

**A summary of responses to Cheshire East Council's
Maintenance of Green Spaces Consultation**

Final

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Executive summary and conclusions

Introduction

During October/ November 2023 Cheshire East Council conducted a consultation to seek views on the introduction of a new policy relating to maintenance regimes of green spaces within Cheshire East.

In total, around 1,700 responses were received during the consultation: 776 survey responses, approximately 700 petition letters, 131 petition signatures and a further 102 email /letter responses.

Overall Policy

The majority of respondents felt that it was important for Cheshire East to have a Green Maintenance Policy (86%) and were in support of increasing biodiversity (62%).

Formal parks and gardens

The majority of respondents (62%) supported the retention of the Green Flag accreditation scheme for formal parks and gardens and agreed with the need for bespoke management plans for larger sites (77%). Over 57% of respondents agreed with each of the proposed amenity levels within this typology and around one quarter (23% - 26%) of respondents disagreed.

Within the comments section there were several concerns highlighted regarding the proposals under this typology and several requests for specific sites to be re-classified/ be classed within a higher maintenance schedule. Respondents were concerned that reduced maintenance would make these areas unusable, inaccessible and make the areas look untidy. These areas were considered as an important part of health and wellbeing. Some respondents felt the parks should be tailored to the place and needs, not standardised, as each one has its own distinct character; others were in favour of more designated wild areas within the parks and felt volunteers/ community groups could help with the maintenance.

Outdoor Sport

Around one half of respondents agreed with each of the proposed amenity levels within this typology with 'football' zones receiving the highest levels of agreement (53%) and 'bowls' the lowest (48%). The percentage of respondents disagreeing with the proposed amenity levels for each of the zones was low (11% or lower disagreed).

Within the comments section there were several requests for reclassification of specific areas. Respondents felt that it was important to maintain all sports sites to a high standard as they are crucial for socialising, exercise and the health and wellbeing to all. There were a few questions

raised as to responsibility, with some suggesting encouraging club adoption or contributions, for the maintenance of these areas.

Community green infrastructure

45% of respondents agreed with the proposed amenity levels for the 'grass cutting', 'hard surfaces' and 'pond/ water feature' zones under this typology with 'hedges' receiving slightly more agreement (48%). The proposed amenity levels for 'grass cutting' zones received the highest disagreement (42% stated strongly or tend to disagree).

Within the comments section there were several requests for reclassification of specific areas. Respondents felt that it was important to maintain all community sites to a high standard as they are assets to the local community and used by all members of the population. Concerns were raised about the usability of these sites with reduced maintenance such as increased anti-social behaviour, fly tipping and decreased safety.

Urban open space

Agreement ranged from 42% for 'hard surfaces' to 48% for 'hedges' under this typology. Disagreement was highest for 'grass cutting' zones (41% disagreed).

Within the comments section there were several requests for reclassification of specific areas. Respondents felt that it was important to maintain all urban open spaces to a high standard, as they are likely to be in areas where people live and will have a perceived detrimental impact on both wellbeing and living standards, if allowed to deteriorate. Specific mention was made as to the maintenance of town centre areas. Concerns were raised about the usability of these sites with reduced maintenance such as increased anti-social behaviour, fly tipping and decreased safety.

Rural open space

Response was mixed for this typology with 39% - 44% agreeing with each of the proposed amenity levels and 29% - 40% disagreeing.

Within the comments section there were a number of requests for reclassification of specific areas. This classification was the most debated among the comments with many respondents confused how seemingly urban areas or those on housing estates could be classified as 'rural'. Concerns were raised about the usability of these sites with reduced maintenance such as increased anti-social behaviour, fly tipping and decreased safety.

Cemeteries, church yard and memorials

Around 40% of respondents (40% - 43%) agreed with each of the proposed amenity levels within this typology. Whereas around one third (31% - 36%) of respondents disagreed.

Within the comments section respondents expressed that these areas should be maintained to a good standard to show respect/ dignity towards the deceased. There were also safety concerns for visitors raised if areas were not maintained in terms of accessibility, slip hazards and anti-social behaviour.

Currently Maintained Sites: Not registered in Cheshire East Council Ownership

Respondents were also asked a series of questions regarding the categorisation of sites not in the Council ownership. Views were split with 36% agreeing, 30% disagreeing and 34% stating neither agree nor disagree or unsure/ don't know about our approach to the categorisation of sites which are not registered in the Councils ownership. Views were also split when asked if they support or oppose our approach to maintenance of those sites in Category 2 (39% supported whereas 29% opposed) and the proposal to cease maintenance on those sites which are definitely not owned by the Council (35% supported whereas 34% opposed).

Within the comments section respondents expressed their opposition to the reduction in green space maintenance in these areas suggesting they should be brought under council management. Others felt that it is not the Councils responsibility to maintain areas not owned by them. There were concerns that if the Council did not manage these areas who is going to maintain them - would need to enforce maintenance of these site so they do not become overgrown and subject to litter, fly tipping and antisocial behaviour. Several requests for reclassification of specific areas/ council adoption were also made – the Sandbach Elworth Estate was an area most effected and an area which received a lot of opposition via a petition letter and other formats of response.

Conclusions and recommendations

Whilst there is general agreement for the new policy and amenity levels within it, respondents did highlight a number of issues, queries and concerns about the look, usability and safety of areas if maintenance levels were to reduce. There was support for wildlife/ biodiversity areas, but respondents felt this needed to be managed in a certain way as opposed to a blanket reduction in maintenance and consideration be given to the specific needs of area/ habitats and the machinery needed. There were also several requests for certain sites to be re-classified.

The Research and Consultation Team recommend that the result of this consultation is considered alongside any other relevant information when re-drafting the policy and the site schedules that sit alongside it. Further engagement with the appropriate stakeholders may be useful if further detail or clarification on any sites that have been requested as requiring re-classification is needed.

Introduction

Purpose of the consultation

During October/ November 2023 Cheshire East Council conducted a consultation to seek views on the introduction of a new policy relating to maintenance regimes of green spaces within Cheshire East. The revised approach aims to deliver those savings which were highlighted in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2027, whilst providing a framework to drive consistency of standards across all Council maintained green spaces and delivering opportunities for rewilding of specific areas, promoting increases in biodiversity.

The following site typologies were identified within the policy:

- A: Formal Parks & Gardens
- B: Outdoor Sport
- C: Community Green Infrastructure
- D: Urban Open Space
- E: Rural Open Space
- F: Cemeteries, Church Yards & Memorials
- G: Inspection only
- H: No inspection or maintenance

A set of three zones have also been developed to group standards under specific descriptions and to further refine how individual sites will be maintained. They were as follows:

- 1: High amenity (high maintenance)
- 2: General/medium amenity (standard maintenance)
- 3: Low amenity (low maintenance)

As part of the policy, site schedules have been produced, which set out the typology and overall zone rating for each site.

Respondents were asked to review the draft policy and the site schedules before responding to the consultation.

Consultation methodology and number of responses

The consultation was hosted online, with paper copies being made available, on request and at Libraries throughout Cheshire East. Consultation responses were invited from anyone who wished to respond and was specifically promoted to:

- Residents of Cheshire East
- The Cheshire East Digital Influence Panel
- Cheshire East Council Members
- Town & Parish Councils within Cheshire East
- Local stakeholders including relevant community groups and organisations such as:
 - Representatives of Friends of the Parks in Cheshire East

Engagement sessions were held with Cheshire East Members and Town and Parish Councils. These sessions provided attendees with an overview of the draft policy/ consultation and an opportunity to ask any questions. All attendees were encouraged to provide their formal response via the survey or via email.

In total, around 1,700 responses were received during the consultation, 776 survey responses (online and paper), approximately 700 petition letters (concerning the Sandbach Elworth Estate), 131 petition signatures (regarding Meriton Park, Handforth) and a further 102 email /letter responses. A summary of the email/ letter responses received can be viewed in Section 9.

Respondent Characteristics

87% of respondents who answered the survey were responding as an individual (e.g. a local resident), 5 % were responding as an elected Cheshire East Ward Councillor or as a Town/Parish Council/lor and 6% were responding on behalf of a group, organisation or club. The remaining 2% were responding as a Cheshire East Council employee, on behalf of a local business or on behalf of a resident.

- See Appendix 1 for the full breakdown of respondent demographics.
- See Appendix 2 for a map of respondent postcodes.
- See Appendix 3 for the list of groups, organisations, clubs, businesses or Parish/ Town Councils that provided the name of who they were representing (survey and email representations)

Amendments

Near the beginning of the consultation, we were notified of a mistake on the paper version of the survey. This mistake applied to questions 2,15,16 & 17. One of the scale options for these questions read as 'strongly support' instead of 'strongly oppose' (i.e. strongly support, tend to support, neither support nor oppose, tend to oppose, strongly support, unsure don't / know). In response, paper copies were recalled from libraries and in areas where they had been requested, and new copies

were provided. 5 of the paper copies that were returned included the wrong scale option - those who chose to select 'strongly oppose' manually changed the scale on their paper returns, these responses were inputted into the system accordingly.

Section 1: Overall Policy

Respondents were first asked a set of questions on the policy approach overall as well as how informed they feel on green maintenance activities currently.

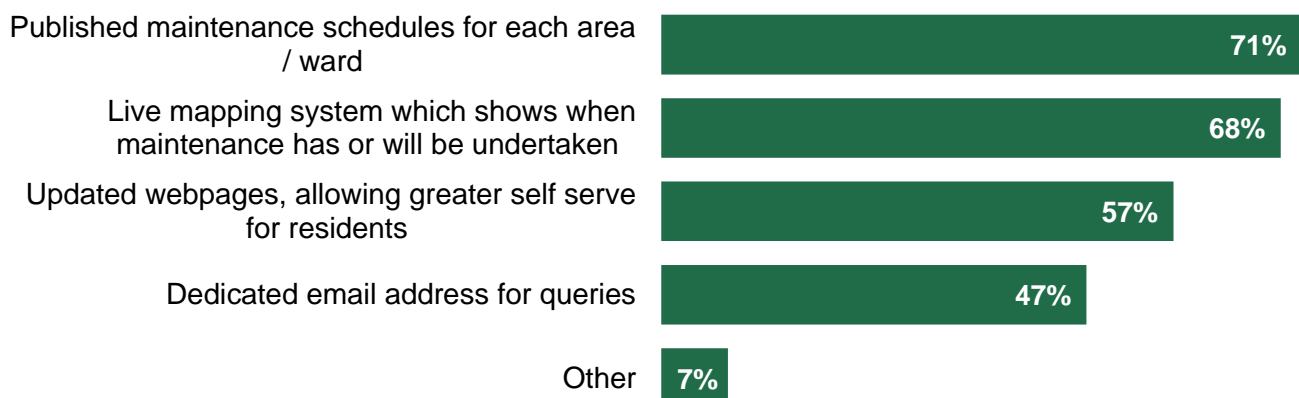
The majority of respondents felt that it was extremely or very important (86%) for Cheshire East to have a Green Maintenance Policy. 12% stated somewhat important.

One of the reasons we are revising the way we maintain our green spaces is to become more sustainable, to promote an increase in biodiversity and to reduce our carbon footprint. It is important that we maintain some areas more often (e.g. high amenity areas). However, other areas will look more 'natural' and less manicured (e.g. low amenity areas). 62% of respondents supported the overall policy in regard to increasing biodiversity, whereas 22% opposed this policy.

The majority of respondents (93%) did not feel well informed on green maintenance activities currently (answering either not very informed or not well informed at all).

Respondents were presented with a list of communication tools for the Cheshire East Website and were asked to select which ones they would like to see available. Respondents could select as many that applied. 71% of respondents would like to see published maintenance schedules for each area ward and 68% would like to see a live mapping system which shows when maintenance has or will be undertaken. See Figure 1 for a full breakdown of response.

Figure 1: Which of the following communication tools would you like to see available on our website?



Base for % = 761

Section 2: Formal Parks & Gardens

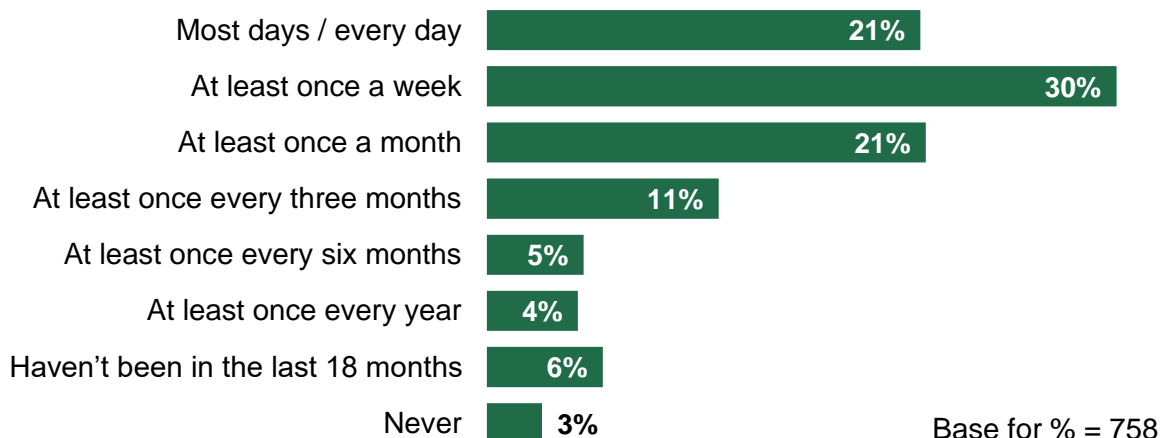
Background

This typology includes 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 (memorial for a person or group of people who is/ are buried elsewhere). There was a mix of proposed maintenance standards under this typology depending on the specified zone area (grass cutting, hedge, borders, pond/water features and hard surface) and amenity level (ranging from high to low).

Frequency of visits

Respondents were asked how often on average they visit the formal parks and gardens in Cheshire East. 51% of respondents visited at least once a week or more often. 21% visited at least once a month. See Figure 2 for the full breakdown of results.

Figure 2: On average how often do you visit the formal parks and gardens in Cheshire East?



Views on the overall formal parks and gardens policy

Key parks are currently entered annually in the Green Flag accreditation scheme. It is proposed that this form of accreditation continues and/ or is established across sites which have been designated as strategic across the borough. The majority of respondents (62%) supported (answering either strongly support or tend to support) the retention of the Green Flag accreditation scheme and 6% opposed (answering either strongly oppose or tend to oppose).

There are a number of formal parks which due to their scale, different areas of use and usage levels have been identified. These larger sites will include multiple 'zones' such as play areas, sports pitches, event space, formal areas and floral features, each of which will have their own maintenance

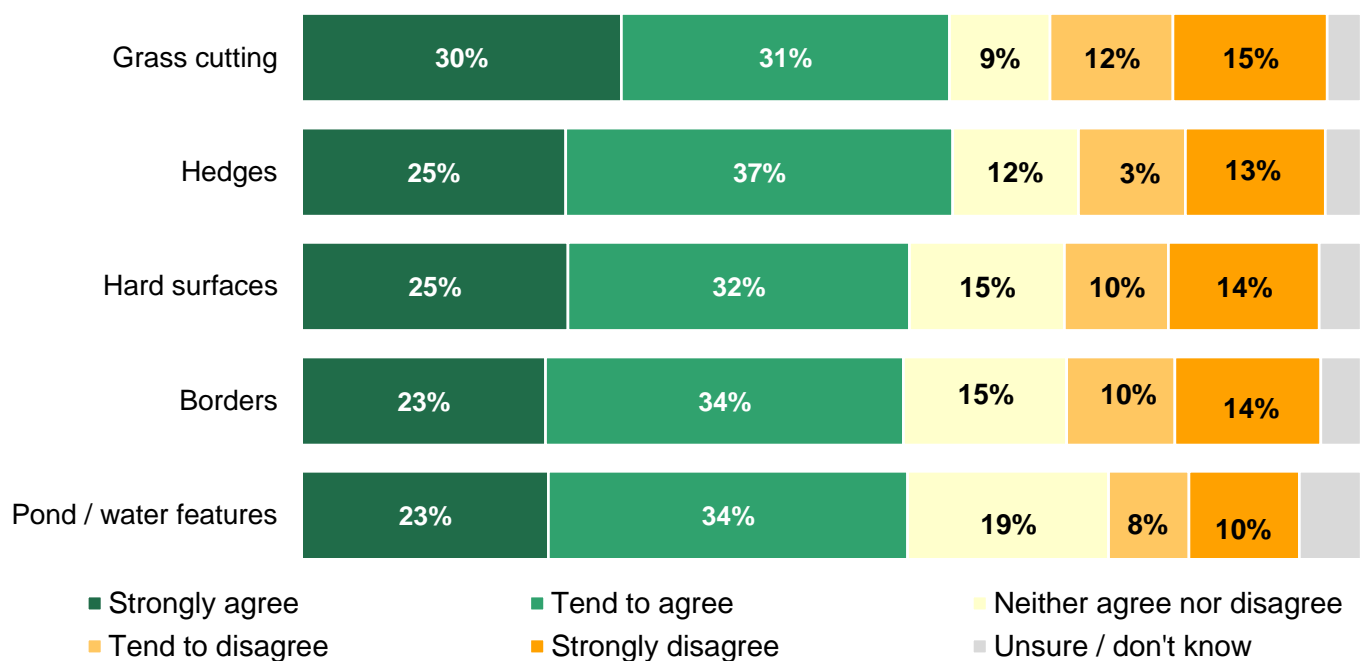
standards. A bespoke site management plan will be developed to maintain these sites effectively and efficiently via different zoned areas rather than via one overall zone specification. The majority of respondents (77%) agreed (answering either strongly agree or tend to agree) with the need for the larger sites to have their own bespoke management plans and 6% disagreed (answering either strongly disagree or tend to disagree).

Views on the proposed amenity levels

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposed amenity levels (i.e., high, medium) for each of the specified zoned areas within our formal parks and gardens. 57% of respondents or over agreed (selecting either strongly agree or tend to agree) with each of the proposed amenity levels within this typology with 'grass cutting' receiving the highest agreement (61%).

Around one quarter (23% - 26%) of respondents disagreed with each of the proposed amenity levels apart from 'pond/ water features' which had slightly more respondents selecting 'neither agree nor disagree.' See Figure 3 for the full breakdown of results.

