

Grassland Management Strategy & Plan

AIM & OBJECTIVES

This strategy and plan aims to deliver a sustainable grassland management policy that empowers Council services to increase local biodiversity and societal mental health and wellbeing through the recovery of natural habitats, whilst also reducing the need for extensive resource use and resources for different sites.

1. To increase biodiversity and nature recovery networks in the Borough, more particularly more invertebrates, wildflowers and small fauna.
2. To increase efficiency in Council resource use by enabling resources for priority jobs and works in the Borough which uses less resources on grasslands that don't need to be managed.
3. To contribute towards the Councils Net Zero goals by 2030 and 2050 by reducing the amount of fuel the Council uses and sequestering and storing more carbon with increased grasslands.
4. To educate residents, businesses and visitors about the change in grassland management and why biodiversity is important for the Borough.

STRATEGY PHASES

Phase 1: <u>Pocket Ward Grasslands</u>	Phase 2: <u>Review & Consult</u>	Phase 3: <u>Parks & Grassland Space</u>
<p>Phase 1 will incorporate new grassland management regimes at different pocket sites in different wards. These are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradwell – Arnold Grove • Clayton – Kingsbridge medical centre • Brampton Vale (Donkey Field) • Bradwell - Chatterley Close (already meadow location) • Crackley – Crackley Field • Chesterton – Douglas Road • Westlands – Guernsey Drive • Keele – Keele Cemetery (already meadow location) • Westlands – Leys Drive • Chesterton – Loomer Road 	<p>After Phase 1 (which may be conducted over 2 years), the Council will conduct a review and consultation to identify and report on the social and environmental impacts of pockets ward grasslands programme. If proved to benefit biodiversity and improve resident</p>	<p>Once Phase 2 is completed then the Council may move to Phase 3. The Council will begin to roll out the new management regimes throughout the parks listed below and other grassland spaces such as road verges and low amenity spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bathpool Park

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clayton – Norwich Place – Stafford Ave • Poolfields – Rotterdam Field • Chesterton – Sheldon Grove • Kidsgrove – Coalpit Hill • Cross Heath – The Wammy • Thistleberry – Thistleberry Parkway • Westbury – Westbury Park • Clayton – Wye Road 	views on wildlife in public spaces then Phase 3 in parks and Grassland Spaces may begin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lyme Valley parkway • Brampton Museum & Park • Wolstanton Marsh & Park
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P1. PUBLIC OPEN SPACES & INFORMAL SPORT AMENITY

Grassland Management Strategy & Plan

ANNUAL CUTTING TIMELINE

Mid-March to Mid-October

Cutting Period	Not Cutting Period
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Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		

MAINTENANCE TABLE

Target Cut Height (Height grass to be cut)	50mm
Cutting Frequency	Every four weeks throughout the growing season
Cutting Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hand mower - Ride-on mower - Flail mower - Strimmer - Tractor
Arising Management	Dropped locally in-situ

MANAGEMENT METHOD & DESIGN OBJECTIVE

Public open spaces and Informal sport areas (not spaces used by formal sports clubs) will be cut every four weeks to a target of 50mm during the growing seasons where appropriate. This document has been created to ensure grassland areas are well managed for use for sport and by the community for recreation. Mowing equipment will be:

- A ride on mower or flail mower to cut the larger areas.
- Hand mower or strimmer to cut localised smaller or undulating areas.

ADDITIONAL REGIMES

Additional regimes for public open spaces and informal sports amenities include:

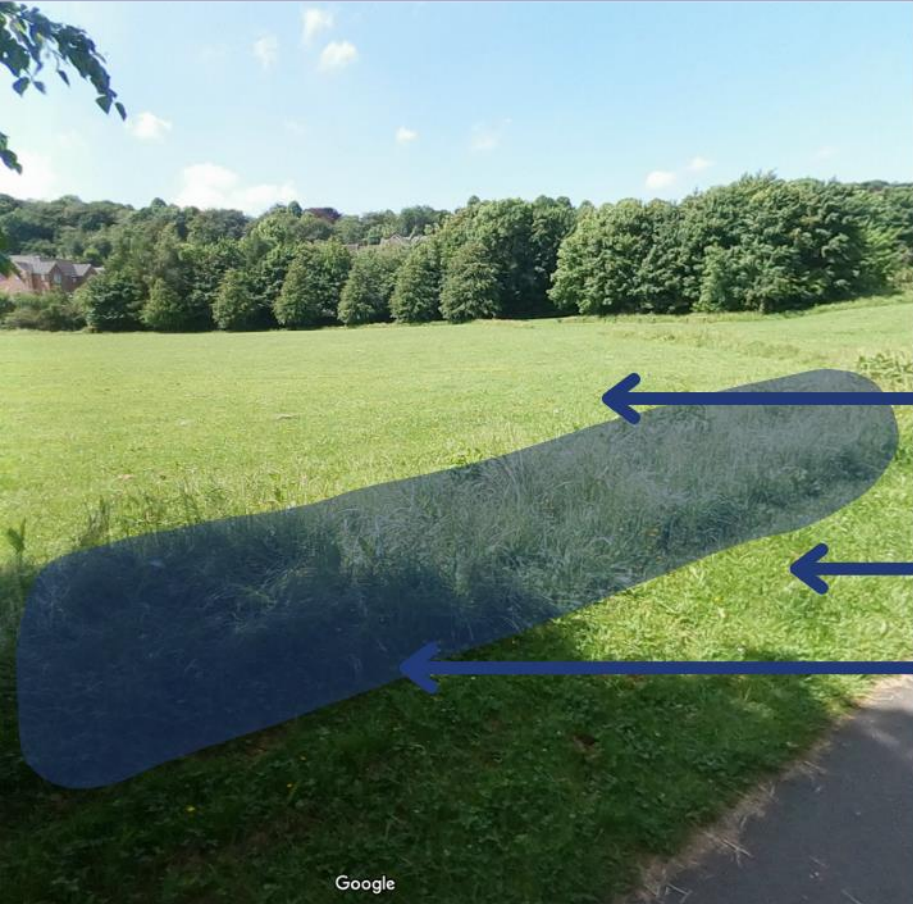
- Creating long meadows surrounding public open spaces and informal sport amenities such as on road or path verges, canopied areas and where not used.
- Mowing desire lines through long meadow verges that surround the open spaces and informal pitches.
- Mowing viewing areas where informal pitches are located for members of the public attending sports games.

IMPLICATIONS (POSITIVE & NEGATIVE)


- Encouraging wildlife corridors and biodiversity to develop on Borough land.
- Creating safer areas for the public to use with verges that act as a barrier in between paths and roads.
- Leaving long meadows that border amenities increase job efficiency for the Council where some mowing regimes can take days when barriers like trees and bollards are in the way.
- Activities/jobs litter picking long meadow areas will be more difficult however the time saved by mowing will make up for this.
- The degradation of natural resources like trees from equipment use and over maintenance will reduce with the creation of more meadows and the decrease in maintenance.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY DESIGN

Public Open Space & Informal Sports Amenity Example



Cut every four weeks or when appropriate to a target height of 50mm



Mid March to Mid October

Highlighted areas indicate the potential for long meadows.

From mid-March to mid-October public and informal sports spaces will be cut to a target height of 50mm every four weeks. Cuttings will be chopped and left on fresh cut areas.

Areas near informal sports areas and path/road verges will be left for viewing and sightliness.

Areas surrounding these amenities such as verges and banks may be left uncut to promote long meadows. They will have desire lines, cut edges and viewing areas as seen by the highlighted areas.

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P2. DESIGNATED PATHWAYS & ADDITIONAL AMENITIES

Grassland Management Strategy & Plan

ANNUAL CUTTING TIMELINE

Mid-March to Mid-October

Cutting Period	Not Cutting Period
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Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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MAINTENANCE TABLE

Target Cut Height (Height grass to be cut)	50mm
Cutting Frequency	Every four weeks throughout the growing season
Cutting Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hand mower - Ride-on mower - Flail mower - Strimmer - Tractor
Arising Management	Dropped locally in-situ

MANAGEMENT METHOD & DESIGN OBJECTIVE

Designated pathways like desire lines and additional amenities like viewing areas will be cut every four weeks to a target of 50mm during the growing seasons where appropriate. This document has been created to ensure grassland areas are well managed for use for accessibility to public open spaces and for use as a natural corridor and biodiversity promotion. Designated paths will be 2m wide to ensure adequate space is allocated for public use, unless the path is popular which may influence a wider cut.

