



Melton
Borough
Council

Annex 1 | 14 January 2025

Open Spaces Consultation



Planning | Regeneration
Green Infrastructure

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Cover image: Melton Country Park

1. Introduction

This consultation report is an annex to the Melton Open Space Strategy & Action Plan 2024. The public and stakeholder consultation was held from 22 January to 4 March 2024. The consultation was preceded by a presentation to MBC Members on 10 January 2024. The consultation was primarily web-based, with paper-based response forms available upon request through Melton Borough Council Parkside Office reception, the Melton Mowbray Library, the Bottesford Library, and local Parish Council Offices.

The consultation was open to all members of the public. A selection of relevant stakeholders was approached directly by email, including statutory stakeholders. The aim of the consultation was to uncover lived experiences of open space in the Borough of Melton, giving residents, local businesses, community groups and other interested parties the opportunity to share their views and thoughts. The outcomes of the consultation are complementary to the open space audit and the benchmarking of sites and proposed standards developed by the authors. This means points made in the consultation process were used to develop the Melton Open Space Strategy & Action Plan 2024.

Chapter 2 details the methodology used, describing who was consulted, what was consulted on, and how the consultation took place. Chapter 3 shares the results from the consultation, with the number of responses and representation across respondents. The responses to all questions on the consultation are analysed and connected with relevant sections of the Open Space Strategy & Action Plan 2024. Finally, chapter 4 offers a brief summary, with an overview of the key points made and key actions addressed in the strategy and action plan.

A note to the reader: all statements shared in chapter 3 are statements from the consultation respondents. These statements are analysed thematically and used to inform the Open Space Strategy & Action Plan 2024.

2. Consultation Methodology

2.1 Who was consulted

The consultation was open to all members of the public. A selection of relevant stakeholders was approached directly by email, including statutory stakeholders. We received a total of 55 unique responses (table 1).

Type	Number
Digital form	51
Printed form	2
E-mail	2
E-mail addendum to submitted form	1
Total unique responses received	55

Table 1 | Number of responses received

The respondents represent a variety of relationships with the borough, different age groups and genders, and mostly reside in and around the borough (figure 1). Note that a respondent can have multiple relationships with the Melton borough. For example, there are residents who also work in the Melton borough. Also note that three respondents have indicated 'other'. These respondents are a developer, a non-departmental public body, and a water company.

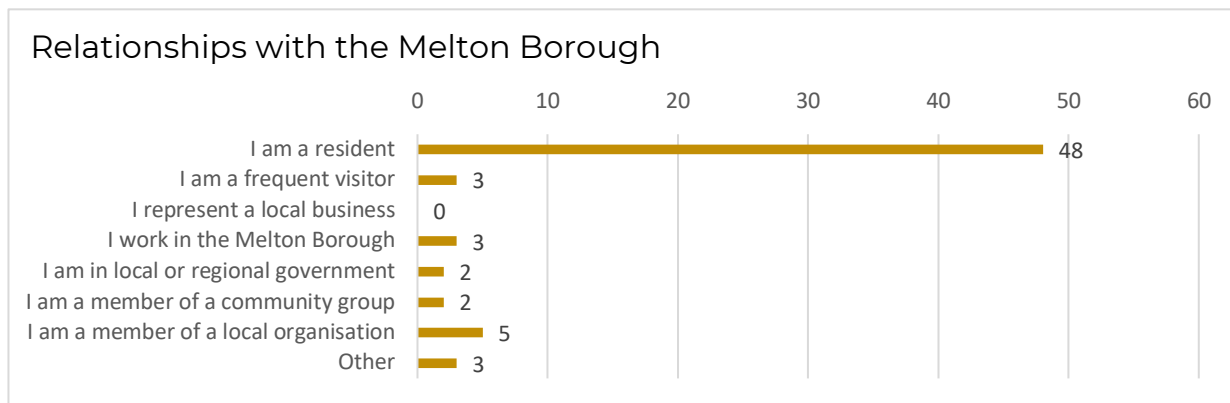


Figure 1 | Respondent's relationships with the Melton Borough $n=55$

The respondents represent all age groups, with most respondents fitting in the age group 35 – 74 (Figure 3). Respondents represent female, male and non-binary residents and stakeholders in and around the borough (Figure 2). Respondents primarily reside in the borough. The total number of responses shows a spread across the borough and neighbouring areas (figure 5¹).

¹ Map created based on [GBMaps.com \(2018\)](https://www.gbm.com)

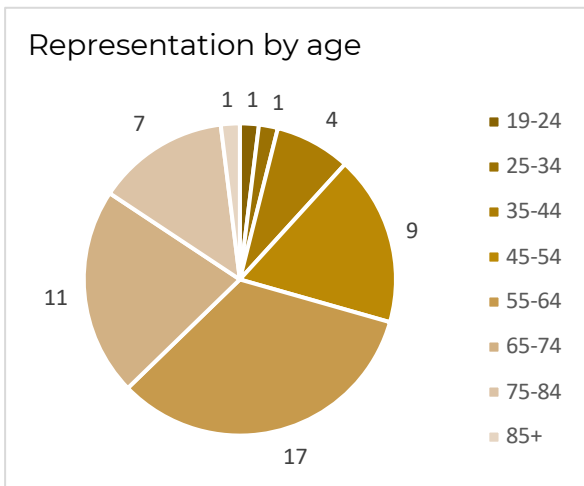


Figure 3| Representation by age *n=51*

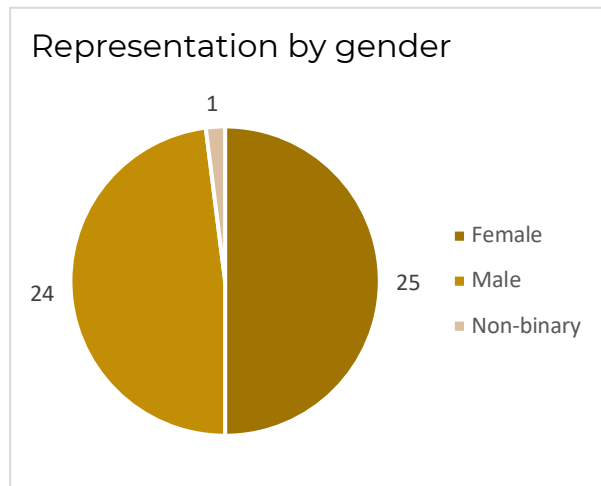


Figure 2| Representation by gender *n=50*

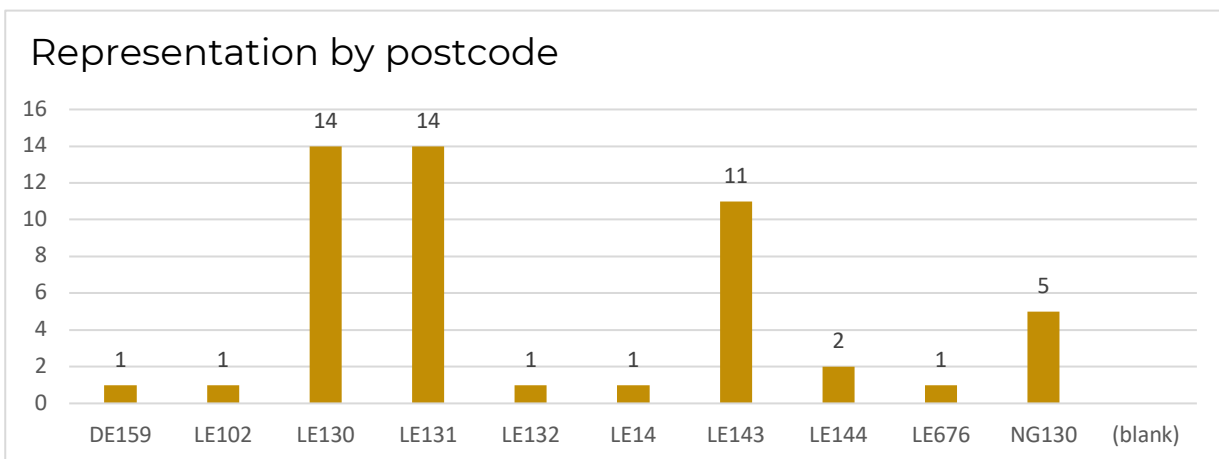


Figure 4 | Representation by postcode *n=51*



Figure 5 | Geographic spread of respondents, with darker areas on the map indicating more respondents from that postcode *n=51*

2.2 What was consulted on

The consultation included a number of themes. For each of the themes, respondents were given the option to reply through closed questions and open questions (Table 2 | Consultation themes and questions).

