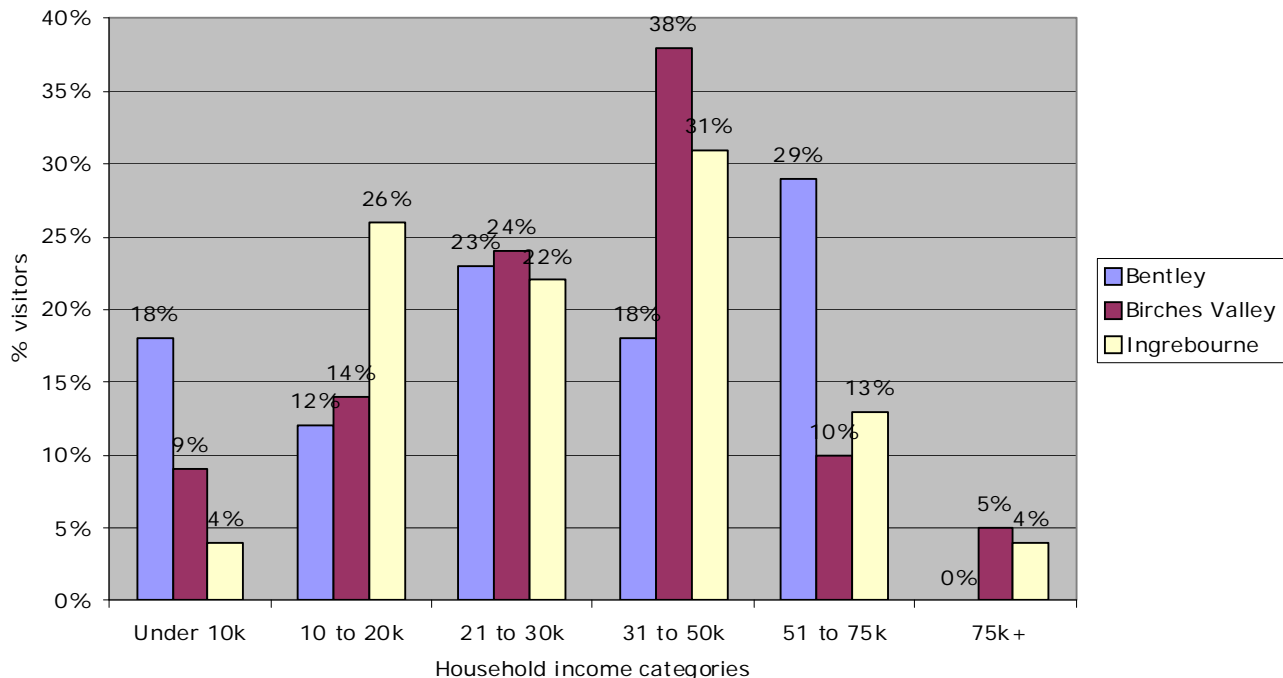


4.6.3 Income profiles

Respondents to the on-site surveys were asked to state their approximate household income. The results in Figure 22 (below) show that respondents from low income households (20k or less) account for 30% of visitors to Bentley (marking a significant decrease since the baseline year (49%)), 23% of visitors to Birches Valley, and 30% of visitors to Ingrebourne. About a third of visitors to Birches Valley and Ingrebourne fall within the 31 to 50k household income category.

The profiling of Bentley’s catchment population revealed an indicative average household income of £23,806, meaning that at least 30% of visiting respondents recorded a household income lower than the average for the catchment. Indicative average household income within the Birches Valley catchment stands at £30,539, meaning that at least 47% of visitors are from households with income lower than the average for the catchment. Average household income within the Ingrebourne catchment is approximated at £33,586, meaning that at least 52% of visitors are from households with income lower than the average for the catchment.

Figure 22. Income profile of visitors to Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne

