



GOWER PARK PLAYGROUND REFRESH: ENGAGEMENT AND INSIGHT REPORT

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December 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gower Park playground is due for a refresh. The aim of this consultation was to seek feedback from the local community on what they would like to see at Gower Park playground. Alongside this, Council used this engagement to better understand how the community currently uses the park.

This survey was available for the wider Hamilton community but specifically targeted those who live in the vicinity of Gower Park. The online survey was hosted on Have Your Say. Council also hosted an information drop-in session at Gower Park, where people could share their thoughts and feedback.

This engagement ran from 5 to 26 November 2024. We received 46 responses from individuals and one from an organisation.

Who uses Gower Park, and what do they use it for?

- Four in five respondent use Gower Park on a weekly basis. 18 visit daily.
- Four in five visit the park with their children or grandchildren.
- Three in five visit Gower Park to use the playground.
- Five respondents mentioned someone in their household who uses the playground has a disability or special needs.

Perceptions of Gower Park

- Half believe there should be more rubbish bins.
- Nine in ten think Gower needs more seating.
- Close to one third desire more shaded areas, while two in five think there is plenty of shade.
- One third believe the park is well maintained, and one third disagree.
- The most common barrier for respondents to playing the way they want to play at Gower Park was the playground being empty, rundown and lacking equipment ($n = 16$).

Desired play spaces at Gower Park

From the pre-defined list provided, respondents ranked the types of play spaces they most preferred to see at Gower Park. The table below generally summarises the community's overall views on the play spaces listed. Play spaces that were closely similar in rankings have been marked with an asterisk (*).

Play type	Most preferred play space	Second most preferred play space	Least preferred play space
Structured Play	Swinging	Sliding	Climbing net
Dynamic Play	Jumping	Spinning*	Rocking*
Natural Play	Balance beam*	Stepping logs*	Rocks
Imaginative Play	Kicking a ball	Outdoor music equipment*	Talking tubes*

Other suggestions from respondents include introducing more things to climb on ($n = 7$) and increasing safety and safe lighting ($n = 6$).

SUBMISSIONS INSIGHTS

Gower Park playground is due for a refresh. The new playground will be more up to date, providing fun within a safe yet challenging environment for young explorers.

The aim of this consultation was to seek feedback on the proposed refresh of Gower Park playground. Alongside this, Council used this engagement to better understand how the community currently uses the park. The results of this engagement will be reviewed alongside the renewals budgets and will inform the final design and delivery process.

The online survey was hosted on Have Your Say. This survey was available for the wider Hamilton community but specifically targeted towards those who live in the vicinity of Gower Park. The survey link was distributed to the local community using letter drops. The wider community could also access the survey via hardcopies from local libraries and the Council building. The survey was also promoted via signage installed at the park, an Antenno notice to Melville residents, and Meta social media advertising geo-targeted to the local area.

Council also hosted an information drop-in session at Gower Park, where people could share their thoughts and feedback face-to-face.

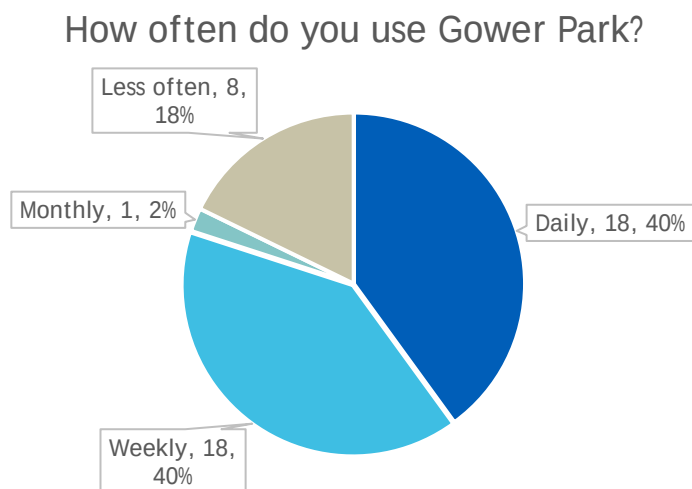
This engagement ran from 5 to 26 November 2024. We received 46 responses from individuals, including three hardcopy responses. We also received one response from an organisation.

FEEDBACK THROUGH SUBMISSION FORMS

WHO USES GOWER PARK, AND WHAT DO THEY USE IT FOR?