- A ride on mower or flail mower to cut the larger areas.
- Hand mower or strimmer to cut localised smaller or undulating areas.

ADDITIONAL REGIMES

Additional regimes for designated pathways and additional amenities include:

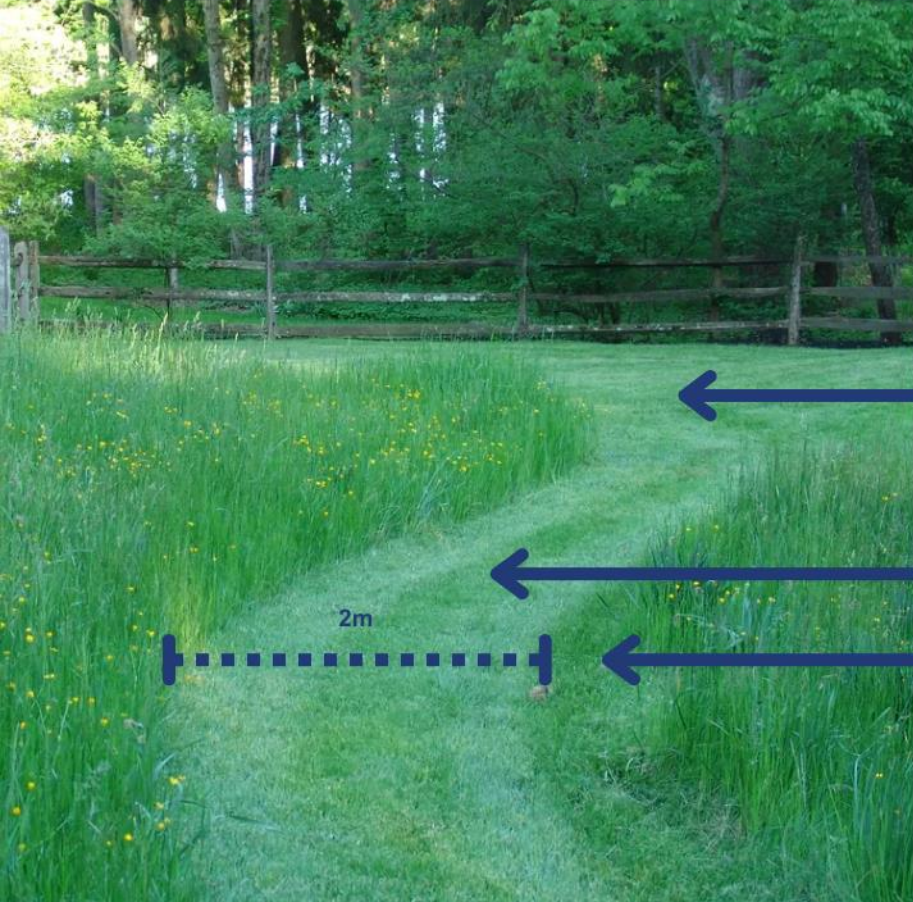
- The creation of desire lines where roads meet near a long meadow that leads into a public open space.
- Mowing desire lines through long meadow verges that surround open spaces and informal pitches.
- Mowing viewing areas where informal pitches are located for members of the public attending sports games.
- Mowing around additional amenities such as seating areas for public use.

IMPLICATIONS (POSITIVE & NEGATIVE)


- Encouraging wildlife corridors and biodiversity to develop on Borough land.
- Creating safer areas for the public to use with long meadows that act as a barrier in between paths and roads.
- Leaving long meadows that border amenities increase job efficiency for the Council where some mowing regimes can take days when barriers like trees and bollards are in the way.
- Activities/jobs litter picking long meadow areas will be more difficult however the time saved by mowing will make up for this.
- The degradation of natural resources like trees from equipment use and over maintenance will reduce with the creation of more meadows and the decrease in maintenance.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY DESIGN

Designated Pathways & Additional Amenities Example



Cut every four weeks or when appropriate to a target height of 50mm



Mid March to Mid October

Highlighted areas indicate the potential for long meadows.

