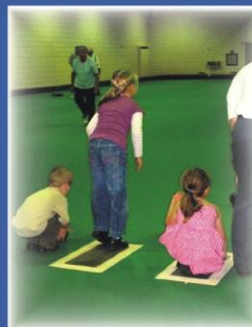
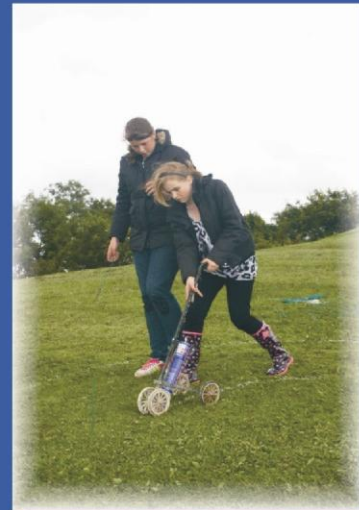


Great Aycliffe



Town Council

Parish Performance Plan



2011- 2012

CONTENTS

PAGE No.

1.	Introduction by the Mayor.....	5
	Some key things we did last year.....	5
	Some key targets for this year.....	6
	Council Finances.....	6
	How much do the Council's Services cost YOU?.....	8
2.	Views on the Plan.....	9
3.	Equalities.....	9
4.	Introduction to Great Aycliffe.....	9
5.	Relationship with Durham County Council.....	10
6.	Services Provided by Great Aycliffe Town Council.....	11
7.	The Civic Year.....	13
8.	Election of Mayor.....	14
9.	The Council, its Members and Establishment.....	14
	9.1 The Council.....	14
	9.2 Members.....	14
	9.3 Committee Structure.....	14
	9.4 Appointment of Committees.....	15
	9.6 The Council's Establishment.....	16
	9.7 The Senior Officers within the Council are:.....	17
10.	Target Setting.....	17
11.	Council Targets 2010/11.....	18
12.	Council Targets 2011/12.....	18
13.	Service Areas.....	19
	13.1 Corporate Services/Personnel.....	19
	13.2 Finance Section.....	20
	13.3 Members/Civic Services.....	21
	13.4 Administration.....	21
	13.5 Pre-School Learning Centres.....	22
	13.6 Works and Environment Section.....	23
	13.7 Parks and Play Areas.....	24
	13.8 Playing Pitches.....	25
	13.9 Outside Events.....	25
	13.10 Allotments.....	26
	13.11 Cemeteries and Burials.....	27
	13.12 Street Equipment.....	28
	13.13 Environment.....	28
	13.14 Sports Complex.....	29
	13.15 Golf Course and Driving Range.....	29
	13.16 Capital Projects.....	30
14.	Value for Money.....	31
15.	Consultation.....	32
16.	Representation.....	33
17.	A Financial Overview.....	34
	17.1 2011/12 Revenue Budget.....	34
	17.2 2011/12 Council Tax.....	35
	17.3 2011/12 Capital Programme Budget.....	36
	17.4 2010/11 Spending.....	36
	17.5 Looking Ahead / Medium Term Financial Plan.....	37

APPENDIX 1	39
AIMS AND TARGETS 2009/10	40
APPENDIX 2.....	45
AIMS AND TARGETS 2010/2011	46
APPENDIX 3.....	49
PEST ANALYSIS.....	50
APPENDIX 4.....	53
SWOT ANALYSIS	54
APPENDIX 5.....	55
MEMBER CONTACT DETAILS	56
APPENDIX 6.....	59
ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER	59

1. Introduction by the Mayor

Within this document we aim to inform you about the Town Council activities, what we said we would do and what we actually did. It will, hopefully, help you understand what Great Aycliffe Town Council is doing for you and the Great Aycliffe area.

The Parish Performance Plan is an important strategic document that the Town Council produces each year as part of our aim to deliver quality services for the residents of Great Aycliffe.

Through our satisfaction surveys, open days, attending community events, the youth council and the customer panel we aim to take into account your views and act upon your priorities in order to improve our services.

The Town Council endeavours to rise to all challenges whilst focussing on the community's needs and continuing to improve our services. The Town Council is committed to providing value for money in the services we deliver. We ensure our arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public resources are sound and our finances are in good order to ensure that we provide value for money for our residents.

The first few pages of this document are intended to provide a brief summary of some key targets from the past year, a snapshot of the year to come and an overview of financial information.

However, the rest of the document provides some useful and detailed information regarding the Town Council and our services. Please take the time to read it and we look forward to receiving any view you may have on the plan. Section 2 provides details of how you may do this, should you wish.



Councillor Mrs
Dorothy Bowman

Some key things we did last year

- ✓ Did not raise the Town Council portion of the Council Tax this was achieved even after a 1% reduction the previous year.
- ✓ Achieved £213,036 savings across all service areas which has been added to council balances, this will enable us to continue to deliver all of our services to you without the need to make cuts.
- ✓ Refurbished School Aycliffe Play Area following consultation with the residents and Aycliffe Youth Council.
- ✓ We have employed 3 apprentices and are looking at ways of providing more placements.
- ✓ Refurbished the toilets at Stephenson Way Cemetery and St. Oswald's Park, including the provision of a separate accessible toilet.

- ✓ Started mapping the council owned land and property onto an electronic Geographical Information System which has proved very helpful.
- ✓ With joint funding from the Great Aycliffe Area Action Partnership various improvements have taken place along the Great Aycliffe Way and a new leaflet has been published.
- ✓ The Environment Officer has been working really hard with the schools and communities of Great Aycliffe holding over 150 activities and events.
- ✓ Undertook a very successful dog fouling and litter awareness campaign in conjunction with Durham County Council.
- ✓ Held another successful Town Pride Environment Week working with the Youth Council, local schools and volunteers.

Some key targets for this year

Following the annual review of the Town Council aims and targets, and including recommendations from the residents of Great Aycliffe, some of our key targets for 2010/2011 are:

- ✓ We are aiming to once again freeze the Town Council portion of the Council Tax.
- ✓ Continue to provide value for money for our services.
- ✓ Continue to look for efficiency savings in all our work.
- ✓ Improve Byerley Park Play Area.
- ✓ Provide a toddler play area at the Town Park.
- ✓ Develop a woodland area along The Burn in celebration of The Queen's Diamond Jubilee.
- ✓ Undertake 40 public environmental events.
- ✓ Undertaken 60 school environmental engagements.
- ✓ Improve our partnership working.
- ✓ Improve our community engagement.

Council Finances

The Council has a responsibility in law for ensuring that its financial management arrangements are sound, that it has an effective system of internal financial control including the management of risk and the prevention and detection of fraud and that it has put in place arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The key performance measure of the Council's financial standing is the annual external inspection by the Audit Commission. The Audit Commission look at four main areas:-

1. Statement of Accounts
2. Parish Performance Plan
3. Annual Governance Statement
4. Value for Money (Use of Resources Assessment)

The overall opinion on the overall financial standing of the Council is set out in an Annual Audit Letter. The Council must obtain an 'unqualified' audit opinion within this letter in order to retain its Quality Council status.

The Council is pleased to report that it again received a clean bill of health on all aspects of the inspection last year. This means that the Audit Commission considers that:-

- ◆ the Council's Statement of Accounts presents fairly its financial position;
- ◆ it is well managed and governed with sound strategies, policies, procedures, systems and internal controls;
- ◆ our finances are in good order;
- ◆ we deliver economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public money;
- ◆ we deliver value for money services to the local community.

All in all, this was a very positive Audit Report for the Council and the Audit Commission commended the Council for the progress it has made over the last few years. This is an excellent achievement and has been achieved as a result of the hard work and commitment of all councilors, management and staff.

A copy of the 2009/10 Audit Letter can be found at Appendix 6 within this document.

An overview of the Council's finances is included in Section 17 of the Parish Performance Plan on pages 34 – 37.

How much do the Council's Services cost YOU?

The following table shows how much the Council's many services cost you, the tax payer, in 2011/12, per week, based on the Band A Council Tax:-

Environment and Grounds Maintenance	42p
Corporate Management	41p
Sports Complex	37p
Parks and Play Areas	35p
Administration and Council Offices	17p
Financial Management	17p
Civic Costs and Councillors	12p
Contingency Sum / Contribution to Reserves	10p
Aycliffe Show	10p
Senior Citizens Trips	9p
Golf Course and Driving Range	8p
Pre Schools	6p
Public Seating, Lighting and Bus Shelters	4p
CCTV Cameras	3p
Cemeteries	2p
Football Pitches	2p
Fun in the Parks	2p
Fireworks Display	2p
Allotments	1p
Santa Tours and Christmas Lights	1p
Other Special Events	1p



Total Cost per Tax Payer per Week of Great Aycliffe Town Council Services £2.62

Total Cost per Taxpayer per Year of Great Aycliffe Town Council Services £136.07



2. Views on the Plan

The Town Council would welcome your views and comments on the Plan and these can be sent to:

Andrew Bailey, Town Clerk, Great Aycliffe Town Council, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham, DL5 6QF

Fax: (01325) 301053

E-mail: info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

The Council accepts full responsibility for its preparation and for the information contained in it. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is correct.