Theme	Form question	Answer options
Types and uses of open spaces	Which of the specified types of open spaces do you regularly use?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible natural green space • Allotments, including community gardens • Amenity greenspace • Churchyard and cemeteries • Multi-use games areas • Parks and public gardens • Provision for children and young people • Other: ...
	What do you typically do when you visit these open spaces?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog walking • Exercise • Games • Gardening • Meeting friends and family • Play • Spending time in nature • Other: ...
	Would you like to highlight any of the above activities? Why is this activity particularly important to you?	Open answer
	If you could choose, what open space would you like to see more of in the Melton borough?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible natural green space • Allotments, including community gardens • Amenity greenspace • Churchyard and cemeteries • Multi-use games areas • Parks and public gardens • Provision for children and young people • Other: ...
Perception of open spaces	Which open spaces in the Melton borough are most special to you?	Geolocation on map
	What makes these open spaces special?	Open answer
	Which open spaces in the Melton borough are most problematic?	Geolocation on map
	What makes these open spaces problematic?	Open answer
Accessibility of open spaces	How do you usually travel to the open spaces you most use?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk • Bike • Electric bike • Bus • Rail • Car

	Are there any areas in the Melton borough with insufficient publicly accessible open space? What is missing in this particular area?	Open answer
Standards for open spaces	Proposed new quantity standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I prefer to keep the 2015 standard • I prefer the recommended new standard • The recommended new standard should be further enhanced
	Proposed new access standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I prefer to keep the 2015 standard • I prefer the recommended new standard • The recommended new standard should be further enhanced
Responsibility for open spaces	Who should be involved with open space provision, enhancement, maintenance and management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Parish Councils • Borough Council • County Council • Community Organisations • Town Trusts • Contractors, including landscape contractors • Trainees and apprentices • Volunteers • Other parties which should be involved:
	Who do you expect to carry the cost of open space maintenance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Parish Councils • Borough Council • County Council • Developers • Residents (e.g. through resident fees) • Other parties which should be involved: ...
Other	Is there anything else you want to add about open spaces in the Melton borough?	Open answer

Table 2 | Consultation themes and questions

2.3 How did the consultation take place

The consultation was preceded by a presentation to MBC Members on 10 January 2024. The consultation was primarily web-based through Google Forms, with paper-based response forms available upon request through Melton Borough Council Parkside Office reception, the Melton Mowbray Library, the Bottesford Library, and local Parish Council Offices. With both options, respondents could submit their response anonymously. Additionally, respondents were given the option to share supplementary statements through a dedicated email address.

2.3.1 Dissemination

The consultation was widely circulated on both online and offline platforms. For online dissemination, we circulated the link to the Google Form on the following locations:

- Melton Borough Council [Have Your Say](#)
- Melton Borough Council [Planning Policy](#)
- Melton Borough Council monthly news bulletin
- Melton Borough Council social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#)
- Direct email to known stakeholders

To make the form available offline, we took the following steps:

- Print-on-demand form available from Melton Borough Council Parkside Office reception, the Melton Mowbray Library, the Bottesford Library, and local Parish Council Offices
- Posters with QR code to online form available from same locations

2.3.2 Accessibility

To ensure accessibility of the consultation, we took a number of steps. These include the following:

- Adhering to Melton Borough Council communication guidelines
- Adhering to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, including the use of alt text for images and an accessible colour palette
- Anonymous data collection and anonymised data processing
- Provision of clear introduction and instructions
- Provision of Frequently Asked Questions at Melton Borough Council [Planning Policy](#)
- Provision of qualitative open questions with space for elaboration
- Run-time of consultation of 6 weeks, with additional reminders shared across platforms a week before the consultation deadline
- Use of visualisations to explain the concepts of open space types, open space quantity standards, and open space access standards

2.4 How were the responses processed

All data from the consultation was processed anonymously by the consultants. The responses were processed using the following programmes:

- Google Forms for collating responses
- Google Maps for geolocating responses
- Microsoft Excel for processing and visualising of answers
- ChatGPT for thematic analysis of open answers

3. Outcomes

3.1 Types and uses of open spaces

Open spaces can take many forms and include all open spaces of public value. Public value here means open spaces available to or important for the public. Open spaces can be green spaces, but this is not always the case. Green spaces are any vegetated land or water areas that are not necessarily publicly accessible. The Open Spaces Strategy & Action Plan 2024 is about accessible open spaces only. This is why the consultation asked respondents about the following open space types (Figure 6):

- Accessible semi-natural green space: accessible meadows, nature rich areas, urban woodlands, and wetlands
- Allotments: allotment gardens, community gardens, community orchards, and other community growing spaces
- Amenity green space: single species green spaces, usually mown grass
- Churchyards and cemeteries: with or without vegetation
- Multi-use games areas: a games and sport area which can be used for a range of sporting activities
- Parks and public gardens: used for recreation, ranging from small pocket parks to large country parks
- Provision for children and young people: e.g. play areas, playgrounds or play spaces



Figure 6 | Open space types

In the form, respondents were provided with the above open space types, and the option to self-define additional open space types. From the responses, we see that accessible natural green space, parks and public gardens are the types of open spaces most regularly used in the borough (Figure 7).

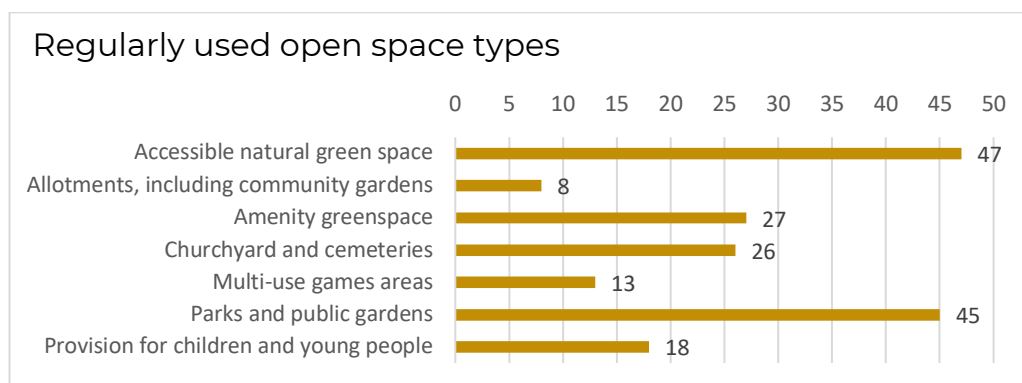


Figure 7 | Regularly used open space types *n*=51

Typically, open spaces in the borough are most used to spend time in nature, to exercise and for social encounters. Besides the given open space uses, the following additional open space uses were identified by respondents (Figure 8):

- Foraging for wild foods
- Quiet time
- Volunteering
- Walking (without a dog)