Figure 3: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed amenity levels (i.e., high, medium) for each of the following zoned areas within our formal parks and gardens?



Base for % = 732 - 749

Comments provided on the proposed amenity levels under this typology.

Respondents had the opportunity to provide a comment on the proposed amenity levels under this typology. 205 respondents chose to leave a comment. The comments provided were coded into the following overall themes:

- Disagree with the principle of reduced maintenance/ amenity level should be higher/ reclassified, 73 mentions.
- Current maintenance issue/ general negative comment, 35 mentions.
- Areas need to be kept well maintained for enjoyment of residents, accessibility and wellbeing, 29 mentions.
- Concern over safety, litter and accessibility, 23 mentions.
- Maintenance levels should be based on need/ have a mixed approach, 20 mentions.
- In support of re-wilding/ lower maintenance schedule, 18 mentions.
- Partner with community groups and volunteers, 8 mentions.
- Other, 18 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received by theme is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Do you have any comments to make on the proposed amenity levels under the Formal Parks and Gardens typology	
Overall theme and Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Disagree with the principle of reduced maintenance/ amenity level should be higher/ reclassified	73
<p>Disagree with the principle of reduced maintenance, maintenance should be as existing. The majority of spaces are already maintained at a low level - should be increased. All areas should be maintained as high. Public parks are often a child's only access to play areas, or for families to have a picnic on the grass – reduced maintenance will make spaces unusable.</p> <p>High amenity is required for grass cutting in parks, grass cutting needs to be at least once per week during the growing season. Disagree, with the proposals to change the number of grass cutting, 8 visits may be inadequate depending on season and growth. Grass needs cutting once a month with grass taken away. Hedges need to always be trimmed except bird nesting season. Unacceptable to cut back on hedge trimming, border & plant weeding. Borders require at least a medium amenity – ad-hoc maintenance is unacceptable/ specialist pruning must be retained specific to plant and location. 1 x spraying per year for hard surfaces is insufficient to keep them under control.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meriton Park in Handforth is a significant park and is well used – unhappy that this has been identified as low maintenance. Meriton Road Park incorrectly classified as Type E (rural open space) rather than Type A (park). It is well used by the local community and has many facilities. Needs more investment not less (30 mentions). • Give Macclesfield Parks a fair deal - why are the two main parks (South Park and West Park) the only sites at Medium rather than High?/ Disagree with the downgrading of both South Park and West Park to a lower level of maintenance/ South Park is underfunded (4 mentions). • Lyme Green Community Park shown as Lyme Green Community Playing Field has been re-named, this should be adjusted, the park is shown as 'LOW' maintenance, and this is clearly incorrect needs to be high maintenance. The volunteers would, in the future, like to pursue a green flag award for this park (4 mentions). • Queens Park Crewe has formal flower beds that need weeding more than the proposed number of times/ cleaning of waterfowl droppings in Queens Park should be high priority (2 mentions). • Elworth Park is a well-used green space. To list this Park for low maintenance is discriminatory (2 mentions). • Leighton Park and surrounding grassland need to be maintained to a good standard; large grass area requires high level of mowing (1 mention). • Stanley Hall Park and Henbury Road park are also formal parks therefore the amenity level should be increased to medium or high (1 mention). • All green spaces in Middlewich should be taken over by the council (1 mention). • Almost all the green spaces in Knutsford are proposed to have a low rating, with only the Moor set at High, and 3 areas set as medium it deserves better (1 mention). 	

Current maintenance issue/ general negative comment	35
<p>Green spaces are poorly maintained. Standards are already not of a high standard; water features are often neglected. The rewilding/biodiversity fashion is unfortunately becoming a mask for lower standards of service. Nothing more than a cost cutting exercise.</p> <p>Specific area / site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meriton Road Park seems to get forgotten and has become increasingly neglected (4 mentions). • The standard of maintenance in Queens Park Crewe has deteriorated over the last couple of years/ it's is very underfunded/ It's a Victorian park and should be kept in good condition (3 mentions). • Wood Park in Alsager never gets any of the hedges trimmed any longer (1 mention). • Wybunbury park is under maintained and is quickly falling into an unusable place (1 mention). • Make contractors remove tree and plant debris after maintenance on Elworth Park - leaving it is a danger (1 mention). • Howty Close Park has been in a sorry state for a long time (1 mention). • I am blind and in Valley Park have often had path obstructed by both maintenance vehicles and overgrown plants, in particular brambles, at face height (1 mention). • The paths and grass areas around Parkers Road are flooded, overgrown and looking a real mess (1 mention). • The grass was always collected at Cop Meadow then suddenly this stopped (1 mention). 	
Areas need to be kept well maintained for enjoyment of residents, accessibility, and wellbeing	29
<p>It is the responsibility of the local authority to maintain a safe, clean, and tidy environment for the enjoyment of the local residents and visitors. A scruffy environment reflects a poor opinion of local areas - need to control weeds more effectively. Formal parks are important to the welfare and wellbeing of communities. All areas should be treated equally. Areas need to be maintained and accessible for all – e.g. those with prams, wheelchairs, those with a visual disability, neurodivergent. Play areas need regular maintenance of both grass areas and equipment.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parks, war memorials and gardens in Macclesfield are used by thousands. People need to see a well-cared for park, not overgrown (1 mention). • Sandbach Park & Elworth Park need to be kept neat and tidy for everyone's benefit (1 mention). • Queens Park Crewe must be kept at the highest levels (1 mention). 	

Concern over safety, litter and accessibility	23
<p>Concerned about safety if grass is not cut and visibility becomes a problem, ease of visibility to dangerous litter and dog muck. Leaving leaves on hard surfaces is dangerous when wet. Maintain walkways/ pavements to ensure they are weed free and do not contain any trip hazards. Sadly, many footpaths are unsafe for pedestrians (particularly the disabled, visually impaired or those pushing a pram) as the unkempt bushes are overgrown. Surfaces need good attention for disabled people's access. Keep parks a safe place to scoot skate and ride by maintaining hard surfaces. Hedges and overhanging trees: Need to be strictly maintained in all areas for safety and accessibility for all.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paths/walkways must be maintained. Meriton road park has been designated as such that the paths will become a hazard (3 mentions). • Overhanging trees which obstruct footpaths, including the Dane Bridge in Congleton and it's riverbanks (1 mention). 	
Maintenance levels should be based on need/ have a mixed approach	20
<p>The maintenance regime needs to be tailored to the place, not standardised - each park should have its own distinct character, reflecting its natural and cultural history and its functions. Standardised maintenance regimes tend to make everywhere look similar.</p> <p>Parks can have a mix of formal and informal/ natural areas. Most people prefer to walk on relatively short turf while appreciating the aesthetic and biodiversity qualities of less frequently mown areas.</p> <p>Rewilding still needs clear timetabling and skilled management - get professional advice on correct biodiversity management. Hedges/ pond areas should be maintained at the correct time of year to promote, avian nesting opportunities, invertebrate survival, leaf emergence, flowering status, tree seed and berry availability. Hedges should be cut on alternate years and widened to increase habitats. No need to cut a hedge into a 'formal shape. Grass cutting is necessary to continue the biodiversity throughout the spring and summer. Different animals and insect need different plants and habitats. Shrub pruning should be done according to the requirements of the specific species. The visits should be in Spring and Autumn for surface cleaning and leaf clearance - the time frame of April to December is inappropriate. Bowling greens should be maintained over the growing season to achieve the optimum playing surface in liaison with those organisations who use them regularly. No need to cut the grass quite so often on fields that are not used as walkways.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meriton Road Park is not a single entity. It comprises 2 major components which need different approaches to their maintenance. One area is amenable to a more 'rewinding' or 'limited maintenance' approach whereas the other has a far higher level of public amenities which deserve a higher level of maintenance (1 mention). 	

In support of re-wilding/ lower maintenance schedule	18
<p>The more rewilding/biodiversity that can be supported the better, would propose that 30% of all formal parks and gardens be allowed to re-wild/ less grass cutting, more wild-flower areas, no weed spraying/ do not use glyphosate. Do formal lawns really need a stripe finish/ plant borders with hardy perennials - they do not need re-planting every couple of months. Move towards more sustainable greenery & footpaths. Would prefer more "sustainable" planting and less rotation of border planting – formal parks require investment in sustainable bedding to help support changes.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stanley Hall Park needs much more wild areas (1 mention). 	
Partner with community groups and volunteers	8
<p>Council is putting all of its funds into high traffic areas at the expense of other areas - could community groups become more established with engagement from third parties e.g., environmental groups/ suggest greater connection with volunteer groups / what opportunities are there for volunteers to be involved?/ Extend responsibilities for maintenance to all home occupants.</p>	
Other comments	18
<p>Other comments include general positive comments, statements, queries into how the assessment levels were reached, other issues e.g. parking, dog bins and signs, road maintenance.</p>	

Section 3: Outdoor Sport

Background

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. It is proposed that the sites specified under this typology will be maintained as per existing maintenance standards. The zone areas under this typology were football, rugby, cricket and bowls with amenity levels ranging from high to medium.

Frequency of visits

Respondents were asked how often on average they visit the outdoor sport areas in Cheshire East. 29% of respondents visited at least once a week or more often. 40% hadn't been in the last 18 months or had never visited. See Figure 4 for the full breakdown of results.

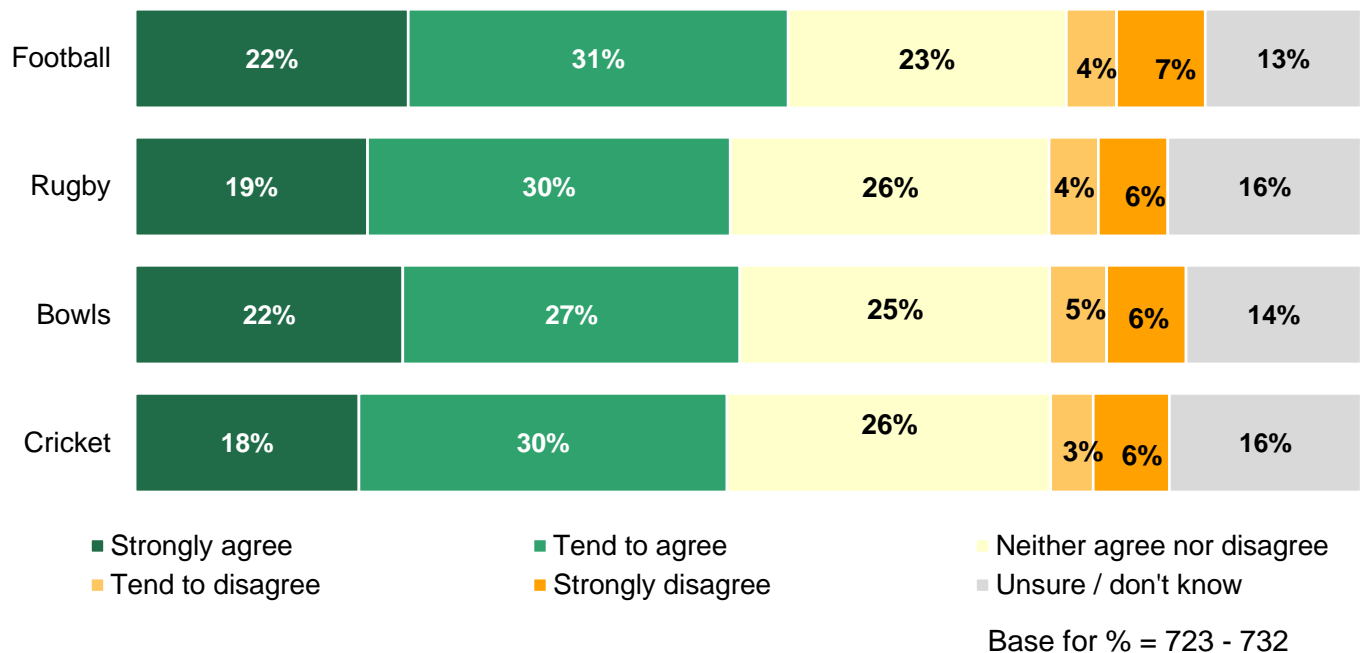


Views on the proposed amenity levels

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposed amenity levels (i.e. high, medium) for each of the specified zoned areas within our outdoor sport areas. Around one half of respondents agreed (selecting either strongly agree or tend to agree) with each of the proposed amenity levels within this typology with 'football' zones receiving the highest agreement (53%) and 'bowls' the lowest (48%).

The percentage of respondents disagreeing (selecting either strongly disagree or tend to disagree) with the proposed amenity levels for each of the zones was low (11% or lower disagreed). See Figure 5 for the full breakdown of results.

Figure 5: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed amenity levels (i.e. high, medium) for each of the following zoned areas within our outdoor sport areas?



Comments provided on the proposed amenity levels under this typology.

Respondents had the opportunity to provide a comment on the proposed amenity levels under this typology. 122 respondents chose to leave a comment. The comments provided were coded into the following overall themes:

- Maintenance rating needs to be high/ should be maintained more regularly/ maintained equally/ reclassified, 42 mentions.
- These areas need to be kept well maintained/ good for mental health and wellbeing, 41 mentions.
- Current maintenance issue/ general negative comment, 14 mentions.
- Encourage sports clubs to adopt spaces/ contribute to maintenance, 12 mentions.
- Need to be realistic/ based on need/ mixed approach, 8 mentions.
- Other, 11 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received by theme is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Do you have any comments to make on the proposed amenity levels under the Outdoor Sport typology

Overall theme and Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Maintenance rating needs to be high/ should be maintained more regularly/ maintained equally/ reclassified.	42
<p>All sports sites should be maintained to a high standard. Inappropriate to reduce maintenance of sports pitches - should be prioritised. All football pitches that are used by children and/ or adults on a weekly basis for competitive games should be treated equally. Good access for all to open lawn space. Well maintained fields are important also. Sports are more often played by children in local parks that will now be designated low amenity rural open spaces.</p> <p>Football pitches - need cutting in November when possible - cutting needs to be done weekly August-October, March - May. Bowling greens - the grass surface must be cut very short - shorter than for other types of sports. Why have football, rugby, cricket been separated out - similar levels of maintenance are required. Bowls require high maintenance levels by default. Outdoor tennis courts are not mentioned.</p> <p>Specific area / site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disagree with the plans to downgrade Meriton park and not maintain the football pitch and bowling green (6 mentions). Weston Playing Field is regularly used shouldn't be classes as a rural open space it is used as a playing field and should be cut as per existing (3 mentions). Both Barony Park and Brookfield Park is not used solely for outdoor sports – it is inadequate to describe the maintenance required includes planted trees, hedges wildflowers, children's play area (3 mentions). Lyme green isn't mentioned – needs to be high maintenance (2 mentions). The Cranage playing fields used by Holmes Chapel Hurricanes (Needham Drive Playing fields) why is the CEC owned pitch classified as High whilst the non-CEC owned pitch is classed as Medium? It will be impossible to play football on a medium defined pitch (1 mention). Don't understand the logic that classes the field described as "Rugby Drive Playing Fields" as "Outdoor Sport" whereas the "King George V Playing Fields, Windmill St" is classed as "Community Green Infrastructure". The facilities off Windmill Street contain a football pitch as well as other facilities which many people use and should be maintained to the highest standard (1 mention). Carnival Field Wilmslow- isn't listed in the strategy document so it is unclear what the intention is. - need the majority of the site to be mowed as is now (1 mention). Football field at Lacey Green Pavilion, Clough Avenue, Wilmslow, seems to have been missed off (1 mention). With Reference to green space (Rectory Field) adjacent to Wilmslow Leisure Centre. E-384936 N-381030. Rectory Field has the correct designated Typology, B Outdoor Sports but feel the Amenity Level should be classed as High so as to continue to use the site for cricket – needs to be cut weekly Mar-Oct up to 26 times per year (1 mention). Sandbach Park Lower Bowling Green needs to be cut at least 3 x per week preferably on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (Wilmslow) (1 mention). 	

These areas need to be kept well maintained/ good for mental health and wellbeing	41
It is the responsibility of the local authority to maintain a safe, clean, and tidy environment. It important for those who play sport to have a pleasant place to do it/ need to ensure these are well maintained regardless. Sports is crucial for socialising, exercise, and the health & wellbeing to all generations. This is an area where resources should be spent, and engagement encouraged to promote the facilities. Satisfied with the Bowling facilities provided – needs to continue to be maintained to a consistently high standard	
Current maintenance issue/ general negative comment	14
<p>Why are grass cuttings left to clump on fields, esp. playing fields? Many sports areas are under maintained already - more investment required.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Football pitches within Cheshire east especially Crewe and Nantwich are poorly maintained. You have never prioritised or supported rugby in Crewe. Even football pitches are covered in faeces from dog owners. (2 mentions). We had a beautiful pavilion and bowling green in Meriton Road park when I was growing up - sadly that has all gone and the pavilion is a disgrace. The tennis courts at Meriton Road Park are in a terrible state and the all-weather football court was removed (2 mentions). Pitch Maintenance at Mount Vernon – the grass is far too long and the line markings barely visible. Sometimes cut grass has been left strewn across the pitch after mowing. There is a constant problem of dog fouling (1 mention). Sandbach Park bowling green has been under maintained recently (1 mention). Cricket players currently play on an uneven area in South Park (1 mention). 	
Encourage sports clubs to adopt spaces/ contribute to maintenance	12
<p>Should this be the council or encourage club adoption with public usage rights? Clubs that are run on these grounds should pay for most, if not all, of this maintenance/ If bowling areas need 80+ cuts, then bowling club should pay for such privilege. There is not enough money to cater for a few people to play bowls/ regular users of outdoor sport areas - i.e. recognised teams - should litter pick the 'pitch' afterwards.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cricket and football pitches at Bollington Recreation need to be maintained by the onsite groundsman (1 mention). 	

Need to be realistic/ based on need/ mixed approach	8
<p>Maintenance should be adequate to carry out sports function successfully. Each specific activity will require a different level of maintenance, required by that sport.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some are seasonal activities but the football pitch and children's activity area in Victoria Park are used all year round so all areas need to be maintained accordingly (1 mention). 	
Other comments	11
Other comments include those stating they are unsure of the question being asked and general statements.	