Copies of the Plan are available for public reference in the following locations:

- ◆ Town Council Offices
- ◆ Newton Aycliffe Library
- ◆ Oakleaf Sports Complex
- ◆ Aycliffe Village Hall
- ◆ And the Council's website – www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk

Copies have also been sent to Durham County Council and neighbouring Town and Parish Councils.

3. Equalities

Great Aycliffe Town Council is committed to the removal of all barriers preventing access to our services arising from ethnicity, religion, special needs, language differences, learning difficulties, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability or geographic location.

Information will generally be provided by the Council in English only. Where we are required under other statute to provide certain information in other languages, this information will be translated. You can request an alternative format copy by contacting Great Aycliffe Town Council on 01325 300700.

4. Introduction to Great Aycliffe

Great Aycliffe comprises the town of Newton Aycliffe and the villages of Aycliffe and School Aycliffe. The population of Great Aycliffe is approximately 26,500. (Sedgefield Borough Council, regeneration statistics 2007)

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the mining industry dominated Durham. During World War II, the Government established an Ordnance factory near to Aycliffe Village, to supply munitions to the services. The workforce, mainly women, became known as the 'Aycliffe Angels' or the 'canaries' so called because the chemicals used in shells turned their hands and skin yellow.

After the war, Aycliffe became the site of a New Town, planned to provide good quality homes near to the Aycliffe Industrial Estate. Under the guidance and control of the Aycliffe Development Corporation, the town flourished and has grown to be part of the Great Aycliffe settlement.

Great Aycliffe is a vibrant community, set in an attractive semi-rural setting. It is bounded on all sides with open countryside and the area administered by the Town Council contains many attractive green spaces.

Schools in the area are generally good, and are increasingly linked to the higher education network. The towns and villages have excellent road links to the A1, and Newton Aycliffe has a train station on the Darlington to Bishop Auckland rail line.

The Aycliffe Industrial Park comprises 230 hectares and is a base for a mix of local, national and international companies.

There are a wide range of voluntary groups, clubs and societies active in the area. A large range of play and leisure facilities are provided by Great Aycliffe Town Council and Durham County Council.

Housing conditions are generally above average. Significant levels of new house building mean that Aycliffe can offer a wide choice of starter, family and executive homes to new residents coming to the area.

The Town Centre has a mix of individual retail outlets and chain stores, with individual retail outlets in neighbourhood areas. The redevelopment of the town centre commenced in January 2009. A wider range of shopping facilities is available in Darlington, Bishop Auckland and Durham.

As with much of the North East, the highly attractive environment can, however, serve to mask some of the problems inherent in the area. The North East is continuing its transformation from an economy traditionally based on heavy engineering and manufacturing, with a lower skills base, towards the more modern, higher skilled mixed economy visualised in the regional economic strategy.

We are aware of the importance of the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Great Aycliffe area. We are endeavouring to work with the new Durham County Council to ensure the best results for Great Aycliffe residents.

5. Relationship with Durham County Council

Local government in England and Wales is provided by a network of primary and secondary councils. The primary council serving the Great Aycliffe area is Durham County Council. Sedgefield Borough Council was dissolved in April 2009 and became part of the new Durham County Council Unitary Authority.

Great Aycliffe is constituted as a town council and is therefore the tier of local government closest to the residents.

Durham County Council is responsible for providing educational and social services, fire and consumer protection, strategic planning, waste disposal and economic development, waste collection, leisure and local planning.

Housing in the Great Aycliffe area is provided by Sedgefield Borough Homes a 'not for profit' housing association which was set up on 27th February 2009, as well as a number of registered social landlords and private houses.

The Town Council **DOES NOT**:

- ✘ Manage schools
- ✘ Manage the Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre
- ✘ Run economic development
- ✘ Manage the highways
- ✘ Manage the police, fire or ambulance
- ✘ Grant planning permission
- ✘ Run social services
- ✘ Run housing services
- ✘ Provide bus services

The Town Council is **not responsible** for the Town Centre, which is in private ownership.

6. Services Provided by Great Aycliffe Town Council

The Parish Performance Plan is a corporate strategic document for the whole of the Town Council. However, it will also be used as the Corporate Service Plan.

We do:

- ✓ Run the Oakleaf Sports Complex - indoor bowls, sports hall, squash courts, bar and catering, children's holidays courses, indoor/outdoor sports coaching
- ✓ Run the Oakleaf Golf Complex – 18 hole golf course and an 18 bay floodlit driving range
- ✓ Manage Stephenson Way Cemetery and West Cemetery and provide grounds maintenance and burial service at St Andrew's Churchyard

- ✓ Manage 8 parks, all with play equipment

Town Park	West Park
Moore Lane Park	Aycliffe Village
Simpasture Park	Byerley Park
St Oswald's Park	Woodham Park
- ✓ Additional play areas at Scott Place, School Aycliffe, Oakleaf Complex and Horndale
- ✓ 6 football pitches, Mini-soccer and six-a-side pitches
- ✓ Run 2 pre-school play settings – with 'good' Ofsted ratings
- ✓ Provide and manage a wide range of special community events – Great Aycliffe Show, Fun-in-the-Parks, Santa Tours, Firework Display, Senior Citizens' Excursions, Christmas Lights
- ✓ Assist and support other event organisers – 10k race, 3k Fun Run, Remembrance Parade, Junior Cross Country, Annual Indoor Bowls Competition and Community Enhancement Awards
- ✓ A range of civic events
- ✓ Aycliffe Angels Memorial Garden – provision and maintenance
- ✓ Maintenance of war memorial and flagpole
- ✓ 5 allotment sites with pigeon and poultry facilities
- ✓ Provide an environmental centre at Moore Lane
- ✓ Encourage interest in the environment of Great Aycliffe through the Environment Officer who works with the community and schools
- ✓ A Civic Pride Team
- ✓ Comment on planning applications
- ✓ Market administration
- ✓ Public seats in many locations
- ✓ Bus shelters with litter bins (not the ones with adverts)
- ✓ Grounds maintenance and environmental management

North Agnew Plantation	Cobbler's Hall Plantation
Woodham Burn	Simpasture Railway Walk
Great Aycliffe Way	Millfields/Bickford Terrace
Butterfly Meadow at Rail Halt	School Aycliffe Wetlands
Aycliffe Village Greens – custodians and maintenance	

- ✓ Youth Council
- ✓ Lorry park
- ✓ Crime prevention – the Council pays for some CCTV cameras and employs a team of Park Patrol Services
- ✓ Community Empowerment – Customer Panel, Consultation and Open Days
- ✓ Grants – small grants to local voluntary organisations

Great Aycliffe Town Council works with other Town Councils in the area to bring together local councils to share good practice, developing a strong voice for the local council sector in Durham.

7. The Civic Year

Councillor Mrs. Dorothy Bowman was elected as Mayor of Great Aycliffe in May 2010 and her term of office lasted until the Annual General Meeting of the Council in May 2011.



There are a number of formal civic engagements each year, which include:

- ✿ The Civic Service
- ✿ The Christmas Carol Service
- ✿ The Civic Ball
- ✿ Remembrance Sunday
- ✿ Mayor's 'At Home'

In addition to these the Mayor attended a further 213 engagements. The Mayor was escorted by her consort, Richard Chester.

The Mayor raised £5,194.00 for her nominated charities in her year of office. This was split between the Chyrelle Addams Breast Cancer Trust and Wear Valley Woman's Aid and the following local charities.

8. Election of Mayor

The Council elects a Town Mayor annually from amongst its members and the Mayor for 2011/12 is Councillor Mrs Mary Dalton, her consort will be Michael Dalton. The Mayor has chosen North East Army Benevolent Fund and local organisations as her charities for her term of office.

9. The Council, its Members and Establishment

9.1 The Council

Great Aycliffe Town Council is one of the largest Town Council's in the country, employing 75 full and part-time staff, with a planned revenue budget of £1,616,850 in 2011/12.

9.2 Members

The Council has a membership of 30, which is made up of 18 Labour, 11 Independent and 1 Liberal Democrat Councillor.