From mid-March to mid-October designated paths and additional amenities will be cut to a target height of 50mm every four weeks.

Cuttings will be chopped and left on fresh cut areas.

Desire lines and paths cut through long meadows will be cut 2m wide or variable for popular paths. Additional Amenities will be cut based on the attached public open space or sports pitch.

P3. MEADOW EDGES & VERGES

Grassland Management Strategy & Plan

ANNUAL CUTTING TIMELINE

Mid-March to Mid-October

Cutting Period	Not Cutting Period
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Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	

MAINTENANCE TABLE

Target Cut Height (Height grass to be cut)	50mm
Cutting Frequency	Every four weeks throughout the growing season or when appropriate according to Staffordshire County Council's verge management policy.
Cutting Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hand mower- Ride-on mower- Flail mower- Strimmer- Tractor
Arising Management	Dropped locally in-situ

MANAGEMENT METHOD & DESIGN OBJECTIVE

Meadow edges and verges will be cut 1m wide every four weeks to a target of 50mm during the growing seasons where appropriate. The Council must ensure that all verges under County jurisdiction must be cut by County Specifications. This document has been created to ensure grassland areas are well managed for sightlines and safety.

- A ride on mower or flail mower to cut the larger areas.
- Hand mower or strimmer to cut localised smaller or undulating areas.

ADDITIONAL REGIMES

Additional regimes for meadow edges and verges include:

- The creation of meadow edges wherever a meadow is located on Borough land.
- When appropriate to create long strips of meadows between roads and paths.

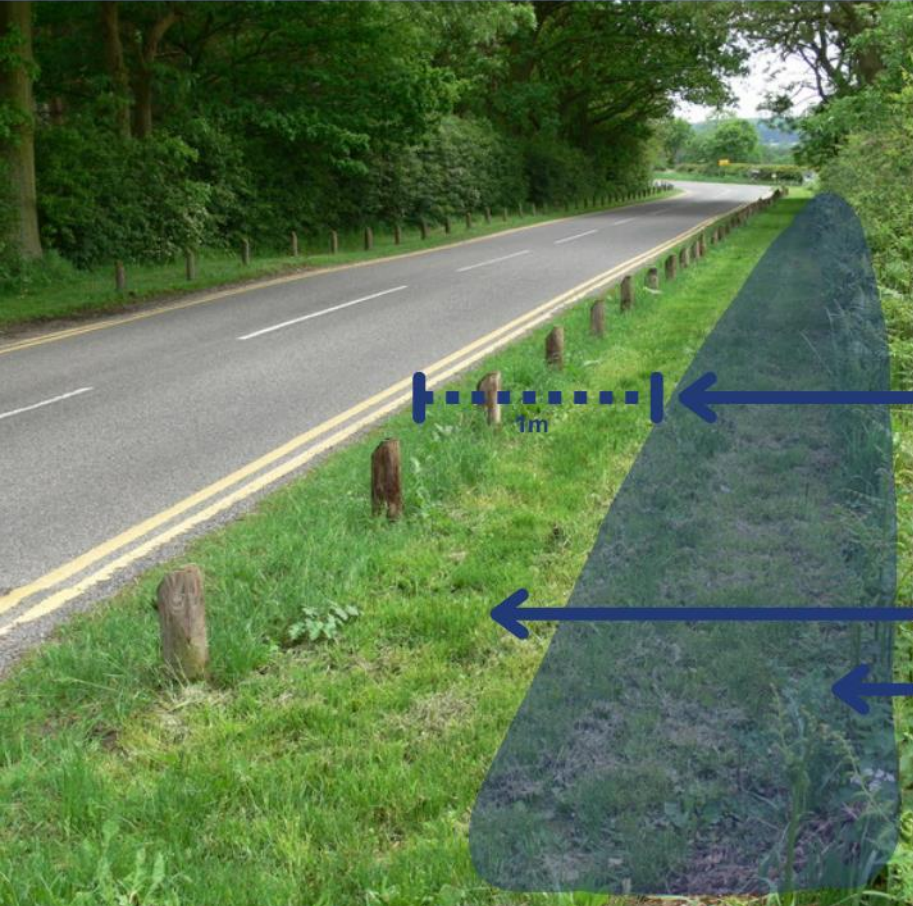
IMPLICATIONS (POSITIVE & NEGATIVE)

