

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	Environment Committee		
<b>MEETING DATE AND TIME</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 7.00 pm	<b>LOCATION</b>	Town Hall
<b>REPORT FROM</b>	Streetscape Development Manager – Ruth Burgess		
<b>AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Item 12 Green Spaces Consultation – Next Steps</b>		
<b>Background</b>	<p>On the 1st February 2024 the Cheshire East Council Environment and Communities Committee met to discuss and finalise the recommendation set by Tom Shuttleworth, Interim Director Environment and Neighbourhoods the <i>Green Spaces Maintenance Review</i>. The purpose of the agenda item for members was : To update Members on the progress of the implementation of the Cheshire East Green Spaces Maintenance Review following the approval of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-27 (MTFS) at Full Council on 22 February 2023. To update the Committee as to how the Green Spaces Maintenance Review proposal has been amended to reflect that feedback and results of a public consultation on the developed detail, undertaken during October and November 2023. And then to finally seeks Committee approval to implement the policy from 1st April 2024 whilst having considered and taken due regard to the output of the consultation process.</p>		
<b>Update</b>	<p>The final decisions RESOLVED (by majority) of CEC Members : <i>That the Environment and Communities Committee:</i> <i>Approve the final details of the proposed Green Spaces Maintenance Policy and associated schedules contained at Appendices A, B and C and their implementation as of 1st April 2024, To Delegate authority to the Interim Director Environment and Neighbourhoods to take all necessary steps to:</i></p> <p><i>a. Implement the Green Spaces Maintenance Policy;</i> <i>b. Make all consequent changes to service provision and;</i> <i>c. Make technical amendments to the implementation of the Green Spaces Maintenance Policy, specifically for those sites contained within the site schedule at Appendix B, as required and to update the Committee on any significant changes at a future meeting</i></p> <p>As per the new CEC Policy The Open Spaces Have been split down into different groups /typologies :</p> <p>A: Formal Parks &amp; Gardens ( Example Congleton Park ) B: Outdoor Sport (Back Lane Playing Fields, Congleton) C: Community Green Infrastructure (none in Congleton ) D: Urban Open Space (none in Congleton ) E: Rural Open Space (Example Townsend Rd / Thames Close OS) F: Cemeteries, Church Yards &amp; Memorials (Example St Peter Church and Closed Sections) G: Inspection only (This typology includes sites where there is no proposed planned maintenance but inspections from a safety perspective will be undertaken, most often related to the presence of mature trees- Verge On Townsend Rd ) H: No inspection or maintenance</p> <p>A set of three zones has also been developed to group standards under specific descriptions and to further refine how individual sites will be maintained. They are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1: High amenity (high maintenance)</li><li>• 2: General/medium amenity (standard maintenance)</li><li>• 3: Low amenity (low maintenance)</li></ul>		

## Next Steps

Following the final decisions from CEC we are now seeking to confirm how CTC would like to proceed with the grass maintenance in the Congleton Area, we have the following options

### Option A

Agree to follow the new CEC Policy and change the current schedule of grass-cutting to the new maintenance Policy

**Schedule No. 1** (Appendix B) denotes sites which are owned and maintained by the Council and how these have been classified under the Policy.

[Appendix B Site Schedule.pdf \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](#)

**Schedule No. 2** (Appendix C) denotes sites which are not registered in the Council's ownership but are currently maintained by the Council and what the proposals are for future maintenance activity, post 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

[Appendix C - Site Schedule 2.pdf \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](#)