Section 4: Community Green Infrastructure

Background

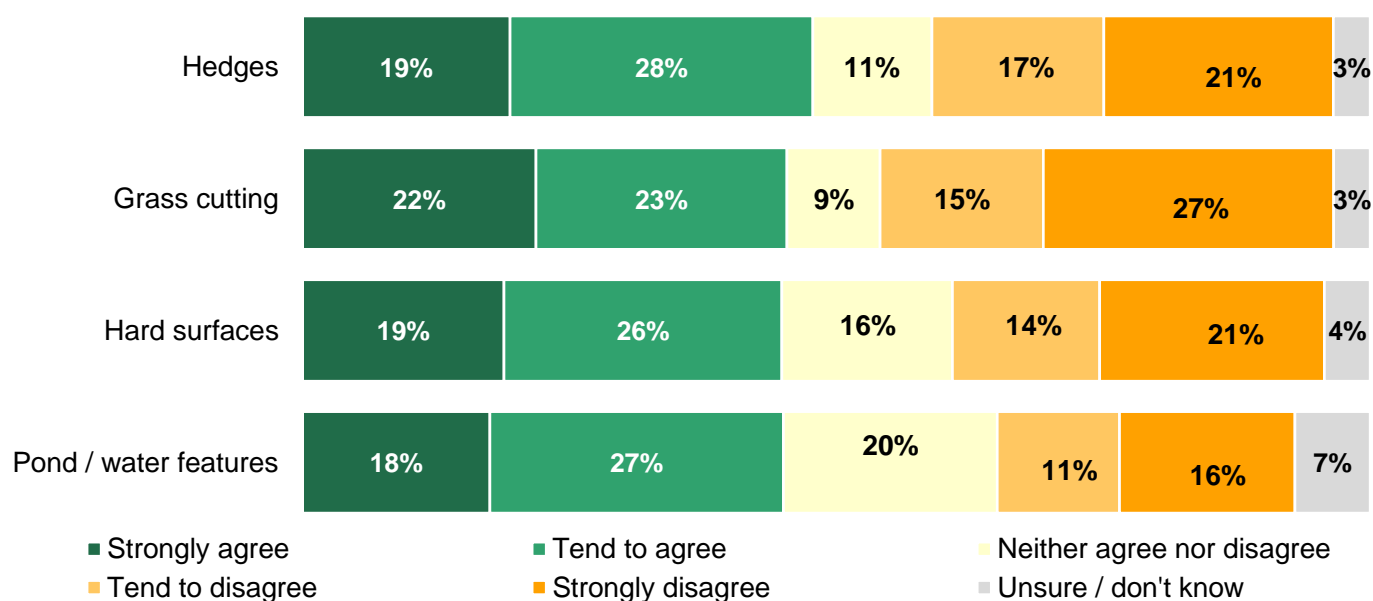
The community green infrastructure typology includes public open space that features key infrastructure such as play areas, Multi Use Games Areas, key green spaces within town centres (including a small number of core town centre cemeteries) and related maintained connecting corridors. There was a mix of proposed maintenance standards under this typology depending on the specified zone (grass cutting, hedges, pond/water features and hard surface) and amenity level (ranging from medium to low).

Views on the proposed amenity levels

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposed amenity levels (i.e. medium, low) for each of the specified zoned areas within our community green infrastructure. 45% of respondents agreed with the proposed amenity levels for the 'grass cutting', 'hard surfaces' and 'pond /water feature' zones under this typology with 'hedges' receiving slightly more agreement (48%).

The proposed amenity levels for 'grass cutting' zones received the highest disagreement (42% stated strongly or tend to disagree). See Figure 6 for the full breakdown of results.

Figure 6: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed amenity levels (i.e. medium, low) for each of the following zoned areas within our community green infrastructure?



Base for % = 724 - 732

Comments provided on the proposed amenity levels under this typology

Respondents had the opportunity to provide a comment on the proposed amenity levels under this typology. 201 respondents chose to leave a comment. The comments provided were coded into the following overall themes:

- Disagree with the principle of reduced maintenance, amenity level should be higher or reclassified, 90 mentions.
- No cutbacks in maintenance, areas need to be kept tidy, should maintain at current levels, 43 mentions.
- Concerns over safety, litter and anti-social behaviour, 35 mentions.
- Current maintenance issue, 16 mentions.
- In support of re-wilding or lower maintenance schedule, 15 mentions.
- Needs to be based on need, mixed or flexible approach, support volunteers, 8 mentions.
- Other, including general negative and general positive comments, 16 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received by theme is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Do you have any comments to make on the proposed amenity levels under the Community Green Infrastructure typology	
Overall theme and Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Disagree with the principle of reduced maintenance/ amenity level should be higher/ reclassified	90
<p>Community Green Infrastructure should be viewed as medium/high, need more maintenance than proposed. Cemeteries need to be peaceful areas and not untidy with overgrown hedges and grass. MUGA spaces should be prioritised to provide for young people, play areas should be high amenity areas. Proposed frequency of grass cutting may not be sufficient to allow access, areas are important to improve health and wellbeing as well as biodiversity and air quality.</p> <p>2 cuts a year is not enough for some areas, will make local parks unusable for sports/ children playing. 8 cuts annually is probably not sufficient for medium amenity grass immediately bordering areas such as play areas, will grow too high between cuts. Medium should be a minimum of bi-weekly. Once a year is not good enough. Car parks should be well maintained to keep safe and reflect pride in our community. Verges will require more regular cutting. Proposed grass cutting and border maintenance frequencies are generally too low to keep anywhere looking like the photos in the typology definitions document.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macclesfield, the park on Robin Lane Lyme Green now known as the Lyme Green Community Park has had investment over the last 2-3 years, due to the investment and increased use of this park a higher maintenance standard is required, volunteers would like to apply for Green Flag status at this park, should be reclassified as high (30 mentions), more regular cutting of hedges and maintenance of footpath verges around Macclesfield cemetery and Westminster road (1 mention), Cop Meadow Sutton has also had refurbishment and a team of volunteers who look after it with an extensive planting scheme planned until 2024, should be classified as high (2 mentions), playing field in Kettleshulme is widely used by the community as a recreational facility in the village needs a high classification (1 mention). Handforth, Meriton Road Park, reclassify to at least medium as it is well used all year round (10 mentions). Land of Kenilworth Avenue needs to be mowed more than twice a year as children play sports and this is difficult between cuts (2 mentions), Stanley Hall Park should also be classified as a Community Green Infrastructure (1 mention), Handforth Memorial Gardens (1 mention). Middlewich, Land by St Michael's Church classes as typology E, should be reclassified as typology C with medium amenity level to maintain the current monthly cut. Use for community events such as Folk and Boat, Christmas Lights switch on, Remembrance parades. People walk through it daily enroute to schools and shops (2 mentions), open space in Ryecroft Close is used by children and dog walkers, activities would be limited by long grass (2 mentions). Wilmslow, land off Colshaw Drive and Howty Close should be reclassified as a community green space with a medium/high priority as this is the only open space for Colshaw residents to use for recreation (2 mentions), play area on Tame Walk should be kept in good order (1 mention). Crewe, Weston Playing fields being cut only twice a year will make it unusable as a playing field (2 mentions). Congleton, Bromley Farm categorised as D low, used by children playing ball games so how can grass be kept long? (1 mention). Knutsford, Longridge Community Space not on spreadsheet should be included at Community Green medium (1 mention), Knutsford North Downs playing field should be reclassified to C Medium as a sizeable recreational field requiring more maintenance (1 mention), Knutsford Land between 35 North Downs and Longridge should be reclassified to C Medium as it is sizable and contains gym equipment and should include the St Helenas 	

Church and Graveyard (1 mention), Candelan Way field is used as an informal playing field with football posts, should continue to cut or will be unusable (1 mention).

- Alsager, all Alsager town centre spaces should be type C Medium as they are key to civic pride such as, Alsager library, Alsager municipal offices, Coronation Gardens, Northolme Gardens (1 mention), Wood Park Alsager needs considering as it's not in the town centre and gets dismissed (1 mention).
- Holmes Chapel, why is Middlewich Road classified and low? (1 mention)
- Nantwich, Mill Island, land off Queens Drive and Riverside, Waterlode/ Barker St have lower typographies, believe the areas should be more significant typography with a high amenity level as key green spaces within the town centre/ high footfall/ key routes into the town (1 mention).
- Sandbach, Elworth Park has four times less cutting proposed than Sandbach Heath Park, will stop volunteering (1 mention), land south of Angelina Close, who owns this as there was supposed to be a small park here that was paid for by residents, this green space should be maintained (1 mention).

No cutbacks in maintenance/ areas need to be kept tidy/ should maintain at current levels

43

Nowhere will benefit from low maintenance. More thought and understanding is needed in reducing the care and maintenance of these public areas. Hard surfaces need to be maintained with frequent spraying so the area looks tidy. All areas should be treated the same, kept tidy and safe for residents to use. It is the responsibility of the local authority to maintain a safe, clean, tidy environment at all times, all year round. Cheshire East needs to provide a good level of upkeep to attract residents and visitors to our area. Green spaces are essential for mental health as highlighted by the global pandemic, community green infrastructure more important area to residents than formal parks in terms of health and wellbeing. History has shown how lack of investment in public spaces has cost more to put right in the long term. Current machinery will not be able to deal with the proposed regime, are you funding new machinery?

The council do not maintain areas properly now so reducing maintenance is not acceptable - grass verges are missed, obstacles are not cut around properly, grass edges are encroaching on the paths and roads. Weeds along roads and in gutters need addressing. Town centres, pavements and passages already looking shabby - rewilding and shrub lands are not a good look in these areas. The practice of cutting grass and not collecting it will only work if it is cut on regular basis.

Specific area/ site mentions:

- Crewe, start looking after the town with meaningful infrastructure and investment (1 mention), maintenance is already poor in local parks such as Queen Street park, paths are barely usable without wellies in the winter.
- Macclesfield, Recreation ground of Alderley Road in Mottram St. Andrew maintenance should continue as existing (1 mention).
- Nantwich, took too long to reflag Nantwich town (1 mention).

Concerns over safety, litter and anti-social behaviour	35
<p>All council owned areas should be at least medium maintenance as low maintenance may make the areas unsafe to use. Scruffy unkept areas will encourage dog fouling and litter, dumping of waste and an increase in graffiti. Broken glass, discarded tin cans, needles, and dog poo is impossible to pick up in such long grass.</p> <p>Connected corridors need to be maintained in order that they don't become neglected "no-go" areas, especially for people with mobility problems. Cemeteries should be kept clean, tidy and safe especially for the safety of the elderly and infirm. Play areas should be maintained - it is a danger to users if not, at least 6 times a year minimum for grass cutting. Ponds/ water features need careful maintenance, a safety issue if edges are not well defined through inadequate maintenance. Hedges that border public paths and roads should have a scheduled cut not the proposed ad hoc cut, paths may become unpassable for some people due to overgrowth and road signs obscured. Hard surfaces need leaf clearing for safety reasons, paths should be cleared a minimum of 2 per year to prevent slips, trips and falls. Tree roots contributing to dangerous paths. Longer grass cutting without removal causes hazards - makes it very difficult for disabled and pushchairs to get around without being scratched.</p>	
Current maintenance issue	16
<p>Already fail to maintain these spaces currently, current maintenance is of a low standard. Footpaths alongside roads seem to receive no clearing at all, autumn leaves remain stuck to the ground and then turn muddy and slippery in winter. Play areas are generally undermaintained. Why is grass left to clump on fields, looks poor and makes it difficult for children to use. A number of grassed areas and hedges encroach on footpaths - needs to be kept clear for walkers/ often have to walk on the road in some areas where there is a narrow footpath that has been overgrown. The standard of maintenance in cemeteries is poor – e.g., leaving cutting and trimmings on graves.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandbach, Grange Way Estate in Elworth current condition not acceptable so to remove maintenance is a wholly unacceptable outcome, grass maintenance should be improved, has been maintained for the last half century why remove now (4 mentions). • Congleton, Ayrshire Way, passage to was not maintained residents have had to cut these themselves this summer (1 mention). • Macclesfield, Lingfield Close needs better upkeep with preferably fortnightly mowing and spraying of kerbs to cut down on weeds (1 mention), Langley playing field trees need to be maintained, they're too high (1 mention). • Crewe, Hard surface on Ripon Drive/ Tunbridge Close Wistaston play area has been cleaned once in the last 44 years. Grass has encroached, moss which is dangerous when wet and tree roots creating a tripping hazard (1 mention), the areas adjacent to Perry Fields and Thornfields estate in Leighton look neglected already and will get worse over time these areas used to be beautiful (1 mention), Merrivale Road to Crewe Road is so overgrown it is now impassable in poor light (1 mention), Barnabas area needs to be cut to reduce dog fouling (1 mention). • Alsager, Dunnocksfold Road/ Close Lane, overhanging hedges on pavements and walkways impair a drivers view on pedestrian/ wheeled access (1 mention). 	

- Handforth, Spath Kate Estate green spaces left to overgrow, areas need cutting regularly (1 mention).
- Wilmslow, Howty Close CEC have neglected ground maintenance for the last 18 months, residents are digging up weeds on public footpaths and cutting overgrown brambles and grass (1 mention).
- Rode Heath, play area only cut twice a year, what use is that for the local community (1 mention).

In support of re-wilding/ lower maintenance schedule
15

Current maintenance is ruthlessly cut back with little consideration for wildlife, suggest sloping sites can be left to rewild with grassy areas being mown only round the edges with a mown path for walkers. Allow hedges to grow much taller to allow habitat for birds and not trimmed repeatedly for 'neatness'. Highly supportive of reduced cutting schedules particularly of meadows. Hedges should not be interfered with during breeding cycles or fruiting/food timings. Support the idea of leaving certain non-playing areas (adjacent to woodland) areas longer for wildlife while allowing walkers access around the edges.

Areas that have low amenity levels to be adopted as pockets of flora and botanical interest with a view to retaining autochthonous species of Cheshire, providing both educational and volunteer opportunities including scientific research for university students. Less grass cutting and more 'wild' areas to give wildflowers and pollinators a chance. 6 cuts a year is far too many to help biodiversity/ less grass cutting on medium amenity areas (perhaps 3), management of green spaces means destruction of habitats. Leave the "meadow grass, wildflower and no-mow areas" alone altogether rather than the proposal for mowing 1-2 visits annually. Cheshire East needs to sow lots more wildflowers and you would get less complaints and fewer requests to mow. Limit the use of weed killer, discontinue the use of glyphosate. Grass and ponds need a balance of maintenance for safety and rewilding to encourage biodiversity and carbon capture.

Needs to be based on need, mixed or flexible approach/ support volunteers
8

Focal planting – replace summer/ winter annual beds with suitable mix of perennial plants. Reduce costs, carbon footprint of propagation, care and transport, and increase biological value by ditching seasonal annual beds. Once the perennial beds are established, add to the biodiversity value of these areas since permanent planting means good ground cover, top growth to harbour insect life. Where hedge pruning is carried out flailing should be avoided as it fails to take account of the needs of individual species and causes a loss in flowers and berries, is unsightly and detrimental to fauna.

Assist or help anyone who is willing to volunteer working on an area local to them.

Other comments
16

Other comments include general negative comments about cost cutting and difficulties with the consultation material e.g., too much technical jargon, inconsistencies with the site schedule and other issues e.g., poor drainage, too much tarmac and benches everywhere, issue with inconsistency of housing estate management fees, concerns about the proposal to spend £100k on IT solutions to save £600k over two financial years.

Section 5: Urban Open Space

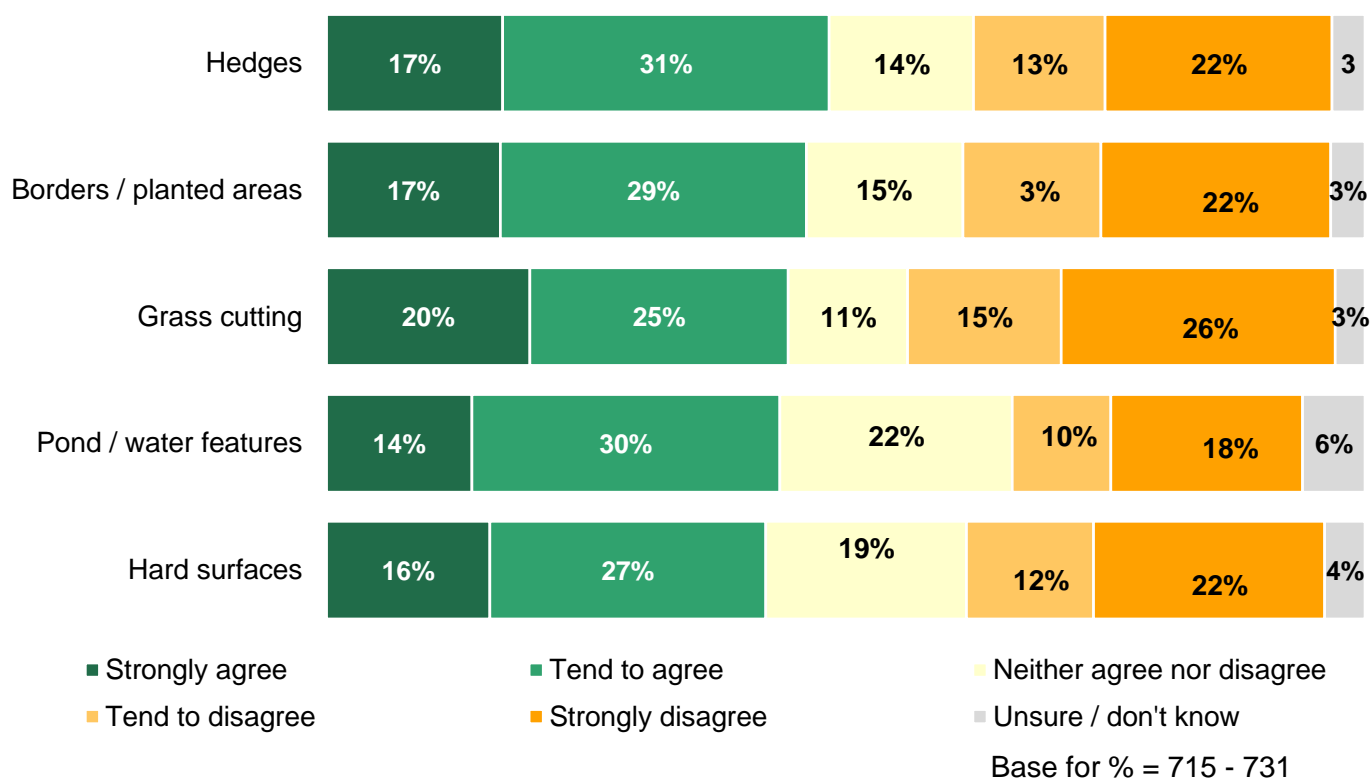
Background

This typology includes the boroughs open space within the urban environment, such as planting strips/ grassed areas within housing developments, highway verges and employment parks. There was a mix of proposed maintenance standards under this typology depending on the specified zone (grass cutting, borders/ planted areas, hedges, pond/ water features and hard surface) and amenity level (ranging from high to low).