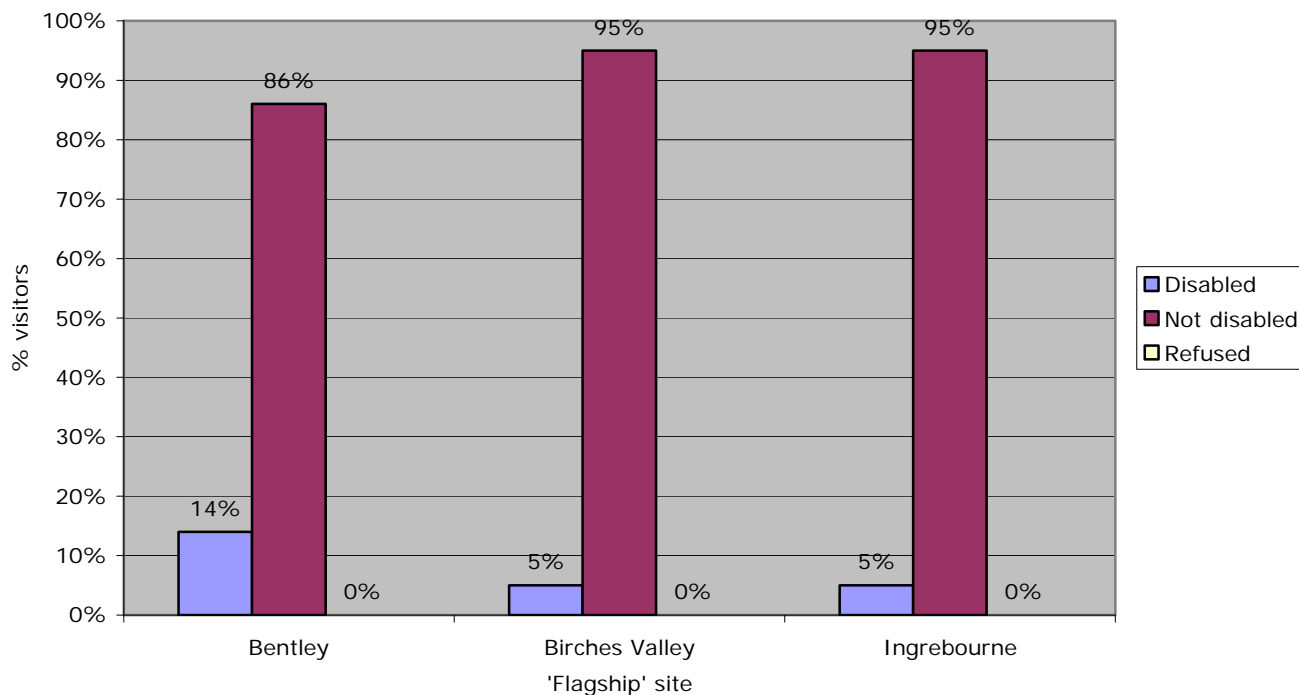


4.6.4 Disability profiles

The disability profiles of visitors to each site, based on results of the on-site surveys, are compared in Figure 23 below. The results show that people with disabilities account for 14%, 5% and 5% of visitors to Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne respectively. This shows a significant fall in the number of disabled people visiting Birches Valley, where 14% of visitors were disabled in the baseline year.

The socio-demographic indicator 'Disability' was not used to profile the site catchment populations, so direct comparisons with catchment profiles are not possible. However, the catchment profiling does show that approximately 23%, 20% and 18% of the catchment populations of Bentley's, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne, respectively, suffer from limiting, long-term illness. The research results allow a tentative conclusion to be drawn, therefore, that people with disabilities are slightly under-represented amongst visitors to Birches Valley and Ingrebourne.

