

Cheshire East Green Spaces Maintenance Standards Policy

FOR APPROVAL

Rev 1.6

January 2024

Open

Fair

Green

Introduction

Grounds maintenance includes the care of public grassed areas, verges, annual bedding displays and horticultural features, herbaceous borders, shrub and rose beds, hedges, and outdoor sports pitches. These standards will be used to provide a pleasant environment for residents and visitors alike, ensuring the green spaces play a key role in achieving Cheshire East Councils Corporate Plan objectives.

This policy identifies the different typologies and zones within the Cheshire East borough as well as providing images to offer a typical representation of the proposed standard but are not intended to be prescriptive.

A core element of grounds maintenance relates to safety inspection of assets such as trees and play equipment. These regimes are already well established and are unaffected by the content of this policy.

For clarity this document does not cover activity related to maintenance activities undertaken in the extents of the adopted public highway, which has its own policy standards.

Typologies

All Council managed green spaces are divided into **eight** typologies based on the type of site and its primary function. Subject to the size and features included of the individual site in question each of these typologies could be further broken down on a zonal basis with maintenance standards then being set according to each zone amenity standard. These standards will be based on a set range of annual maintenance tasks.

The main typologies are;

Typology A – Formal Parks and Gardens

This typology includes the likes of high-profile town parks and gardens which are well used community spaces. The sites in this category typically leisure/recreation features and a higher proportion of ornamental features, to also include named cenotaphs.

These sites are those as identified on the Councils webpages - [Parks and gardens in Cheshire East](#)

From this list there are a number of formal parks which due to their scale, different areas of use and usage levels have been deemed strategic to the borough. They are as follows;

- Alderley Edge Park;
- Bollington Recreation Ground (GF);
- Congleton Park (GF);
- Fountain Fields, Middlewich (GF);
- Milton Park, Alsager (GF);
- Queens Park, Crewe (GF);

- Sandbach Park (GF)
- South Park, Macclesfield
- The Moor, Knutsford (GF) and;
- West Park, Macclesfield

These larger strategic sites will include several 'zones' such as play areas, sports pitches, event space, formal areas and floral features, each of which will have their own maintenance standards. A bespoke management plan will be developed and maintained in relation to effectively and efficiently maintaining these sites.

The majority of these sites hold Green Flag accreditation which will be maintained as reflected by a "(GF)" in the list above. Where a site on this list does not hold this accreditation the target will be to acquire it over a reasonable period of time.

Typology B - Outdoor Sport

This typology includes the locations that support sporting activities throughout the borough. This includes sports turf pitches subject to fees and charges and involves management practices that ensure these facilities are maintained to playable standards

Examples would include:

- Back Lane Playing Fields, Congleton
- Barony Sports Complex, Nantwich;
- Cedar Avenue Playing Fields, Alsager;
- Jim Evison Playing Fields, Wilmslow;
- King George V Playing Fields, Crewe;
- Lyme Green Playing Fields, Macclesfield;
- Sutton Lane Playing Fields, Middlewich;
- Victoria Park, Macclesfield and;
- Wheelock Playing Fields, Sandbach

Typology C – Community Green Infrastructure

The community green infrastructure typology includes public open space that features key infrastructure such as play areas, Multi Use Games Areas, key green spaces within town centres (including a small number of core town centre cemeteries) and related maintained connecting corridors. Sports pitches which are not maintained to the same standards as those listed under Typology B may be present in this category.

Typology D – Urban Open Spaces

This typology includes the boroughs open space within the core urban environment, such as planting strips/grassed areas within housing developments, ancillary green spaces surrounding car parks, highway verges and employment parks.

Typology E - Rural Open Spaces

This typology includes the boroughs open space, highway and other grass verges and ancillary green spaces within a semi-rural or rural setting.

Typology F - Cemeteries, Church Yards & Memorials

This typology includes cemeteries, closed graveyards, church yards and memorials otherwise not covered under other typologies.

Examples would include:

- Bollington War Memorial and Gardens;
- Park Green War Memorial and;
- Wilmslow War memorial & Remembrance Garden

Typology G – Inspection Only

- This typology includes sites where there is no proposed planned maintenance but inspections from a safety perspective will be undertaken, most often related to the presence of mature trees or play equipment accessible to the public. Where issues are identified from those inspections requiring intervention these will be programmed on a reactive basis.