Views on the proposed amenity levels

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposed amenity levels (i.e. high, medium, low) for each of the specified zoned areas within our urban green spaces. Agreement ranged from 42% for 'hard surfaces' to 48% for 'hedges'. Disagreement was highest for 'grass cutting' zones within this typology (41% disagreed). See Figure 7 for the full breakdown of results.

Figure 7: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed amenity levels (i.e. high, medium, low) for each of the following zoned areas within our urban green spaces?



Comments provided on the proposed amenity levels under this typology

Respondents had the opportunity to provide a comment on the proposed amenity levels under this typology. 157 respondents chose to leave a comment. The comments provided were coded into the following overall themes:

- Disagree with the maintenance rating, level should be higher or reclassified, 47 mentions.
- No cutbacks in maintenance, areas need to be kept tidy, should maintain at current levels, 44 mentions.
- Concerns over safety, litter, accessibility and anti-social behaviour, 28 mentions.
- In support of re-wilding or lower maintenance schedule, 21 mentions.
- Needs to be based on need, mixed or flexible approach, support volunteers or other organisations to help maintain, 9 mentions.
- Highlighted current maintenance issues in local area, 6 mentions.
- Other, including general negative and general positive comments, 17 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received by theme is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Do you have any comments to make on the proposed amenity levels under the Urban Open Space typology	
Overall theme and Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Disagree with the maintenance rating/ level should be higher/ reclassified	47
<p>Need to be high maintenance, areas need to be maintained to a much higher level/ maintained regularly regardless. Disagree with reducing the number of grass cuts in urban green spaces April-October, will allow weeds to grow out of control. 2 cuts a year is not enough, green open spaces in residential estates used by children for informal sports should be mown 3-4 times a month and car parks need to be more than twice a year. Car parks should be well maintained to keep safe and reflect pride in our community. If grass is cut more frequently there are less cuttings left making the area look much better and easier to cut next time. Low amenity levels should still include a minimum amount of monitoring and be reserved for areas that are not frequently used. Some urban areas are wrongly classified as rural which opens up the possibility for future reduction in services.</p> <p>Hedges grow too quickly so would need more than once a year cut, probably twice a year cutting. Not sure where in the maintenance regime is for roundabouts, surely green spaces near resident houses deserve a high quality, weed free condition than these. The Urban Open Space category needs to be re-thought. Many of the green spaces now within it might be better in a 'miscellaneous or other' category.</p> <p>Specific area / site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handforth, Meriton Road park, Meriton Road Green and Handforth Memorial Grounds, should be regularly maintained (7 mentions). • Wilmslow, Colshaw Drive/ Howty Close should be reclassified to medium to high as it is the only open space for that side of Colshaw estate (2 mentions), a significant number of urban open spaces within housing estates that have been erroneously listed as rural open spaces (1 mention). • Nantwich, Nantwich Library should be reclassified to a high amenity as the planted borders are the highlight of this area and in close proximity to the civic hall (2 mentions), many areas within this typology are key car parks and should not be reduced as this would have a negative visual impact for visitors and possible health and safety risks. Gullies would need clearing more regularly from falling leaves and increased potential for flooding (1 mention). • Macclesfield, Lyme Green Community Park/ Lyme Green playing fields (2 mentions) and Cop Meadow Sutton (1 mention). • Congleton, Brereton Park cutting only twice a year, surely that is incorrect (1 mention), land at the end of Penrith Court has been maintained previously by the council for over 50 years the grassed area has been used by local children for sports, general activities would not be possible if the site was left to deteriorate (1 mention). • Knutsford, Candelan Way field is used as an informal playing field and should continue to be cut every fortnight or it will be unusable and difficult to cut (1 mention), all of the Knutsford rural green spaces should be at least urban as they border or are within housing areas (1 mention). • Alsager, Alsager Library and Alsager Municipal Building are central locations and should be cut 8-10 over Spring and Summer (no cuts in May) rather than the proposed low with 1-2 cuts annually (1 mention). • Middlewich, Ryecroft Close open space is used by children and dog walkers, these activities would be limited by long grass and a lack of maintenance (1 mention), all areas should be reclassified as medium amenity areas and play areas should be high amenity areas (1 mention). 	

- Crewe, Cranage Estate, the new proposal would mean unsafe play areas for children, difficult walking for adults, more pests and block drains, needs a subdivision within the classification such as green areas used as play areas being high but treating the areas around the paths and edges of development differently (2 mentions), Weston playing fields needs cutting more than twice a year to be usable as a playing field (1 mention).
- Sandbach, Tabley Close, public footpath should be maintained as when it deteriorates there is anti-social behaviour. Path is well used as it leads to Elworth Hall main gate and the Co-op, Elworth Park should have as much maintenance as Sandbach Heath Park (1 mention).

No cutbacks in maintenance/ areas need to be kept tidy/ should maintain at current levels
44

It is the responsibility of the local authority to maintain a safe, clean and tidy environment or the enjoyment of local residents and visitors, current standards fall short and shouldn't be further denigrated. A reduction is quite unacceptable - standards should be kept high. This area should be a statutory thing as they are important to health and wellbeing. As soon as maintenance is neglected the whole area will deteriorate and affect the general well-being of the people living there. Cheshire East has always been an example to other boroughs which helps boost tourism, but this will stop if low maintenance policies are progressed. There are many local 'clean teams' doing the work that the council should be doing. Pavements need to have weed killer on them more frequently, hard surfaces may not be able to be weed treated if the leaves are not blown off. Hedgerows take up more carbon but require ongoing maintenance by knowledgeable people.

Specific area/ site mentions:

- Sandbach, Grange Way Elworth, all spaces should continue to be maintained as they have been for the last 50 years, will have a detrimental effect on all who live there especially on mental health, will negatively impact house prices (7 mentions).
- Crewe, urban spaces are the lungs of Crewe, none of the designated areas in Crewe as 'urban' should be maintained at a 'low' level, they need to be a high standard to prevent neighbourhoods looking shabby (1 mention).

Concerns over safety, litter, accessibility and anti-social behaviour
28

Urban areas need to be more strictly maintained for safety than open spaces such as parks. Low maintenance leads to the dumping of waste which is a false economy due to the cost of clearing this.

Footpaths must not be allowed to get into a state of bad repair or there will be a lot of accidents. Hard surfaces need to be kept weed free and clear of leaves to maintain walkers' safety, in some areas two people can't walk side by side, these need to be maintained in a safe condition for walkers and cyclists. Grass verges alongside roads could not be used as crossing points due to overgrowth of weeds. Reducing maintenance around these, and such as cutting back over growing grass or bushes makes it difficult to walk, especially for people with mobility problems or for pushchairs. The grass cutting on land near highway junctions is too infrequent at low 4-6 cuts when it was previously 12-14 and should be subject to a safety assessment, hedge cutting near junctions would be a bigger concern – should not cover road signs. By not cutting grass verges, you are causing an obstruction to vision at corners.

Proposed reduction would negatively impact those who suffer from hay fever/ pollen allergies and asthma. Could reduce how much people participate in active travel routes and have a detrimental impact on public health.

If car parks look unmaintained, they attract anti-social behaviour and become unsafe. They present an image of a town being left to deteriorate. It's counter intuitive to cut costs in one area of the council only to lose income generation or impact on reducing town centre footfall because the areas feel unsafe. The picture must be looked at holistically. If towns feel unloved it also impacts on residents feeling devalued and mental health and wellbeing can be impacted too. Areas looking unkempt are more prone to vandalism and sends a message to our young children that the adults do not care so why should they.

Failure to cut grass generally means kids can't play on it and dog owners can't pick up dog poo from it/ will hide immediate danger of litter such as glass and syringes.

Specific area/ site mentions:

- Macclesfield, Dorchester Road in Tytherington has long grass verges with occasional non-grass crossing points, allowing weeds to overgrow would reduce the number of crossing points and would be an issue for those with reduced mobility (2 mentions).

In support of re-wilding/ lower maintenance schedule

21

Agree with no mow areas in the right places. Very few people want to see unkempt areas but excessively tidy planting, access routes and other open areas create poor opportunities for wildlife and are expensive to maintain. Hedges are ruthlessly cut back with little consideration for wildlife, suggest all sloping sites can be left to rewild and grassy areas be mown only round the edges with a path for walkers. Hedges be allowed to grow much taller in order to allow habitat for birds. Establishment of wildflowers in lawn spaces has great financial and aesthetic value/ wildflower sections have been lovely and hope they will continue and be enlarged. No need to spray weeds, people should get used to wildflowers. Plant bee friendly perennials of clover near foot paths. Plant more trees. Need to be constantly planting so that there doesn't become a gap in the lifecycle of them, they reduce carbon so must think of our children's future.

Verges should be used to 'cultivate' wildflowers, means cutting and clearing in autumn after seeds have dispersed, fuel cost saving and reduces emissions and favours pollinators. Wildflower beds and patches in parks and by the roads are a joy to see. Grass cutting in low amenity areas could be reduced even further. Ideally, there should be no grass cutting during the growing season/ no need to mow low amenity areas at all/ Urban grass does not need 8 visits. More sustainable planting. As these areas are not used for sport or recreation, they can be maintained less to encourage bio-diversity.

Needs to be based on need, mixed or flexible approach/ support volunteers or other organisations to help maintain

9

Annual planting is expensive to maintain and should be phased out in favour of perennial or permanent amenity planting. Hedge pruning by flailing should be avoided, as it fails to take account of needs of individual species, causes loss in flowers and berries, is unsightly, and detrimental to fauna. Some areas like highway verges should be rewilded while others need regular maintenance like paths in housing estates.

Smaller grassed areas could be sold to the adjacent house owner, would increase capital and reduce annual costs. Grass outside our house has little to no amenity level, we could all mow our own grass or better still the roads could be widened. Planted areas should be adopted by volunteering schemes. Teams of volunteers could remove low branches from trees. Town councils should be encouraged to take on as much open spaces for their own community as possible.

Current maintenance issue	6
<p>In 2023 the pavements and roads looked terrible. Areas have been left wild and neglected. Gutters require more attention as they can lead to flooding and makes the area look uncared for.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congleton, Berkshire Drive residents have already taken on the responsibility of clearing the kerbside and public pavement of weeds as this seems to have ceased, green space at the end of Penrith Court was purchased by a development company in Leeds was previously maintained by CEC, should continue to maintain the plot and seek compensation from the owners (2 mentions). • Macclesfield, Lingfield Close, please mow fortnightly to reduce the hazards of excessively long grass such as dead animal carcasses, health hazard (1 mention). • Poynton, Deva Park suffers from poor drainage and ponding is an unnatural occurrence (1 mention). • Chelford, grass cutting of verges already requires residents of Chelford to maintain part of verges as current maintenance is insufficient to remove weeds from highly visible areas (1 mention). • Sandbach, Barlow Way/Oakley Close the council used to cut the grass and manage the trees in this space but now don't. The proposed grass cutting regime seems like a fantasy, Congleton Road, maintenance of trees needed as residents are having to manage them, no maintenance for the last five years why did Cheshire East buy this land if they were not willing to maintain it? (1 mention). • Handforth, Spath Kate Estate green spaces growth was disgusting, I am ashamed to be on the estate (1 mention). • Knutsford, maintenance on the Moor has already been scaled back, grass high, trees not being maintained, lots of dog fouling, needs to take more action not less (1 mention). 	
Other comments	16
<p>Other comments include general negative comments about cost cutting and difficulties with the consultation material e.g., not asking the right questions, badly phrased. Not user friendly, inconsistencies in the spreadsheet (classifies urban open spaces as D but the spreadsheet has urban green spaces as D) and other issues such as using green areas as ad hoc car parks - they become a muddy mess and restoration costs money.</p>	

Section 6: Rural Open Space

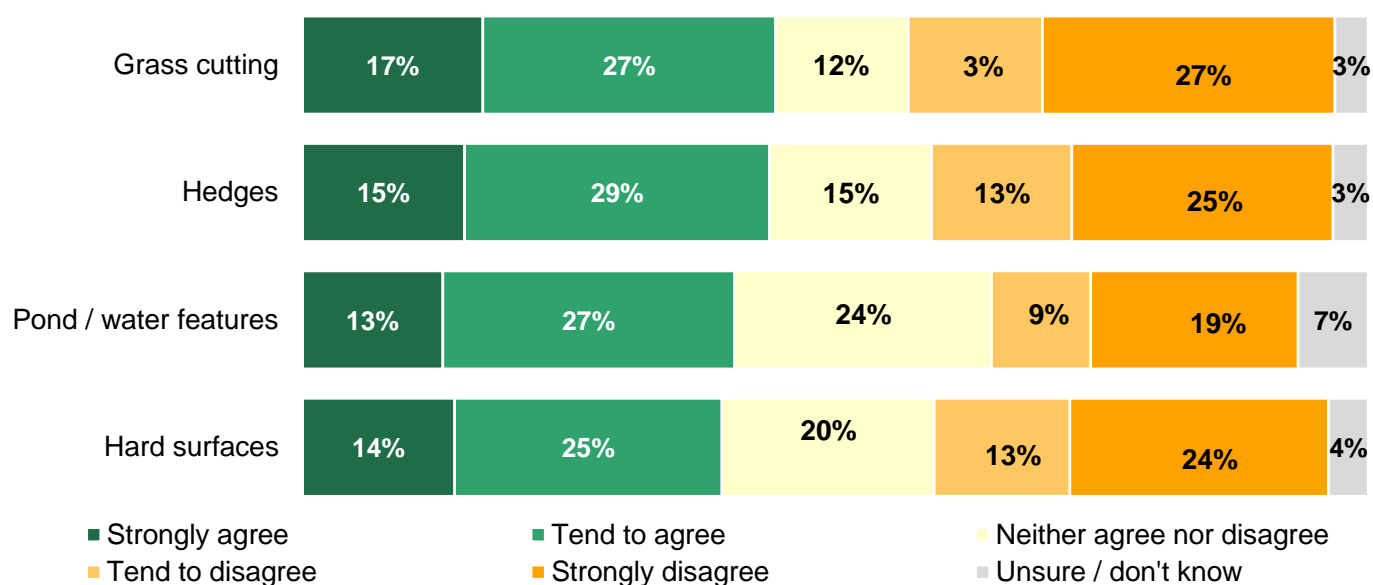
Background

This typology includes the boroughs open space within a rural setting. There was a mix of proposed maintenance standards under this typology depending on the specified zone (grass cutting, hedges, pond/water features and hard surface) and amenity level (ranging from medium to low).

Views on the proposed amenity levels

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposed amenity levels (i.e., medium, low) for each of the specified zoned areas within our rural open spaces. Response was mixed with 39% - 44% agreeing (selecting either strongly agree or tend to agree) with each of the proposed amenity levels within this typology and 29% - 40% disagreeing (selecting either strongly disagree or tend to disagree). See Figure 8 for the full breakdown of results.

Figure 8: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed amenity levels (i.e. medium, low) for each of the following zoned areas within our rural open spaces?



Base for % = 729 - 739

Comments provided on the proposed amenity levels under this typology

Respondents had the opportunity to provide a comment on the proposed amenity levels under this typology. 171 respondents chose to leave a comment. The comments provided were coded into the following overall themes:

- Disagree with the maintenance rating, level should be higher or reclassified, 88 mentions.
- No cutbacks in maintenance, areas need to be kept tidy, should maintain at current levels, 30 mentions.
- Concerns over safety, litter, accessibility and anti-social behaviour, 30 mentions.

- In support of re-wilding or lower maintenance schedule, 16 mentions.
- Needs to be realistic/ based on need, mixed or flexible approach, should partner with other organisations, enforce maintenance in these areas whoever owns them, 9 mentions.
- Highlighted current maintenance issues in local area, 6 mentions.
- Other, including general negative comments, 11 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received by theme is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Do you have any comments to make on the proposed amenity levels under the Rural Open Space typology

Overall theme and Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Disagree with the maintenance rating/ level should be higher/ reclassified	88
<p>Disagree with the number of sites classified as rural open spaces that are within towns and housing areas and should be classified at least as Urban open space especially as the lower classification leads to less frequent grass mowing under the medium amenity. Playing fields used by children should not be low maintenance levels. More grass cutting and hedge trimming is required, once a year is not good enough, all areas should be classified as high priority. Rural areas need their green spaces maintained more - being in a rural area means more weed growth, nettles.</p> <p>Rural residents should not be discriminated for where they live and deserve a share of well-maintained areas, twice a year grass cutting is not enough or fair. The designation of pieces of open grass on housing estates as 'rural open space' is slightly strange, areas are listed incorrectly seems like a poor desktop exercise. There does not seem to be any reason why some are in this category, where at least they might get 'low' maintenance, while others of a similar nature get 'Inspection only'.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handforth, Meriton Road Park, this is not rural it is urban, and the proposed category do not reflect the usage and amenities which exist. To be usable the park must be maintained in keeping with its valuable status to the community, should be type A/C park (22 mentions), land at 1-36 Sagars Road and link between Sagars Road and Bulkeley Road is incorrect, there are mature trees here that need inspection every few months and overgrown vegetation at the road junction (1 mention). • Middlewich, Land by St Michael's Church, Leadsmyth and Hightown, Land in front of St Michael's, St Michael's Way please reassess to medium, to have grass cut only twice a year in unacceptable and would turn the area into a waste land. It needs to be maintained on a monthly visit/grass cut cycle as it's used by the community for a wide range of events and is in a prominent location in the town centre (16 mentions), Ryecroft close which children have used for the last 30 years to play on has been maintained by Cheshire East, how will they play if maintenance is reduced? (2 mentions). • Sandbach, most areas in Sandbach identified as 'rural' feel to be more 'urban' most are within the town so by definition are not rural (1 mention), 14 plots of land have incorrect classifications as they are not rural but next to highways or part of housing estates these should be reclassified as urban open spaces with medium maintenance or transferred to highways: Abbey Road, Elworth Road, London Road north of Elm Tree Lane, Middlewich Road, Richmond Close, Ruscoe Avenue near Deans Lane, Grange Way estate footpath and Mulberry Gardens (1 mention), Brereton Green play area needs more maintenance as it is a well-used play area and is of a similar size and space to Sandbach Heath which is a typology C (3 mentions). • Alsager, many low areas are not satisfactory due to proximity to roads where tall vegetation will obscure visibility e.g. Crewe Road/ Chancery Lane and Crewe Road/ Arrowsmith Drive (1 mention). • Crewe, Weston village recreation ground/Weston village playing field needs regular maintenance and grass cutting, it is managed by a charity but requires council support to be a vital community asset for the local area, should be reclassified as outdoor sports with a medium amenity level (1 	

mention), many open spaces here have been designated rural which seems odd. All areas of Crewe need to be medium maintenance and it's a principle town and needs to be appropriately cared for (1 mention).