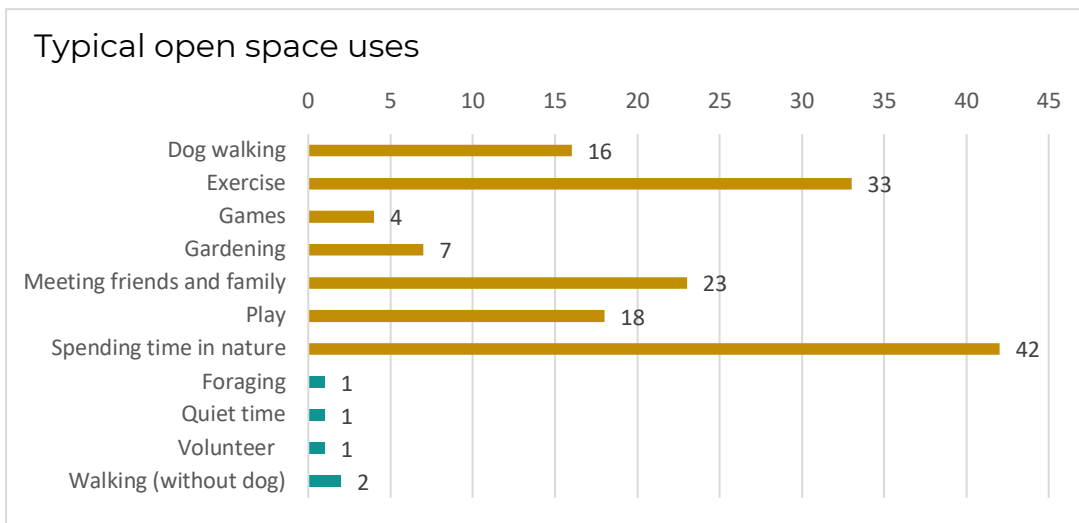


Figure 8 | Typical open space uses, with typical uses and additional open space uses as identified by respondents $n=53$

We asked respondents if they would like to highlight any of the activities mentioned, and why those activities are particularly important to them. Table 3 lists the reasons why open spaces are important:

Reasons why open spaces are important	Times mentioned
Mental health and wellbeing, including stress relief and relaxation, and peace and calmness	17
Physical health and fitness, including exercise and sports	16
Enjoyment of nature and outdoor activities	6
Community/social interaction	4
Appreciation of nature/biodiversity	4
Dog walking	4
Need for open space and nature	3
Accessibility and convenience	2
Supporting children's activities	1
Environmental concerns	1
Supporting local facilities	1
Volunteering	1

Table 3 | Reasons why open spaces are important $n=33$

If given the option, respondents would like to see an increase in accessible natural green space, parks and public gardens. Provisions for amenity green space, sports, games and play follow as a second priority. Besides the given open space types, the following open space types were identified as desired by respondents:

- Improved access to existing open spaces: respondents mention access but do not further specify what this means. Improved access could for example be about more publicly accessible open spaces, or different open space designs to increase physical access
- Sports facilities: multi-use areas, sports hall, indoor sports facilities, and additional table tennis tables
- Play provisions along routes to schools: options for play along the route to encourage children and parents to walk, cycle and scoot to school

One respondent remarked that no additional green spaces are needed in their opinion.

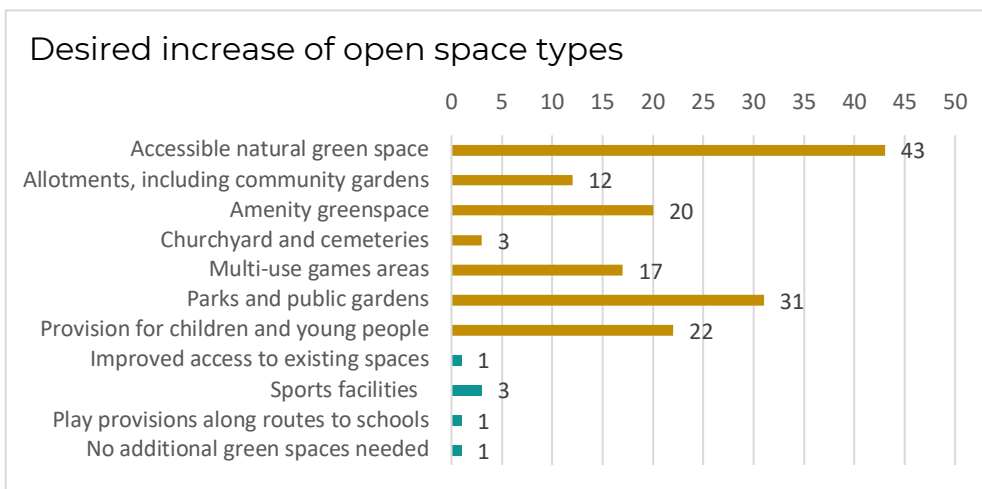
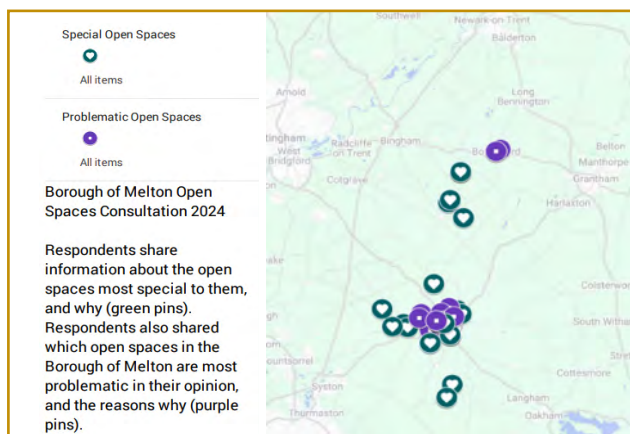


Figure 9 | Desired increase in open space types, with **existing open space types** and **types additionally identified by respondents** n=53

3.2 Perception of open spaces



We asked respondents to share with us the open spaces most special to them, and the open spaces which they deem most problematic. The places mentioned are mapped on [this interactive map on Google Maps](#) (Figure 10). Simply click the point on the map, and the reason why the place is special or problematic pops up. These locations and reasons are listed in Table 4 and Table 5 on the next pages.

Figure 10 | [Interactive map](#) indicating **appreciated** and **problematic** open spaces n=47 + 33

	Location	Times mentioned	Reasons for appreciation
Appreciated locations	Asfordby Hill, including Stanton Roads	2	Fantastic for families and people with limited mobility
	Asfordby Playing Field	1	They give you the chance to meet up with friends and family. To walk, talk, exercise and get fresh air. Good for clearing your head when you have been working hard or had a stressful day
	Belvoir Road	1	Openness and views
	Belvoir Vale Escarpment	3	Natural environment
	Bottesford	1	Natural environment
	Blythe Avenue play area	1	Seeing children playing, enjoyment of seeing nature, walking in the fresh air or sitting sitting with a friend and a drink in the park
	Burrough Hill, including surrounding farmland	2	Landscape, heritage, natural diversity
	Crescent Allotments	1	Beautiful green spaces close to home
	Egerton and adjacent areas	1	Easy access, good walking areas, river, recreation and peace
	Egerton Lodge Gardens	1	Easy access, access to cafes
	Egerton Park	3	Beautiful green spaces close on our doorstep
	Eye Kettleby Lakes	2	A chance to enjoy being outside, getting exercise and being in natural surroundings but in a safe environment (as a lone walker)
	Glendon Park, Asfordby	1	They give you the chance to meet up with friends and family. To walk, talk, exercise and get fresh air. Good for clearing your head when you have been working hard or had a stressful day
	Grantham Canal	2	Landscape, heritage, natural diversity
	Holwell Nature Reserve	1	Quiet, well cared for and mostly natural
	Holwell Works (old iron works site, Asfordby Hill)	2	Value for nature, connection with history and heritage
	Kirby Fields	1	Quiet, well cared for and mostly natural
	Lagg Lane	1	Away from town centre
	Melton Country Park	29	An oasis amongst the traffic and concrete jungle. Easily accessible without driving, with good footpaths for walking. Quiet, well cared for, and mostly natural, with openness and views. The Country Park is a very pleasant and expansive place to wander with family and friends.
	Melton Town Park, including gym area	5	Landscape, heritage, natural diversity, and the table tennis tables
	Play Close in Melton Mowbray	6	Seeing children playing, the trees and the bandstand
	Priory Water in Asfordby	1	Value for nature, connection with history and heritage
	Rhubarb Island and surrounding area	1	Away from town centre
	River Eye riverside walk	2	Important open area without buildings, where it is becoming harder to feel like being in the countryside. Should be supported as a valuable amenity
	Stathern area	1	Spaciousness, wooded area and wildlife
	Sysonby Acres	1	Good places to walk
Wilton Park	1	Quiet, well cared for and mostly natural	

