

# Cabinet

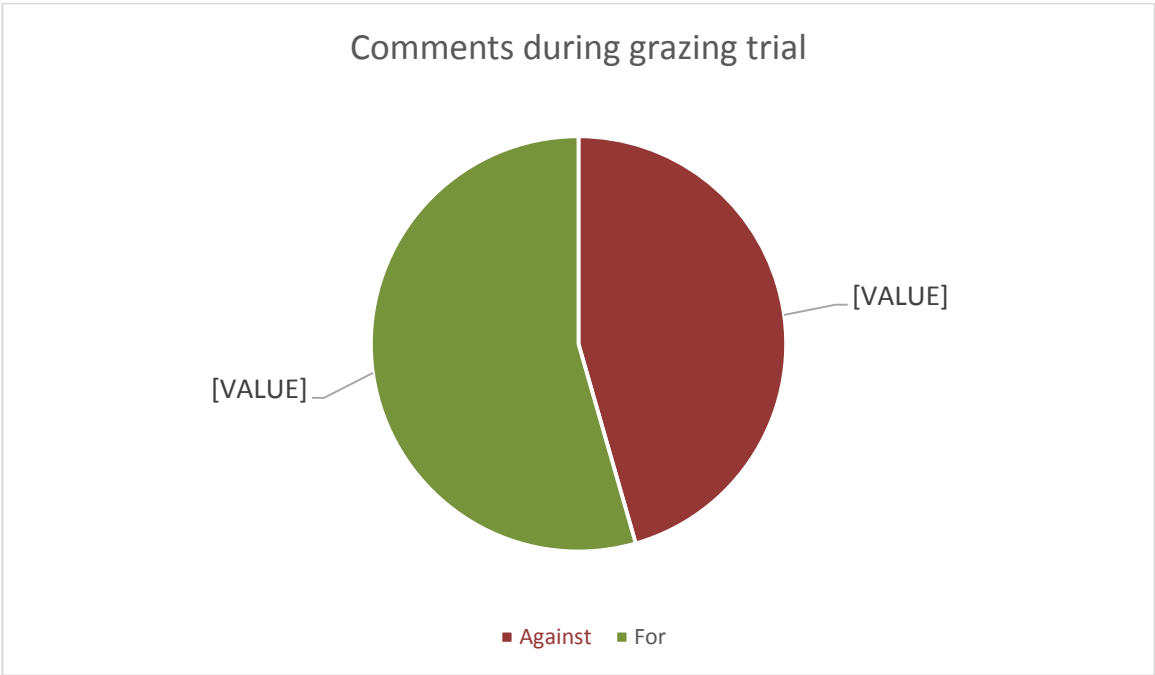
24 February 2016



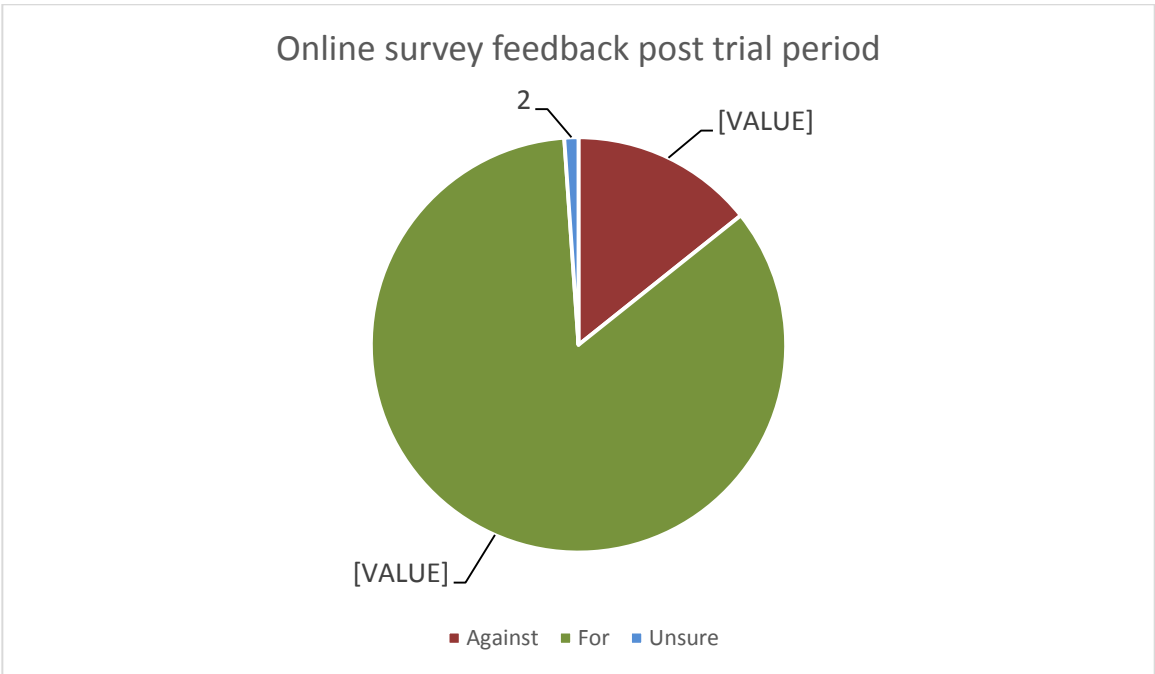
<b>Title</b>	Grazing in Sunbury Park		
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision		
<b>Report Author</b>	Steve Price		
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Maureen Attewell	<b>Confidential</b>	No
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Delivering quality of life services		
<b>Cabinet Values</b>	Community		
<b>Recommendations</b>	Cabinet is asked to decide on the grazing of Sunbury Park 2016 between April and June with an increased period of grazing in subsequent years.		

## 1. Key issues

- 1.1 Conservation grazing within Sunbury Park on an annual basis following the trial period (2015).
- 1.2 Grazing of the park was suggested by Surrey Wildlife Trust in 2008 under their conservation management plan which reviews possible ways to improve biodiversity in the park.
- 1.3 With open green spaces coming under increased pressures the responsibility of managing these in the most efficient and productive manner is paramount. The emphasis would be to eradicate the current cycle of a summer cut to exclusively grazing the land over the spring/summer months, a transition that could take 2-3 years but would be more economical and a huge ecological improvement.
- 1.4 The target areas to benefit from this change in management would include, biodiversity, long term management costs, heritage and community engagement with local environment.
- 1.5 Whilst the grazing trial was taking place we made note of every comment made via e-mail, letter and phone call. When the trial was first underway the majority of feedback was negative but as the trial continued those who were in favour began to forward their comments.