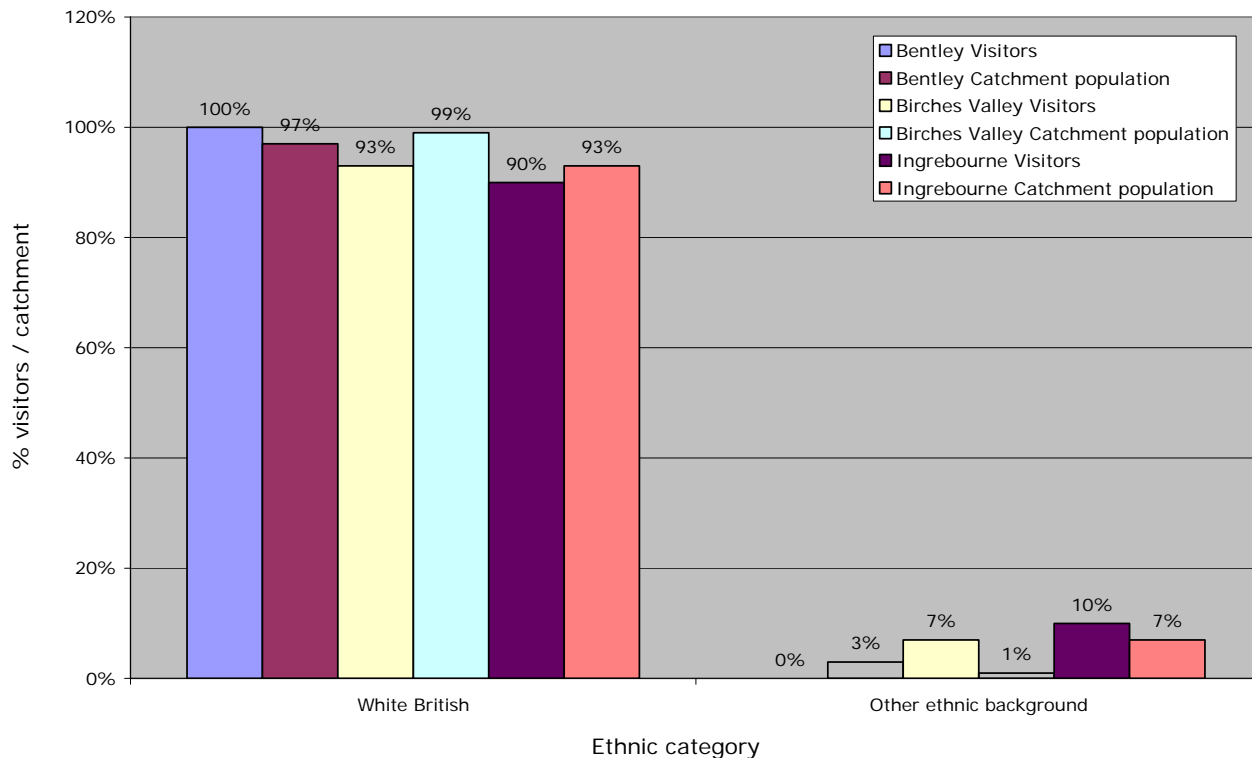
Figure 23. Disability profile of visitors to Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne



4.6.5 Ethnic profiles

The ethnic profiles of visitors to each site are compared in Figure 24, below. Due to the low numbers of respondents falling within ethnic categories other than 'White British', broad categories of 'White British' and 'Other ethnic background' are used. For each site, the indicative ethnic profile of the catchment population (adjusted to exclude the under 16 yrs category) is also presented, enabling comparisons between visitor and catchment profiles. The results suggest that representation of people from 'Other ethnic background' amongst visitors is slightly higher than in the catchment population at Birches Valley and Ingrebourne, with the implication that ethnic minority groups are well represented at these sites. The opposite holds at Bentley, where representation of people from 'Other ethnic background' is slightly lower than the background population. Working with a 95% confidence level, however, there is no significant difference between the ethnic profiles of catchment and visitor populations at Bentley and Ingrebourne. However, at Birches Valley people from other ethnic backgrounds ($7 \pm 4\%$) are well represented amongst visitors.

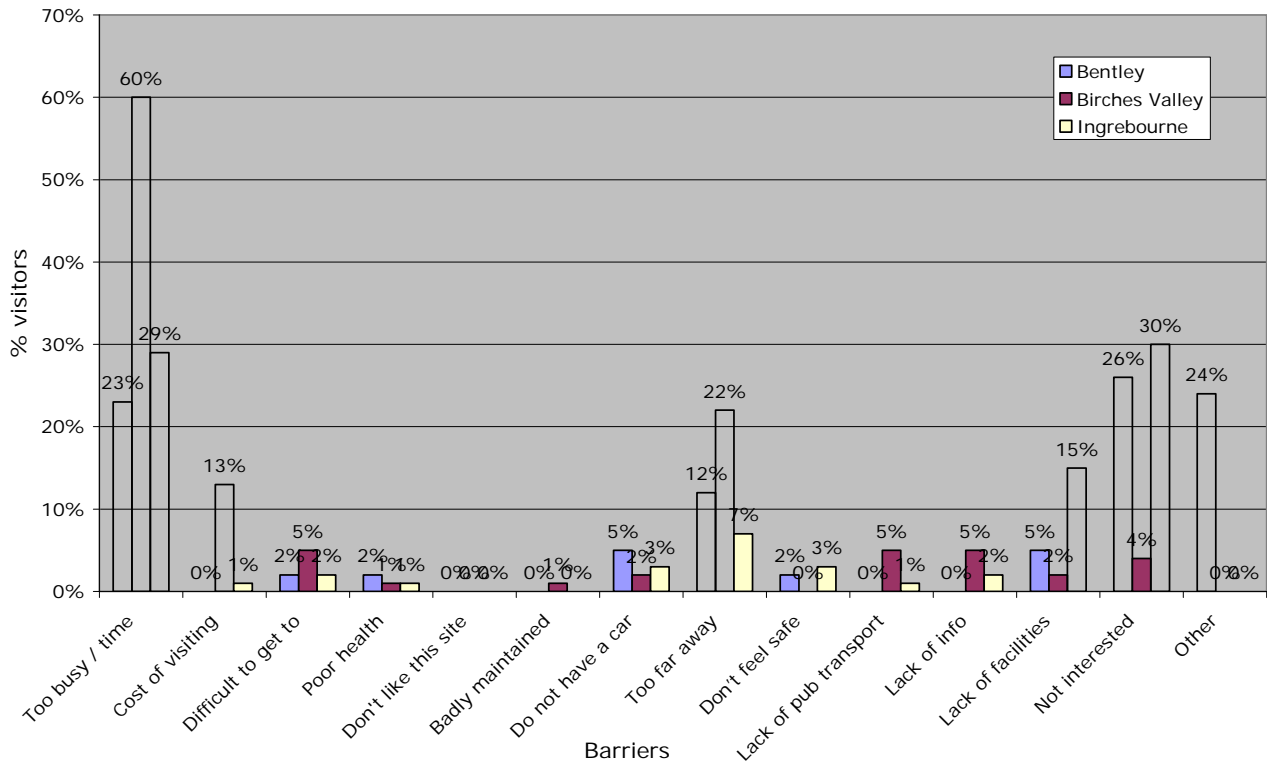
Figure 24. Ethnic profile of visitors to Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne



