

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 have 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, Middleswich (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.
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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.


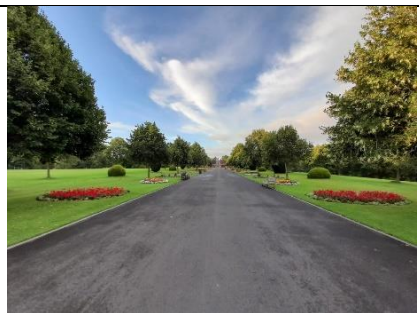
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Typology A – Formal Parks and Gardens

| 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. |  |



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|-------|---------------------|--|-----------|--|---|---|
| | 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 |  |


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|-------------------------|-------------------|--|-----------|--|---|--|
| 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 |  |

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|------------------------|---------------------|--|-----------|--|--|--|
| 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, |  |