Appreciated landscape features	All green spaces	2	Quiet, well cared for and mostly natural. They are level, open and free
	Canals and woodlands	1	Ability to cycle without traffic, being close to nature
	Fields and access to the River Wreake from Glebe, Crompton and Stanton Roads on Asfordby Hill	1	Very special access to the countryside from the front door, now taken
	Footpaths and bridleways	2	Local, used by all and freely accessible. You are able to walk around without any noise or interruptions

Table 4 | Appreciated locations and landscapes features, including times mentioned *n=47*

Open spaces which cause concern	Times mentioned	Reasons for concern
Amenity green on Thorpe Park, LE13	1	Safety concerns, littering, lack of maintenance
Bottesford	1	Population growth, dog waste left uncollected
Bottesford A52	1	Safety concerns, lack of pedestrian crossing
Bottesford skatepark	1	Expensive to maintain and prone to vandalism
Cemetery opposite St Mary car park	1	Anti-social behaviour
Corner of Chapel Street and Norman Way	1	Misuse as a free car park, causing damage to grass
Countryside South West of Asfordby Hill	3	Development plans impacting biodiversity and community access
Fairmead play area	1	Dog waste left uncollected
Holwell Works	1	Development plans impacting biodiversity and community access
Melton Country Park, including playing fields and Redwood section	12	Anti-social behaviour, dog waste left uncollected and poor dog control by owners, paths sometimes too muddy to walk on. Tarmac near to the big play area is misused as a free car park, causing damage to grass. Danger to nature from overuse
Melton Mowbray Sports Hall and open air MUGA	1	Loss of the last non-school linked sports hall in Melton Mowbray. Open air MUGA holding back hesitant people wanting to return to sport and exercise, feeling observed and on show
Melton Mowbray town centre pedestrian zones	2	No greenery, plants, or trees. The lack of aesthetics makes the town centre less attractive and relaxing
Melton Town Park	3	Youths have no better places to hang out apart from skatepark, anti-social behaviour
Playing fields at school	1	Dog waste left uncollected
Railway line crossing Asfordby Road	1	Safety concerns
Rhubarb Island and surrounding area	1	Safety concerns, littering, lack of maintenance
River Wreake riparian lands	1	Lack of community access

Table 5 | Open space locations which cause concern *n=32*

A number of reasons for open space appreciation and open space concerns is mentioned several times. Using ChatGPT, all responses were thematically analysed and compiled in the overviews below (Figure 12).

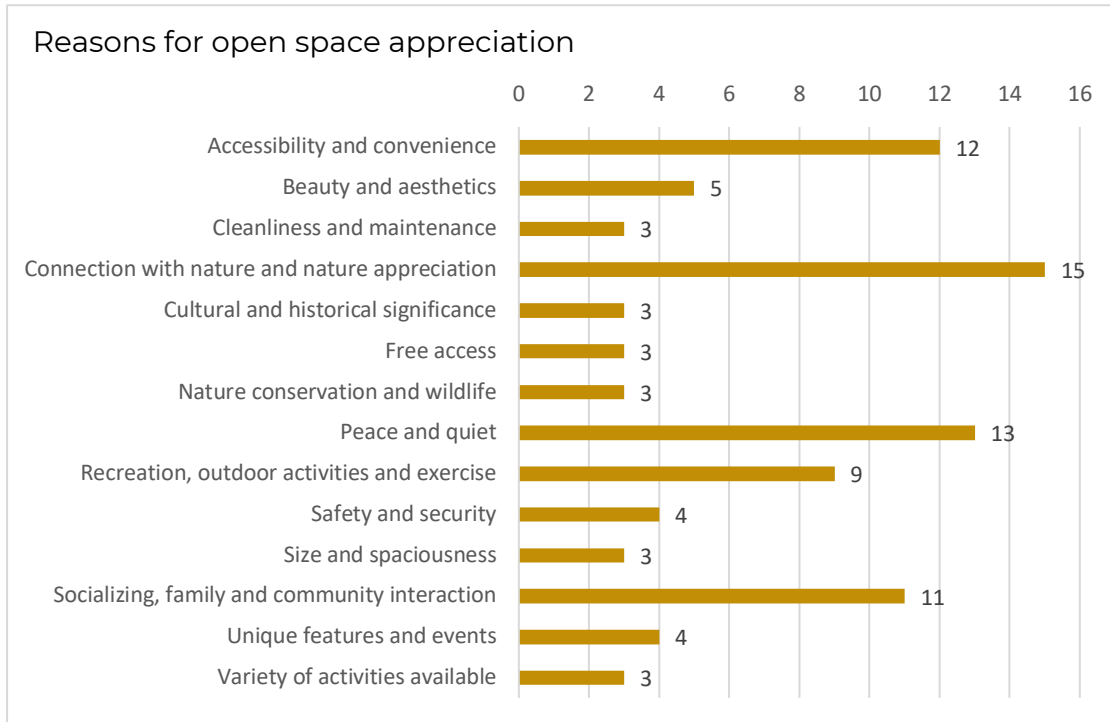


Figure 11 | Reasons for open space appreciation $n=47$

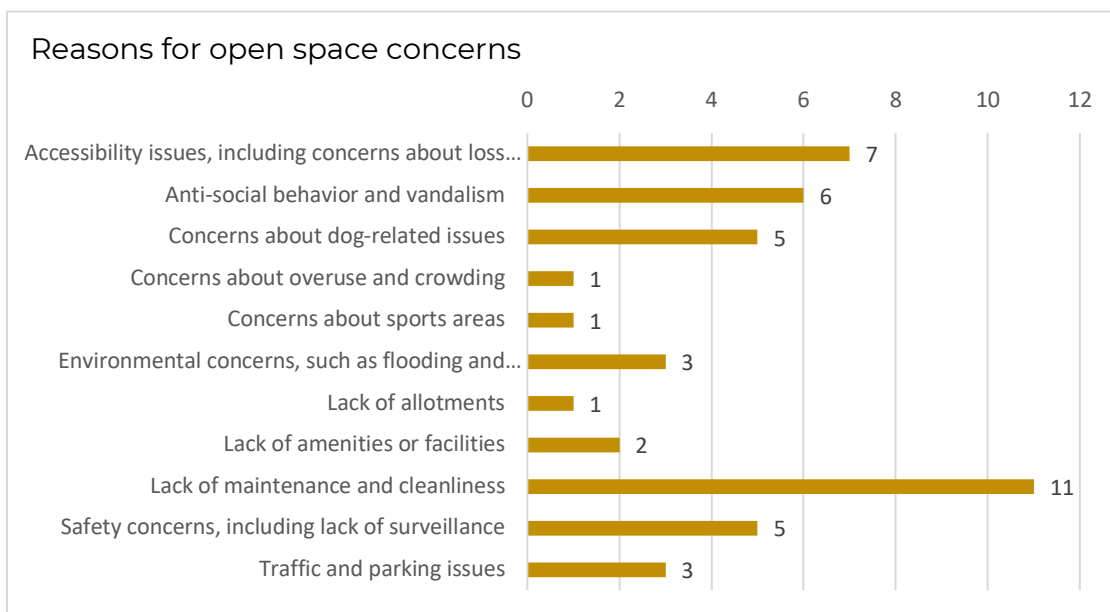


Figure 12 | Reasons for open space concerns $n=32$

The themes mentioned are incorporated in the Open Spaces Strategy & Action Plan. For each of the topics mentioned, the corresponding section is marked in Table 6.

