

North Lanarkshire Council

Report

Environment and Transportation

approval noting

Ref

Date 12/02/20

No Ball Games Signs - Motion

From Nicole Paterson, Head of Environmental Assets

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Executive Summary

This report presents members with the details of the consultation undertaken regarding the removal of no ball games signs. The consultation was undertaken following a council motion where the decision was that “The Council supports outdoor play and activity and agrees, where possible, to remove “No Ball Game” signs and signs of a similar effect and recognises that not all signs can be removed, therefore requests that a report be brought to the relevant Committee after consultation, with particular attention towards health and safety, location and local resident opinion, has taken place across North Lanarkshire.”

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Environment and Transportation Committee:

- (1) Considers the content of this report, and
- (2) Approve the removal of no ball games signs upon request and the retention of signs where there is potential safety concerns.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities

Ambition statement (15) Encourage the health and wellbeing of people through a range of social, cultural, and leisure activities

1. Background

- 1.1 That the Council supports outdoor play and activity and agrees, where possible, to remove “No Ball Game” signs and signs of a similar effect and recognises that not all signs can be removed, therefore requests that a report be brought to the relevant Committee after consultation, with particular attention towards health and safety, location and local resident opinion, has taken place across North Lanarkshire.
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2. Report

2.1 Service background

- 2.1.1 The council has erected no ball games in a range of locations including roads, open spaces, end of house, garage sites etc. and this has been undertaken by a range of services now all contained within Enterprise & Communities.
- 2.1.2 Signs were erected with a view of addressing anti-social issues despite the signs having no legal backing. The geographical location data for the signs was never recorded and as such there is no record of the extent of the ball games signs asset (pole mounted, building mounted etc.) or the locations of such signs.

2.2 Consultation

- 2.2.1 The Enterprise and Communities Team undertook a consultation on the retention of no ball games signs using Survey Monkey. Three questions were asked as part of the survey and an opportunity provided for any additional comments. The consultation was distributed through the council’s website and social media, promoted through the local community groups, tenants participations groups and shared with young people through the Youth Worker Team.
- 2.2.2 The proposal presented indicated “We are consulting on the proposal that No Ball Games signs within the North Lanarkshire area are removed unless there is an obvious health and safety reason for them to remain. Examples of health and safety reasons would be proximity to moving vehicles, volume of traffic in the location, proximity to electricity sub stations etc. Removal of the signs will allow more opportunities for children to have free outdoor play”
- 2.2.3 In question one the public were asked if they were in agreement with the proposal to remove the ‘No Ball games’ signs. There were 1,385 responses of which 757 (54.66%) agreed with the proposal and 471 (34.01%) agreed with the proposals however believed that certain signs may need to remain for safety reasons. 143 (10.32%) of people disagreed with the proposals and 9 (0.65%) were unsure.
- 2.2.4 In question two we asked if there are any ‘No Ball Games’ signs in the community which the public think should be removed. There were 1,361 responses and 559 (41.07%) were unsure of any signs, 217 (15.94%) said yes but did not identify any signs. 249 (18.30%) indicated that there weren’t any no ball games signs within their community which they thought should be removed. 336 (24.69%) said they had signs that could be removed and identified those locations.
- 2.2.5 In question three we asked if there were any ‘No Ball Games ‘ signs which should be remain. There were 1,347 responses of which 663 (49.22%) believed that all should be removed, 476 (35.34%) were unsure and 79 (5.86%) considered some signs should

remain but did not provide any specific examples and 129 (9.58%) considered some signs should remain and did provide specific examples.

- 2.2.5 Question four allowed for supplementary comments to be provided. There were 513 additional comments although many of these were similar to the responses provided for questions one to three.