4.7 Non-use

Respondents to the on-site surveys were asked about factors that prevent them from visiting each of the sites more often. The results in Figure 25 (below) show that, amongst those respondents who answered this question, significant proportions (Bentley 23%, Birches Valley 60%, Ingrebourne 29%) cited 'lack of time' as a barrier to more frequent use. 24% of visitors to Bentley ticked the 'other' category. The explanation provided in the majority of cases was that respondents were already visiting daily, or at least 4 times a week. 26% and 30% of visitors to Bentley and Ingrebourne, respectively, said that they were not interested in visiting more frequently. As was the case in the baseline year, few visitors thought of aspects of the sites themselves as barriers to more frequent use, although 15% at Ingrebourne cited 'lack of facilities' as a reason for not visiting more often. Despite this, the research results suggest that factors external to each site and its management (busy lifestyles, poor health, lack of transport) are the most significant limits on visit frequency. One conclusion to draw is that although improvements to on-site facilities and infrastructure may deliver some gains in visitor numbers, visit frequency and duration, perhaps more significant gains may be delivered by focusing attention on those off-site factors (lifestyles, health, transport) that seem to have a stronger determining influence over visiting habits.

Figure 25. Barriers to visiting Bentley, Birches Valley and Ingrebourne more often



5. Discussion and lessons learnt

Summary

Summary discussion of site-level and national analysis

The framework is building up strong evidence of quality of experience of informal site visits. It is necessary to complement this with evidence of formal visits, requiring further capture of feedback from participants to formal events.

Consistently high levels of personal benefit were derived by formal and informal visitors to Bentley and Birches Valley, but a decrease was noted at Ingrebourne for informal visitors. High levels of personal benefit accrued to formal users at Ingrebourne, suggesting that organised events have a significant positive impact of participants' perceptions of benefits and these should be captured in more detail.

The framework is currently limited in terms of its ability to establish causal linkages between inputs and benefits. Assessing the impacts of formal activities and events will require a more systematic and comprehensive implementation of feedback.