Topic	Corresponding section in Open Spaces Strategy & Action Plan 2024
Accessibility, including free access and access standards	Section 3.3
Allotments	Sections 5.4, 6.5, 6.8, 7.9
Amenities and facilities	Sections 3.4, 5.5, 6.4, 7.4
Anti-social behaviour and vandalism	Sections 7.3 under 'community engagement'
Beauty and aesthetics	Sections 4.6, 7.3 under 'quality', 7.7. under 'social cohesion'
Cleanliness and maintenance, including dog-related issues	Section 4.5, 5.2, 7.3, 7.8
Connection with nature and nature appreciation	Sections 7.3
Cultural and historical significance	Sections 7.3, 7.6, 7.8
Environmental concerns, including flooding and impact on nature	Sections 3.5, 7.3 under 'multifunctionality', 7.8
Nature conservation and wildlife	Sections 1.7, 7.3, 7.8
Overuse and crowding	Section 6.3 under 'sufficient size', 6.8 under 'deficit in semi natural greenspace', 7.4,
Recreation, outdoor activities and exercise	Sections 3.4, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 5.3, 6.3, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5
Safety and security	Section 3.7, 7.3, 7.5
Sports areas	Sections 5.4, 5.5, 6.3, 6.6
Traffic and parking	Sections 7.5, 7.8

Table 6 | Overview of responses to respondents' appreciation and concern

3.3 Getting to open spaces

Open spaces across the Melton borough are primarily accessed on foot and by car (Figure 13). One respondent additionally mentioned scooting. Note that none of the respondents use public transport to access the open spaces they most use.

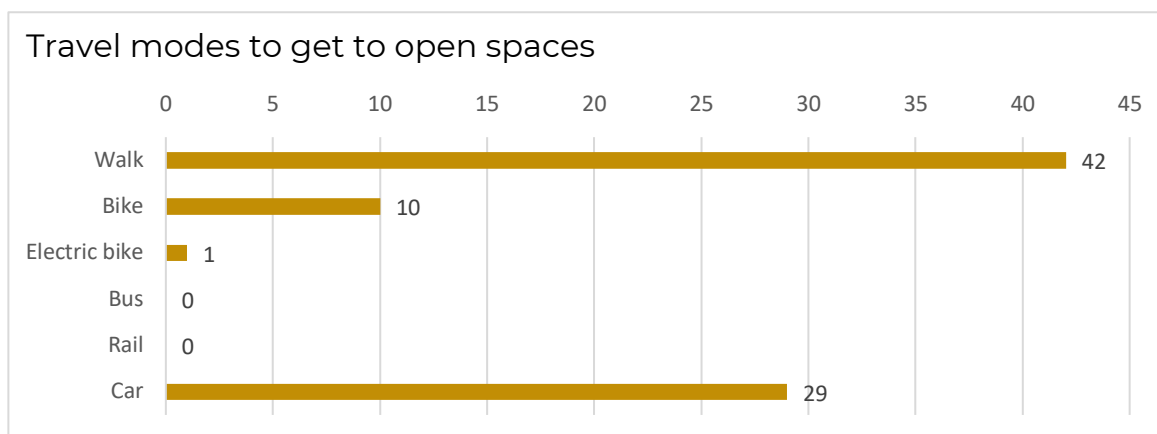


Figure 13 | Travel modes to get to open spaces most used by respondents $n=53$

Areas with insufficiently accessible open space include particular locations in the borough, but respondents also larger areas with insufficiently accessible open space. Multiple respondents mention “a general increase of accessible open space is needed”, and particularly in and around new housing estates.

As seen section 3.2 Perception of open spaces on the perception of open spaces, there are multiple concerns about previously accessible open spaces becoming inaccessible to the public. Respondents note areas of concern, where there is not enough publicly accessible open space available. The areas of concern are mapped in Figure 14, and listed in detail in Table 7 below. These concerns and the reasons mentioned are used to inform the Open Spaces Strategy & Action Plan (see also 4. Conclusions)



Figure 14 | Insufficient publicly accessible open space across the borough $n=12$

Areas with not enough accessible open space	What is missing this particular area
Asfordby Hill	There is nothing much here at the moment. It's all cut-off by development and the park is diminished by it
Asfordby Nature Reserve	Insufficient parking and access
Bottesford	Pedestrian footbridge needed, because you can't get anywhere safely on foot
	A nice park to sit in or walk around. There are too many houses being built, with not enough outdoor areas
	The new build in the West of Bottesford does not have enough open space planned
Burton Road	Sports Hall, a facility missing in all areas of Melton
General increase needed	The fast population growth in Melton has put demand on open spaces, generally there just need to be more
	Accessible toilets in all public green spaces, which should be available independent of closing times of other facilities
New housing estates	Grass and connectivity
	There is no planning or provision for new parks or gardens where the new housing estates are being built on the north side. This increased population can't all go walking in the Country Park, otherwise that park will get over crowded and lose its charm and natural feel.
NE of borough	The North East has no parkland
Semi-natural and natural open spaces	We have lost a semi-natural old railway embankment due to housing with very little notice, with much of the wildlife habitat destroyed. This is hard to replace, but needed!
South, West, North and East of Melton Mowbray	I think the South /West side of Melton Mowbray is lacking in good open spaces with green space and trees. Perhaps these can be acknowledged and addressed when the southern section of the MMDRi is built
	I am lucky to live near the Country Park on the North side of town. I feel residents in other areas have less access to significant open spaces where users would feel that nature – trees, plants, wildlife – are flourishing
	Additional open spaces needed in the West and East of Melton Mowbray

Table 7 | Areas with insufficiently accessible open space across the borough $n=15$

3.4 Standards for open spaces

There are current standards for open space quantity and access for the Melton borough. These standards are from 2015. The 2020 Open Spaces Strategy & Action Plan for the town of Melton Mowbray include recommended new standards for open space quantity and access. This strategy and action plan also recommends introducing these new standards across the entire borough. We asked respondents if they want to adopt or enhance the newly proposed standards, or if they would prefer to keep the 2015 standards. To help increase accessibility, we visualised comparisons between the current and proposed quantity standards (Figure 15) and access standards (Figure 16).

3.4.1 Quantity standards

Quantity here means: the amount of available open space per person, expressed as hectares per 1,000 population. The recommended quantity standard proposes the following, in hectares per 1,000 population:

1. Increase allotments and community growing spaces from 0.26 to 0.30 ha
2. Decrease amenity green space from 0.63 to 0.60 ha
3. Keep parks and public gardens at 2.08 ha
4. Increase provision for children and young people from 0.13 to 0.25 ha
5. Increase semi-natural green space from 0.29 to 1.80 ha
6. Increase total open space quantity from 3.39 to 5.03 ha per 1,000 population

Current quantity standard 2015, in hectares per 1,000 population



Recommended quantity standard 2020, in hectares per 1,000 population



Allotments and community growing spaces	0.26	0.30
Amenity green space	0.63	0.60
Parks and public gardens	2.08	2.08
Provision for children and young people	0.13	0.25
Semi-natural green space	0.29	1.80
TOTAL OPEN SPACE QUANTITY	3.39	5.03

Figure 15 | Visual comparison between current and proposed open space quantity standard

3.4.2 Access standards

Access here means: how long it takes or how far it is to reach the next open space, measured in a straight line. The recommended access standard proposes the following, measured in a straight line:

1. Change the standard for allotments and community growing spaces in rural areas from 15-minute walk or 1,200 metres to a 15-minute car drive in rural areas. Keep the 2015 standard for urban areas, which include Asfordby, Bottesford and Melton Mowbray.
2. Keep amenity green space at a 10-minute walk or 800 metres;
3. Change the standard for parks and public gardens from a 15-minute walk/1,200 metres and a 10-minute car drive in rural areas to a 10-minute walk/800 metres and a 15-minute cycle ride in rural areas
4. Keep provisions for children and young people at a 10-minute walk/800 metres and change this standard from a 10-minute car drive in rural areas to a 15-minute cycle ride in rural areas
5. Keep semi-natural green space at a 10-minute walk/800 metres and change this standard from a 20-minute car drive in rural areas to a 20-minute cycle ride in rural areas.