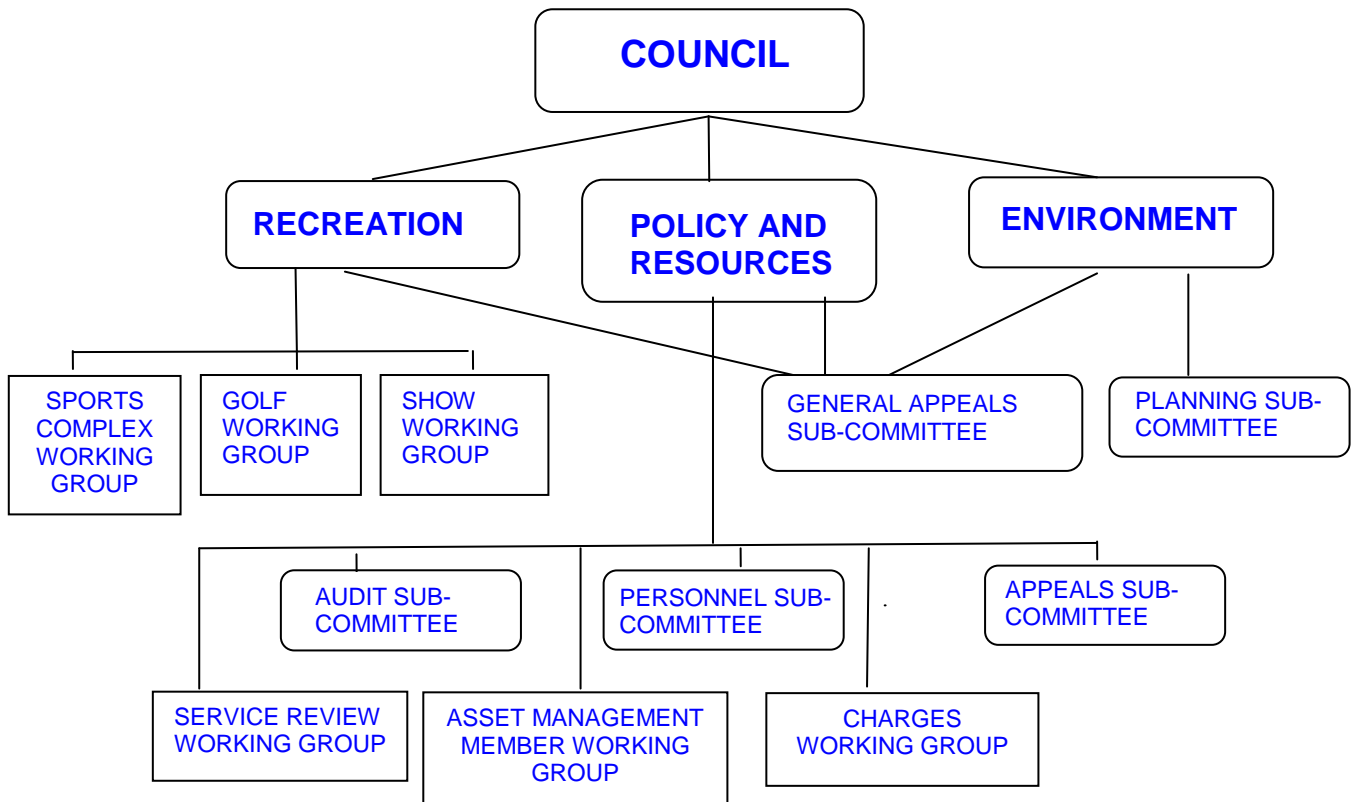
The area represented by the Town Council is divided into eight wards.

◆ Byerley Park, Horndale and Cobblers Hall	6 members
◆ Shafto/St Mary's	3 members
◆ Woodham South	3 members
◆ Woodham North	6 members
◆ Simpasture	2 members
◆ Neville	3 members
◆ West	6 members
◆ Aycliffe Village	1 member

The Council conducts its business through committees and the committee structure is set out below. The responsibilities of each committee are set out in the Council's Scheme of Administration and are reviewed annually.

9.3 Committee Structure

The Council originally considered its Constitution in 2005/06. The Constitution was reviewed, updated and adopted in May 2009 with a review undertaken each May. The Constitution is reviewed annually to ensure it is still relevant and fit for purpose for the Town Council.



The Local Authorities' (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 came into force on 1 May 2003, which allowed the Council to pay each member a basic parish allowance.

After taking advice from the Independent Remuneration Panel of Sedgfield Borough Council, as was, in April 2005, the level of remuneration is currently set at £1,059.60 per annum for each member of the Town Council. This amount has not increased since that date.

9.4 Appointment of Committees

The three main committees are appointed at the Council's Annual General Meeting in May each year and a list of the dates for the committee meetings in 2011/12 is set out in the Council's newsletter.

Members for the various sub-committees, working groups and representatives on outside bodies are also appointed at the Council's Annual General Meeting.

9.5 Public Participation

Meetings of the Council and its Committees and Sub-Committees are normally open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business or for some other special reason. Notices are placed in the press and on local notice boards informing the public of the dates and times. Agendas and reports are made available on the Friday afternoon preceding the meeting. These are available from the Council website or at the Council Offices. Agendas are displayed on council notice boards.

The public entrance to the council chamber will be open 30 minutes prior to the time of the meeting.

Members of the public are permitted to make representations, ask questions and give evidence in regard to any item of business included in the agenda of the Council, its Committees and the Planning Sub-Committee.

With the exception of the Annual and Extraordinary Council meetings members of the public can submit a written question for the Council agenda as long as it is submitted 7 clear days before the Council meeting date. Questions should relate either to the powers and duties of the Council, or affect the Parish in some way. These will be entered on to a register which will be open to the public for inspection.

A period of up to 20 minutes has been allocated at each Council or Committee and the Planning Sub-Committee for this purpose. Each person may speak once for 3 minutes only in respect of business itemised on the agenda.

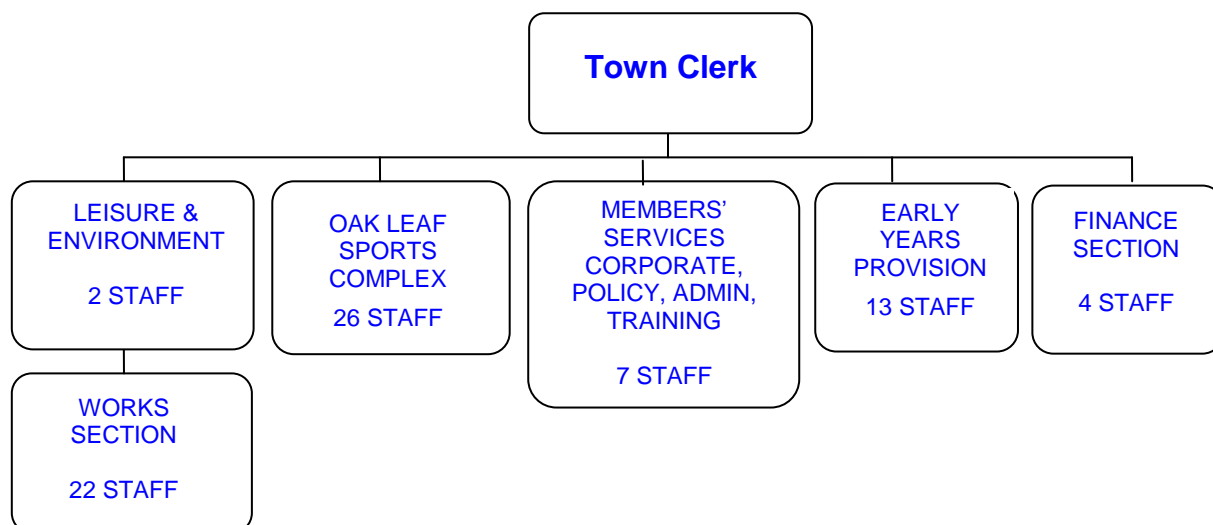
Questions **will not be received** by the Council which are in furtherance of a person's individual circumstances, which are about a matter where there is a right of appeal to the courts, a tribunal or government minister. A question will not be received by the Council, its Committees or specified Sub-Committees where the issue it concerns has been the subject of a decision of the Council in the last six months.

A verbal question or statement concerning an item on the agenda asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting will normally be taken into account during the subsequent discussion of that agenda item. However, the Chairman may also direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an immediate oral response or to an employee for a written or oral response.

Written questions submitted to the Council meeting may be debated by members, however, no decision will be made solely on the comments and representations made under a public participation session. A matter raised that falls under the remit of a particular committee may be deferred to the next meeting of the relevant committee.

9.6 The Council's Establishment

The Council employs 50 full-time and 25 part-time employees.



9.7 The Senior Officers within the Council are:

Town Clerk	Andrew Bailey	info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Corporate & Policy Officer	Christine Walton	christine.walton@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Finance Manager	Dan Austin	daniel.austin@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Works Manager	Don Thompson	info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Complex Manager	Judith Simpson	judith.simpson@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Early Years Officer	Jackie Swainston	Jackie.swainston@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Senior Admin Officer	Christine Ryder	christine.ryder@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Environment Officer	Steven Cooper	steven.cooper@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

Great Aycliffe Town Council occasionally employs casual staff, which do not form part of the formal staff establishment.

The Council also retains the services of consultants for HR matters, Health & Safety and Occupational Health services and other speciality services such as IT.

10. Target Setting

To maintain Quality Parish Council Status, there is an increased emphasis on reviewing our progress and performance. In response, progress on Council targets is discussed at Performance Management Group, which all service managers attend. A report is given to the Council on a quarterly basis and the Customer Panel on a six monthly basis. The progress made during the year informs the development of targets for the following year.

Following the designation as a Quality Parish, the Council agreed a strategic mission statement in February 2005, which is that Great Aycliffe aims to be:

“A quality Council, working in partnership, listening to and speaking up for the community, to bring excellent services to Great Aycliffe.”