- Knutsford, Knutsford North Downs playing field should be classified as a community space as it's a sizeable recreational field requiring more maintenance (1 mention), Land between 35 North Downs and Longridge should be community green space as it is sizeable and contains gym equipment (1 mention), St Helenas Church and graveyard should be listed with the land between 35 Downs End and Longridge as 2 zones the church within the community green as referenced in the Neighbourhood plan (1 mention).
- Macclesfield, need fortnightly mowing of grass on spaces such as Lingfield Close (1 mention), Dorchester Way, the only way to cross is to walk across the grass verges on both sides of the road these must be maintained or it will be impossible to cross when walking never mind with a pushchair or for those less able (1 mention), Newquay Drive/ Whirley Rd grassed area is actively used for children playing and walking dogs, the area should be mowed regularly so it can stay usable (1 mention), Stanley Hall Playing fields is not rural, community has spent time and effort improving this space (1 mention).
- Haslington, areas like Dingle Walk, Shelburn Drive, Newtons Crescent/ Fisherman's Close are well used locations and if not cut then young people will not be able to enjoy open spaces close to them (1 mention), Cloverfields grassy area is not a rural space and is located in residential housing, needs more maintenance and should be a Zone 2 medium amenity (1 mention).
- Nantwich, many sites in the town centre have been classified as rural open space but should not be such as Coronation Gardens (should be category C), Land off Beam Street and The Crescent, Land off Oat Market (should be category D) (2 mentions).
- Wybunbury, reaction field is used as a football pitch by local children and should be classified as a sport or playing field and ungraded to medium level of maintenance (1 mention).
- Disley, Dane Hill Close playground is used by the community, if long grass is allowed to grow dog fouling will increase. Disley parish council requests additional cuts be considered for this area (1 mention).
- Wilmslow, many areas have been wrongly labelled as rural open spaces such as Cranford, Trafford, Egerton [...]; Newton Rd, Styal Rd to Bollin Grange Park (1 mention), Clough Avenue area in Lacey Green is designated 'Inspection Only' when this is a football field adjacent to a community centre clarification needed (1 mention), Boddington Playing Fields, hugely visited park about to celebrate its centenary (1 mention).
- Cranage, the green space is used for health and leisure and will be turned into an unusable wilderness (1 mention).
- Warford, land at Warford Crescent is used by residents for leisure purposes and proposed maintenance will undermine existing uses of the site, site is used for many events and should be kept in good condition (2 mentions), Merrymans Lane Great Warford should not be low (1 mention).
- Kettleshulme, Paddock Lane green space is well used, if the grass it not cut it will become unusable needs to be higher maintenance (3 mentions).
- Ollerton, land at Oaklands Road is used by residents for leisure purposes and proposed maintenance will undermine existing uses of the site, site is used for many events and should be kept in good condition (1 mention).

- Over Alderley, land at Ashbrook Road is used by residents for leisure purposes and proposed maintenance will undermine existing uses of the site, site is used for many events and should be kept in good condition (1 mention).
- Lower Withington, Dicklow Cob is used by residents for leisure purposes and proposed maintenance will undermine existing uses of the site, site is used for many events and should be kept in good condition (1 mention).

No cutbacks in maintenance/ areas need to be kept tidy/ should maintain at current levels**30**

Landowners are required to meet standards of maintenance for roadside hedges so there's no way the local authority should work to a lower standard. Being rural does not mean they are not used, nor should be neglected. The proposals disadvantage those in rural areas in favour of urban areas, this is unfair. Hedges should be a priority and maintained at specified frequency levels. Feels that it is the responsibility of the local authority to maintain a safe, clean and tidy environment for the enjoyment of the local residents and visitors. The rural countryside must be maintained so that all can continue to enjoy it. Maintenance of these areas should be covered by council tax, shouldn't matter where you live in Cheshire East. Making cuts to an already substandard level would be a disgrace. Proposed grass cutting frequencies are generally too low to keep anywhere looking like the photos included in the typology definitions document. Both hedges and weeds will cost more to maintain long term if standards are allowed to slip.

The current standards fall well short of what residents find acceptable. Sort out the area, pay enough in taxes. People from these areas will have to travel to enjoy a well-maintained park or play area which is not good for carbon footprint. More upkeep is needed more often if these spaces are to remain good and safe for the community.

The council do not maintain areas properly as it is so reducing maintenance is just not acceptable. Leaving grass to grow and not mowing it doesn't increase biodiversity. The areas that the council describe as meadow need to be sown with appropriate wildflower seeds and still require maintenance.

Specific area/ site mention:

- Mottram St Andrew, maintenance of the recreation ground off Alderley Road should continue as present (2 mentions).
- Cranage, Needham Drive, Cheshire East took on the responsibility for the rural open spaces when the estate was first established 23 years ago and prevented residents for a maintenance programme funded by a service charge. Want to live in a well-maintained area will consider a legal challenge as you took away the option to self-maintain by taking on responsibility in 2000 (2 mentions).
- Sandbach, Grange Way the amenity areas should be maintained as they have been for the last 50 years (1 mention).

Concerns over safety, litter, accessibility and anti-social behaviour**30**

Rural open space needs regular maintenance to keep areas looking tidy and cared for/clean. Letting grass grow too long will cause more dog fouling which is dangerous for children and adults. Not treating areas for weeds will just cause more weeds leading to more long-term problems such as blocked drains. By having longer intervals this will result in mounds of long grass clippings being left which are unsightly. All areas must be carefully monitored and managed to prevent fly-tipping. Playing areas used by children need a higher maintenance level or risks a health and safety issue. Country car parks need weed control

otherwise they become unsightly and unwelcoming. Areas will look run down. Hedgerows will obscure traffic sighting. Hedges, if adjoining footpaths they might need two cuts – spring and autumn, to maintain space for pedestrians.

Hedges need sorting in some areas especially if they're an obstruction for families taking children to school. Hard surfaces need to be maintained strictly even in rural areas for accessibility for those wanting to use them such as those with disabilities or pushchairs. Will increase the risk of trips and slips in the wet reason due to falling leaves and increased potential for flooding. Hard surfaces such as paths and roads need to be maintained to safe standards.

There is a risk of increased anti-social behaviour and a reduced feeling of personal safety by reducing maintenance regimes. This could reduce how much people participate in active travel routes etc with an associated detrimental impact on public health.

In support of re-wilding/ lower maintenance schedule

16

Rural area maintenance not as important as urban/ sub-urban maintenance. Some areas need less fuss so nature can thrive. Rural spaces should be kept natural to protect wildlife, carbon capture and encourage more biodiversity. Now almost all the grassy areas and hedges seem to be labelled as 'amenity' and get ruthlessly cut back with little consideration for wildlife. I would suggest that all sloping sites can be left to rewild, all other grassy areas be mown only round the edges, with a mown path across for walkers, and that hedges be left to grow much taller to allow habitat for birds. Grass verges should be left to overgrow for wildlife and hedges too where possible. When pruning is carried out, flailing should be avoided, as it fails to take account of needs of individual species, causes loss in flowers and berries, is unsightly, and detrimental to fauna. Support less grass cutting/ no grass cutting, would cut even less in these proposed areas.

Medium and low amenity grass cutting could be reduced further, ideally not cutting in the growing season that is not impeding with public footpaths or byways. Cutting 1-2 times are proposed would still destroy the flowers and grasses which are important, leave cutting altogether to provide wildlife corridors in rural open spaces. Many areas should be assessed by ecologists and their value to wild nature not what it is currently done as the number of grass cuts per year.

Significantly more should be done to support wildflower meadows, fruiting and flowering hedge and flower environments, field pond environments including flash areas. Too many farmers repeatedly cut hedges during avian breeding seasons and strip remaining leaves and berry/ fruits in early winter when they could wait till late winter when food sources have been utilised by wildlife.

Pond maintenance could be reduced if they are suitably improved for oxygen supply (oxygenating plants if a mechanical/ electrical option is uneconomical).

Specific area/ site mention:

- Bosley, the local road verges are overly mowed, and a reduced mowing regime would be welcome that could involve just a mow around the edges next to the road and footpath. This would save costs which could be used to better mainlined the encroachment of verges and hedges onto village road footpaths (1 mention).
- Congleton, Biddulph Valley Way maintenance is an example of excessive grass (wildflower cutting) (1 mention).

Needs to be based on need, mixed or flexible approach/ support volunteers or other organisations to help maintain	9
<p>More grass areas should be offered up to community groups for wildflower gardens. More consultation necessary with nature/wildlife organisations. Parish council should be encouraged to work with Cheshire East community workers to see how they can make their green spaces more inviting and usable.</p> <p>Need differentiation on grass cutting proposals depending on the nature of the development, and on the different uses of the area within the same development. Every patch of land is different and can't be placed into a few categories for a broad approach to maintenance.</p>	
Current maintenance issue	6
<p>Areas are currently untidy and, in some instances, dangerous. Far too many trees are being planted and then nobody maintains them, and they are left to grow. Rural areas are not well maintained. Pavements in rural areas are appalling and so overgrown you can't see half of them. Need more grass cutting, less over the last few years has done nothing but hide a load of litter in the green areas.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handforth, Meriton Road Park back fields, trees are not maintained, and they are taking away light and open space (1 mention), Meriton Park playground hard surface needs addressing as it regularly floods and becomes unusable the bark covering is dirty and messy (1 mention) • Haslington, numerous footpaths that run through housing estates that are overgrown with nettles in the summer months, council should maintain them but never does (1 mention). • Crewe, Queens Park was the jewel in Cheshire's crown but it's gone downhill (1 mention). • Macclesfield, Cop Meadow in Sutton is often left too long between grass cutting which is done to a poor standard and grass left on ground to rot (2 mentions). 	
Other comments	11
<p>Other comments include general negative comments e.g. savings should be made elsewhere, council wastes too much money. Difficulty with the consultation questions/ material. Categorisation needs to be reviewed.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alderley Edge, query the location of 80864/ 377356 (3 Ullswater/ 8 & 10 Buttermere Drive) as this land was sold to the adjoining householders in 2018 (solely maintained by them since 2009). Does the location relate to the two small visibility splays i.e. highway land? The visibility splays by 8 Buttermere Drive have since 2009 been solely maintained by residents to stop the damage rendered by CEC on their single visit in 2008. Clarification would be welcome (1 mention). 	

Section 7: Cemeteries, Church Yards & Memorials

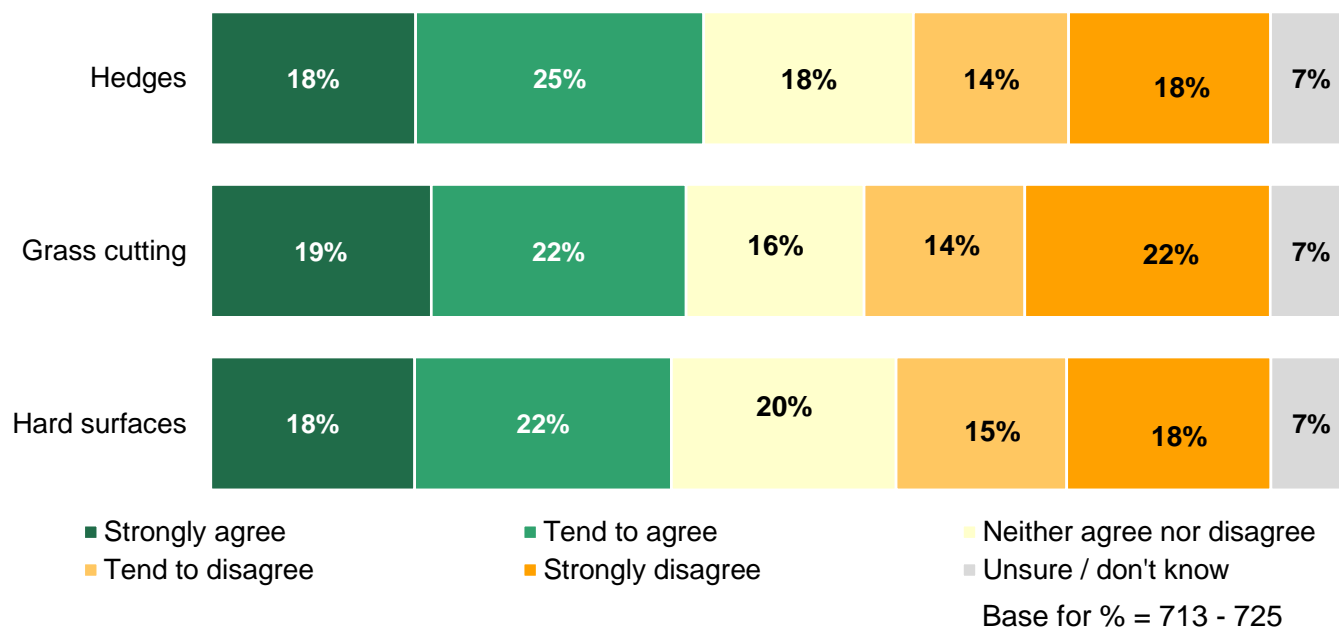
Background

This typology includes cemeteries, closed graveyards, church yards and memorials otherwise not covered under Typology A or C. There was a mix of proposed maintenance standards under this typology depending on the specified zone (grass cutting, hedges and hard surface) and amenity level (ranging from medium to low).

Views on the proposed amenity levels

Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the proposed amenity levels (i.e., medium, low) for each of the specified zoned areas within our cemeteries, church yards and memorials. Around 40% of respondents (40% - 43%) agreed (selecting either strongly agree or tend to agree) with each of the proposed amenity levels within this typology. Whereas around one third (31% - 36%) of respondents disagreed with each of the proposed amenity levels under this typology. See Figure 9 for the full breakdown of results.

Figure 9: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed amenity levels (i.e. medium, low) for each of the following zoned areas within our cemeteries, church yards & memorials?



Comments provided on the proposed amenity levels under this typology

Respondents had the opportunity to provide a comment on the proposed amenity levels under this typology. 133 respondents chose to leave a comment. The comments provided were coded into the following overall themes:

- Disagree with reduced maintenance/ areas need to be treated with respect, 54 mentions.

- Maintenance rating/ level should be higher/ reclassified, 40 mentions.
- Concern over safety, accessibility, and antisocial behaviour, 12 mentions.
- In support of re-wilding/ lower maintenance schedule, 11 mentions.
- General negative comment/ current maintenance issue, 8 mentions.
- Partner with volunteers/ not CE responsibility, 4 mentions
- Other, 8 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received by theme is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Do you have any comments to make on the proposed amenity levels under the Cemeteries, Church Yards & Memorials typology

Overall theme and Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
<p>Disagree with reduced maintenance/ areas need to be treated with respect.</p> <p>All surfaces need to be maintained to a good standard and should be treated with respect/ don't want these areas to become overgrown and look a mess, shows a general lack of respect/ dignity towards the deceased/ Cheshire East Council have an obligation to keep the county tidy/ cemeteries should be well maintained and safe for everybody to visit regardless of age or disabilities.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Michael's Church Grounds need to be kept tidy and cut short - the tidy lawns and flower beds enhance the appearance and feel of the town. The prominent position of the church grounds means that any reduction in the standard of care would be detrimental to the town (5 mentions). These are vital community points of touch for people at specific times and times of need. Remembrance Sunday in Handforth is very well attended and the memorials in Handforth, Styal and Wilmslow are key (1 mention). 	<p>54</p>
<p>Maintenance rating/level should be higher/ reclassified/ missing area</p> <p>Need to be high maintenance rather than medium or low/ maintenance of war (and other hard surface) memorials & immediately surrounding hedges, borders, grass cutting should be given high priority – have some respect for those no longer with us. Many people visiting cemeteries are older people and have walking difficulties. Not maintaining hard surfaces can result in personal injury. 8 visits to cut grass paths between graves would be insufficient/ once a year is not good enough. There is no reference to flowerbeds in this Typology.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Michael and All Angels church in Middlewich, is the main focal point in the town. The paths and grass area are frequently used by the church and community. If the grass were to be cut twice yearly, the cut grass would not be removed and would kill the grass underneath. It would not give a good impression of our town and would attract more littering. It needs the grass cutting and flowerbeds weeded at least six times a year (5 mentions). Nantwich St Mary's Church 365221,352327- the proposed amenity classification and maintenance level for this area is incorrect. It is a town centre green space accessible to the public. It should be classified as medium amenity, or preferably as a community green space or D Urban Green Space (3 mentions). St Helenas Church and Graveyard (Knutsford) should be seen as a community green with 2 or three zones of amenity maintenance) It is classified as a neighbourhood Green as Local Green Space no 29 in the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan). The wider area requires medium grass cutting and hedge/ tree maintenance. Cemetery and memorial areas require a higher visit rate for grass cutting than 8 visits for grass and 1 for hedges and paths (1 mention). Poynton churchyard needs to be more looked after. Some graves and areas look neglected and it's sad to see and disrespectful for the deceased (1 mention). 	<p>40</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reference to the Macclesfield Formal Garden of Remembrance, where a high level of maintenance is required, the current standard is already poor (1 mention). Elworth War Memorial is excluded from the schedule, yet Sandbach War Memorial is included (1 mention) 372653, 352398 Weston Cemetery - complaints are received even with the current level of maintenance to have a no maintenance policy is unacceptable (1 mention). Reducing the frequency of grass cutting at Wilmslow Cemetery would tend to reduce the attractiveness of the cemetery and could pose a safety hazard to visitors/ Why is Wilmslow Cemetery not in this category - why is it 'inspection only'? (2 mentions). Why is Wybunbury cemetery not included on your maintenance schedule? (1 mention). 	
Concern over safety, accessibility, and antisocial behaviour	12
Hard surfaces, walkways, hedges and verges need to be maintained, as many older aged people and disabled are likely to use these areas - they need to be safely accessible. Leaf clearance needs doing at least once before Remembrance Sunday for safety reasons. There is a risk of increased anti-social behaviour and a reduced feeling of personal safety by reducing maintenance regimes.	
In support of re-wilding/ lower maintenance schedule	11
Cemeteries should be all biodiversity areas and be looked after as such/ should encourage wilding cemeteries/ like the wild flowering scheme between monuments. The Church of England and local diocese (Nantwich/Chester) actively encourage a more natural approach to managing their church yards. An organisation called caring for gods acre would be a useful contact as a starting point to understand the approach www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk . / Leave the zone 3, low amenity areas altogether - allow nature to take its course. Even mowing 2 times throughout the season could prevent plants from becoming established. / Don't mow them at all/ cut less than proposed in these areas	
General negative comment/ current maintenance issue	8
Just an excuse to not bother maintaining the areas properly. These areas need regular maintenance - ANSA do the bare minimum as it is. Cemeteries are never kept up anyway. Current machinery will not be able to deal with the proposed regime.	
Specific area/ site mentions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childrens area in Crewe old crem is left in a poor state at times/ Crewe cemetery is poorly maintained – hope to see improvements (2 mentions). The state of Macclesfield Crematorium is poor (1 mention). 	
Partner with volunteers/ not CE responsibility	4
Look at recruiting volunteers. Church yards should be maintained by the church/ incentivise church grounds etc to self-manage. These items are the responsibility of local councils not Cheshire East	

Other	6
Other comments include general statements, negative comment about the wording of the question, or other issues such as allowing dogs into cemeteries.	