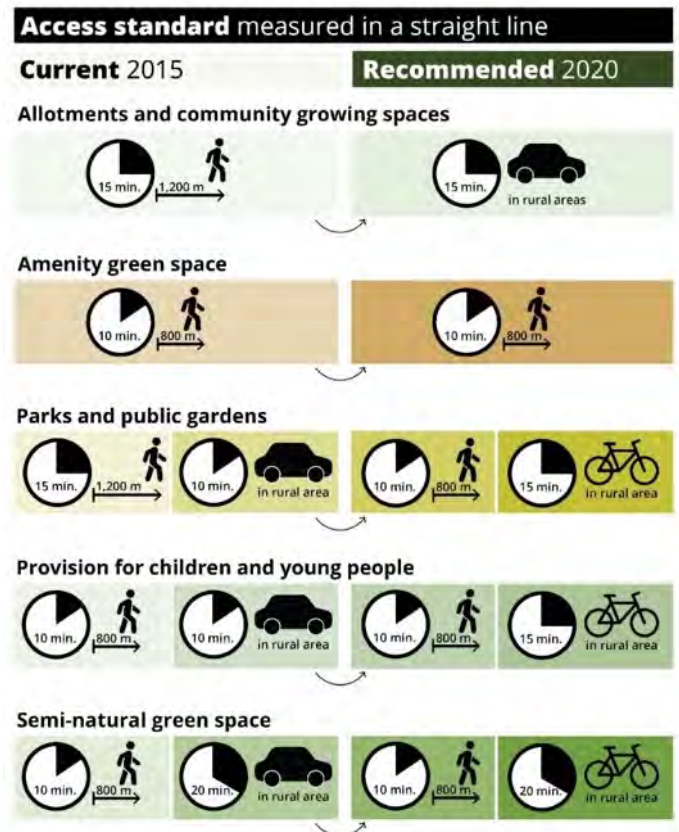


Figure 16 | Visual comparison between current and proposed open space access standards

3.4.3 Response to proposed standards

In principle, respondents have a clear preference for the proposed new standards, as is demonstrated by the responses in Figure 17 and Figure 18 on the next page. However, there are some caveats on the quantity standard for amenity green space and the access standards for allotments and community growing spaces.

The recommended quantity standard for amenity green space proposes a decrease in amenity green space. Respondents do not have a clear preference for the existing or new standard for amenity green space. This is probably because of the proposed decrease.

However, the site survey (see the site survey annex) indicates there is a large quantity of amenity space not previously mapped. Two respondents remark the same: **“Not sure if the planning department are even aware of the existence of [some of the open spaces in the borough].”** In light of this information and the outcome of the consultation, the proposal for the recommended quantity standard for amenity green space is revised in the strategy (sections 7.4 and 7.5).

The recommended access standard for allotments and community growing spaces proposes to change the access standard for allotments and community growing spaces. Respondents have a clear preference for the current access standard. The 2015 standard prescribes access to allotments and community growing spaces as a 15-minute or 1,200 metres walk. The new standards propose to replace this standard in rural areas with a 15-minute car drive. For urban areas, including the towns of Asfordby, Bottesford and Melton Mowbray, the standard would remain a 15-minute or 1,200 metres walk. Find more details in the strategy report in section 7.4 about the quantity strategy and section 7.5 on the access strategy for open space in the borough of Melton.

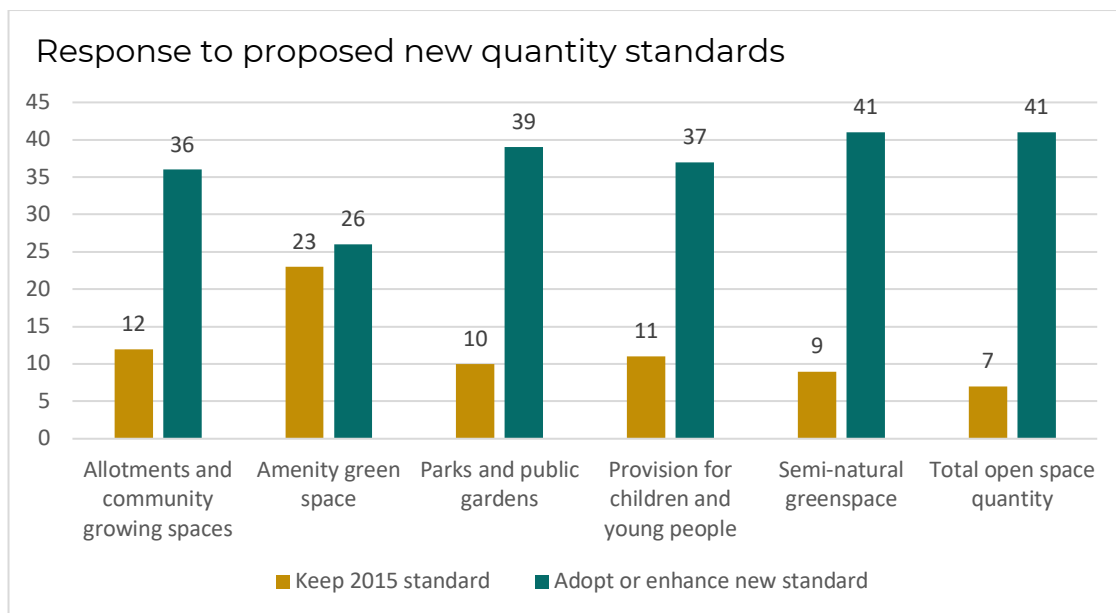


Figure 17 | Response to proposed new quantity standards $n=48$

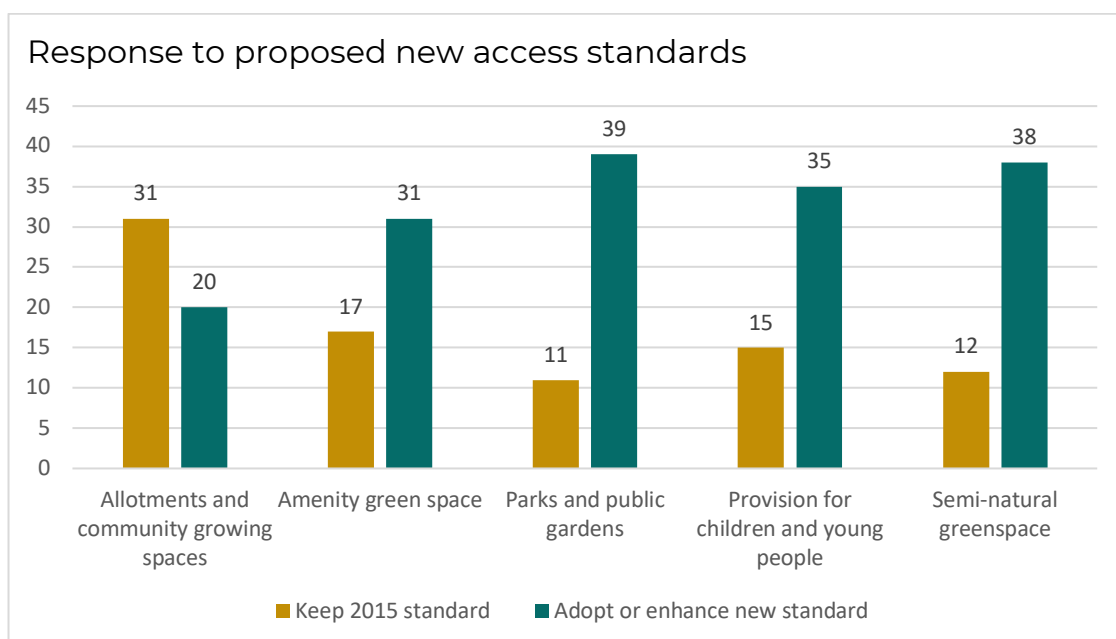


Figure 18 | Response to proposed new access standards $n=51$

3.5 Responsibility for open spaces

Open spaces can provide health and recreation benefits, have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure. They are an important part of the landscape and built developments and are important components in achieving sustainable development goals. Open spaces can only deliver these qualities when they are appropriately managed. Open space management occurs on four levels:

- Provision and creation: providing or creating new open space or access to existing open space
- Enhancement: improving existing open space
- Maintenance: maintaining newly added and existing open spaces
- Management: long-term responsibility for open space provision, enhancement

3.5.1 Involvement in open space management

Respondents indicate that particularly the Melton Borough Council, the Leicestershire County Council and the local Parish Councils are expected to be involved (Figure 19). Town trusts, community organisations and volunteers should also be involved. Trainees and apprentices as well as contractors should be involved, but to a lesser extent.

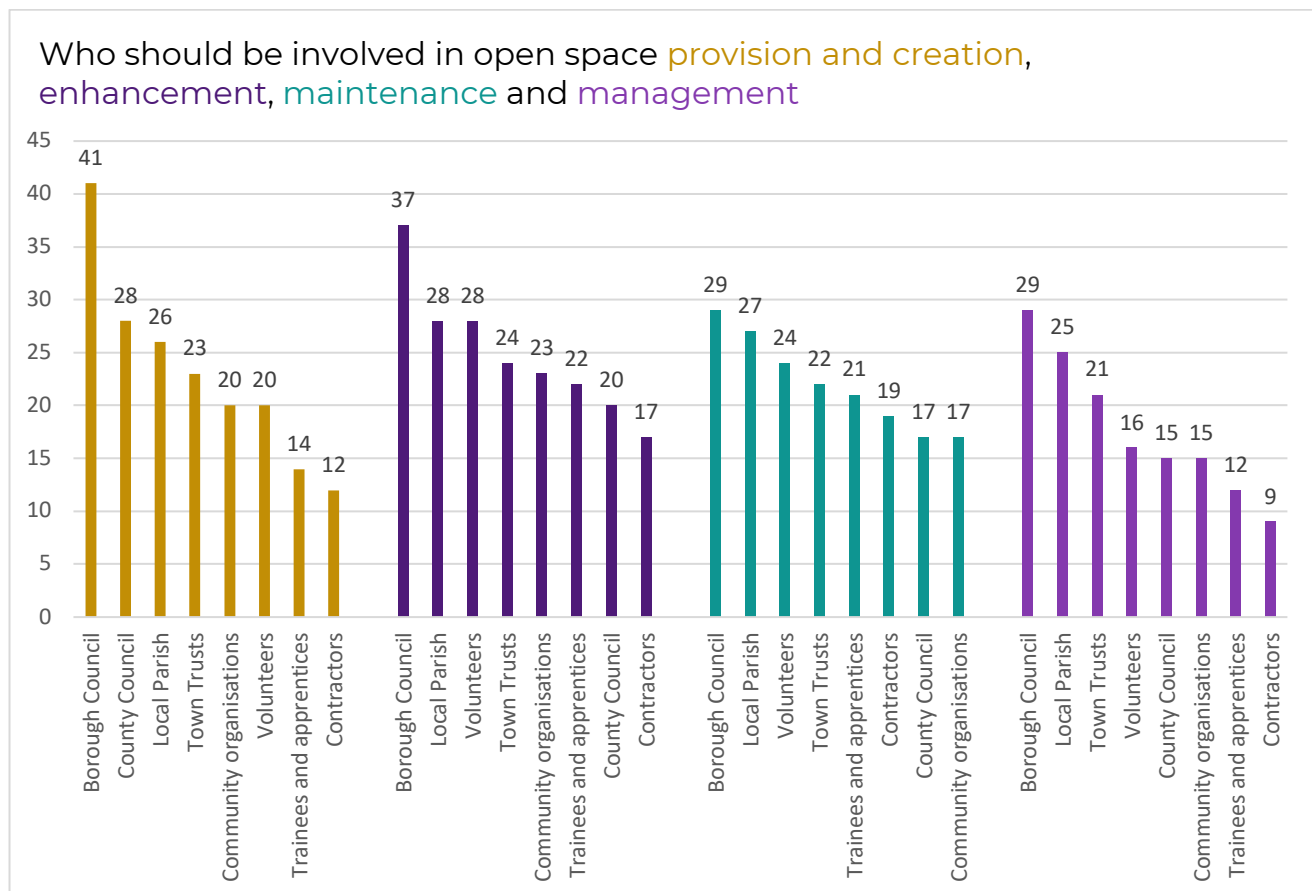


Figure 19 | Who should be involved in open space provision and creation, enhancement, maintenance and management n=45

Respondents also mention a number of additional parties. Most importantly, “everyone should be responsible.” The public and especially the users of facilities “should be responsible for their bit”. This includes for residents of Melton to have their voice heard, in particular young people. Residents should principally be involved with open space enhancement, maintenance and management.

Developers of land, developers of housing estates, the agricultural sector, and suitable land owners should be involved in provision and creation, enhancement, maintenance and management. Corporate volunteering can benefit enhancement and maintenance, mentions one respondent, “becoming more of a factor in bids for government contracts. [Open space enhancement and maintenance should] make up a significant percentage of many tender scores.” Another respondent notes that developers of housing estates should be funding new country parks, town parks and gardens “through planning agreements between developers and the Melton Borough Council”.

Finally, one respondent mentions how Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and charities should be involved in provision and creation, enhancement, maintenance and management. Especially NGOs and charities with specialist knowledge and experience in nature recovery and biodiversity would be suitable, “such as the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust”.

3.5.2 Cost of open space maintenance

In response to the question ‘who should carry the cost’, respondents indicate that particularly the Melton Borough Council and developers should be responsible for the provision and creation of open spaces. The Melton Borough Council and the Leicestershire County Council are expected to carry enhancement and improvement costs, and the Melton Borough Council and local Parish Councils the costs for regular maintenance and management (Figure 20). Residents and local charities are least expected to carry the brunt of the costs.