In support of this statement, the Council agreed a number of strategic aims which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are still appropriate for the work and the people of Great Aycliffe.

The eight strategic aims are:-

- 1. To provide good quality governance and management of the Council.**
- 2. To manage the council's finances and assets in a responsible manner.**
- 3. To provide accessible, affordable leisure facilities and opportunities.**
- 4. To provide pre-school education as appropriate in Great Aycliffe.**
- 5. To contribute to the environmental improvement of Aycliffe by managing and developing parks, play areas and green spaces.**
- 6. To help and encourage partnership working to improve the services and facilities for the residents of Great Aycliffe.**

7.	To encourage the residents of Great Aycliffe to become involved in local democracy.
8.	To research information and make the case for Great Aycliffe.

To ensure that the aims are met, the Council set a series of targets under each aim.

Every effort is made to ensure aims and targets are closely linked to medium term financial planning and budget setting process and within the context of the Council's Asset Management Plan. It is acknowledged, however, that some work matters and capital projects are generated from other areas as and when funding becomes available.

Additional funding is occasionally made available from others sources, giving rise to one-off projects that are not part of the aims and targets but are important to take advantage of. The Parish Performance Plan is therefore only a guide for the Council in deciding on spending priorities in future years and guides the medium term financial planning for the Council.

11. Council Targets 2010/11

As detailed in the Mayor's foreword, targets are chosen from our satisfaction surveys, open days, attending community events, the youth council and the customer panel. We aim to take into account your views and act upon your priorities in order to improve our services for the people of Great Aycliffe.

We also strive to take into account the wider government agendas where possible such as the Area Action Partnership and the general health improvement agenda.

The successful introduction of a comprehensive performance management framework a number of years ago ensures a consistent approach to performance management is applied across all services.

Quarterly monitoring of targets and regular progress reports to the Council are also undertaken. These improvements have been closely linked with the budget setting process and risk assessment.

The targets set out for the last financial year, under each aim, are attached as Appendix 1, including a statement of progress achieved against each target.

12. Council Targets 2011/12

The large satisfaction survey exercise undertaken in April 2009, covering the whole of the Great Aycliffe area, helped prioritise the targets for the Council. The Council's budgets were developed in line with these targets and the survey results which identified the customers' needs. In addition, Members, the Customer Panel and Youth Council have also been consulted and an annual budget consultation is also held.

The Area Action Partnership has been in place since April 2009 – The Great Aycliffe and Middridge Partnership (GAMP). The Town Council makes every effort to play a significant role within this group and wherever possible reflect the wider needs of the area.

The top three priorities for GAMP have been identified as:

1. Activities for young people
2. Support to the community and voluntary sector
3. Employment, job prospects and enterprise

The Town Council aims do reflect these areas and we are confident we will be able to deliver targets in line with most of the above.

It is worth noting, once again, that the Town Centre is in private ownership and is **NOT** the responsibility of the Town Council. The Town Council has limited input into any meetings or progress made in this area although we strive to have a larger impact.

The list of targets for 2011/12 is attached as Appendix 2.

13. Service Areas

This section of the Plan explains the individual services we provide and the purpose of the service.

Because of the increasing emphasis on ensuring that all Great Aycliffe Town Council targets can demonstrate direct linkage to the overall aims of the Council, service areas have developed service plans and action plans which can clearly be linked back to the Council's aims.

As always, we invite the community's comments on the Plan and positively welcome constructive criticism, which will help us to improve the information we provide for you each year.

13.1 Corporate Services/Personnel

This service area covers corporate and cross-cutting issues which have an effect across the entire Council. These are policy, planning, performance management, risk management, administrative and committee services, training, and customer engagement.

This service area is responsible for the implementation of performance management arrangements and in particular for setting up systems for monitoring the Council's progress in relation to continuous improvement.

The **objectives** of this service are:

- ◆ To ensure timely and appropriate advice to the Council on matters affecting the strategic and corporate activities of the Council
- ◆ To ensure effective management and implementation of the Council's policies and priorities
- ◆ To be aware of, and ensure compliance with, all duties and obligations as laid down in Acts of Parliament, statutory instruments and specific guidelines
- ◆ To provide timely and appropriate advice in relation to all employee/employer relations issues
- ◆ To provide advice in relation to training requirements for members and employees.

13.2 Finance Section

The Finance Section plays an important corporate role in ensuring that sound arrangements are put in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in use of the Council's financial resources and in ensuring that the Council provides value for money to council taxpayers.

The Finance Section is responsible for the overall financial management of the Council and also provides an important support service to the Council's front line service areas, and to Officers and Members of the Council.

The main responsibilities of the Finance Section are detailed below:-

- ◆ Updating and monitoring compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for Contracts and Procurement
- ◆ Managing and developing the Council's accounting systems, internal controls, financial records, financial policies and procedures
- ◆ Reporting on the Council's financial performance
- ◆ Providing financial information to Members and Officers including the regular reporting of budgetary control during the year
- ◆ Preparing the annual Revenue Budget and Capital Programme
- ◆ Preparing the Medium Term Financial Plan
- ◆ Preparing the annual Statement of Accounts
- ◆ Preparing the Annual Governance Statement
- ◆ Treasury Management including the maintenance of the Treasury Management Code of Practice and the management of the Council's cash flow, loans and investments

- ◆ Managing an effective payroll service
- ◆ Managing an effective accounts payable and receivable function to ensure that all invoices are raised and paid promptly
- ◆ Manage an effective income collection and banking system to ensure that all monies receivable by the Council are collected and banked promptly
- ◆ Insurance arrangements
- ◆ Banking arrangements
- ◆ Taxation
- ◆ Managing an effective Internal Audit service; and
- ◆ Provision of financial advice and training

13.3 Members/Civic Services

This service area covers principally the work undertaken by the Mayor's Secretary and the general administration office staff in supporting the Mayor during their year of office.

The **objectives** for this service area are:

- ◆ To support the Mayor in their year of office
- ◆ To ensure that proper conventions and protocols are observed at all times
- ◆ To organise successfully the necessary civic functions agreed annually by the Council
- ◆ To manage the Members' Allowances Scheme.

13.4 Administration

The Administration Section of the Council produces all minutes and agendas and provides support to members and service areas.

The **objectives** of the Administration function are:

- ◆ To provide effective and efficient typing, administration and reception services to members, officers and to the public in relation to the Council's functions
- ◆ To provide the necessary support at meetings of the Council and its Committees.

13.5 Pre-School Learning Centres

The Council's aim is to provide a high quality service, where every child feels safe, is happy and has fun, in safe and secure learning environments in two locations within its administrative area.

Our standards are high and each Pre-school has received a successful inspection from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), each receiving a 'good' grading at their last inspection.

To enable us to develop and maintain these standards we have an excellent ratio of well-trained and motivated staff, who work with the children on a daily basis.

The work of the Pre-schools is managed by the Council's Early Years Officer, who ensures the smooth running of the Pre-Schools in accordance with Council Policy and current legislation.

The continual training of the staff is vital to the operation of the Pre-Schools, and the Council ensures that sufficient resources are available to ensure that high standards continue to be achieved.

The **objectives** of this service area are:

- ◆ To ensure the Pre-schools are fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children, particularly those that arise from their ethnic heritage, social and economic background, gender, ability or disability.
- ◆ To ensure that quality learning experiences are provided for the children, appropriate to their stage of development
- ◆ To provide the Early Years Foundation Stage and meet the Welfare Requirements
- ◆ To ensure that the current high standards within the Pre-schools are developed further
- ◆ To ensure that appropriate training is provided for all staff in all aspects for the provision of the service
- ◆ To ensure effective liaison and joint working with other organisations, particularly with Sure Start County Durham, who have an interest in the provision of early years learning
- ◆ To seek to secure, for the benefit of the service, assistance, resources and contributions towards its operation
- ◆ To keep the service under review and to make appropriate recommendations.

13.6 Works and Environment Section

The Works and Environment Section provides a range of what might be called 'grounds maintenance' services, including grass-cutting, floral bedding displays, hard and soft landscaping, tree maintenance and planting, play equipment maintenance and installation, litter-picking, supervision of park activities, maintenance of parks, playing fields, woodlands, nature areas, open spaces and amenity areas and the preparation of graves.

In addition, the Section carries out the inspection and maintenance of Town Council owned buildings and property, and inspects and maintains Town Council owned footpaths, roads, cemeteries, bridges, public seats and play equipment.