Typology H – No Inspection or Maintenance

- This typology includes sites where there is no proposed planned inspection or maintenance as the site is allowed to be re-wilded to enhance biodiversity, closed to public access or it is not registered in Cheshire East Council's ownership.

Zones

A set of three zone ratings have been selected to group maintenance standards under specific descriptions. They are as follows:

1 – High amenity (high maintenance)

Maintenance standard expected for high profile areas such as in formal parks and bowling greens. The tasks within this zoning include regular mowing of fine Turf areas, floral display maintenance including watering, dead-heading, pruning, weeding and fertilizing; and maintenance of formal water features. Fine turf grass playing pitches will include programmed scarification, aeration, irrigation and renovation at the end of each playing season. Enhanced highway features i.e. roundabouts

2. – General/medium amenity (standard maintenance)

Maintenance standard expected in areas where there is a high level of general use/activity, sites such as recreation areas. The tasks within this zoning include regular mowing of park grassland and sports playing fields. Informal hedge maintenance, informal shrub and non- ornamental seasonal bedding maintenance and roundabouts.

3. – Low amenity (low maintenance)

Maintenance standard expected in natural areas including countryside parks, rural spaces and grass verges. The tasks within this zoning include mowing of grass verges, highway gateways, meadows, natural ponds, rural and natural hedges.

Site Schedules

In support of this document site schedules have been produced which set out the specific typology and the overall zoning rating for each site. Those sites which have formal accreditations or are required to be maintained to a higher standard under regulations or specific grant funding conditions will attract a higher zoning rating. For clarity the larger sites will have multiple zones defined within their boundary which could attract different amenity levels.

FOR APPROVAL

Typology A – Formal Parks and Gardens

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Grass Cutting	1 High amenity	Fine quality turf areas in high profile sites, often adjacent to ornamental features e.g. flower beds.	Mar – Oct	20-24 cuts per season where specified, cut and collect with a striped finish	As per existing maintenance standards	
	2 Medium amenity	Reasonable quality grass areas in non-ornamental areas of formal parks and urban spaces such as areas around sports pitches	Mar – Oct	12-14 cuts. Uniform cut with consistent finish	10 visits annually, uniform cut.	

	3 Low amenity	Meadow grass, wildflower and no-mow areas usually situated in areas of amenity grass in formal parks	March- Nov	6 or less cuts during the growing season. Areas are cut less frequent through growing season	Up to 3 visits annually, subject to resource availability	
Hedge	2 Medium amenity	Hedges pruned to a specific form in high profile area often adjacent to ornamental features	Jun- Mar	Hand Cut to formal shape (1 to 2 cuts per year as required)	As per existing maintenance standard	
	3 Low amenity	Good quality informal hedges sometimes forming boundaries in formal parks and urban spaces.	Aug - Feb	1 cut per calendar year. Tractor and flail (where accessible otherwise by hand)	As per existing maintenance standard	

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Borders	1 High amenity	Specialist focal planting. Perennial, summer and winter annual beds.	Jan-Dec	Weed control by hand including dead heading through the flowering period. Irrigation undertaken as required.	Ad-hoc as required – maximum of 8 visits annually	
	1 High amenity	Formal shrub beds in high profile areas of formal parks, often used to complement floral planting and bedding	Jan - Dec	Ongoing maintenance throughout the growing season. Specialist pruning	Ad-hoc as required – maximum of 4 visits annually	
	2 Medium amenity	Shrub borders providing backdrops to non-ornamental areas in formal parks and green spaces.	Oct - Mar	Shrub beds - ad hoc maintenance throughout the growing season. Hard prune as part of winter maintenance	Ad-hoc, subject to resource availability – one visit annually for hard prune	

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Ponds / Water Features	2 Medium amenity	All ponds in formal park settings	Jan - Dec	Ad hoc as required	As per existing maintenance standard	
Hard surfaces	1 High amenity	Hard surfaces in high usage formal parks. Mainly footpaths and kerb edges next to formal flower beds/ high amenity grass	Apr - Dec	Weed treatment and leaf blowing in autumn.	2 visits for weed spraying annually - where appropriate	