Reflections on practical application of monitoring methodologies

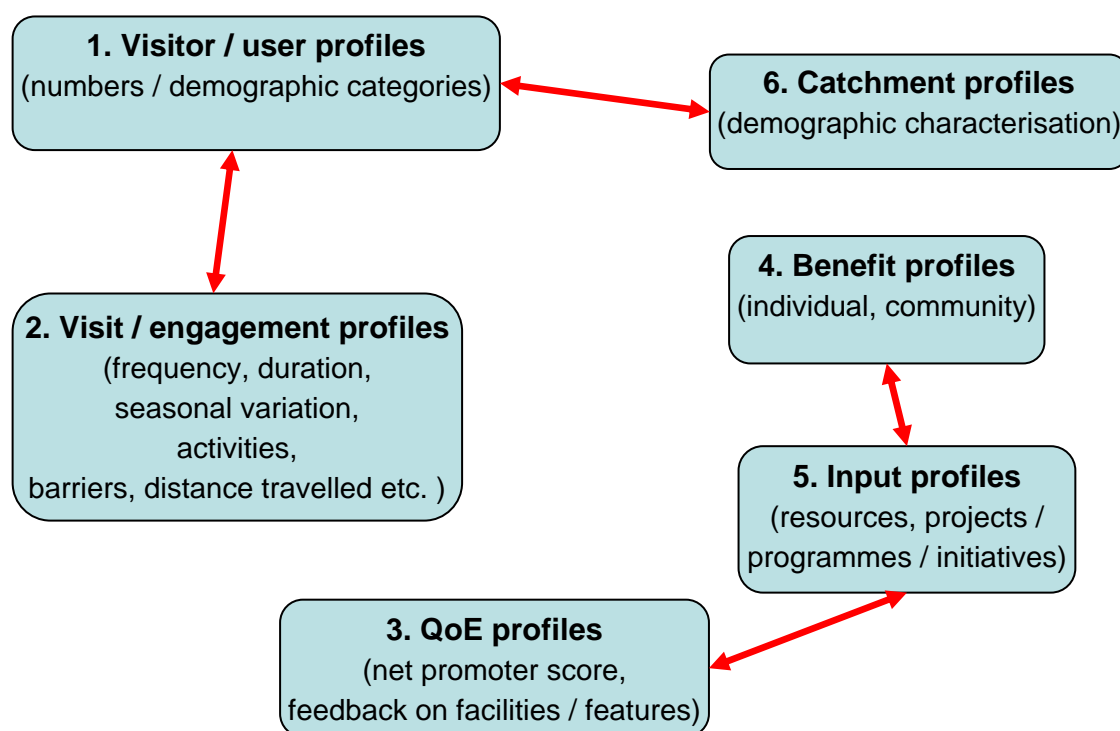
A key development area for the framework has been establishment of monitoring methodologies that improve the quality and robustness of data collected via routine site management practices. Tools such as the Activities and Events database have started to repay investments of staff time provided in its development. The framework has revealed limitations of relying too heavily on operational staff to conduct monitoring, especially the on-site visitor surveys. The long-term adoption of the methodologies for corporate monitoring will need to continue to ensure that each monitoring activity justifies its staffing investment by informing local delivering, in addition to national objectives. Operations managers may need to consider options to support monitoring activities by operational staff in the future.

A key quality criterion for the project is that it should be readily endorsed by local managers. Feedback includes "The project has been very important...it has helped inform development of our community engagement plan" and "year 1 report helped by giving good data to make comparison to other sites...we are limited in our use of the Facilities database due to computer capacity" and "the catchment definition is appropriate to some sites but not all - one to think aboutIt will be interesting to see the comparisons in measurements between year 1 and year 2".

5.1 Summary discussion of site-level and national analysis – implications for ongoing monitoring & evaluation.

The project has now run for two years and all the methods within the monitoring and evaluation framework have now been implemented and tested. As such, this report constitutes a good opportunity to reflect on the analytical capabilities of the framework and consider possible solutions to any shortcomings. A key intention in the development of a multi-method framework (on-site surveys, catchment surveys, site management records and national survey) was to enable the construction of a number of 'profiles' and to track how these profiles changed over time. The construction of profiles at both case study and national levels would also enable inter-site comparisons and comparisons between national and site-level trends. These profiles and the lines of analysis that they enable are set out in Figure 26 and explained and illustrated below.

Figure 26. Monitoring & evaluation for CSR07 – the analytical framework



5.1.1 Visitor / user profiles & 6. Catchment profiles

Through on-site and catchment surveying and the capture of management data (site level) and through national surveying (national level), the framework has enabled the construction of dynamic visitor profiles (both formal and informal), showing the extent of use and the demographic make-up of that use. For example, the results have shown significant changes in the gender profile of visitors to all three Flagship sites. Case study results can be compared with the national results, which show that males and females are equally represented amongst visitors to woodlands and forests in England.

Comparisons between visitor profiles and catchment population profiles enable the identification of social groups that are well-/under-represented amongst visitors to each site; e.g., during 2009 females were under-represented at Bentley and Birches Valley.

The analysis of national survey results has enabled us to profile a typical visitor to woodlands and forests in England (see sub-section 3.1.2). Similar analysis could also be run on the site level data enabling comparisons between local and national visitors.

5.1.2 Visit / engagement profiles

Through on-site and catchment surveying and the capture of management data (site level) and through national surveying (national level), the framework has enabled the construction of dynamic visit and engagement profiles, showing the extent of engagement in management related activities and enabling a detailed description of site use. The results show, for example, a high level of engagement amongst visitors to Bentley, relative to the two other case studies and the national average.