- Encouraging wildlife corridors and biodiversity to develop on Borough land.
- Creating safer areas for the public to use with long meadows that act as a barrier in between paths and roads and cut meadow edges for visibility.
- Leaving long meadows that border amenities increase job efficiency for the Council where some mowing regimes can take days when barriers like trees and bollards are in the way.
- Activities/jobs litter picking long meadow areas will be more difficult however the time saved by mowing will make up for this.


- The degradation of natural resources like trees from equipment use and over maintenance will reduce with the creation of more meadows and the decrease in maintenance.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY DESIGN

Meadow Edges & Verges Example



Cut every four weeks or when appropriate to a target height of 50mm



Mid March to Mid October

Highlighted areas indicate the potential for long meadows.

From mid-March to mid-October meadow edges and verges will be cut to a target height of 50mm every four weeks and be at least 1m wide or according to the County's specifications.

Cuttings will be chopped and left on fresh cut areas.

Meadow edges and verges located around meadows, near paths or roads will have a long meadow attached to it, if there is enough space and it is over 3m in width.

P4. AMENITY PRESTIGE

Grassland Management Strategy & Plan

ANNUAL CUTTING TIMELINE

Mid-March to Mid-October

Cutting Period	Not Cutting Period
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Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	

MAINTENANCE TABLE

Target Cut Height (Height grass to be cut)	50mm
Cutting Frequency	Every two weeks throughout the growing season
Cutting Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hand mower- Ride-on mower- Strimmer- Tractor
Arising Management	Collected after each cut

MANAGEMENT METHOD & DESIGN OBJECTIVE

Amenity prestige areas will be cut every two weeks to a target of 50mm during the growing seasons where appropriate. This document has been created to ensure grassland areas in prestigious areas are well managed for the value of the area. This includes the mowing of roundabouts in the Borough according to the civic pride enhanced standard and when appropriate introducing perennial plant species to reduce resource use and increase biodiversity. Additionally this includes the mowing of formal sports pitches in Council parks, used by sports clubs.

- A ride on mower or flail mower to cut the larger areas.
- Hand mower or strimmer to cut localised smaller or undulating areas.

ADDITIONAL REGIMES

Additional regimes for amenity prestige include:

- The creation of meadows where possible in prestigious areas, such as below tree canopied areas.
- Council managed sports pitches that are in ownership of the Council but used by sports club will be managed according to Policy 4 Amenity Prestige.
- Council owned sports pitches which are self-managed by sports clubs will aim to adhere to the standards set out in Policy 4 Amenity Prestige.

IMPLICATIONS (POSITIVE & NEGATIVE)

- By mowing every 2 weeks in prestigious areas, this adds no benefit to biodiversity or society other than the perceived cleanliness of the site.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY DESIGN

Amenity Prestige Example



Cut every two weeks or when appropriate to a target height of 50mm



Mid March to Mid October

Highlighted areas indicate the potential for long meadows.

Amenity prestige areas like the Brampton Museum and Park will have well cut lawns due to the prestige of the site. This means no long meadows will be created unless justified like under tree canopy.

From mid-March to mid-October amenity prestige areas will be cut to a target height of 50mm every two weeks and be at least 1m wide or according to the County's standards. Cuttings will be collected after each cut.

P5. LOW ACTIVITY & TREE CANOPY AMENITY

Grassland Management Strategy & Plan

ANNUAL CUTTING TIMELINE

Mid-March to Mid-October

Cutting Period	Not Cutting Period
----------------	--------------------

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		

MAINTENANCE TABLE

Target Cut Height (Height grass to be cut)	50mm
Cutting Frequency	Cut the grass length to 50mm whenever the height of the meadow reaches up to 200mm. Cuttings must be left for nutrient generation and seed bank creation. 0 to 1 cuts a year are advised.
Cutting Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hand mower - Ride-on mower - Flail mower - Strimmer - Tractor
Arising Management	Dropped locally in-situ

MANAGEMENT METHOD & DESIGN OBJECTIVE

Long meadows will be left to grow until the grow season where it will be cut to a grass length of 50mm whenever the height of the meadow reaches up to 200mm.