2.3 Conclusion

- 2.3.1 In general there was considerable support for the wholesale removal of no ball games signs. However, a proportion still considered it appropriate to provide the signs for safety and other reasons. There was a degree of support for removing signs from residential areas with the exception of signs remaining on busier roads.
- 2.3.2 Many of the signs erected in the past were to address perceived anti-social issues although there is support for removing signs from residential areas and keeping those on busier roads. There is still concern regarding ball games in close proximity to houses and potential damage to property, nuisance and individual health issues impacted by ball games.
- 2.3.3 In the past most complaints about ball games were not about the activity itself but about groups of young people congregating in spaces close to people's homes and causing nuisance by trespass, noise, abusive language and drinking. In practice, the presence of a 'No Ball Games' sign does little to resolve the nuisance problem which if repetitive should be reported to Police Scotland.
- 2.3.4 In recognition of this the service ceased providing new 'no ball games' signs over five years ago which would suggest that concerns surrounding such behaviour is being addressed through other more appropriate means rather than the provision of signing.
- 2.3.5 As indicated in paragraph 2.1.2 the service does not hold asset information regarding no ball games signs and to obtain this information would involve a significant exercise which would be resource intensive, bearing in mind signs have been erected in open spaces, roads, garages sites etc. It is proposed that the signs highlighted in the consultation are removed and that removal of other signs is carried out on request.

3. Equality and Diversity

- 3.1 Fairer Scotland Duty
There are no unfair aspects contained with this report.
- 3.2 Equality Impact Assessment
There are no adverse impacts on equality or diversity contained within this report.

4. Implications

- 4.1 Financial Impact
There will be a requirement to fund the removal of signs through the existing revenue budgets.
- 4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact
No HR/ Policy/ Legislative impacts identified.
- 4.3 Environmental Impact

No Environmental Impacts identified, report relates to current performance information on the service provided.

- 4.4 Risk Impact
No risk impacts identified.

5. Measures of success

- 5.1 A reduction in the number of no ball games signs increasing the opportunity to play across North Lanarkshire.