Section 8: Currently Maintained Sites: Not registered in Cheshire East Council Ownership

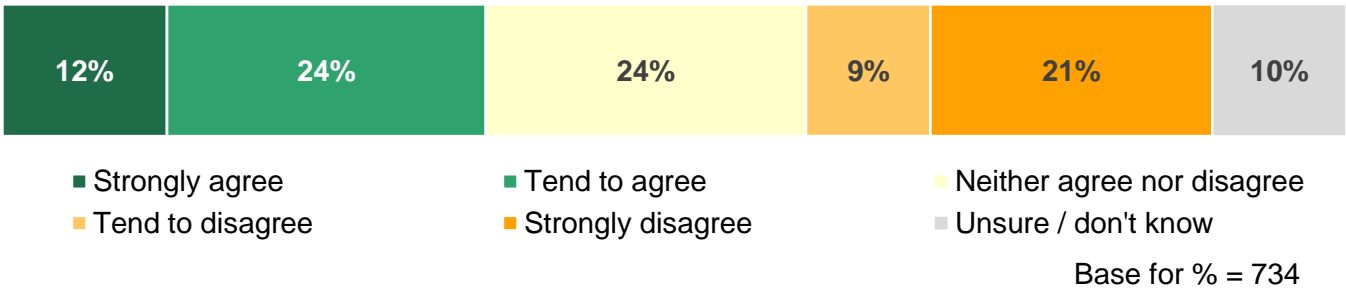
Background

The Council with it's contractor ANSA has undertaken a review of 540+ sites ANSA are currently maintaining but were potentially not registered in Council ownership. Sites known not to be in Council ownership have continued to be maintained during this time unless the owner has formally requested a cessation in maintenance or there is evidence the land has attempted to be enclosed. After reviewing the list, a set of simple categories were developed to classify how we propose to move forward with these sites:

- **Category 1:** Maintenance works to continue in accordance with new policy, (3 sites).
- **Category 2:** Maintenance works to continue in accordance with new policy, subject to further investigations on maintenance responsibility and/ or funding. This will be picked up as part of the ongoing green spaces maintenance review, (352 sites).
- **Category 3:** Maintenance works to cease from April 2024, as Council can demonstrate that it does not have an interest/ obligation. This would be communicated with the registered owners who would alongside the relevant Town or Parish Council be offered the opportunity to fund continued maintenance activity under a formal agreement, (80 sites).

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the categorisation of sites not in the Council ownership. When asked if they agreed or disagreed with our approach to the categorisation of sites which are not registered in the Councils ownership views were split with 36% agreeing (selecting either strongly agree or tend to agree), 30% disagreeing (selecting either strongly disagree or tend to disagree) and 34% stating neither agree nor disagree or unsure/ don't know. See Figure 10.

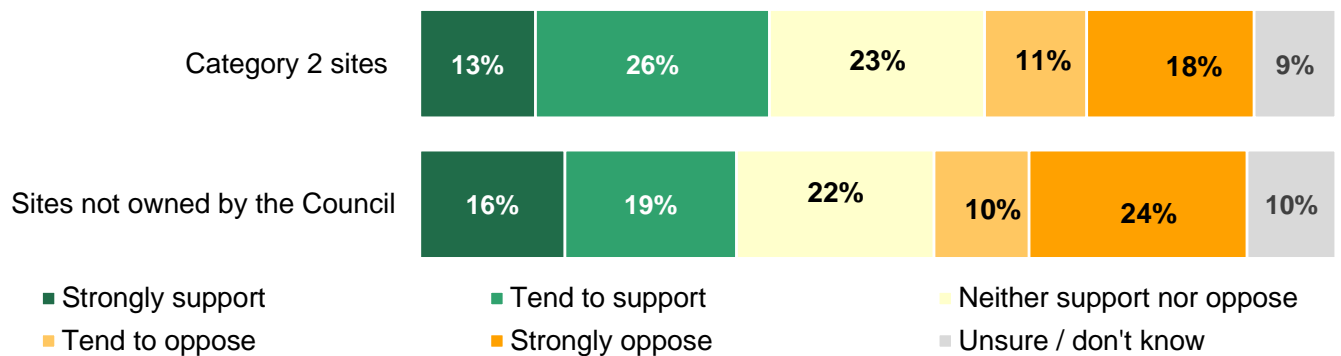
Figure 10: How strongly do you agree or disagree with our approach to the categorisation of sites which are not registered in the Councils ownership?



Views were also split when asked if they support or oppose our approach to maintenance of those sites in Category 2 and the proposal to cease maintenance on those sites which are definitely not

owned by the Council. 39% supported (selecting either strongly support or tend to support) with our approach to maintenance of those sites in 'category 2' whereas 29% opposed (selecting either strongly oppose or tend to oppose). 35% supported our approach to maintenance of those sites which are definitely not owned by the Council whereas 34% opposed as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11: How strongly do you support or oppose our approach to maintenance of those sites in Category 2 / sites which are definitely not owned by the Council?



Base for % = 728 - 732

Comments provided on the proposed approach of sites not owned by the Council.

Respondents had the opportunity to provide a comment on the proposed approach of sites not registered in the Council's Ownership. 190 respondents chose to leave a comment. The comments provided were coded into the following overall themes:

- Disagree with withdrawal of maintenance/ CE have a duty of care to continue maintenance, 73 mentions.
- Enforce maintenance in these areas/ find who owns them/query on who owns, 38 mentions.
- Areas not maintained by CE should not be maintained/ Not CE responsibility, 30 mentions.
- Maintenance level should be higher/ re-classified/ missing area, 21 mentions.
- General negative comment/ current maintenance issue, 15 mentions.
- Concern over safety, 8 mentions.
- General support/ more wildlife areas needed, 6 mentions.
- Other, 12 mentions.

Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. The full summary of the comments received by theme is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Do you have any comments to make on proposed approach of sites not owned by the Council

Overall theme and Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Disagree with withdrawal of maintenance/ CE have a duty of care to continue maintenance	73
<p>All maintenance should continue on any site that has always been maintained. CE, they have a duty of care to residents to maintain them to a good standard. You have duties to adopt areas as agreed with planning at the time of the development and should continue to be maintained. Would be good if these sites could be brought under the management of the council rather than privatised.</p> <p>If they are not going to be maintained as per the current contract, who is going to maintain them? If there are still uncertainties over ownership of certain sites, then maintenance should continue until that is resolved. Would not support the council absolving itself of all responsibility without first gaining commitment from the actual owner that the owner has an obligation to maintain the space. Areas are going to look unsightly, attract littering, fly tipping and potential improper use of the land. Green spaces are important to residents who live in these areas and can influence mental health. Need to keep areas clean and tidy for future generations safety and hygiene or areas will look run down.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity sites in Elworth which have been maintained by the council since the estate was built some 50 years ago should continue to be maintained by the Council. A precedent has been set, and it ought to continue/ residents are paying council tax and are entitled to the same service as everyone else. Will become an areas of long grass, weeds, litter and dog mess. The value of my house will decrease. Should be cut at least once during the growing season. Spaces that are overgrown and not maintained increases stress and anxiety for all those living in the vicinity (22 mentions). • Keep the town of Middlewich properly maintained, it would be tragic to let it slip into disrepair and looking unkempt. Opposed to this approach, as published, for the areas identified in Middlewich, areas identified in the proposals appear to be clearly owned by CEC e.g. Middlewich Library and SeaBank car park (2 mentions). • Broomfield Close Chelford, the verges are an important part of the original landscape characteristic of the estate as defined in the original title deeds, any further reduction in maintenance will have a negative effect on the appearance of the environment (1 mention). • Chelford open spaces have always been mowed and are used by youngsters for small gatherings/ games and by many dog walkers for exercising and training dogs (1 mention). • Hope that the Cross Keys Roundabout will have grass cut regularly as this looks a mess covered in weeds and is on a main road going into Crewe (1 mention). • What is the area meant by 15 High St Nantwich – is it the flower bed at the end of High St and/ or that on the Swine Market? If so, no inspection / maintenance will lead to an eyesore in an important town location/ loss of amenity. Strongly oppose (1 mention). • The green space at the end of Penrith Court in Congleton has been well maintained by CEC for many years, the present owner will not maintain the plot resulting in it becoming overgrown - should be maintained by CEC (1 mention). 	

- Site reference 380988, 375382 is an area that includes a footpath, agreed by the Council during planning, with Utilities crossing the site and requiring access. Walking away from the responsibilities that go with this site after 37 years of accepting that responsibility and maintaining the site would be a concern. Need to agree with the owner for them to maintain the site; adopt the site or assist in the transfer of the title for the site from the current owner to a local community group/ charity (1 mention).

Enforce maintenance in these areas/ find who owns them/ query on who owns

38

Need enforcement notices on the owners to maintain the sites. There should be a compliance order sent. It is reasonable for the council to say that if it doesn't own a site, it should not have to pay to maintain it. Someone should chase the owners up to either pay the council or maintain it themselves. It should be made clear to the public who does own the property, and therefore who is liable for its maintenance. The people who own the land that has been maintained need advising so they can pick up as appropriate.

Specific area/ site mentions:

- Alderley Road Wilmslow nr The Rectory PH - not sure if WTC mow the grass here. WTC will need to know if they will have to pay for grass mowing if this is currently completed by CEC. Identified as not registered and will not receive any maintenance under the proposal - query ownership as this land will have formed part of the original road construction and may be owned by CE Highways/ Would be useful to identify the owner of this land if it is not registered with CEC. Who owns the two sites listed in Alderley Road, Mottram St Andrew? (4 mentions).
- Footpath from Stanley Hall Park across the fields by the Trainline and under the A555, is poorly maintained - if this isn't your problem then how do people raise issues and get things fixed? (1 mention).
- Christ Church - who is responsible for the paving, which is in constant need of repair? (1 mention).

Areas not maintained by CE should not be maintained/ Not CE responsibility

30

Areas not owned by CE should not be maintained, waste of money, unless hedgerows affect pedestrian/ disability access along the highways or unless you have a properly funded contract in place to do so and that there is a significant benefit to the whole community. A line needs to be drawn and to avoid disparity between estates and districts being perceived to have favourable treatment if not council owned but still maintained.

All privately owned sites should be managed by either resident's community groups with support & grants or by the owner of the site. Should be the responsibility of residents/landowners. Residents should be encouraged to provide maintenance in their own area.

Engage with local Parish Councils so that they can take over the maintenance.

Specific area/ site mentions:

- In Alsager there are 15 plots due to have no maintenance. As CEC do not own these areas it is understandable that in times when finances are under pressure these areas are ignored. Alternative solutions are - town council takes these on with impact on precept or volunteers (nearby residents) maintain them (1 mention).

- Alderley in Bloom' might be interested in taking on the planting of the island at the junction of chapel Road and London Road - important that groups are contacted early to ensure they are ready when the Council's maintenance activity stops (1 mention).

Maintenance level should be higher/ re-classified/ missing area
21

Increase maintenance, not reduce. Areas are becoming unkempt and dangerous. Rural areas need more maintenance than is currently provided to keep roads and footpaths open. Very few spaces in Cheshire east should be categorised as rural – some wrongly categorised they are clearly urban. / All areas should be maintained to a high level rather than medium/low as is proposed. All hedges require cutting at least 3 times per year in order to encourage thick growth and also to prevent danger, damage or injury to persons and vehicles passing them.

Specific area/ site mentions:

- There should be an increased level within the green areas surrounded by housing, especially in Elworth/ Elworth should have more than two cuts a year, including Elworth Park (3 mentions).
- St Mary's Nantwich is not Typology F. Although not CEC owned land the Council has a duty to maintain the whole area which includes shrub borders, turf, town centre footpaths under an agreement from 1988. This classification of low amenity maintenance should be reviewed (3 mentions).
- Cranage football pitches - one is owned by Cheshire East and one by another unknown entity. Football pitches are high maintenance and if the pitch not owned by Cheshire East is assigned to category 2 it will not be playable (1 mention).
- The areas around Thornbrook Way and Goldsmith Drive are not rural and require more maintenance than is currently proposed. (1 mention)
- One of the sites in Bollington is a roadside verge and adjacent to other grass verge areas that ANSA maintains. The other is a community amenity space in a residential area. We would wish these to be in category 1 instead of 2 (1 mention).
- An area described as 'Prescott Rd opposite 14 Egerton' in Lacey Green Wilmslow is listed on the non-CE spaces and is set as low maintenance Urban Open Space. It is immediately in front of houses in a low-income housing estate and leaving grass to grow here will be very detrimental to the residents and appearance of the area. It is imperative that this land is properly maintained with a high frequency of mowing (1 mention).
- Site 385157, 382223 - not 'rural open space', and has a medium amenity – it is heavily travelled by active travel users and bus routes - due to receive funding from Active Travel England. 384351, 381707 - more clarification needed, but would suggest that a low-grade inspection would mean a greater level of risk (1 mention).
- How is Flag Lane Woods (aka Primrose Dell) – categorised – seems to have been ignored? (1 mention).
- We rely on the use of the Carnival field in Wilmslow - we understand that Carnival Field Wilmslow is referred to as B Outdoor Sport with high amenity, but it is not listed under that category in the strategy document. We are unclear what the intention is with regards to this space - main requirement for the field is mowing to ensure the grass is at a reasonable length (1 mention).

General negative comment/ current maintenance issue	15
<p>There seems a strong financial element to this plan – not just about biodiversity. Instead of more & more cutbacks, focus on modern efficiency gains, logistics, worker attitudes & abilities. Cheshire peaks and plains do not work up to standard. Better when it was all 'In House'.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verges in Bulkeley are not well maintained and many verges are never cut (1 mention). • There is poor performance monitoring as demonstrated by the Knutsford Moorside play area falling into disrepair (1 mention). • Need to see some work done on Wood Park Alsager (1 mention). 	
Concern over safety	8
<p>If left to overgrow there is great potential for accidents, as visual aspect of road will not be able to be seen. There is a risk of increased anti-social behaviour and a reduced feeling of personal safety by reducing maintenance regimes. The sites you want to cease maintaining are mainly the bungalow closes where elderly people live - if they start to look unkempt, they will become a target for anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing maintenance of paths e.g., Christ Church Macclesfield, and Hospital Street Crewe has great potential for accidents (1 mention). • The hedges, particularly outside Elworth Hall School, definitely needs maintaining as it becomes impassable during the course of the year and dangerous for elderly people/ young mums with pushchairs (1 mention). • Broomfield Close Chelford - hard surfaces require adequate weed control and removal of leaves to maintain safety of the walking surfaces (1 mention). 	
General support/ more wildlife areas needed	6
<p>Agree that charges should be implemented if maintenance continues, however it would be good to see where this money is put back into the community.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the proposal to cease maintenance and to rewild the non-owned council land around Sandbach Elworth Ward to help the wildlife and increase biodiversity, but also to save council money to support more important service provision (3 mentions). • Some areas should be left to overgrow for wildlife like the gully/ cut through on Kipling Way to Hungerford Rd Crewe - it would not bother me to see it overgrown as long as the path is usable (1 mention). • Two areas listed as non-CE owned in Lacey Green appear to be a triangle between Bridgewater Rd and the railway line - this could be managed for biodiversity if done correctly. The other area appears to be the tree-clad area on the hill to the north side of the Bollin River in the Carrs Park. This again should be ok under a proper biodiversity plan (1 mention). 	

Other	12
Other comments include negative comment about the wording of the questions. Difficulty of navigating the site detail as part of the consultation, or other issues such as parking and bins.	

Section 9 – Email/ letter responses

933 email/ letter responses were received during the consultation period (inc. approximately 700 petition letters concerning the Sandbach Elworth Estate, 131 petition signatures regarding Meriton Park, Handforth and a further 102 letters/ emails.

The responses received are summarised in Table 8. Some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore total mentions won't add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment. Responses containing detailed images/ site schedule changes have been sent directly to the decision makers for a thorough review this includes all CE elected member responses, Parish/ Town Council responses and organisation/ business responses.