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Hard surfaces	2 Medium amenity	Hard surfaces in formal parks including car parks, medium amenity footpaths, curbs, fence lines, building footings etc	Apr - Dec	Weed treatment and leaf blowing in autumn.	1 visit for weed spraying annually - where appropriate	
	3 Low amenity	Hard surfaces in low amenity areas of formal parks such as meadow areas.	Apr - Dec	Weeds treatment and leaf blowing in autumn.	None	

Typology B - Outdoor Sport

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Football (Pitch Improvement Programme)	1 High amenity	All football pitches within formal parks and Public Open Space.	Jan – Dec	20 - 24 cuts per year. Football pitches will be accurately set out and lines visible throughout the playing season	As per existing maintenance standards	
Football (Non Pitch Improvement Programme)	2 Medium amenity	All football pitches within formal parks and Public Open Space.	Jan– Dec	14 - 16 cuts per year. Football pitches will be accurately set out and lines visible throughout the playing season	As per existing maintenance standards	

Zone Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Rugby	2 Medium amenity	All rugby pitches within formal parks and public open space.	Aug - Jun	10 - 14 cuts per year. Rugby pitches will be accurately set out and lines visible throughout the playing season	As per existing maintenance standards	
Cricket	1 High amenity	All cricket pitches including artificial cricket wickets and grass outfield	Mar - Oct	28 - 56 cuts per year. Cut and collect on the square allowing uniform grass levels and optimum playing conditions.	As per existing maintenance standards	
Bowls	1 High amenity	All bowling greens with quality fine turf	Mar - Oct	84 - 96 cuts per year. Cut and collect allowing uniform grass levels and optimum playing conditions. Spring and Autumn renovation	As per existing maintenance standards	

Typology C – Community Green Infrastructure

Zone Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Grass Cutting	2 Medium amenity	Open areas directly adjacent (within 5 metres) to community infrastructure such as play areas	Apr - Oct	12-14 cuts. Uniform cut with consistent finish	10 visits annually	
	3 Low amenity	Reasonable quality grass areas in non-ornamental areas within community infrastructure spaces	Apr - Oct	6 or less cuts during the growing season. Areas are cut less frequent through growing season. Uniform cut with consistent finish	Up to 6 visits annually, subject to resource availability	
	3 Low amenity	Meadow grass, wildflower and no-mow areas usually situated in areas of grassland linked with community green space	Apr - Oct	6 or less cuts during the growing season. Areas are cut less frequent through growing season	2 visits annually	

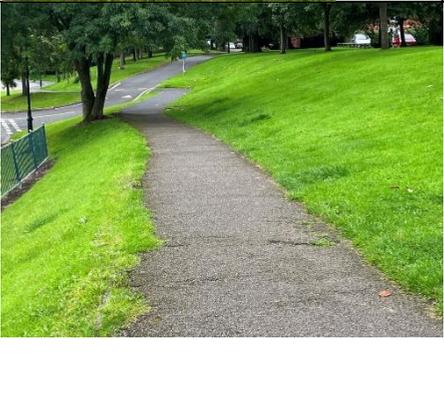
Zone Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Grass Cutting	3 Low amenity	Steep embankments that are difficult to access.	Apr - Oct	6 or less cuts during the growing season. Areas are cut less frequent through growing season	4 visits annually	
Hedges	3 Low amenity	Hedges generally maintained to act as boundaries to the site boundary.	Sep - Feb	1 cut per calendar year. Tractor and flail (where accessible otherwise by hand)	Ad-hoc as required, subject to resource availability	

Zone Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Borders / Planted Areas	1 Medium amenity	Specialist focal planting. perennial, summer and winter annual beds	Apr - Sep	Weed control by hand including dead heading through the flowering period. Irrigation undertaken as required.	Ad-hoc as required – maximum of 6 visits annually	
Ponds / Water Features	2 medium amenity	All maintained ponds in a natural setting	Jan - Dec	Ad-hoc as required, subject to resource availability and prioritised safety requirements	As per existing maintenance	
Hard Surfaces	3 low amenity	General standard for footpaths and kerbs/ channels.	Apr - Oct	Ad-hoc as required, subject to resource availability	As per existing maintenance	