National and case study results show that many people take part in multiple activities during any one visit. However, exercise (e.g. walking, running, mountain biking) emerges as the most popular activity, providing strong evidence of the health benefits of woodlands and forests.

5.1.3 Quality of Experience profiles

Through on-site and catchment surveying (site level) and through national surveying (national level), the framework has enabled the construction of dynamic quality of experience profiles for each site, which can be compared with national results. For example, as indicated by the net promoter score, quality of experience has increased significantly at Bentley and Birches Valley, but apparently has decreased at Ingrebourne. Quality of experience at all three sites is higher than the national average. However, national survey respondents were not asked to specify what kind of woodland they were basing the quality assessment on, making it problematic to attribute higher scores at the three Flagship sites to FC presence and investment.

It is recommended, therefore, that subsequent iterations of the POFS include a question that enables quality assessments to be linked to a specific category of woodland ownership and management intensity.

It should also be noted that the framework is building up strong evidence of quality of experience relating to informal site visits. It will be essential to complement this with similarly strong evidence relating to formal visits (permissions and ranger-led). To achieve this, it will be essential for site staff to capture feedback from participants in formal activities and events. This is discussed in more detail below (sub-section 5.2.2).

5.1.4 Benefit profiles

On-site and catchment surveying, the capture of management data and national surveying have been used to build up dynamic personal and social benefit profiles (national and site-level). For example, consistently high levels of benefit across most categories are derived by visitors to Bentley and Birches Valley. However, there has been a significant decrease in the delivery of benefits at Ingrebourne. That said, high levels of personal benefit accrue to formal users at Ingrebourne, suggesting that organised activities and events have a significant positive impact of participants' perceptions of benefits.

Both nationally and across all three case studies consistently, the highest levels of agreement are with the following statements:

- 'They are important places for wildlife';
- 'They are places where people can relax and de-stress';
- 'They are places where people can have fun and enjoy themselves'.

Consistently lower levels of agreements emerge for benefits relating to community cohesion and local economic growth:

- 'They bring the community together'
- 'They contribute to the local economy'.

The framework is currently limited in terms of its ability to establish causal linkages between inputs and benefits. Assessing the impacts of formal activities and events will require a more systematic and comprehensive implementation of the feedback component of the management data records method (discussed below). Additional questions could also be asked through the on-site survey, however the questionnaire is already long and the required questions would be complex and unwieldy. An alternative would be to run group discussions with informal visitors to explore these causal linkages.

5.1.5 Input profiles

The capture and analysis of management data has enabled us to start to build up an input profile for each site. It is envisaged that in the coming reporting year (2010 / 11),

a full year of data will be recorded, enabling a more detailed and representative input profile for each site to be constructed. To date, the ability to make comparisons across sites is limited to descriptive comparisons because of differences between the activities and events run at each site. It is envisaged that the rolling out of the method across a much wider range of site across England will enable comparisons within emerging categories of site and, ultimately, between individual sites and a resulting national input profile constructed from a representative sample of sites.

5.2 Reflections on Year 2 experience and practical application of methods

5.2.1 A fall in visitor numbers at Bentley

A fall in visitor number was recorded at Bentley during site inspections by staff and during the on-site visitor surveying. A cause for the decline has not been researched or identified. However, Bentley staff note that low levels of public engagement and attendance at events, per se, is exhibited throughout the county.

Visitor survey data demonstrates that satisfaction with Bentley has not decreased since the baseline year: with 93% rating facilities as either excellent or very good; and the net promoter score increasing to 88% from 65% in the baseline year. These figures suggest that the reason for the fall in visitor numbers may be linked to external factors, outside of the direct control of the management of Bentley.

The fall in visitor numbers highlights a potential weakness in the monitoring and evaluation framework: significant variation in visitor numbers year on year weakens statistical confidence in trend analysis and conclusions drawn. It also highlights the importance of a mixed-methodology, wherein comparative information is provided through the events database and, to a lesser extent, national and catchment surveying.

5.2.2 Operational considerations

5.2.2.1 Consistent data gathering

The events database was developed in consultation with future users to ensure its practical functionality and fitness-for-purpose. It was designed to gather a diverse range of information to meet user needs. The specific data entry requirements vary with event type. However, users should enter as much data as possible and appropriate in support of effective reporting.

The extent of data entry varied between Flagship sites, limiting data comparability for reporting. Frequent omissions included finance data, event planning time, final (as opposed to expected) participant numbers and event feedback forms.

A number of inconsistencies in data gathering may be expected when introducing new software, due to variation in local competence and training needs, releasing upgrades and local enthusiasm. Greater consistency is anticipated in Year 3 as the software is now 'bedded-in' and in light of proposed refinements (see 5.2.2.3 below).