Table 8. Summary of the emails/ letters received as part of the consultation	
Overall theme and Summary of comments received	Count
Disagree with withdrawal of maintenance to sites not registered in the Councils ownership	715
<p>The majority of the sites not recorded in Cheshire East Council ownership have been maintained by Cheshire East Council (or its predecessor councils) for many years. The council should therefore seek the registration of such areas by statutory declaration and in accordance with adverse possession laws.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oppose withdrawal of maintenance for the Sandbach Elworth Estate, area should be treated equally to others – all residents pay council tax. Will make selling houses more difficult, these areas have been maintained for over 50 years on assumed adoption. These larger green spaces are at the very heart of the estate, and give the estate it's character, and are well used by residents. Adoption and reclassification of areas needed – the council has a duty of care to these areas. Areas will look unkempt if not maintained appropriately - concerned about litter, dog mess and anti-social behaviour. Anomalies with the data have been identified - a detailed list of observations as part of the response has been sent to decision makers for a thorough review. Areas mentioned Grange Way/ Lawton Way Estate, Bollin Close, plots of land surrounding Elworth Hall primary school, Elworth Park, Elworth war memorial. (714 mentions, inc. the 700 petition letter responses that were received). 	
Maintenance rating/ level should be reclassified/ missing area	174
<p>Don't regard any on the list as rural all are within urban housing estates. The policy should distinguish as far as grass cutting is concerned between low amenity space in rural and urban areas. At present it suggests they get the same no of cuts whereas I think urban areas warrant more maintenance.</p> <p>Specific area/ site mentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not agree with the proposal to change the status of Meriton Park to rural open space - the park is not in a rural position and is used by residents for many activities. It can be considered to be a formal park under Typology A as it is a high-profile Park - this is evidenced by its inclusion in your Municipal Parks Strategy 2030 Policy. Meriton Road Park also has a football pitch which is currently well used - potentially placing the Park within 	

Typology B. Reducing the cutting of grass to twice a year would lead to areas becoming dangerous for children, adults and dogs with items being hidden within the length of the grass. It will look unkempt and unsightly and not in keeping with its intended purpose as a park. What would happen to the section 106 grant funding? (137 mentions, inc. the 131 petition signatures that were received).

- Apart from 2 locations, Oakencloough Centre and Picton Drive Park, everything else in Handforth ward is classified as LOW priority, why is this? E.g., Stanley Hall Park, Meriton Rd Park, The Parsonage 'Playground' and Henbury Rd Park (which is not even on the schedule) should be classified as Formal Parks and not rural open spaces. They all have amenities which classify them as parks and should be regularly maintained (2 mentions).
- Lyme Green Playing Fields has been re-named Lyme Green Community Park, this should be adjusted. Also, it is graded as low which is not right – a lot of work has been put into this park – it has a multi-generational playground and communal area, with many accessible features. This refurbishment of the park and its present use should justify it being graded as 'High' maintenance. The volunteers would, in the future, like to pursue a green flag award for this park. Football to the community park will increase considerably due to new housing developments (2 mentions).
- Site schedules relating to Macclesfield West and Ivy - The grass needs to be cut more than 1-2 times a year, there is a lot of green space on the Weston Estate owned by Peaks & Plains which fall under their responsibility - it would be desirable if there was consistency in the maintenance. Schedule 1 - Land & Buildings off Ivy Rd - should be renamed on Somerton Rd - should be urban open space - medium. Land at Chester Rd- this is a roundabout nr the Regency hospital so should fall under highways definitely not rural - should be medium/ high. Land at Warwick Rd this is the old school playing field and should therefore be classified as community green infrastructure - amenity level medium. The other sites that are on the list which are classified as rural open space should be urban open space and the amenity level should be medium. Schedule 2 - All sites should be classified as urban open space and the amenity level should be medium (2 mentions).
- Classification of Rural Open Spaces in Sandbach - classification is incorrect. The lands identified are next to highways as part of housing estates. They are not open green spaces in the middle of the countryside, as exemplified within the consultation policy. There are inconsistencies with how areas are being maintained - a detailed list of observations as part of the response has been sent to decision makers for a thorough review / 14 plots of land have been identified in Elworth as being owned by Cheshire East Council. 12 of these spaces have been classified as rural open spaces – low maintenance. The classification is incorrect. The lands identified are next to highways as part of housing estates. They are not open green spaces in the middle of the countryside. They should be re-classified as urban open spaces – medium maintenance. (2 mentions).
- In relation to Rainow, the proposals exclude Milestone Island, outside the Robin Hood on Stocks Lane, or the triangle at Mount Pleasant. These need to be added, and green maintenance continued/ these should be added as medium amenity (2 mentions). Typology "E" for Rural open spaces - all grass verges applied through the parish of Rainow (1 mention).
- Multiple references to sites in Crewe land is categorised as Rural Open Spaces - this cannot be correct and when balanced against the definition within the report documentation none of the sites match the CEC definition. The proposals are not acceptable, indicating the intent to reduce maintenance to such a low level will impact on access to leisure and amenity space as well as not maintaining public assets to a sustainable standard. If the proposals are allowed to go ahead by Cheshire East Council the impact will be generational and disproportionately and adversely

affect those facing the greatest levels of deprivation, often without access to private amenity space such as gardens, within our community - a detailed list of observations as part of the response has been sent to decision makers for a thorough, (1 mention).

- There are no “rural open spaces” in Crewe East. There are “urban open spaces” This is a basic error in the whole area of Crewe definition. To classify them as “low” with only 1-2 cuts per year is not suitable for areas within an urban setting. There is also a place in Poynton, 371970 355325 listed as being in Crewe (1 mention).
- Disagree with Land off Frank Webb Avenue to Brooklands Grove Crewe being categorised as Low. It is used as a communal park - propose this area should be Medium rather than low. Frank Webb Avenue is a real hot spot for litter. Land off Frank Webb Avenue by Westbourne Avenue, since Frank Webb Open space at medium amenity is directly adjacent to this and this is such a small area, it could be cut at the same time - should be Medium rather than low amenity. Crewe North, Land off Windsor Avenue, this space is directly adjacent to residential properties. It is a through route part of Leighton Greenway, and is well used by pedestrians, and dog walkers. In the summer months this open space is used weekly by Wishing Well Project a Crewe based charity that puts on sports and social events and activities for children - should be Medium rather than low amenity (1 mention).
- Why are South and West Park proposed to drop to Medium Amenity level, when all other Cheshire east sites are High (1 mention).
- Question the current designation of Cop Meadow, as this appears to understate the significance of this piece of green infrastructure, not just to Sutton Lane Ends, but in surrounding villages and rural communities (1 mention). Typology “C” - Cop Meadow, Lyme Green and Langley playing fields. Amenity Level “M” - Cop Meadow, Lyme Green and Langley playing fields. Typology “E” - Rural open spaces - all grass verges through Sutton parish (1 mention).
- Oppose Cranage Needham Drive estate being at the lowest level – this fails to consider the areas used by residents and their families for health and leisure. If the grass is not cut around the play area it will become unusable. The green spaces around Needham Drive and Armistead way are used by young children to play on as is the green in front of Lawrence close - the area behind Lawrence close does not need to be so rigorously maintained and could easily be left to encourage wildlife (1 mention).
- The land at: Land Manor Crescent 375994, 378833 Is under your proposal classed as a Rural Open Space with Low proposed Amenity Level. However, it is a clearly bound area which is used for purposes of play and for the walking and play of dogs in an enclosed area. The area is used frequently by the Scout Group Sections, as well as others so should be Community Green Infrastructure Zone 2 with Medium Amenity, requiring a maintenance of minimum 8 cuts per year (1 mention).
- Wilmslow East – how is land at Bank Square, Wilmslow and Alderley Road/ Manchester Road rural? What about 384855, 381016 (near the leisure centre), the land between the leisure centre carpark and station road, and the small square patch of land in the leisure centre carpark? (1 mention).
- Congleton – a number of areas within Congleton need reclassification - a detailed list as part of this response has been sent to the decision maker for a thorough review (1 mention).

- Bromley Farm neighbourhood in Congleton - grass cutting areas should be typology D Urban Open Spaces, including locations which Cheshire East Council claim they are not the registered landowner. They should have an amenity level of medium with a minimum of 8 grass cuts a year with some receiving 10 cuts. The only exception is Bromley Farm Park and Play Area (Bromley Farm Community Centre) which should have a topography of C Community Green Infrastructure with a medium amenity level with a minimum of 10 cuts a year due to its level of use. The areas of Bromley Farm include green spaces located on South Bank Grove, Edinburgh Place, Windsor Place, Festival Hill, Newton Place, Woolston Avenue, Highcroft Avenue, Edinburgh Road, Hillary Avenue, Bromley Road, Burns Road, Coronation Road and Fern Crescent (1 mention).
- Wrong categorisation in the draft proposals for the two plots of land making up Middlewich Churchyard. The Churchyard is a beautiful open space, close to the town centre, used as a thoroughfare, recreation space and also used by community groups. Suggest the following: Grass Cutting – Medium, Hedge – Medium, Borders – High, Hard Surfacing – Medium, present arrangement for trees, (1 mention).
- Concerned about St Mary's cemetery as it is in the centre of town and if only maintained twice per year will have massive effects on everyone who comes into the town centre? This isn't a cemetery in the usual sense its more of a community space (1 mention).
- The Ilford Way Recreation Ground is a football and games field. I do not believe this should be categorised as Rural Open Space (1 mention).
- Alsager is an urban not rural open space. Urban open spaces demand more maintenance. Areas omitted in Green Spaces Maintenance Policy Schedules 1 and 2 e.g., in Alsager - Holly Lane/ Poplar Green, Joseph Crescent Green, verge on Audley Road on edge of Alsager bordering golf club car park which is a "Gateway to Alsager" (1 mention).
- The majority of green spaces in Knutsford should be regarded as Urban Open Spaces of medium amenity. The medium amenity grass cutting frequency should be a minimum of 14 cuts per year to ensure spaces are usable for a variety of recreation purposes, a detailed list of observations as part of the response has been sent to decision makers for a thorough review, (1 mention).
- The Barncroft Knutsford - the council should instigate a three-zone regime for this space - Wildflower Meadow, cut once per year (and remove cuttings), football pitch should be cut 16 times per year (as current) to maintain a usable space, area in between - lower amenity area, could be cut less often. Pleased to see the Moor is being maintained to a high standard (1 mention).
- Crosstown community orchard, Knutsford - an error that the orchard has been listed as a low amenity rural green space. It is a high amenity community asset and should be in the "Community Green Infrastructure" category. Must adopt a site-specific approach to reflect the different uses spaces have for the community. The value of this green space and the significant time invested in it by the local community warrants a better standard of maintenance than is proposed. Require the grass cutting every two weeks between March and October.
- Would like to request the following amendments: Gravel Lane Recreation Ground, The Carrs Park, Little Lindow Playground - should be classified as D – Urban Open Spaces, Medium Amenity as they are all recreational parks within the town centre and are bordered by housing (1 mention).
- Many sites are categorised as: Rural Open Space, Low Amenity. On the Typology descriptions, for grass cutting it has two low amenity definitions: Meadow grass, wildflower and no-mow areas and Steep embankments that are difficult to access. This doesn't seem to match most of the sites. For example: "Land between 35 North Downs & 11 Longridge" which is a three-acre field, would these areas be cut 1-2 times per year? The public

open space on Longridge (376735, 379354) isn't listed. What is proposed there? There are two areas (Branden Drive and the Longridge space) where there are goal posts – what is the proposed there as they are not listed under “B – Outdoor Sport” (1 mention).

- Concerned about the proposed low maintenance for the three formal play areas: Rode Heath Play Area (Heath Ave); Scholar Green Play Area and Playing Field; and Mount Pleasant Play Area (Church Street). These are well used formal green areas that need to be maintained to at least medium maintenance standards (1 mention).
- How can any area within Macclesfield Central be classified as 'Rural Open Space'? For example, the stretch on Churchill Way, one of the busiest roads and pavements in the centre of town (1 mention).
- Village green in Lower Withington (Dicklow Cob, ref: 381353, 369691) proposed for this to be allocated to the 'G – Inspection Only' typology – is this correct? (1 mention).
- Land Off Millbeck Close and Westmere - should be raised to medium with a minimum of 6 visits annually. 372653, 352398 Weston Cemetery - to have a no maintenance policy is considered unacceptable. Chorlton Roundabout, Wychwood Village & Park Roundabout - should be raised to medium amenity with 6 visits a year (1 mention).
- Many sites in Bollington need to be re-classified, the overall reduction of service levels inherent in these proposals will negatively impact the appearance of our green spaces, would like to emphasise the particular need to maintain current service levels at the Green Flag Recreation Ground and the War memorial Gardens which are very important community spaces and widely used/visited - a detailed list of observations as part of the response has been sent to decision makers for a thorough review (1 mention).
- Object to the proposals for changing how the Green Spaces within Holmes Chapel Parish would be maintained, a high number of the open spaces have been incorrectly classified, how will you deal with grass cuttings? Often the sites do not lend themselves to uniform maintenance across the site - part may be suitable as meadow but the remainder will require higher levels of maintenance - a detailed list of observations as part of the response has been sent to decision makers for a thorough (1 mention).
- Wybunbury Recreation Ground should be Typology C Community Green infrastructure with at least 8 visits per year. Land of Church way Wybunbury and Chorlton and Whychwood Village / Park roundabouts – should be Typology E Rural Open Spaces Medium (not low) with 6 grass cuts per annum. Land West of Cobbs Lane should be Typology E Rural Open Spaces Medium not Inspection only. Reparative maintenance needed on the x 2 Wybunbury closed cemeteries before a decision is made on the long term typology, (1 mention).
- There are a number of Cheshire East owned plots within the Dean Row and Lacey Green wards. These plots are within the estates known locally as Summerfields, The Villas and Colshaw. All of these plots are classed as 'rural' and are shown to have a minimal level of maintenance. This is clearly an error - these plots should be identified as 'urban'. The sports pitch at Lacey Green has been omitted from the consultation. The pitch is near to the Lacey Green Pavilion and is in the ownership of Cheshire East Council and needs to be included on the maintenance schedule.
- Site Schedule 1 - Land end of Gladstone Drive should read Land end of Gladstone Street, Land end of Beechcroft Avenue next to school Crewe should read Land end of Beechcroft Avenue next to Berkeley Academy Primary. Site schedule 2 - Land between Kensington drive and potters close - this land has always been maintained by ANSA and the footpath provides a direct route into the village for the houses to the south. It was

not mentioned in either site schedule included with the consultation. Can we please establish the status and maintenance of this land moving forward? (1 mention).

- Poynton Civic Hall Car Park - note that this is a D type space and as such its planted areas will be maintained on an "ad-hoc basis as required". If visits are not regular, how will you know that maintenance is required? Poynton Library although in the same complex as the Civic Hall, this is to be maintained on a medium amenity level compared with the low amenity level of the Civic Hall. This does not seem to make much sense. Glastonbury Drive Playing field - should be a Type C space with medium amenity - it does not fit at all into Type D. Land between 11 and 15 Tewkesbury Close - defined as a low amenity rural open space. If it is to be downgraded from 6 or less to 2 or less visits per year perhaps it could be managed as a wildflower area? (1 mention).

Opposed to reduced maintenance/ need to maintain areas

36

Opposed to the reduction in green space maintenance, these areas need looking after properly and by machines that collect the cuttings. Would lead to an unsightly place for all and an increase in dog mess and litter being left. Public perception of lack of care may result in increased littering and vandalism. There is no specific mention of Green Space user's safety needing to be a priority in establishing the level of maintenance required in an area. Concerned that wet leaves on park paths can be hazardous, particularly for the elderly and disabled. Road Signs must be always kept clear of foliage. We are seeing a vast reduction in green space around the Cheshire area as it is and to reduce the maintenance would mean the public, dog walkers etc would have less opportunity to go about their daily routine.

Already struggling to get the grass cut as it is - tree maintenance has been so neglected over the past ten years there are now trees that are an accident waiting to happen. Letting grass overgrow will mean it is harder to clear the spaces when they are scheduled for maintenance - it is a false economy e.g., machine damage, extra time to complete the job. Members of the public inc. children will not be able to use the spaces. Mental health would also be impacted. What does our Council tax pay for – are you reducing this too? Public parks are important to health and wellbeing, support the preparation of bespoke management the aspiration to maintain and achieve Green Flag status for them. There is a substantial difference between 'no maintenance' and 'rewilding'. Rewilding, if done properly needs active management.

Specific area/ site mentions:

- Oppose changing cutting grass maintenance in Crewe St Barnabas area from 6 to 1-2 times a year - will encourage rats, dog mess will be left and make the area look unkempt. Litter build up would be difficult to clear when the grass is long/ will encourage more fly tipping. Children use the local grass areas for sports and recreation. A charity from the hopes and beams in broad street used the field in Windsor Ave last year to help entertain children during school holidays. These are residential areas with trees, hedgerows etc has the grass grows in height the chance of a fire risk grows substantially (Areas mentioned: Brookland Grove to Frank Webb Ave. field opposite Abington close, land off Frank Webb Avenue and Westbourne Avenue, Leighton Brook Park to Frank Webb Avenue, Green space opposite Windsor Avenue, Newcastle Street by Broom Street) (10 mentions).
- I don't think you should be reducing grass cutting in public areas in Crewe it's one of the worst maintained areas in Cheshire/ concerned that the new proposals will have a detrimental effect to the parks in Crewe - longer grass will hide rubbish and dog mess leaving it only suitable to walk on the paths. (2 mentions).