### Examples:

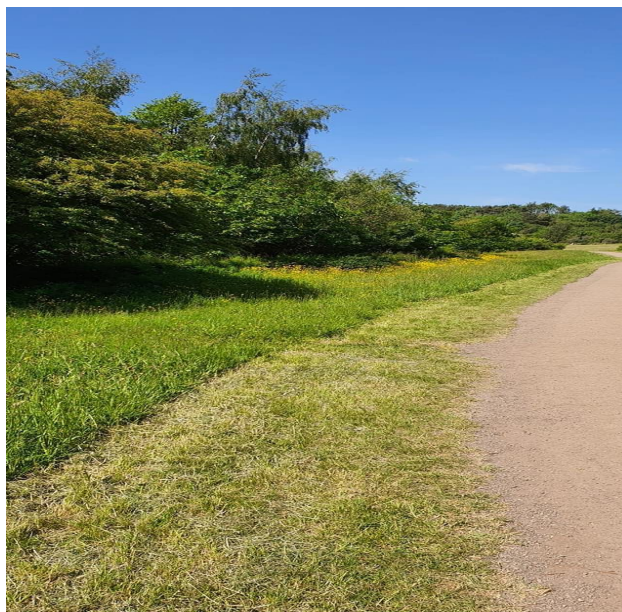
- Low = 2 visits annually
- Medium = 4-6 visits annually

Land corner of Canal Road & Derwent Drive Cong	Rural Open Space	Low
Land off Solly Crescent in front of the bungalows	Rural Open Space	Low
Land piece rear of 34 Newcastle Road Congleton	Rural Open Space	Low
Congleton Leisure Centre (Hankinsons Field)	B - Outdoor Sport	Medium
Land at Newcastle Rd Congleton 5026	Rural Open Space	Medium
Land between 122 Chestnut Drive & 71 Longdown	Rural Open Space	Medium
Land between 29 & 31 Derwent Drive & canal Co	Rural Open Space	Medium
Land between end Worsley Drive & end Telford C	Rural Open Space	Medium
Land by 7 Maple Close & 97 Chestnut Drive to pa	Rural Open Space	Medium
Land by 81 Longdown Road & 6 Maple Close to p	Rural Open Space	Medium
Land east of Thirlmere Court Congleton	Rural Open Space	Medium
Land near 71 Longdown Road bounded by paths	B - Outdoor Sport	Medium
Land north west of Newcastle Road Congleton	Rural Open Space	Medium
Land off & west of Bankyfields Crescent Congleton	Rural Open Space	Medium
Land off Lower Heath Avenue & Tidnock Avenue	C Community Green Infrastructure	Medium
Quinta Park and Play Area	Rural Open Space	Medium
St Johns Road Playing Fields	C Community Green Infrastructure	Medium

**Option B**

Carry on with the Low Mow Town Congleton Town Council Initiative, where we have a mix of grass left for nature and for residents to enjoy as well as short grass to allow for ball games etc.

We have now leave 58649sqm of grass for wildlife which is only cut at the end of season which equates to 27.9% of the grass we cut.



<p><b>Financial Considerations</b></p>	<p>There are potential financial savings on staff hours with option A (reduction in grass cutting) however in this instance, we would advocate utilising any streetscape capacity for either more environmental projects or public realm maintenance which is currently being neglected by CEC due to their financial situation.</p> <p>Option B is “business as usual” so no financial implications</p>
<p><b>Environmental Considerations</b></p>	<p>With option A there will be an increase in litter and potential dog fouling which needs to be taken into account alongside the environmental benefits, furthermore extremely good for biodiversity as no mowing at all in some areas. We will ensure that we are following the latest environmental guidelines to see where we can improve and help sustain the environment for both the public and local wildlife.</p> <p>Option B – very good for biodiversity as limited mowing in most areas, with more access through grassy pathways to help deal with litter and dog fouling.</p>
<p><b>Equality Considerations</b></p>	<p>Leaving entire areas uncut as in Option A will make them inaccessible for many people, including the elderly, those using mobility aids, children who wish to play or people wishing to walk, especially with pushchairs.</p> <p>Option B will create more spaces to play and more accessible throughways for people, whilst maintaining a high level of biodiversity.</p> <p>Reducing mowing is not popular with everyone, but is essential in order to address the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Sequestering carbon from the air and increasing biodiversity will have well-being benefits for all our residents.</p>
<p><b>Decision Requested</b></p>	<p>To receive the report and to agree next steps of following the CEC New Green Space Policy (A) or to carry on with our Low Mow Town Initiative (B)</p>