1.6 Online Survey post grazing trial was advertised on the council's e-newsletter, website and notice boards around the park. The results were in favour of the cows returning (below).



Furthermore a handwritten support form signed by 39 individuals was forward to the Sustainability office, all in favour of the grazing.

## **2. Options analysis and proposal**

The grazing of the park is offered in continuation of the cabinet agreed trial grazing of the park. Safeguarding and enhancing the boroughs greenspaces is featured within the Spelthorne sustainability plan.

## **3. Financial implications**

- 3.1 Supply of 6 Aberdeen Angus during the 2015 grazing trial came at no cost, they were supplied via a local grazier who specialises in grazing smaller areas of grassland. Expenditure occurred through the supply of a drinking trough and manual fill-ups. If the cows are to return on an annual basis a permanent water supply will be installed; this would partly be subsidised through the Higher Level Stewardship agreement which contributes to enhancing the biodiversity of key sites in the Borough. The one-off cost of the water fixtures would be the equivalent of mowing the park for 3 years.

### Breakdown of expenditure

- 3.2 Cutting of Sunbury Park is within the Contract of Lotus approx value £900.
- 3.3 Price of installing permanent water supply £2,595.
- 3.4 Water trough £150 (already purchased)
- 3.5 Supply of cows £0

## **4. Other considerations**

- 4.1 Changing from mown (cut and leave onsite) to hay cuts (cut and taken off-site) would be more costly and is logistically difficult due to contractor availability.
- 4.2 Continue a mowing regime and going against the survey outcome.

## **5. Timetable for implementation**

- 5.1 Report to Cabinet – 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016  
Subject to availability of cattle achieve grazing by April 2016

**Background papers:** None

**Appendices:** None