- Oppose reduction of grass cutting in Crewe North. Residents use these areas for dog walking and generally getting out into the fresh air. By reducing the amounts of cuts will lead to accumulative waste costing more in the long run (1 mention).
- To stop cutting grass in Places like Great Warford would be a disgrace, the place would become awful and overgrown (1 mention).
- Opposed to the proposal to only cut open spaces twice a year. Already weeds are not sprayed between pavement/ road borders. Knutsford floral displays are very poor in comparison to Wilmslow and Alderley Edge (1 mention).
- Mere Road Weston field is not all meadow and is partially used as a football field for local children. Only cutting the grass twice a year would prevent children playing in the area and stop picnics taking place (1 mention).
- Windsor Ave - large green area gets used by local youngsters who enjoy having a game of football, also people of all ages walk across the paths. If your plans go ahead this will stop - it's going to be a dumping ground for all kinds of rubbish (1 mention).
- Opposed to the proposal to not maintain the green areas on Ashworth Park in Knutsford – area will look unsightly and run down (1 mention).
- High Legh is a rural area, which receives little attention in terms of maintenance and services. Oppose any of these areas being removed from the Councils maintenance scale (1 mention).
- Booth Bed Lane Playing Field has been identified as a CEC owned site and graded as Typology E with Medium Amenity. Concerned this will have a negative impact on use of the field. Concerned that the overall reduction in maintenance will lead to a decrease in use by residents at a time when investment in improving the play provision for the benefit of the community is being made (1 mention).
- Grass verges along Glastonbury Drive near its junction with B5092 London Road North – please consider maintaining this pavement regularly. There are a lot of pavements in Poynton, and probably in other parts of Cheshire East, where homeowners have allowed their hedges to grow over the pavements, quite dramatically in places. This is another issue that you should tackle (1 mention).
- Object to the proposed Green Space Maintenance changes at Cranage Park, location 375175, 368355, Land Access beside 55 Needham Drive - Location 375215, 367926, Needham Drive Estate Playing Field (non-CEC owned area to west) Location 375181 367830, pockets of land within the Needham Drive estate, not included in the land called Cranage Park, (1 mention).
- Object to the proposals for changing how the Green Spaces within Middlewich would be maintained. Green spaces within the town, if not properly maintained will leave the town looking unsightly and unattractive to current and future residents and investors. most of the areas on the list in need of regular cutting through the growing season. Often the sites do not lend themselves to uniform maintenance across the site - part may be suitable as meadow but the remainder will require higher levels of maintenance - Market Field off Civic Way is a prime example. Cheshire East have downgraded all parks and play areas within Middlewich save one, Fountain Fields (which is a green Flag Park, and we have seen the decline in that maintenance), ALL parks and play areas should maintained the same as Fountain Fields, and not downgraded to medium or low (1 mention).
- Oppose the proposal to reduce maintenance of green spaces in Poynton. The reduction in grass cutting will lead to unmanaged green spaces which will create an air of neglect which can be detrimental to the visual amenity of a Town maintenance - a detailed list of observations as part of the response has been sent to decision makers for a thorough review (1 mention).

Query over ownership/ who will maintain/ transfer of ownership**19**

If CEC don't own the land listed, who does and what are their responsibilities regarding maintenance? If town/ parish councils are to fund green space maintenance in lieu of CEC doing so, the timing of this consultation and decision in Feb 2024 cause difficulties with the annual draft budgeting process.

Specific area/ site mentions:

- There are 13 sites within Knutsford that are not recorded in the ownership of CEC, each is listed as cat 2 - Know the ownership of four: Wallwood is owned by KTC, Crosstown War Memorial is owned by the PCC of St Cross Church, St Cross Church is presumably owned by St Cross too and CEC manage it under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (presuming it was formally closed by an Order in Council). Southfields Play Area is leased from Great Places. What further investigations are needed with these sites and the likelihood of CEC deciding not to maintain them moving forward? What further investigation is needed with the other nine sites? (1 mention).
- If CEC don't own the Christ Church car park land, is it leased? It should be noted that the Christ Church grounds are used by the NWAA, as one of the very few open spaces near the centre of town, does this impact the maintenance eligibility? (1 mention).
- Mike Heywood green (top of Moorfields, junction onto Wistaston Rd) is not listed here. It is owned by CEC but has been maintained by the parish council for decades due to a long-standing agreement from the days of C&N Borough Council. Can either a provision be made to retain the right to have council maintenance moving forward or that the green itself is asset transferred or loaned for 25 years to the parish themselves, (1 mention)
- Site Schedule 2 – The land adjacent to the peacock pub sits between a footpath/ cycle path and a busy through road (Crewe Rd). Approaching the roundabout from Nantwich this land sits on the left and is in the line of sight towards the A51. If the council knows whom owns the land, have they been contacted to discuss this - what would happen if the land should be left maintained to the degree that it obscures visibility of cars, pedestrians and cyclists? (1 mention).
- Bunbury village playing Field is mowed every couple of weeks by ANSA - my concern here is that the PC rent this out to a separate Playing fields committee and as such should probably, if not owned by CEC organise the cutting themselves. The Graveyard is nothing to do with the PC - and we cannot support it with resources or financially - as the graveyard is still open, does this mean CEC maintain or the Church? The Green at Bowes Gate Road does seem to belong to CEC (1 mention).
- There are a number of plots which are described as being outside the ownership of Cheshire East Council and, accordingly, will not be maintained. find it difficult to believe that some of these sites are not owned by Cheshire East Council and would enquire as to what extent records have been checked in order to establish ownership – e.g. the green verges alongside the main thoroughfare through the centre of Wilmslow, including the site on Alderley Road close to the junction with Station Road and The Old Rectory. These green verges were established at the same time as the current roads were built. There are a number of plots within Summerfields and The Villas which are said to be outside the ownership of Cheshire East Council. These green spaces, which are generally small, are a critical element of the overall appearance of the estates, were key to the original planning permissions and have certainly never been owned by the residents of these estates (1 mention).
- Reaseheath Roundabout – It would be difficult for anyone to safely take on this responsibility and I would suggest that it is adopted by CEC. I have spoken to the Parish Council about the playing area and village hall green spaces. They have confirmed that the Parish Council maintain the

playing field. I would like to know if the Council do cut the Village Hall green space as the feedback was that they have their own arrangements, but that could be CEC (1 mention).

- Dean Row Community Centre is currently being considered for an asset transfer which I presume means the new owners would be responsible for maintenance? (1 mention).
- The Parish Council (Alderley Edge) would like to agree a licence between themselves and Cheshire East regarding the maintenance of the flower beds in the roundabout at the bottom of Macclesfield Road. In addition, we would welcome a further discussion regarding the other green spaces in the village (1 mention).

In support of re-wilding/ lower maintenance schedule/ mixed approach in areas

7

Could spaces be actively seeded to become wildflower spaces to be more pleasing on the eye and better for biodiversity? The general approach to grass cutting seems to be to mow less often - this should allow wildflowers to grow and set seed - it requires that the grass is collected to take nutrients out of the system. Enhance our area by sowing wildflower mixes. The grass cuttings can be moved to discreet designated sites to decompose or sent to be composted. Informal hedges could be laid instead of being flailed. Hedges can provide shelter and safe corridors for movement for animals. Incorporate perennial plants to make it more sustainable. Do we need ornamental flower beds (or so many) in the parks/ traffic islands that require tending through the year and planting/replanting at least a couple of times a year.

Support the aspiration to increase biodiversity but question whether a reduction in mowing regimes alone will achieve this. How will improvements to biodiversity be monitored and what will be the response to them? Will monitoring inform wildflower planting? Areas of reduced mowing need to be carefully considered and designed. Without the correct ongoing management, areas developed for biodiversity will eventually become rank and unusable and we will not achieve a variety of habitats required to ensure healthy ecosystems. Annual bedding is highly valued by many. Trees form the framework and structure of many parks and gardens - concerned that skilled arboriculture as well as the selection and planting of new/replacement trees does not appear to be covered in the plan.

Specific area/ site mentions:

- Reducing grass cutting in areas of Crewe is a great idea. Often when the ground is wet the mowers make a lot of mess by turning up the grass and mud. It's a great opportunity to think about wildlife and plant wildflowers in these areas so that it's not just long grass, (1 mention).
- The borders and verges, which are planted with spring bulbs, should not be cut until after they have flowered. In Sutton we have some areas that have been planted with spring bulbs and English bluebells by our residents and verges and banks where wild bluebells growing. These areas should not be cut until the end of May (the banks on Judy Lane, Sutton and Coalpit Lane in Langley. The track leading through from Cop Meadow to the Children's Play area & playing field has also been planted with snowdrops and bluebells by volunteers) (1 mention).

General negative comment/ current maintenance issue

6

Terms need to be clear and unambiguous otherwise they become subjective and liable to misuse/abuse - The proposals have a large number of expressions such as "where appropriate" and "subject to prioritisation." The document should avoid such subjective statements and instead state minimum

standards, which can always be exceeded, and to which the local authority can be held to account. Not a "maximum" figure with no stated minimum. E.g., Urban Green Spaces - Boarders/planted areas "Ad hoc as required - maximum of 8 visits annually". Rural Open Space - Hedges "Ad hoc as required subject to prioritisation of resource availability."

Consultation should have asked about proposed maintenance standards/ asked for general comments/ had difficulty accessing the data from the spreadsheets as they were locked. Seems a complicated policy proposal, that many parishes and residents may find difficult to interpret.

If the council did a proper job e.g., edging and collecting grass cutting I might be in favour/ It has become apparent over the last 5-10 years how standards have slipped - traffic junctions, signage and pavements need to be kept clear and visible. Once a year hedgerow flailing isn't enough - these have been abandoned over recent years in some cases, leaf blowing collection has reduced. Re-wilding is an excuse for not doing what is needed.

Specific area/ site mentions:

- A523 from Higher Barn to Cranford, is never litter-picked and verges are rarely cut, (1 mention).
- The Moor, Knutsford - Inspection of wooded area which is accessible by people (especially dog walkers) for exposed broken bottles/waste recommended. Issues in Congleton Road Playing field – waste and asbestos fibres. King Georges Playing Field, Windmill Street, Macclesfield Inspections should look out for any signs of waste at the surface and the potential for bottle digging. Land east of Sandbach Road North Church Lawton issues with waste and unstable trees, (1 mention).
- Has a recent tree safety survey been carried out at Dane Hill Close Play Area in Disley? This is owned by Cheshire East Council, and concerns have been raised about tree safety here. Is there a plan in place to carry out tree safety surveys on all Cheshire East owned land where applicable, (1 mention).

Other/ overall considerations

5

When the Council makes its decisions on maintenance it should take a whole area approach regarding the workload for ANSA teams. For example, if an area has a grass cutting workload of 1.25 days it would maybe be more cost effective to work 2 days in the area. Under the introduction it should include 'Adopted Highway that is maintained by Highways'. The highways policy for urban grass cutting is 10 cuts per year.

Policy needs to be consistent with other policy documents and inconsistencies/ errors rectified in liaison with ANSA – errors predominately relate to open spaces within urban areas being identified as Typology E – Rural Open Space. The current machines used do not have capacity to cut long grass at the frequencies proposed for low amenity areas. If the policy and associated appendices remain unchanged ANSA will be required to purchase new vehicles in order to meet the required maintenance levels - a detailed list of observations as part of the response has been sent to decision makers for a thorough review.

Appendix 1 – Respondent Demographics

A number of demographic questions were asked at the end of the survey to ensure there was a wide range of views from across different characteristics. All of the questions were optional and therefore won't add up to the total number of responses received.

Table 9: Number of survey respondents by gender

Category	Count	Percent
Female	323	46%
Male	345	50%
Prefer not to say	27	4%
Other Gender identity	< 5	<1%
Grand Total	696	100%

Table 10: Number of survey respondents by age group

Category	Count	Percent
16-34	42	6%
35-44	77	11%
45-54	100	14%
55-64	159	23%
65-74	186	26%
75-84	87	12%
85 and over	< 5	< 1%
Prefer not to say	50	7%
Grand Total	705	100%

Table 11: Number of survey respondents by ethnic origin

Category	Count	Percent
White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / Irish	601	86%
Any other White background	19	3%
Asian / Asian British	< 5	<1%
Black African / Caribbean / Black British	<5	<1%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	5	1%
Other ethnic groups	<5	<1%
Prefer not to say	67	10%
Grand Total	695	100%

Table 12: Number of survey respondents by religious belief

Category	Count	Percent
Christian	362	53%
Other religion	13	2%
No religion	191	28%
Prefer not to say	113	17%
Grand Total	679	100%

Table 13: Number of survey respondents by limited activity due to health problem / disability

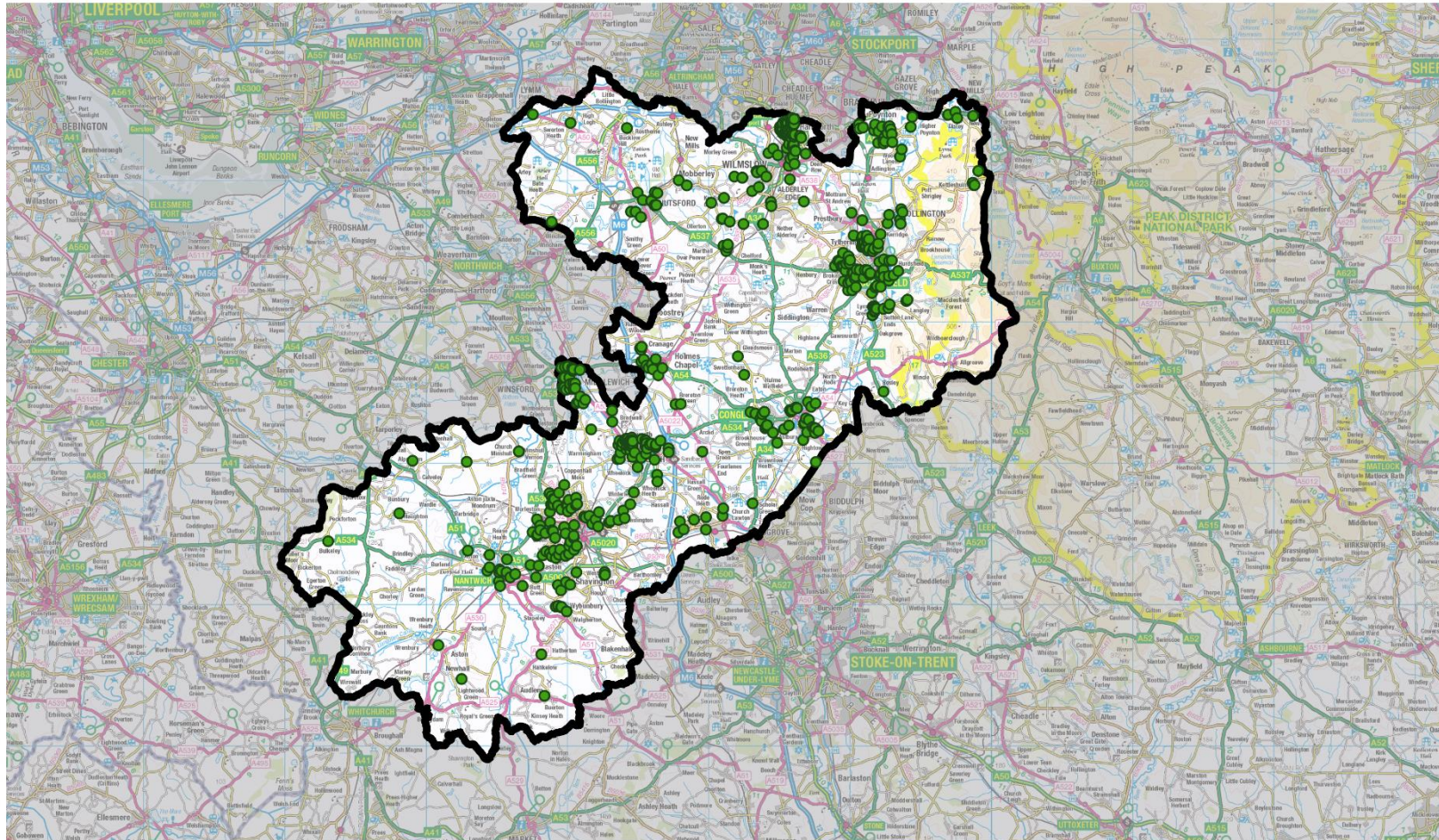
Category	Count	Percent
Yes, a lot	47	7%
Yes, a little	120	17%
Not at all	463	66%
Prefer not to say	68	10%
Grand Total	698	100%

Table 14: Number of survey respondents by who indicated they were pregnant, on maternity leave or returning from maternity

Category	Count	Percent
Yes	11	2%
No	253	42%
Not applicable	282	47%
Prefer not to say	54	9%
Grand Total	600	100%

Appendix 2 – Map of Respondent Postcodes

The following map plots respondent postcodes that were provided and that are within Cheshire East (623 postcodes).



Appendix 3 – List of groups, organisations, clubs, businesses or Parish/Town Councils

Table 15: List of groups, organisations, clubs, businesses or Parish/Town Councils that provided the name of who they were representing (survey and email representations)

2nd Handforth Guides	Friends of Meriton Road Park	Richmond Rovers
Alderley & District Probus Club	Friends of the Moor	Sandbach Park Bowling Club
Alderley Edge Parish Council	Friends of Queens Park	Sandbach Town Council
Alderley Edge Station Volunteer Group	Goodwin Gardens Ltd	Sandbach U3A
Alsager Town Council	Goostrey Parish Council	South Cheshire Youth Football League
ANSA Environmental Services	Great Warford Parish Council	St Mary's Nantwich
Bollington Bowling Club	Great Warford Residents Group	St Michael and All Angels Church, Middlewich
Bollington Town Council	High Legh Parish Council	Sutton Parish Council
Brereton Community Interest Group	Higher Poynton Football Club	Transition Bollington
Brereton Parish Council	Holmes Chapel Parish Council	Trees for Congleton
British Trust for Ornithology Representative: Cheshire	Kettleshulme and Lyme Handley Parish Council	Tytherington Lane Residents Association
Bromley Farm Community Development Trust	Knutsford Scout Group	Victoria Park Bowling
Bulkeley and Ridley Parish Council	Knutsford Town Council	We Love Cheshire Volunteers
Bunbury Parish Council	LFC	Weston and Crewe Parish Council
CE Environmental Protection	Lower Withington Parish Council	Weston Village Playing Field
CE Highways & Infrastructure	Lyme Green Community Park	Wheelock Albion FC
Cheshire Gardens Trust	Marriott House Veterans Bowling Club	Willaston Parish Council
Congleton Park Bowling Club	Mary Dendy FC	Wilmslow Community Show
Congleton Town Council	Middlewich Town Council	Wilmslow Cricket Club
Cop Meadow Group	Nantwich in Bloom	Wilmslow Round Table
Cranage Parish Council	Nantwich Town Council	Wilmslow Town Council
Crewe Town Council	Odd Rode Parish Council	Wilmslow U3A Bowling Group
Crosstown Community Orchard	Ollerton with Marthall Parish Council	Wybunbury Parish Council
Disley Parish Council	Over Alderley Parish Council	
Friends of Bollington Recreation Ground	Poynton Town Council	
Friends of Elworth Park	Rainow Parish Council	