5.2.2.2 Event programmes

The events database revealed considerable diversity in the type and number of events held at the three Flagship sites: Bentley had a strong focus on health and well-being and they actively deliver this agenda through events at Bentley as well as through off-site visits to groups; Birches Valley deliver considerably more education events than community/ recreation events, and Ingrebourne have a community-event focus. The number of events delivered at each site is a reflection of local priorities and staffing.

The events database provides quality assurance for event reporting by providing a consistent approach to data recording, including information on types of event held, staffing and resource commitment. It can also be used to inform on the inclusivity and quality of events based upon diversity and feedback records from the event visitors. Analysis of event visitor's feedback will support local staff in their assessment and revision of event programmes, year on year.

Differences in local delivery objectives demonstrate that a comparison of event delivery programmes between the Flagship sites is meaningless. There is little value in considering the numbers of events held at each Flagship site when delivery objectives and staffing levels vary considerably between the sites. Any future evaluation of a site's contribution to quality of life through its events programme could however be made based upon qualitative measures, such as:

- Quality of service delivery
- Customer satisfaction with event and/or site and/or facilities
- Value for money
- Willingness to recommend site and/or events to others.

A robust comparison of delivery will require a statistically representative number of feedback forms for the evaluation to be meaningful and this requires determination by site staff to distribute forms and collect completed feedback forms.

5.2.2.3 Event Feedback

At a basic level of operation, the events database records the number and types of events held (i.e. the input profile for each Flagship site) and an estimate of the number of people who attend (i.e. the output profile per Flagship site). To more fully assess the contribution of Events to people's Quality of life an assessment of 'outcomes' is required - where outcomes may include: a contribution to health or making new friends. To gather 'outcome' data the event feedback forms must be used, providing testimony and

qualification of the wider impacts of attending events. Basic operation of the events database is useful, though the dataset is considerably strong if used to its full potential.

Eight different types of feedback forms were available in the first version of the events database. The range of feedback forms was selected to reflect the diversity of permissions and events, tailoring data collection accordingly. Feedback data recorded in the current reporting period was limited as a result of differing levels of capacity and commitment between sites to adopt the QoL project's feedback forms, and because of poor return rates from participants.

A simplification to the feedback process is proposed for year 3. Only one type of form will be available for event organisers and one for event participants. This will restrict the breadth of data collected but will reduce the time required for data entry and should encourage use by staff as well as a higher percentage of returns from event visitors.

Revised feedback forms have been sent to Flagship site staff for comment with a view to incorporating the changes before the start of year 3 of the project. Furthermore, staff will be encouraged to obtain feedback from a representative of each group/family attending, rather than all attendees, when a large number of groups are represented (e.g. at community open days).

5.2.3 Ongoing reliance on operational staff

A key area of development for the Quality of Life monitoring and evaluation framework has been to establishment tools and/or methodologies that will improve the quality and robustness of data collected via routine site management practices, so that this data may be used in a formal monitoring context. For example, to inform a corporate indicator for the contribution of trees, woods and forests to quality of life.

Tools such as the Activities and Events database have started to repay investments of staff time provided for its development (see Feedback from flagship site managers). Similarly, the newer Facilities and Incidents database is showing promise as a tool that will increase the reliability of site management data, in support of audits, and save time in recording and reporting on facility inspections and crime/incidents. Whilst both these tools are proving to be time saving and a support of local staff, other methodologies have demonstrated limitations in relying too heavily on operational staff to conduct monitoring, especially the visitor surveys. The on-going success of both this project and its long-term adoption for corporate monitoring will depend upon monitoring activity having local value, informing local delivering, and provides quality data suitably for national monitoring objectives. Senior operations managers (e.g. Forest Management Directors) may need to consider options to support operational staff further in their monitoring activities if the methodology is to adopted for corporate reporting.

5.2.4 Feedback from flagship site managers

A major objective of this 'Monitoring and Evaluating Quality of Life' project is to provide a monitoring methodology that is non-burdensome to the site staff who implement it and, at the same time, delivers information that is important for the successful on-going management of the site. To this end, the methodology should be readily endorsed by local site managers.

To assess project progress, feedback was sought from managers for each of the three flagship sites based upon the following questions:

"As a precursor to the final years work, we would like to hear how useful you are finding the project and the results it's generating:

1. Was last year's report interesting to you?
 - o Was it useful, useable?
2. What has been your cycle of improvement? Have you implemented anything new out of the results of the year 1 report?
 - o If yes: what? What from the report helped in this?
 - o If no: why? What were the constraining factors?
3. Would you welcome time with the project delivery team us to discuss the implications of the year1 and 2 reports?
4. What do you expect next from the project?"