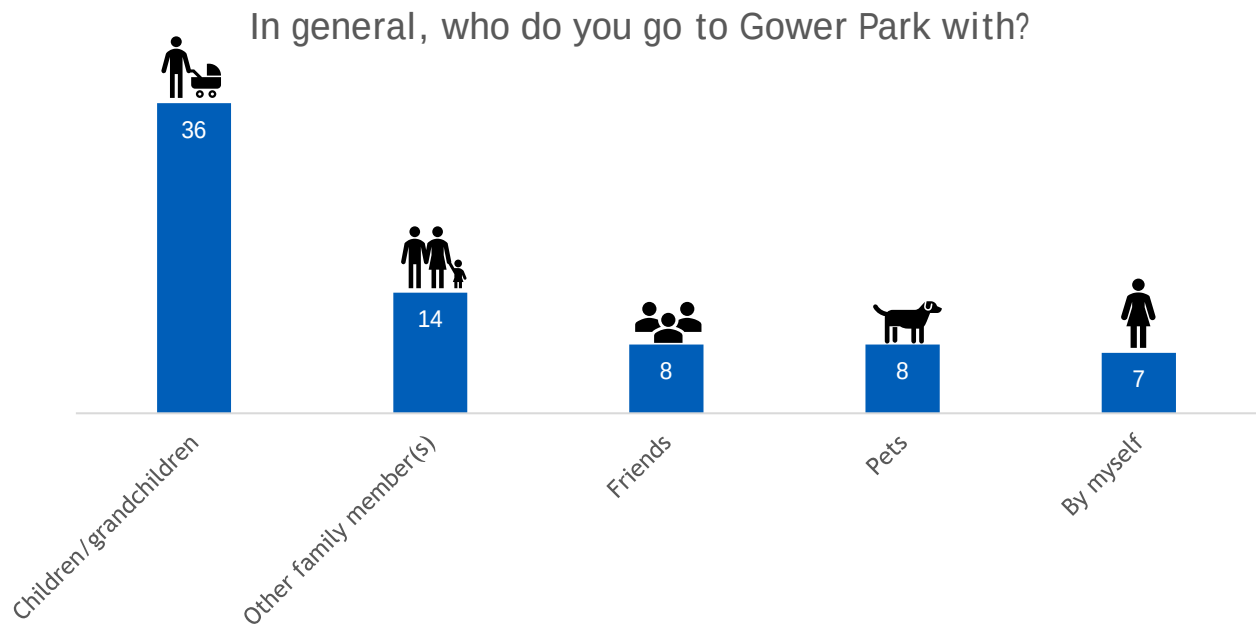
How often do you use Gower Park?

Four in five of respondents (80%, $n = 36$) use Gower Park on at least a weekly basis. Of these, 18 use it daily (40% of respondents).

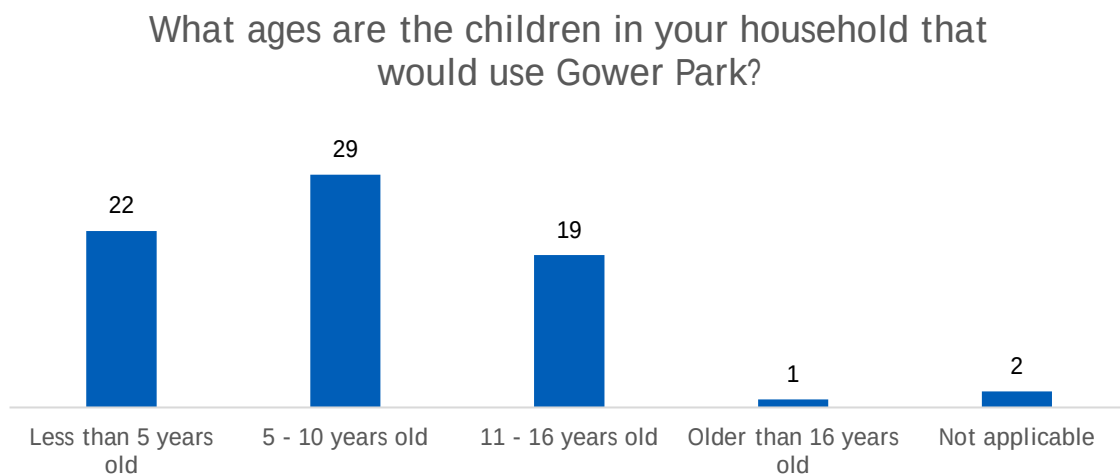


In general, who do you go to Gower Park with?

Most respondents (78%, $n = 36$) said they go to Gower Park with their children or grandchildren.