The Works and Environment Section provide a range of skilled services to the Council. These services include:

- ◆ Grass cutting
- ◆ Design, planting and maintenance of annual floral bedding displays
- ◆ Management, inspection and maintenance of amenity trees
- ◆ Management, inspection and maintenance of woodlands
- ◆ Management and maintenance of shrub beds and perennial borders
- ◆ Management, inspection, maintenance and renewal of play equipment and play areas
- ◆ Operational management and maintenance of the Oakleaf Golf Course and Driving Range
- ◆ Management, associated record keeping, burial service and maintenance of two cemeteries
- ◆ Maintenance and burial service of Aycliffe Village Churchyard
- ◆ Management, inspection and maintenance of allotment sites
- ◆ Management, inspection and maintenance of 8 parks
- ◆ Maintenance and inspection of Council buildings and property
- ◆ Maintenance and inspection of Council roads and footpaths
- ◆ Maintenance and inspection of bus shelters, litter bins and public seating
- ◆ Provide expertise and assistance in setting up and staging special events

- ◆ Management, setting up, inspection and maintenance of Christmas lighting display
- ◆ Management of the community enhancement award scheme
- ◆ Work in partnership with other agencies to enhance and improve other amenity areas not under the ownership of Great Aycliffe Town Council
- ◆ Provide and manage a park patrol service
- ◆ Provide an 'out of hours' service for emergency call outs in relation to security or health and safety issues
- ◆ Supply and maintain sufficient plant, vehicles and equipment required to undertake the above services
- ◆ To carry out operational duties in a safe manner by employing safe working practices and undertaking risk assessments to ensure the health and safety and welfare of staff and the general public
- ◆ To work with schools to encourage environmental awareness
- ◆ To manage and maintain wild flower areas and wetlands.

The Works and Environment Service charges are allocated across other service areas' budget headings as appropriate and this reflects the variety and range of the work which the Section undertakes.

The **objectives** of the Section therefore need to reflect the variety of services provision and are:

- ◆ To ensure adequate provision and management of well-maintained and accessible environmental areas, allotments, cemeteries, parks and play areas, which meet the needs of all the community in a cost effective, efficient and timely manner.

13.7 Parks and Play Areas

We currently manage and maintain 8 parks, all of which have play equipment. In addition West Park has a boating lake.

The 8 parks are:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| ◆ Town Park | ◆ Moore Lane |
| ◆ Woodham | ◆ West Park |
| ◆ St Oswald's | ◆ Horndale |
| ◆ Simpasture | ◆ Byerley Park |

We also provide and maintain play areas at Aycliffe Village, School Aycliffe, Scott Place and the Oak Leaf Sports Complex.

The Works and Environment Section carry out maintenance and upkeep of the parks and the play equipment in them. Regular inspections are undertaken of play equipment to ensure that it is safe.

The **objectives** for this service area are:

- ◆ To maintain the Council's parks and play equipment in order to provide a clean, safe environment for the community to use
- ◆ To carry out a phased programme of replacing play equipment in the Council's parks.

13.8 Playing Pitches

The Council provides six permanent football pitches for the use of the community and 8 teams use these during each football season. The football pitches are located at:

- ◆ Oakleaf Sports Complex
- ◆ Simpasture Park
- ◆ Moore Lane Park

In addition, we provide mini-soccer facilities at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex fields.

Our seasonal charges for the pitches range from £250 to £460, depending on location and the facilities provided. Junior team fees are charged two thirds of the adult fees.

The **objectives** for this service area are:

- ◆ To seek to provide sufficient playing pitches to meet the demand from the community
- ◆ To ensure that the pitches provided by the Council are maintained to an acceptable standard
- ◆ To liaise with and work in partnership with other appropriate bodies to secure the availability of suitable playing pitches and to consult as necessary with users
- ◆ To keep under review the charging policy for the use of playing pitches.

13.9 Outside Events

The Council organises several events each year for its community. This service continues to be popular, with many residents enjoying the various events throughout the year.

There is input to this service area from a number of staff, principally the Leisure Manager, the Works Manager and the Leisure and Environment Assistant.

We continue to seek to work in partnership with other bodies in the organisation and staffing of outside events.

The **objectives** of this service area are:

- ◆ To organise and/or stage outside events in accordance with the Council's priorities
- ◆ To ensure that the organisation of each event complies with all statutory regulations and requirements
- ◆ To continually survey the community in relation to its satisfaction with such events and to respond to the results of such surveys
- ◆ To actively seek to work in partnership with other appropriate organisations in staging or organising outside events.

13.10 Allotments

The Council provides and supervises five allotment sites. These are located at Aycliffe Village, Finchale Road, Clarence Chare, Byerley Park and St Oswald's Park. There are a total of 163 allotments and fees range from £11.19 for a half plot to £34.38 for a full plot.

We also provide 9 pigeon sites at St. Oswald's and 5 poultry sites at Clarence Chare.

At the inaugural Allotment Tenants Annual Meeting in 2001 and again in February 2010, tenants were asked if they would like to form an allotments association and manage the sites themselves.

The tenants decided that they wanted the Council to manage the sites and agreed to an 'Allotments Charter', which sets out the Council's future commitment to the allotments and also the maintenance standards we intend to achieve and maintain at the sites.

An annual meeting, which is open to all allotment tenants, ensures that the Charter's standards are adhered to. In addition, a satisfaction survey is undertaken every two years.

As a Council we continue to explore new initiatives to reduce green waste and have produced a Good Composting Guide, which has been issued to all tenants.

New allotment tenants are also provided with an Allotment Tenants Handbook, which contains useful information and tips on how to get started.

The **objectives** of this service area are:

- ◆ To provide sufficient allotment plots to meet the demand for them
- ◆ To maintain all allotment sites up to the standards set out in the Council's Allotments Charter and tenancy agreement

- ◆ To liaise with allotment holders and their representatives on a regular basis
- ◆ To ensure that the obligations of the allotment holders under the Allotments Charter are carried out.

13.11 Cemeteries and Burials

The Town Council is the burial authority and is responsible for the following facilities:

- ◆ Stephenson Way Cemetery
- ◆ West Cemetery

Stephenson Way Cemetery was opened for interments in 1963 and West Cemetery in 2000.

Burial spaces are available at both cemeteries. However, at Stephenson Way this is now restricted to reserved, single-burial plots and cremated remains plots as the cemetery nears full capacity.

In addition, the Council carries out the burial function at Aycliffe Village Churchyard and also maintains the church grounds. The burial function is undertaken on a rechargeable basis.

The Council works hard to ensure that not only does it provide high quality services, delivered in a professional and sympathetic manner, but that these standards are also observed by funeral directors and stonemasons when carrying out duties in the cemeteries.

To this end, the Council introduced an approval scheme for stonemasons. Only stonemasons on the approved list are allowed to operate in the Council's cemeteries. Before being accepted on the approved list, stonemasons must provide references from other local authorities regarding standards of workmanship and also produce health and safety documentation and public liability insurance certificates.

In an effort to help bereaved families through a difficult time in their lives, the Council has also produced a reader-friendly booklet, which is issued to grant holders, detailing various aspects of cemetery procedures.

The **objectives** of this service area are:

- ◆ To provide facilities for burials.
- ◆ To provide and manage attractive and well-maintained cemeteries for parishioners and non-parishioners alike
- ◆ To ensure that liaison with undertakers, stonemasons, ministers and the bereaved, and the administration of the service are efficient, professional and sympathetic at all times.

13.12 Street Equipment

This service area relates to the maintenance of street equipment such as bus shelters, dog bins, litter bins, public seats and parish footway lighting.

The Town Council provides most of the bus shelters within the parish (with the exception of the Adshel style shelters located on Woodham Way, Williamfield Way, Burnhill Way and the Industrial Estate) and public seating.

We also provide footway lighting, dog bins and litter bins on areas for which we have responsibility. Although, Durham County Council are responsible for the emptying of all dog bins.

The objectives of this service area are:

- ◆ To keep under review the demand/requirements for additional street equipment
- ◆ To ensure that existing equipment is maintained in a clean and safe condition
- ◆ To respond effectively to remove graffiti from premises and property for which the Council has responsibility.

13.13 Environment

The Environmental Officer helps raise environmental awareness within the Great Aycliffe area and two multi skilled 'Town Pride' operatives enable the Town Council to deal with urgent and environmental issues.

In addition, the Environmental Officer will be working with other external bodies such as the local schools, the Police and Youth Offending Service to raise awareness about the environment, climate change and developing a sense of pride in our local area. The Environmental Officer is also responsible for the Environmental (Eco) Centre based in Moore Lane Pavilion.

The **objectives** of this service are:

- ◆ To create a greater understanding of the natural environment around Great Aycliffe
- ◆ To provide opportunities for members of the public to become more involved in their towns practical environmental management
- ◆ To develop and maintain strategic environmental policies for Great Aycliffe Town Council
- ◆ To identify suitable conservation and environmental works for the Town Pride Team and Volunteers on natural green areas.

13.14 Sports Complex

The Oak Leaf Sports Complex is a family friendly facility, open 7 days each week from 9am until 11pm. We continue to provide facilities for the following sports: five-a-side football, badminton, netball and table tennis within the main sports hall. The Complex also provides the Town's only squash courts and indoor bowls facility.

The bar/catering function provides an excellent facility and a range of reasonably priced meals. The function room can cater for 80 users and is able to provide an excellent venue for a number of leisure activities such as private functions, meetings, bridge, pilates and yoga classes. We employ 25 staff within the Complex, supported by a pool of casual and coaching staff.