Feedback from each of the site managers are summarised below.

Tristram Hilborn, Team Leader at Thames Chase, and site manager for Ingrebourne Hill Community woodland stated:

1) The project has been very important for us. It has helped to inform new development of our community engagement plan and related strategy. It has highlighted a need to repeat all the work - in slim-lined version - across all the Thames Chase sites to inform future direction of the Beat – as a holistic vision. This has certainly been one of the most useful reports out of Forest Research in recent years, directing and questioning our interventions. Our need now is to improve site management and implement new interventions and have these followed through by the monitoring package to see how the interventions have performed and if our objectives have been met.

2) The project has demonstrated a need to expand our level of understanding across the beat, including identifying priority groups. The report has helped to disprove a long held assumption about misrepresentation at Ingrebourne, which in turn disproves the need for improvement in respect of representativeness of users.

3) We would certainly welcome support to discuss the wider issues of monitoring and evaluation, including how to monitor across all the sites with limited funds and how to target monitoring. We also need to continue and expand our use and interrogation of the events database and the facilities database to get the most from them.

4) Next we would like to see development of specific management interventions, followed by assessment to see if they'd been useful and/or effective. We'd like to see if the project can follow the process from implementation of an intervention to monitoring it, to evaluating it, through to causing a new shift in delivery because of the evaluation results. Looking forward to seeing how the process will work.

Helen Walton, Community Facilitator for the South Yorkshire Beat, stated:

1) The project has helped to redirect our consultation process and formal recording systems. It has informed us less about the site specifically, but we feel we had a good knowledge of our site and who uses it already. The new systems that the project has put into place [such as the events database] has successfully helped to move work from the team leader to the team. We are currently a little limited in our use of the Facilities and Incidents database due to computer capacity, but we are working on this. The year 1 report helped by giving us good data to make a comparison to other, local sites, for instance concerning on site issues and local deprivation

2) We have implemented a new programme at Bentley to improve one area, based upon the feedback from visitor surveys. Though we have not yet been able to provide the desired new seating due to budget constraints.

3) The report is good and helpful. We know who our minority groups are and where they are, and across our family of sites we are very active to engage these fully. Where we go from here is as much linked to the capacity of the team and our budget, as it is to project support.

4) We would like more feedback from the community, especially on where we can improve site facilities and the programmes that we deliver to the wider community.

Jason Maclean, Environment Manager West Midlands Forest District and the project's Lead contact for Birches Valley Visitor Centre commented:

1) The value in the year 1 report lies in the currency that it provides for communicating with partners, such as the Primary Care Trusts. Previously it has been difficult to describe our activities and achievements to such partners,

who assumed that the FC had no data and/or an impossible task to demonstrate the levels at which we engage with people and, for example, deliver health improvements. The report has been widely picked up by partners. It will be very interesting to see the comparisons in measurements between the year 1 and year 2 reports.

Birches Valley attracts visitors from far away as well as near. The project's catchment definition is appropriate to some sites but not all - one to think about maybe.

2) We haven't made any additional changes so-far arising from the project results as we had several major initiatives being developed over the course of the last two years that are now opened, such as the cycle trails. We had been struggling with collecting key user information, e.g. using car park through put counters, but the new systems [such as the databases] have slim-lined the need for these.

The team [here] have discussed the demographic results and apparent under-representation at Birches Valley, for example for the elderly. This has helped us to realise that we can't be all things to all people at all our sites, but that we can tailor sites to offer different primary functions, e.g. 'activity' sites. The catchment is so large that representation is difficult, but we can now justify what role each site fulfils, because we can state with surety that we are actively seeking to provide inclusivity across our sites.

3) We feel well supported and don't feel we need additional time with the team at the moment. We may re-assess this decision having digested the year 2 report however. March brings the official launch of the new cycle trails at Birches Valley; it will be good to see if the project can measure any impact.

4) The new database has given us numbers [linked to activities and events held on site]. We need to digest these locally and assess their impact on our delivery/delivery strategy.

It will be good to see if the project can measure/monitor the impact of initiatives and changes in initiatives in place.

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For more information contact

Kieron Doick kieron.doick@forestry.gsi.gov.uk (FR)

Jake Morris jake.morris@forestry.gsi.gov.uk (FR)

Joe Watts joe.watts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk (FCE)