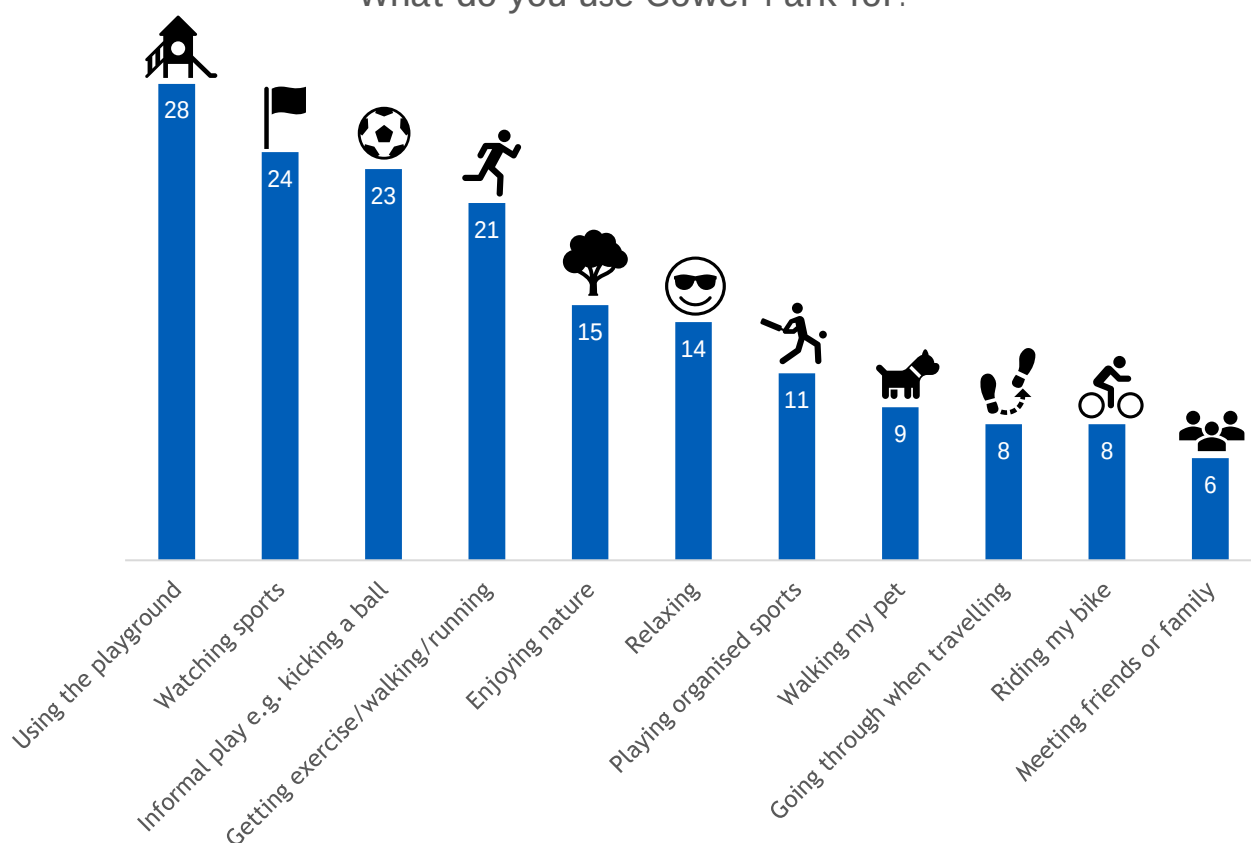
We also asked respondents what ages the children in their household were who used Gower Park. 22 respondents said they have children aged 0-4 years old, and 29 have children aged 5-10 years old.



What do you use Gower Park for?

The most common reason for visiting Gower Park is for using the playground. 61% of respondents ($n = 28$) mentioned the playground as a reason for visiting.

What do you use Gower Park for?