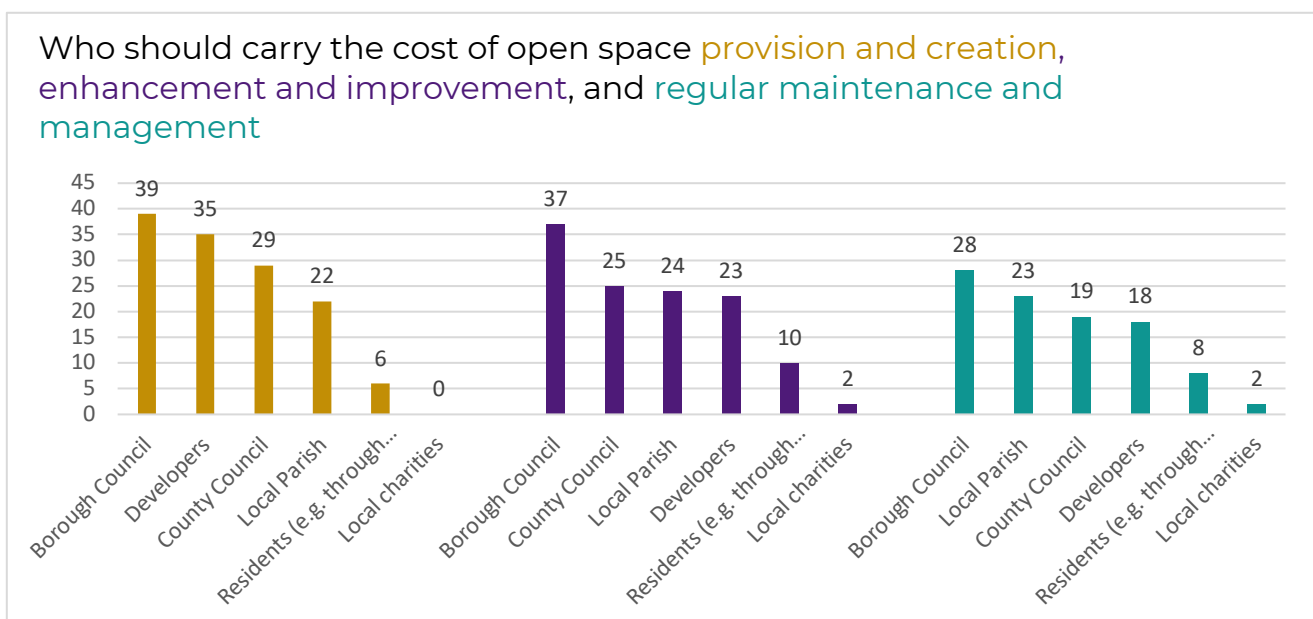


Figure 20 | Who should carry the cost of open space provision and creation, enhancement and improvement, and regular maintenance and management $n=33$

Similar to the points made on who should be involved in provision, enhancement, maintenance and management questions, respondents stress that everyone should play their part. “A culture of looking after your local environment for the good of the local community should be fostered as the norm.”

Additionally, respondents mention the following stakeholders and financial resourcing:

- Agricultural sector
- Contribution through reasonable parking fees, free for disabled parking spaces
- Local charities, such as the Town Estate and Melton Wombles
- Progressive local taxation (rather than regressive fees)
- Resident support from councils on all levels to foster active engagement, time and labour among residents, for example through organised initiatives and volunteering schemes

3.5.3 Response to proposed involvement and cost carrying

See chapter 7 of the Open Space Strategy report, in particular section 7.6 on the open space finance strategy, and section 7.9 on the developer contributions strategy.

3.6 Other responses

At the end of the form, we gave respondents space to share anything else they would like to add about open spaces in the Melton borough. Responses could be shared in the form or by sending an additional response to a dedicated email address. From the 23 form responses and 1 additional e-mail, we analysed the specific themes and questions mentioned (Table 8 and Table 9). All concerns and questions are considered and used to inform the production of the Open Space Strategy & Action Plan 2024.

Theme	Times mentioned	Quotes
Development, enhancement, maintenance and management	10	"All our facilities and open spaces are substandard and need considerable attention."
		"All our open spaces appear or are neglected apart from the Norfolk Drive green areas."
		"I think it is probably the smaller areas that get overseen."
		"More open spaces are needed, because they lag behind population growth or get replaced by housing schemes or solar farms."
		"Open spaces are not protected enough. Not sure if the planning department are even aware of the existence of some of them."
		"Stop building on green spaces!"
		"We are very fortunate to have what we have. It should be maintained and improved."
Need for accessibility and amenities	4	"Add disability access, for example a path around the golf course. Let young people play on grass areas."
		"Please ensure open spaces are easily accessible, with provision for disabled parking, bike parks, and bus stops nearby."
		"Please ensure plenty of trees, benches and maybe some consideration given to a route/trail map that links all these spaces."
		"There are footpaths across fields but these are difficult to navigate."

Call for freely accessible open space	3	"Open spaces should be free to everyone."
Call for protections of open space	2	"Existing open spaces must be protected from development on them or by the proximity of poor development."
		"The south side riverwalk from Leicester Road/Wilton Park bridge to the railway station should be supported as a valuable amenity."
Community involvement and visibility	2	"Schedule days when the volunteers can turn up and get involved with work on open spaces."
		"The community pay back scheme should be more visible and involved."
Support for natural spaces and tourism	4	"I support the move to increase provision of semi-natural spaces."
		"It would be lovely to have a multi-use concert stage somewhere."
		"More provision would enhance tourism to the town and be of great benefit to well-being of residents."
		"Open spaces offer opportunities that aren't always measurable by statistics."

Table 8 | Themes and quotes from open-ended responses $n=23$

Theme	Question
Quality vs. quantity	Is quality or quantity the primary goal for open spaces?
Improvement of existing spaces vs. creating new spaces	Should existing spaces be improved before creating new ones?
	Will off-site contributions be an option within updated standards?
Justification for space requirements	What is the justification for increasing space requirements?
	Do proposed increases materially enhance public health and wellbeing?
Relationship between space requirements and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	How do proposed increases in open space requirements work alongside Biodiversity Net Gain requirements?
	Is there a potential conflict between BNG and the usability of open spaces?
Resolution of conflicts between needs	How will the need to create usable open space be resolved with the need to create undisturbed habitats/species-rich grasslands?
	In circumstances where public usage might be limited to walking, how does this affect the design and use of the space compared to other uses like play?
Inclusion of Restricted Access Areas	Would an enclosed pedestrian path across a species-rich grassland be counted as public open space?
	Should the entirety of the grassland or just the path be considered?

Table 9 | Themes and questions from submitted additional writing $n=1$

4. Conclusions

The main take-away from this public consultation is that the Melton borough has a wealth of open spaces, which are appreciated and celebrated by the community. The community is actively involved, and wants to keep being involved. Respondents note in detail the issues with particular open spaces, and share their concerns on accessibility and free access, neglect and anti-social behaviour, and their concerns for nature conservation and the environment. The Melton Borough Council has a clear mandate from respondents and is expected to actively initiate open space provision and creation, enhancement and improvement, and maintenance and management. Residents expect to be involved in this process, and to actively contribute to the protection and care for existing open spaces, and for the establishment of new open spaces.

All responses and answers from respondents can be organised in a list of topics of particular concern. Table 10 shows an alphabetical list of topics and the corresponding section in the Open Spaces Strategy & Action Plan 2024 where the topic is addressed.

Topics of concern indicated by respondents	Corresponding section in Open Spaces Strategy & Action Plan 2024
Accessibility, including free access and access standards	Section 3.3.
Allotments and community growing spaces	Sections 5.4, 6.5, 6.8, 7.9
Amenities and facilities	Sections 3.4, 5.5, 6.4, 7.4
Anti-social behaviour and vandalism	Sections 7.3 under 'community engagement'
Beauty and aesthetics	Sections 4.6, 7.3 under 'quality', 7.7. under 'social cohesion'
Biodiversity Net Gain	Sections 1.5, 1.6, 2.8
Cleanliness and maintenance, including dog-related issues	Section 4.5, 5.2, 7.3, 7.8
Community involvement and visibility	Section 7.3
Conflicting open space uses, including overuse and crowding concerns	Section 6.3 under 'sufficient size', 6.8 under 'deficit in semi natural greenspace', 7.4
Connection with nature and nature appreciation	Section 7.3
Cultural and historical significance	Sections 7.3, 7.6, 7.8
Cost of open space development and maintenance	Sections 7.3, 7.6, 7.8, 7.9
Development, enhancement, maintenance and management of open spaces	Sections 7.3, 7.4, 7.5
Environmental concerns, including flooding and impact on nature	Sections 1.7, 7.3, 7.8
Nature conservation and wildlife	Sections 1.7, 7.3, 7.8
Protections of and for open space	Sections 1.7, 4.8
Recreation, outdoor activities and exercise	Sections 3.4, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 5.3, 6.3, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5
Safety and security	Section 3.7, 7.3, 7.5
Sports areas	Sections 5.4, 5.5, 6.3, 6.6
Tourism	Section 7.3
Traffic and parking	Sections 7.5, 7.8

Table 10 | Overview of topics from consultation and corresponding sections in Strategy & Action Plan

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