Typology Type D – Urban Green Spaces

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Grass Cutting	2 medium amenity	Urban grass verges and local amenity open space adjacent to pedestrian footpaths and highways.	Apr - Oct	12-14 cuts. Uniform cut with consistent finish	8 visits annually	
	2 medium amenity	Traffic junction sites. Single swath width (1.2m) visibility splay from the carriage way.	Apr - Oct	12-14 cuts. Uniform cut with consistent finish	4-6 visits annually	

Grass Cutting	3 Low amenity	Meadow grass, wildflower and no-mow areas	Apr - Oct	6 or less cuts during the growing season. Areas are cut less frequent through growing season	Up to 4 visits annually, subject to resource availability	
	3 Low amenity	Steep embankments that are difficult to access.	Apr - Oct	6 or less cuts during the growing season. Areas are cut less frequent through growing season	Up to 4 visits annually, subject to resource availability	
Borders / Planted Areas	1 High amenity	Specialist focal planting. perennial, summer and winter annual beds.	Apr - Sep	Weed control by hand including dead heading through the flowering period. Irrigation undertaken as required.	Ad-hoc as required – maximum of 8 visits annually	

Hedges	3 Low amenity	Urban and semi-rural hedges generally maintained to act as boundaries.	Sep - Feb	1 cut per calendar year. Tractor and flail (where accessible otherwise by hand)	As per existing maintenance standard	
Ponds / Water Features	2 medium amenity	All maintained ponds in a natural setting in urban settings	Jan - Dec	Ad-hoc as required, subject to resource availability and prioritised safety requirements	As per existing maintenance standard	
Hard surfaces	2 medium amenity	General standard for footpaths and kerbs/ channels.	Apr - Oct	Weed treatment and leaf blowing in autumn.	1 visit for weed spraying annually - where appropriate	

Typology E – Rural Open Space

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Grass Cutting	2 Medium amenity	Semi-rural / rural grass verges and amenity open space adjacent to pedestrian footpaths and highways (where not part of public highway).	Apr - Oct	12-14 cuts. Uniform cut with consistent finish	6 visits annually	
	3 Low amenity	Meadow grass, wildflower and no-mow areas	Apr - Oct	6 or less cuts during the growing season. Areas are cut less frequent through growing season	2 visits annually	
	3 Low amenity	Steep embankments that are difficult to access.	Apr - Oct	6 or less cuts during the growing season. Areas are cut less frequent through growing season	2 visits annually	

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Hedges	3 Low amenity	Rural hedges generally maintained to act as boundaries.	Sep - Feb	1 cut per calendar year. Tractor and flail (where accessible otherwise by hand)	Ad-hoc as required, subject to prioritisation of resource availability	
Ponds / Water Features	3 Low amenity	All maintained ponds in a natural setting in urban and semi-rural settings	Jan - Dec	Ad-hoc as required, subject to resource availability and prioritised safety requirements	As per maintenance standard	
Hard surfaces	2 Medium amenity	General standard for footpaths and kerbs/ channels within country parks.	Apr - Oct	Weed treatment and leaf blowing in autumn.	1 visit for weed spraying annually - where appropriate	

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Hard surfaces	3 Low amenity	Semi-rural areas and low use footpaths or country park car parks	Apr - Dec	Weed treatment and leaf blowing in autumn.	None	

Typology F - Cemeteries, Church Yards & Memorials

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Grass Cutting	2 Medium amenity	Accessible grassed areas within churchyards including grass pathways	Mar - Oct	Grass cut 12 – 14 times throughout the growing season.	8 visits annually	
	3 Low amenity	Areas with long grass and areas identified as biodiversity enhancement including grazed areas.	Mar Oct	6 or less cuts during the growing season. Areas are cut less frequent through growing season	Up to 4 visits annually, subject to resource availability	

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	When	Current Average Standard	Proposed Maintenance Standard	Typical Example
Hedges	2 Medium amenity	Frontage hedges adjacent footpaths and access roads and internal hedges.	Oct - March	1 cut per calendar year. Tractor and flail (where accessible otherwise by hand)	1 cut annually	
Hard surfaces	3 Low amenity	Car parks and access footpaths/ highways	Apr - Oct	Weed treatment and leaf blowing in autumn.	1 visit for weed spraying per annum,	