The **objectives** for this service area are:

- ◆ To provide and maintain a variety of sporting activities commensurate with the size and capability of the Complex and in accordance with the Council's priorities
- ◆ To be flexible in our approach to the facilities provided
- ◆ To provide and maintain a bar/catering facility
- ◆ To ensure that an efficient and effective booking service is operated for those wishing to use the facilities
- ◆ To seek to maintain or increase levels of usage for each of the activities undertaken
- ◆ To be alert to new initiatives and provide appropriate and timely advice to the Council in relation to the same.

13.15 Golf Course and Driving Range

The Council provides an 18-hole Golf Course and an 18-bay Driving Range. There is involvement from a number of different sections in the operation of both.

The Town Council has entered into a new contract for services with a Golf Professional, whose responsibilities are:

- ◆ To collect fees for the Course and Driving Range
- ◆ To operate the Driving Range and to collect the range balls
- ◆ To take tee reservations and to administer party bookings
- ◆ To provide a golf shop with associated professional services.

The Works and Environment Section employ green-keeping specialists who are dedicated to maintaining the course to a high standard.

The **objectives** in relation to these two facilities are:

- ◆ To keep under review the management arrangements for the two facilities
- ◆ To liaise appropriately with other municipal golf course providers
- ◆ To ensure that there is an opportunity within the Golf Working Group for users to make their views known on the operation of the facilities
- ◆ To continue to work with the Oak Leaf Golf Club
- ◆ To provide a warden service for the Course
- ◆ To promote and support junior golf in all appropriate ways
- ◆ To keep the course layout under review, with the intention of all-year-round 18-hole provision
- ◆ To maintain the Golf Course to an acceptable standard.

13.16 Capital Projects

The Council reviews its programme of proposed capital projects on an annual basis.

Capital projects are those that relate to significant one off investment in the Council's fixed assets such as its buildings, vehicles and machinery. Some represent one-off proposals, others a continuing programme of improvements in a particular area.

Capital Programme Budgets are prepared annually based on the future capital investment requirements set out in the Council's Asset Management Plan. Indicative five year capital budgets are also prepared and included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Asset Management Plan covers a ten year period and ensures that the Council takes a planned approach to the long term maintenance of its assets. It also ensures that capital projects are undertaken within the context of the Council's strategic aims and targets set out within this Parish Performance Plan.

The Capital Programme Budgets provide mainly for planned maintenance of the Council's buildings as well as the replacement of vehicles and major plant and machinery, in line with Asset Management Plan priorities.

The 2011/12 Capital Programme Budget provides for a number of projects including:-

- various asset management works at the Sports Complex;
- computer hardware and software upgrades;
- a new play area at Byerley Park;

- a new toddlers play area at the Town Park;
- the creation of woodland in Woodham Burn for the Queen's Jubilee;
- roofing works to the Sports Complex and Stephenson Way Cemetery;
- resurfacing of the Sports Complex access road and car park;
- a new Council website;
- St Oswald's Allotments extension.

The main capital works completed in 2010/11 are listed below:-

- ◆ Converting St Oswald's bowls pavilion into a pre-school office;
- ◆ Replacement golf fairways mower;
- ◆ ICT hardware and software;
- ◆ Notice boards;
- ◆ Sports Complex heating system replacement;
- ◆ Refurbishment of the public toilets at the Sports Complex;
- ◆ Works to re-open the public toilets at St Oswald's Park;
- ◆ Upgrade of School Aycliffe play area and play area safety surfacing;
- ◆ Town Park tyre swing replacement;
- ◆ Roofing works at the Golf Complex;
- ◆ Replacement litter and dog bins;
- ◆ Access road at St Oswald's allotments and allotments fencing;
- ◆ Purchase of a dance mat system;
- ◆ Improvements to the Great Aycliffe Way.

Full details are provided in the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts.

14. Value for Money

Although the previous best value legislative requirements have been removed from Town and Parish Councils, and to date no further guidance has been released, the Town Council considers it vital to continue to deliver services under the ethos of best value and providing value for money to the local tax payers.

The Town Council consults its community on a regular basis from a town wide satisfaction survey undertaken every three years to consult on specific projects and the annual budget consultation. It undertakes an annual review of its functions, measures performance on a quarterly basis and produce a number of strategic documents, including the Medium Term Financial Plan, which are audited by an independent external auditor.

As a Quality Council, Great Aycliffe Town Council will continue to make arrangements to secure continuous improvements in the way in which it exercises its functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Council, will continue to undertake service reviews which have member involvement.

The Service Review Working Group is charged with the following responsibilities:

- ◆ To undertake reviews of services as determined by the Council from time to time
- ◆ To consider and make recommendations to the appropriate committee regarding all aspects of value for money for that service.

15. Consultation

We will continue to be flexible in our approach to consultation but our methods of consultation will be realistic in terms of cost and available resources. The Council continues to have a regular programme for surveying the users of our services, and we continue to publish a quarterly newsletter.

Surveys are undertaken each year for

- ◆ Users of the Oakleaf Sports Complex,
- ◆ Pensioners using the trips provided by the Council,

The allotment holders are surveyed every two years, and other ad-hoc surveys are undertaken as and when required.

A Strategy Customer Panel was set up following the satisfaction survey undertaken in August 2007. This panel has been involved in the setting of council targets and is consulted on a range of matters including the budget setting process and the annual budget consultation.

A Youth Council was set up in November 2008 who is also consulted on a range of matters. In addition the Youth Council has been given a devolved budget to help deliver specific projects highlighted by the young people of the Great Aycliffe area.

The Town Council attends community events to highlight the services it provides and gather residents view.

16. Representation

The Council nominates representatives annually to the following outside bodies. The representatives for 2010/11 are:

- a) Aycliffe Youth Council
Councillors V Crosby, A Warburton, Mrs K Hopper and the Corporate and Policy Officer.
- b) County Durham Association of Local Councils
Councillors RS Fleming (Leader), JD Clare (Deputy Leader) and the Town Clerk.
- c) Citizens' Advice Bureau
Councillor M Iveson with B Hall as reserve.
- d) Woodham Village Community Association
Councillors Mrs J Gray and K Henderson
- e) Great Aycliffe and Middridge A.A.P. Local Council's Committee
Councillors RS Fleming and B Hall and the Town Clerk.
- f) Countryside Volunteers
Councillors V Crosby, I Gray and A Warburton.
- g) Larger Local Councils' Forum
Councillors RS Fleming (Leader), JD Clare (Deputy Leader) and the Town Clerk.
- h) Lifelong Learning Committee
Councillors V Crosby, Mrs D Bowman and RS Fleming.
- i) Normandy Veterans' Association
Councillor Mrs M Dalton.
- j) Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre
Councillor Mrs K Hopper
- k) Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society
Councillors I Gray, Mrs D Bowman and B Haigh

17. A Financial Overview

This section of the Plan provides a summary of the Council's spending plans for 2011/12 as represented by the Revenue and Capital Budget and explains how this is funded by the Council Tax payers of the Parish via the Town Council Precept.

The Town Council Precept is basically the amount that the Council has estimated that it will require from Council Tax this year to fund the many services that we provide and is the figure on which the Town Council proportion of the Council Tax bill is calculated.

This section also provides a summary of the Council's financial performance in 2010/11 as well as a look ahead to the future.

17.1 2011/12 Revenue Budget

The Council must set a Budget every year. The Budget is set in advance of the following year. The Council's financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March.

The Budget is an estimate of the resources that the Council will require to fund all of the services that it provides, to achieve its strategic aims and objectives and address community and local taxpayer needs and priorities.

The Revenue Budget funds the day to day running costs of the Council's services such as salaries, supplies and fuel and the net cost after deducting any income receivable to the service from fees and charges and grants is met from the Town Council proportion of the Council Tax.

The development of the 2011/12 Revenue Budget needed to take into account a number of important issues, including:-

- ◆ the impact of the current economic climate and public sector expenditure cuts as discussed above;
- ◆ the principle of freezing the council tax;
- ◆ providing for inflation and any other unavoidable increases in costs;
- ◆ accounting for falls in income from fees and charges;
- ◆ identifying efficiency savings and potential budget reductions;
- ◆ identifying opportunities for increased income or securing external funding;
- ◆ considering any required investment in priority services

The Council is pleased to report that it has achieved a small reduction in the level of its Precept for 2011/12, thereby allowing it to freeze the council tax.

It is important to stress that this was achieved without the need to make cuts to front line services or staffing levels.

This was possible largely because there were a number of one off savings available to the Council's Revenue Budget although additional investment in existing or new services was unfortunately not possible due to the commitment to freeze the council tax.