- A ride on mower or flail mower to cut the larger areas.
- Hand mower or strimmer to cut localised smaller or undulating areas.

ADDITIONAL REGIMES

Additional regimes for idle low and canopy amenity include:

- The creation of meadow edges wherever a meadow is located on Borough land.
- If there is a meadow/verge between a path and road that is less than 3m wide the entire area will be cut according to this regime.
- The creation of any desire lines that are used by the public with adequate mowing regimes according to the meadow edges and verges and the designated pathways policy.
- In areas that are considered to be wetlands, the Council will not cut due to difficulty and the opportunity for biodiverse habitats. This will then be allowed to develop into scrub areas.


IMPLICATIONS (POSITIVE & NEGATIVE)

- Encouraging wildlife corridors and biodiversity to develop on Borough land.
- Creating safer areas for the public to use with long meadows that act as a barrier in between paths and roads and cut meadow edges for visibility.


- Leaving long meadows increase job efficiency for the Council where some mowing regimes can take days when barriers like trees and bollards are in the way.
- Activities/jobs litter picking long meadow areas will be more difficult however the time saved by mowing will make up for this.
- The degradation of natural resources like trees from equipment use and over maintenance will reduce with the creation of more meadows and the decrease in maintenance.
- Reducing the risk that falling branches have on the public as long meadow areas under canopy will be inaccessible except for designated pathways.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY DESIGN

Low Activity Amenity Example



Cut to a height of 50mm every time it grows up to 200mm (once a year at the beginning of season).



Mid March to Mid October

Highlighted areas indicate the potential for long meadows.

Low activity amenity areas can be identified for the generation of long meadows such as this area in Kidsgrove, Coalpit Hill. This area will be paired with other policies like meadow edges which makes it look clean. Trees have been planted here which pairs well with meadow generation.

From mid-March to mid-October low activity areas will be cut to a target height of 50mm once a year if able to. Cuttings will be left after each cut.

Tree Canopy Amenity Example



Cut to a height of 50mm every time it grows up to 200mm (0-1 a year at the beginning of season).



Mid March to Mid October

Highlighted areas indicate the potential for long meadows.

Canopy areas that aren't used or that may cause safety issues by many can be identified for the generation of long meadows such as this area at Lyme Valley. This area will be paired with other policies like meadow edges/verges which makes it look clean.

From mid-March to mid-October canopy areas will not be cut unless justified. if cut, cuttings will be left after each cut.

P6. WILDFLOWER MEADOWS

Grassland Management Strategy & Plan

MANAGEMENT METHOD & DESIGN OBJECTIVE

Wherever possible the Council will identify areas of long meadows that can be sown to create perennial wildflower sites for the benefit of the environment and people. They will be managed similarly to P5 however will need specialised care to secure the welfare of the wildflowers.

IMPLICATIONS (POSITIVE & NEGATIVE)

- Encouraging wildlife corridors and biodiversity to develop on Borough land.
 - Leaving long meadows with wildflowers increases job efficiency for the Council where some mowing regimes can take days when barriers like trees and bollards are in the way.
 - Activities/jobs litter picking long meadow areas will be more difficult however the time saved by mowing will make up for this.
 - The degradation of natural resources like trees from equipment use and over maintenance will reduce with the creation of more meadows and the decrease in maintenance.
 - Reducing the risk that falling branches have on the public as long meadow areas under canopy will be inaccessible except for designated pathways.
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CONCLUSION

Grassland Management Strategy & Plan

The Council currently has a vast amount of grassland that has the opportunity to benefit the Borough socially and environmentally. Grasslands are incredibly important and will help the Council achieve its goals towards net zero and nature recovery. Through relaxed management on grasslands, the Council can encourage the increase in biodiversity, societal health and wellbeing, sequester carbon, inform residents and use Council resources more efficiently.

A Grassland Management Strategy and Plan will be the beginning towards a new outlook on how the Council manages its land and perceives the natural environment in the Borough. However must be informed by experts within the Council and others such as The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. This Strategy will make the Council a leader in the sector.