Five respondents indicated that a member of their household who uses playgrounds has a disability or special needs. We asked this group if they experienced any difficulties in accessing or using the park or play elements. Their responses are copied below verbatim:

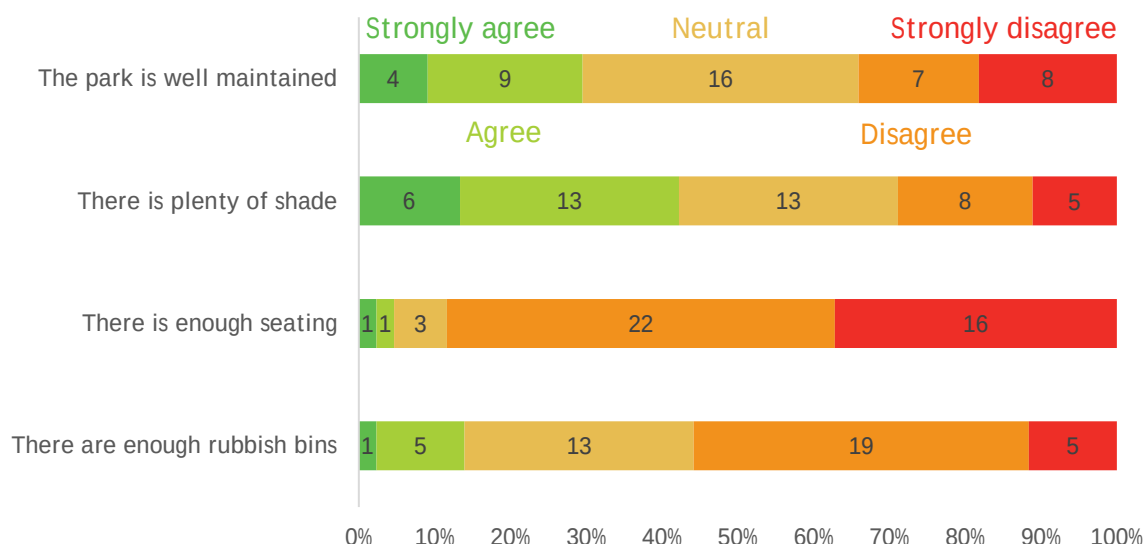
- "I use a wheelchair, there is only one mobility park with a narrow access point to get onto the grounds"
- "Mobility issues"
- "My mum finds it hard to walk long distances and is blind in one eye so depth perception is an issue. Uneven surfaces etc can cause falls and make her less confident with walking independently. Making sure the walkways are all flat/even surfaces and the steps are not too large would help. Having benches for people to sit would help her walk a short distance rest and then walk on."
- "Not enough younger children play, we have a mix of tween and toodler so be good to have a range they can both play. My son also is neruo divergent so having a easy to use toodler friendly space close by would be great, we live closer to the lake but it's always busy and to bosiey for my son so this is a great place for us to go. We love the swings ans the fact we can also run around the park with a ball"
- "The tiled concrete becomes a hazard when they are lifted up. It's also a shame that the hospital staff take up alot of the carparks in the area. Sometimes I take the car just to let my son have a run around but end up leaving as no parks"

PERCEPTIONS OF GOWER PARK

Respondents were mixed in their perceptions of Gower Park. One third (29%, $n = 13$) believe the park is well maintained, and one third (34%, $n = 15$) disagree. 42% ($n = 19$) think there is plenty of

shade. Almost all respondents (88%, $n = 38$) believed there is not enough seating, and over half (56%, $n = 24$) believed there are not enough rubbish bins.

Tell us what you think of the following for Gower Park



We also asked respondents if any barriers prevented them from playing the way they wanted to play in Gower Park. 28 respondents listed the barriers they faced. Limited/run down/outdated play equipment was the most common barrier, mentioned by 16 respondents. Respondents also mentioned lawn/path maintenance/muddiness ($n = 4$), feeling unsafe/concern for homelessness ($n = 3$), and broken play equipment ($n = 3$).

DESIRED PLAY SPACES AT GOWER PARK

We asked respondents to rank the play spaces they would like to see at Gower Park. We organised these rankings into four types of play (structured play, dynamic play, natural play, and imaginative play). For each type of play, we suggested three play spaces, and asked respondents to rank each play space. These rankings ranged from 1 (most preferred) to 3 (least preferred).

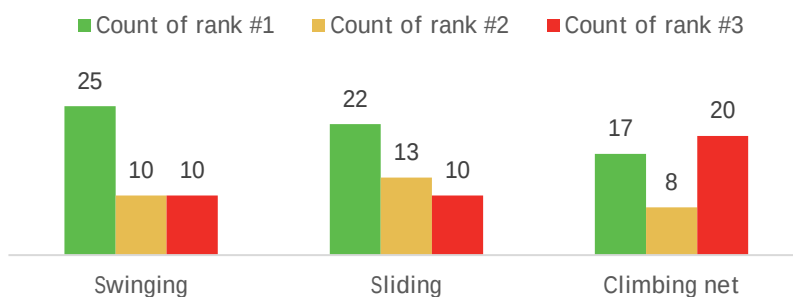


Structured play

We asked respondents to rank three play spaces which were attributed with structured play – climbing net, swinging and sliding.