The Council's spending plans for 2011/12 can be summarised as follows:-

Service Area	2011/12 Budget £
Members and Civic Expenses	72,600
Corporate Management, Finance and Administration	453,100
Capital Financing Charges	29,650
Pre Schools	249,500
Community Events	151,650
Sports Complex	671,300
Golf Course and Driving Range	240,350
Environment and Open Spaces	116,700
Parks, Sports Pitches and Play Areas	249,050
Works Depot and Street Equipment	146,650
Cemeteries	72,700
Allotments	15,650
Contingency Sum	16,150
Total Cost of Running Town Council Services	2,485,050
One Off Capital Investment in Council Assets	207,800
Contribution to Capital Reserves	50,000
Total Planned Spending	2,742,850
Less Income	
County Council Funding for Pre-Schools	(165,000)
Double Taxation Grant (Cemeteries and Allotments)	(38,500)
Sports Complex Fees and Charges	(450,250)
Golf Course and Driving Range Fees and Charges	(187,400)
Cemeteries and Allotments Fees and Charges	(29,550)
Other Income	(42,500)
Investment Income	(5,000)
Total Income	(918,200)
Less Use of Council Balances to fund Capital Works	(207,800)
Net Budget Requirement / Council Precept	1,616,850

The 2011/12 Budget document provides more background to the budget setting process and more detail in terms of the budgets for individual service areas. The Budget document can be viewed at the Council Offices or on the Council website.

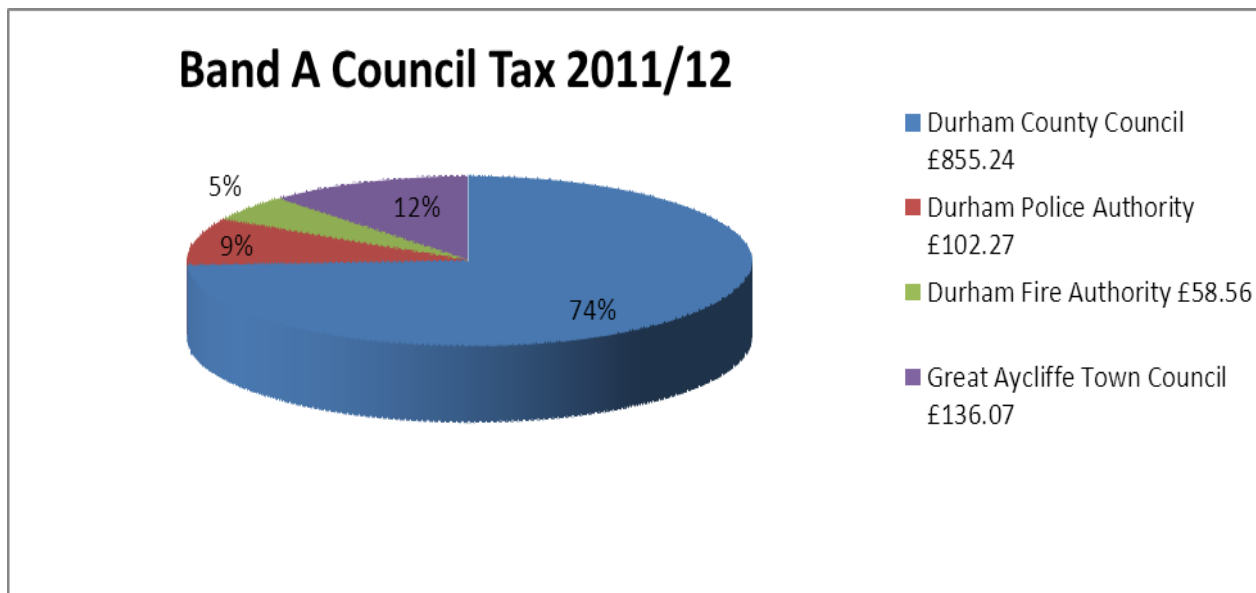
17.2 2011/12 Council Tax

As detailed above, the Council's 2011/12 Precept is £1,616,850 which equates to a Band D Council Tax of £204.10. However a significant proportion of properties in the Great Aycliffe area fall within **Council Tax Band A**, for which the Town Council element of the Council Tax bill is **£137.07 per year or £2.63 a week**.

This represented a freeze in the level of Council Tax.

The overall Council Tax figure for 2010/2011 for Band A properties in the Great Aycliffe area is £1,152.14.

However, the following illustration demonstrates that **only 12p in every £1 of council tax comes to Great Aycliffe Town Council:-**



The remainder of the council tax bill pays for services provided by the County Council such as education, social services and roads, as well as the Police and Fire Authorities.

17.3 2011/12 Capital Programme Budget

The **Capital Programme Budget for 2011/12** has been set at **£351,300** including £143,500 carried forward from 2010/11 in respect of on-going projects.

Capital projects planned for 2011/12 include roofing works at the Sports Complex and Stephenson Way Cemetery, the new Council website, St Oswald's Allotments extension, the refurbishment of Byerley Park play area, the installation of a toddlers' play area at the Town Park, the creation of new woodland in Woodham Burn, and the resurfacing of the Sports Complex and Golf Complex access road.

The Capital Programme Budget **will be funded in full from Council Balances**, as it is not expected that any external funding will be available towards the Council's capital investment plans and the Council does not need to undertake further borrowing at the present time.

17.4 2010/11 Spending

A summary of the Council's actual expenditure in 2010/11 in running its various services, and how this expenditure was funded is detailed below:-

Service Area	2010/11 £
Members and Civic Expenses	68,188
Corporate Management, Finance and Administration	460,036
Capital Financing Charges	45,582
Pre Schools	224,118
Community Events	139,475
Sports Complex	728,526
Golf Course and Driving Range	276,237
Parks, Sports Pitches and Play Areas	346,092
Environment, Works and Street Equipment	281,448
Cemeteries	72,739
Allotments	18,327
Contingency Sum	-
Total Cost of Running Council Services	2,660,767
Less Income	
Grants	(47,570)
Pre Schools Funding and Fees	(204,297)
Sports Complex Fees and Charges	(449,192)
Golf Course and Driving Range Fees and Charges	(188,030)
Cemeteries Fees	(25,923)
Other Fees and Charges	(41,529)
Investment Income	(3,561)
Total Income	(960,102)
Exclusion of Depreciation Charges	(340,702)
Actual Net Cost of Council Services	1,359,964
Contribution to Council Balances / Savings	263,036
Council Precept / Council Tax	1,623,000

The financial position and spending of the Council is continuously monitored and controlled in order to help achieve the most efficient use of public resources.

This has allowed the Council to make a contribution to its balances and reserves in 2010/11 of £263,000 or 16%. The savings were made up of the planned contribution to capital reserves in the Revenue Budget, the non-use of the contingency sum, the officer pay freeze, savings on staff cover and overtime costs, high pre-school funding arising from numbers of children running at capacity levels, the non-implementation of environment waste disposal charges by Durham County Council, renegotiated gas and electricity contracts and general efficiency savings achieved in many budget areas.

17.5 Looking Ahead / Medium Term Financial Plan

The Council is currently in the process of preparing its Medium Term Financial Plan for the five year period 2011/12 to 2015/16.

The Medium Term Financial Plan sets out the Council's financial strategy for the next five years and provides the link between its aims, targets and priorities as set

out in the Parish Performance Plan and the resources that are likely to be available to fund them via the Annual Budget.

The Medium Term Financial Plan will set out the Council's financial strategy for the next five years helping to shape the Council's spending plans over the medium term enabling it to achieve its strategic aims and targets and respond to the challenges that might lie ahead in these uncertain economic times.

Looking ahead, there will undoubtedly be pressure on the Council's Revenue Budget over the next five years. For example, inflation continues to run at very high levels, interest rates remain low and usage of our leisure facilities continues to suffer from users having less disposable income to spend.

The Council also has significant on-going capital investment commitments and it is likely that Council Balances and Reserves will diminish. This could mean that the Council may need to look at other ways of funding capital investment in the future such as generating capital receipts from land sales or taking out additional loans.

Having said that, the Council finances are still in a relatively healthy position and the Council is well placed going forward to continue to avoid needing to make cuts to services or jobs and to keep council tax increases low.

The Medium Term Financial Plan can be viewed at the Council Offices or on the Council website.

APPENDIX 1

AIMS AND TARGETS 2010/11

No	Target	Comments
AIM 1 – TO PROVIDE GOOD QUALITY GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL		
1	Publish a Parish Performance Plan by 30 th June	Complete
2	Achieve an unqualified audit opinion on the Annual Governance Statement	Complete – See Appendix 6
3	Quarterly performance report to Policy & Resources Committee	Complete
4	Deliver the Internal Audit Plan Schedule of Work and report to council	Complete
5	Review the personal development reviews to find a more user friendly approach	Complete
6	Prepare an annual training list, developed from the Personal Development Review, or replacement, process and feed into the budget setting process	Complete
7	Provide a Member and Town Clerk training programme to comply with guidance for Quality Status	On-going
8	Undertake a review of all records and filing systems annually to comply with Freedom Of Information Act	On-going
9	Improve advertising of council facilities and services by targeting a service area in each publication	On-going
AIM 2 – TO MANAGE THE COUNCIL'S FINANCES AND ASSETS IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER		
10	Produce annual statement of accounts by 30.6.10	Complete
11	Achieve an unqualified audit opinion of the account by 30.9.10	Complete
12	Complete any Government returns electronically by the relevant deadline	Complete
13	Aim to deliver 3% efficiency savings.	Complete
14	Implement any works highlighted in the Asset Management Plan, prioritised by Disability Discrimination Act compliance.	On-going
15	Undertake a review of all Council risks every March and report to Council	Complete
16	Budgets/Precepts approved by 31 st January 2011	Complete