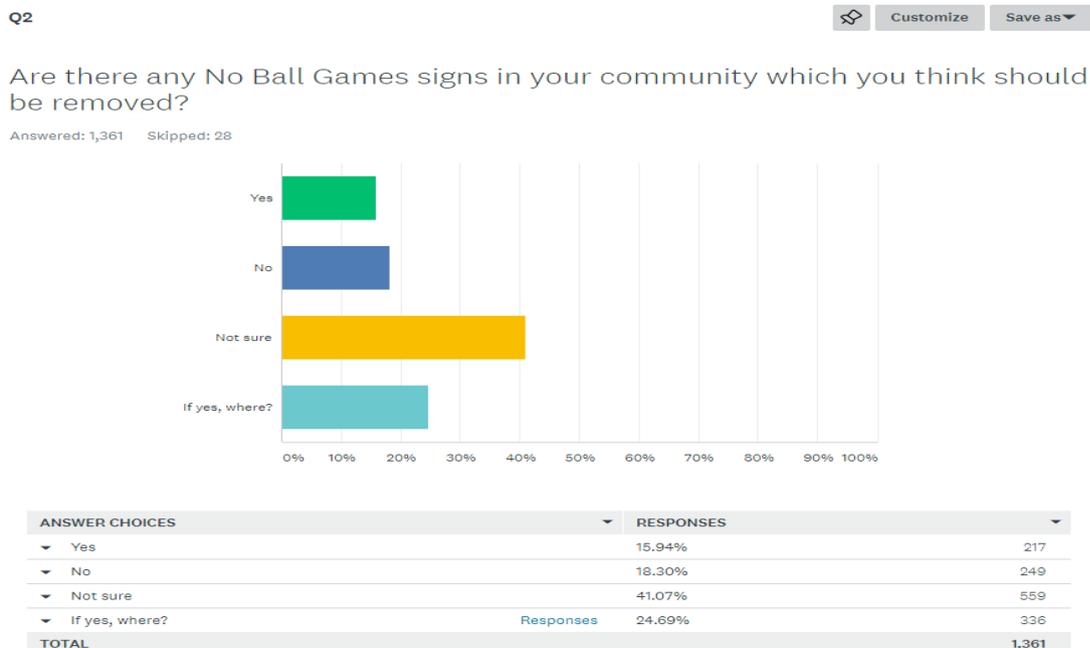
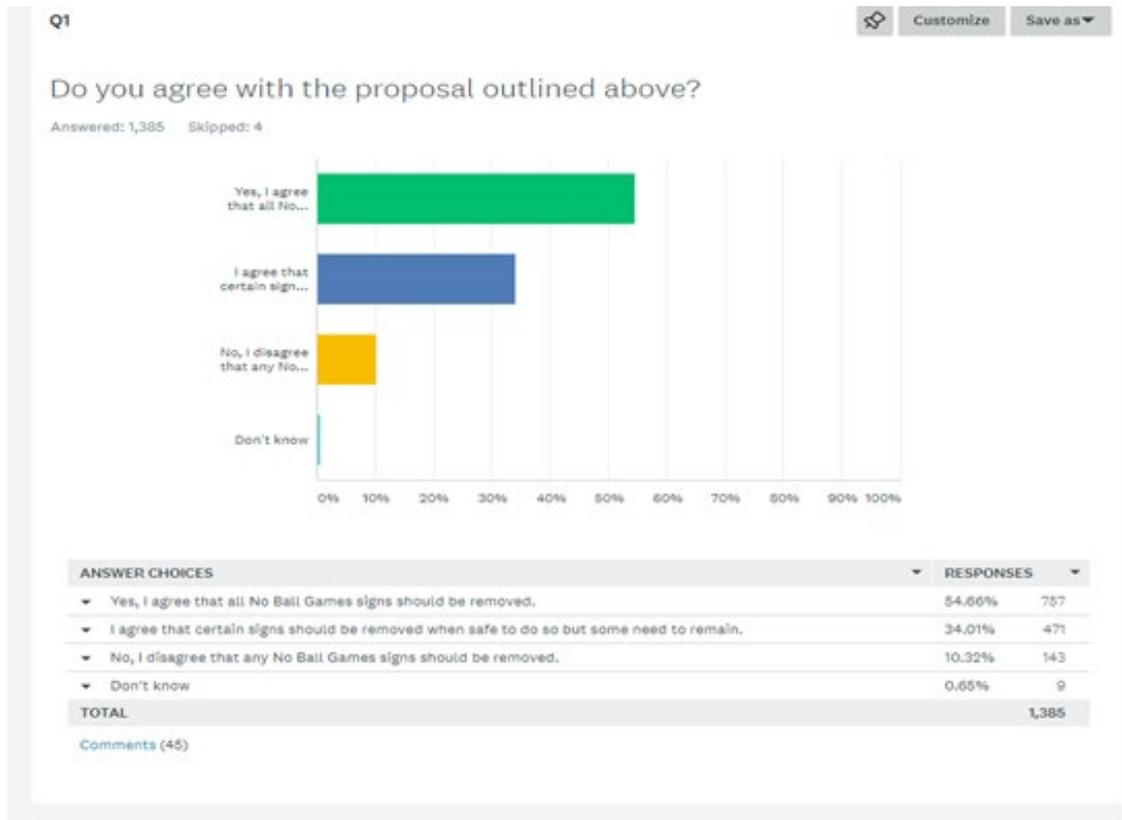
6. Supporting documents

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Bar charts showing the results of the consultation exercise.



Nicole Paterson
Head of Environmental Assets

APPENDIX 1



Q3

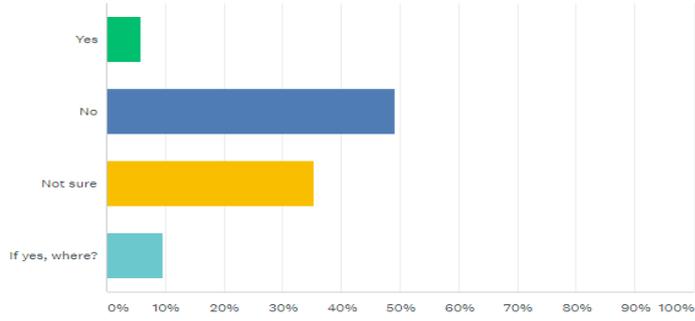


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Are there any No Ball Games signs in your community which you think should remain?

Answered: 1,347 Skipped: 42



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	5.86% 79
No	49.22% 663
Not sure	35.34% 476
If yes, where?	Responses 9.58% 129
TOTAL	1,347