Swinging and sliding were similarly popular, with 25 and 22 respondents ranking these first respectively.

Structured play



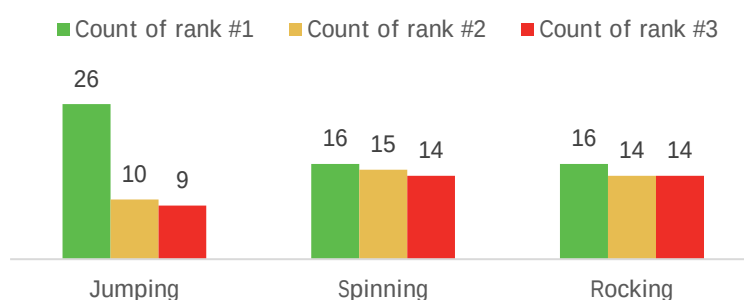
Play Space	Count of 1 st rankings	Count of 2 nd rankings	Count of 3 rd rankings	Weighted score ¹ (higher = more preferred)
Swinging	25	10	10	105
Sliding	22	13	10	102
Climbing net	17	8	20	87

Dynamic play

We asked respondents to rank three play spaces which were attributed with dynamic play – jumping, spinning and rocking.

Jumping was by far the most popular play space, with 26 respondents ranking it as their first choice. Spinning and rocking were ranked similarly.

Dynamic play



Play Space	Count of 1 st rankings	Count of 2 nd rankings	Count of 3 rd rankings	Weighted score (higher = more preferred)
Jumping	26	10	9	107
Spinning	16	15	14	92
Rocking	16	14	14	90

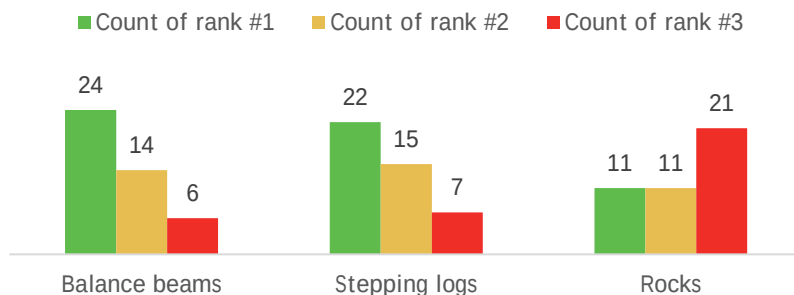
¹ Scores calculated by every #1 ranking receiving a point value of three, #2 rankings each receiving a point value of two, and #3 rankings each receiving a point value of one. These points were then summed to calculate the final score.

Natural play

We asked respondents to rank three play spaces which were attributed with natural play – balance beams, stepping logs and rocks.

Balance beams and stepping logs were the most preferred options, with 24 and 22 respondents indicating this was their most preferred option respectively.

Natural play



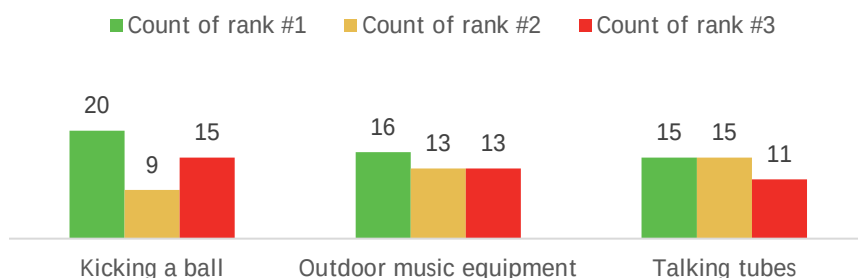
Play Space	Count of 1 st rankings	Count of 2 nd rankings	Count of 3 rd rankings	Weighted score (higher = more preferred)
Balance beams	24	14	6	106
Stepping logs	22	15	7	103
Rocks	11	11	21	76

Creative play

We asked respondents to rank three play spaces which were attributed with creative play – outdoor music equipment, talking tubes and kicking a ball.

Kicking a ball was the most popular option, receiving 20 first-place rankings. Outdoor music equipment and talking tubes were viewed similarly.

Creative play

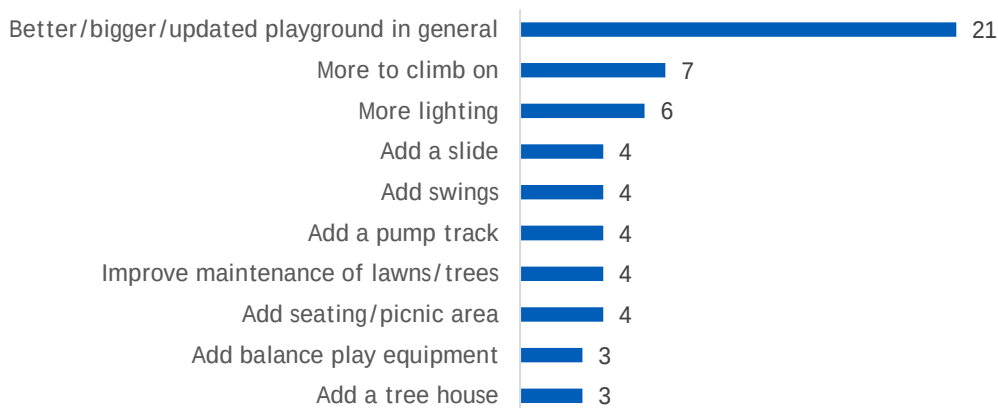


Play Space	Count of 1 st rankings	Count of 2 nd rankings	Count of 3 rd rankings	Weighted score (higher = more preferred)
Kicking a ball	20	9	15	93
Outdoor music equipment	16	13	13	87
Talking tubes	15	15	11	86

Suggestions from respondents

We asked respondents for suggestions for how to make Gower Park a more exciting place to play. 30 respondents left comments. The most common suggestions include generally creating a bigger, better, updated playground ($n = 21$).

What would make Gower Park a more exciting place to play?



OTHER COMMENTS

24 respondents left further comments about the playground renewal at Gower Park. The most common themes from these comments were generally supportive/excited for the upgrade ($n = 14$) or were reiterating their suggestions for the park ($n = 9$).

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISON OF RESPONSES FROM INDIVIDUALS

Most of our responses (61%) came from Hamilton Lake ($n = 15$) or Melville ($n = 13$). This is the area in which Gower Park is situated, therefore it makes sense to have a high number of responses from those living nearby.

Most respondents were aged 30 – 39 years old (41%, $n = 19$).

Respondents were most likely to be NZ European (48%, $n = 22$).

FEEDBACK FROM ORGANISATIONS

We received one submission from an organisation, which came from the Disabled Persons Assembly NZ. Their submission can be read in full [here](#).

FEEDBACK FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

Hamilton City Council made a Facebook post on 6 November advertising the consultation. This received 7 comments, of which 3 came from Hamilton City Council.

- Three comments suggested other playgrounds to refresh
- One comment expressed excitement/support for the Gower Park playground refresh

ENGAGEMENT TACTICS

GOAL

To gather feedback from the local community and users of Gower Park to understand how they use the current playground, what is important to them, and what types of play equipment they would like to see in this space.

OBJECTIVES

1. More than 50 people provide feedback on the Gower Park playground refresh
2. More than 10 people/families attend the drop-in session held at Gower Park
3. The local communities feel like they have been included in the process and have been able to have their say (sentiment of feedback to customer services is more positive than negative)
4. The effectiveness of the engagement methods is evaluated to help refine approach for future playground refresh projects (campaign is evaluated and findings shared).

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOME

Council understands the community's views on the planned Gower Park playground refresh.

ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN REVIEW

The campaign tactics for the community engagement on the playground refresh included:

- Email to iwi
- Email to Wanderers Football Club
- Letter to nearby residents
- Letter to nearby schools and early childcare centres
- Antenno alert to local area
- Signage installed in the park
- Posters at libraries and Council building
- Digital screen image in Council building
- Meta social media advertising targeted to local area
- Internal communication
- Drop-in session at park

ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

SUBMISSION FORM (ONLINE & PAPER COPY)

Council received 46 submissions responses from individuals and one from an organisation.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Paid advertising ran across Meta social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) encouraging people to have their say. The ads produced the following results:

- Impressions: 52,825
- Reach: 24,140
- Clicks: 685
- CTR: 1.30%
- Post reactions: 13



DROP-IN SESSIONS

Parks staff held a one-hour drop-in session at Gower Park on Saturday 23 November from 9am-10am, which was promoted in the mailout and on posters displayed at libraries. This attended by three individuals/families.

LETTERS

Letters were delivered to 332 residential properties surrounding Gower Park, as well as two nearby schools/early childcare centres.

WHAT'S NEXT

Council will consider this feedback when designing a refreshed playground for Gower Park.