No	Target	Comments
17	Map all council owned land, buildings and other assets onto the Geographical Information System	On-going
18	Undertake an annual update of the Asset Register	Complete
19	Undertake an annual review of the schedule of expected life and replacement costs for plant and machinery and build into the capital works programme as necessary	On-going
AIM 3 – TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE LEISURE FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES		
20	Complete the Best Value Review of the Oakleaf Sports Complex	Complete
21	Deliver 30 public countryside events	Complete - 35 events took place
22	Deliver the Council's programme of special events	Complete
23	Provide 2 training sessions on the new dance mat system (<i>'train the trainer'</i> type sessions)	Complete
24	Work with community groups and voluntary organisations to provide at least 5 community dance sessions	Complete – However there is some reluctance from community groups to collect and return the mats as they are quite heavy and 2 people are required
25	Pursue the of opening additional allotments at St. Oswald's Park/allotments	Awaiting planning permission
26	Replace the Oakleaf Sports Complex heating system to be more efficient	Complete
AIM 4 – TO PROVIDE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AS APPROPRIATE IN GREAT AYCLIFFE		
27	Investigate the need for extended opening hours at the Early Years settings. If required extend the opening hours.	St. Oswald's Pre-School now provides extended hours
28	Achieve successful Ofsted Inspection Results (if undertaken)	No inspections have taken place

AIM 5 – TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT OF AYCLIFFE BY MANAGING AND DEVELOPING PARKS, PLAY AREAS AND GREEN SPACES		
29	Environmental Officer to work with local schools and community groups to develop volunteer opportunities	On-going
30	Work with the Youth Council, schools, community and voluntary groups to hold a Town Pride Environment Day	Complete
31	Publicise environmental/green spaces in the Great Aycliffe area. Including the development and publication of a leaflet	On-going
32	Plant a hedgerow round the inner field boundary at Cobblers Hall Plantation	Complete
33	Publicise parks and play areas in Town Council ownership. Including the development of a leaflet	On-going
34	Complete the improvements to the Great Aycliffe Way	Complete
35	Develop and publish a Great Aycliffe Way leaflet to promote the walk	Complete
36	Refurbish School Aycliffe Play Area	Complete
37	Open the public toilets at St. Oswald's Park	Complete
38	Continue the replacement of dog waste bins at various town council owned locations	Complete
39	Consider the re-development/use of Horndale Park and football pitches	Following the withdrawal of Durham County Council funding for major leisure improvements around the Horndale Park area, the Town Council investigated a number of options for redevelopment. However, due to the current economic climate it was decided to put any potential projects on hold
AIM 6 – HELP AND ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO IMPROVE THE SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR THE RESIDENTS OF GREAT AYCLIFFE		
40	Support and encourage Aycliffe Youth Council (AYC) by Organising the election process Holding at least 8 meetings a year Help organise at least 1 project per year	On-going Regular meetings are held Bulb planting, wild flower planting and environment week projects have been completed
41	Working with other groups to develop community activities to encourage pride in Great Aycliffe	On-going All of the above were undertaken with various partners

42	Hold a litter awareness campaign in partnership with Durham County Council, the Youth Council and any national initiatives	Complete
43	Negotiate with Durham County Council to hold a high profile 'dog fouling' campaign in the Great Aycliffe area	Complete
44	Work with County Councillors for Aycliffe and Great Aycliffe and Middridge Partnership (GAMP) and Durham County Council to provide additional off-street parking	Complete
45	Work with County Councillors for Aycliffe and GAMP to access Neighbourhood Budgets for the benefit of Great Aycliffe residents	Complete
AIM 7 – ENGOURAGE THE RESIDENTS OF GREAT AYCLIFFE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN LOCAL DEMOCRACY		
46	Hold at least 5 Customer Panel meetings with the residents of Great Aycliffe	On-going
47	Hold a budget setting consultation meeting with the Customer Panel	Complete
48	Hold a Parish Meeting	Complete Held on 4 th May 2011
49	Hold an Allotment AGM	Complete Held on Thursday 18 th November
50	Hold 6 allotment representative meetings	On-going Meetings are held prior to Environment Committee
51	Provide information about elections, the need to register to vote, how to become a Councillor etc on the Council's website	On-going New website in process of being developed
52	Hold or take part in at least 2 events to inform residents about Town Council services	On-going
AIM 8 – TO RESEARCH INFORMATION AND MAKE THE CASE FOR GREAT AYCLIFFE		
47	Produce timely responses to all major consultations carried out	On-going
48	Undertake benchmarking and research where appropriate for new policies and procedures	On-going
	Keep up to date with any changes in legislation and report to council as and when required	On-going

APPENDIX 2

AIMS AND TARGETS 2011/2012

AIM 1 – TO PROVIDE GOOD QUALITY GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL	
1	Publish a Parish Performance Plan by 30 th June
2	Achieve an unqualified audit opinion on the Annual Governance Statement
3	Quarterly performance reports are presented to Policy & Resources Committee
4	Deliver the Internal Audit Plan Schedule of Work and report to council
5	Hold quarterly team meetings or staff supervision sessions to discuss training needs and generate new ideas.
6	Prepare an annual training list, developed from the team meetings and any supervision sessions
7	Provide a Member and Town Clerk training programme to comply with guidance for Quality Status
8	Undertake a review of all records and filing systems annually to comply with Freedom Of Information Act
9	Improve advertising of council facilities and services by targeting a service area in each publication
10	Provide apprenticeship/learning opportunities to give young people work experience
11	Undertake a town wide questionnaire consultation exercise
AIM 2 – TO MANAGE THE COUNCIL’S FINANCES AND ASSETS IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER	
12	Produce annual statement of accounts by 30.6.11
13	Achieve an unqualified audit opinion of the account by 30.9.11
14	Ensure the Medium Term Financial Plan is approved by 30 th June each year
15	Complete any Government returns electronically by the relevant deadline
16	Aim to deliver 3% efficiency savings.
17	Implement any works highlighted in the Asset Management Plan, prioritised by Disability Discrimination Act compliance.
18	Quarterly budgetary control reports are presented to Policy & Resources Committee
19	Undertake a review of all Council risks every March and report to Council
20	Budgets/Precepts approved by 31 st January 2012
21	Map all council owned land, buildings and other assets onto the Geographical Information System
22	Undertake an annual update of the Asset Register
23	Undertake an annual review of the schedule of expected life and replacement costs for plant and machinery and build into the capital works programme as necessary

24	Undertake a review of the waste disposal costs and options available to the Town Council
25	Undertake and complete a programme of roof surveys of Council owned buildings
AIM 3 – TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE LEISURE FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES	
26	Deliver 40 public countryside events
27	Plant a woodland area along The Burn to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee
28	Deliver the Council’s programme of special events
29	Pursue the opening of additional allotments at St. Oswald’s Park/allotments
30	Expand the activities offered at the Oak Leaf Sport Complex
31	Maximise on the proposed closure of neighbouring facilities and increase the number of people accessing the indoor bowling facility
32	Complete the programme of asset management planned work at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex
AIM 4 – TO PROVIDE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AS APPROPRIATE IN GREAT AYCLIFFE	
33	Achieve successful Ofsted Inspection Results (if undertaken)
34	Aim to maximise child numbers at both pre-schools
AIM 5 – TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT OF AYCLIFFE BY MANAGING AND DEVELOPING PARKS, PLAY AREAS AND GREEN SPACES	
35	Environmental Officer to work with local schools and community groups to develop volunteer opportunities
36	Work with the Youth Council, schools, community and voluntary groups to hold a Town Pride Environment Day
37	Undertake improvements to Byerley Park Play Area
38	Install a separate toddler play area within the Town Park
39	Work with Sedgefield Borough Homes to pursue the land transfer of the area known as Seven Hills
40	Work with Durham County Council and present a case for the Town Council to take over certain green spaces to help improve these areas
41	Continue to provide a limited snow clearing and gritting service on behalf of Durham County Council
42	Undertake a range of improvements to Aycliffe Nature Park
AIM 6 – TO HELP AND ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO IMPROVE THE SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR THE RESIDENTS OF GREAT AYCLIFFE	
43	Support and encourage Aycliffe Youth Council (AYC) by Organising the election process Holding at least 8 meetings a year Help organise at least 1 project per year

44	Working with other groups to develop community activities to encourage pride in Great Aycliffe
45	Work with partners and assist with initiatives to reduce litter
46	Working in partnership with Network Rail, The Bishop Line and others adopt Aycliffe Train Station
AIM 7 – TO ENCOURAGE THE RESIDENTS OF GREAT AYCLIFFE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN LOCAL DEMOCRACY	
47	Hold at least 5 Customer Panel meetings with the residents of Great Aycliffe
48	Hold a budget setting consultation meeting with the Customer Panel
49	Hold a Parish Meeting
50	Hold an Allotment AGM
51	Hold 6 allotment representative meetings
52	Provide information about elections, the need to register to vote, how to become a Councillor etc on the Council's website
53	Hold or take part in at least 2 events to inform residents about Town Council services
54	Develop a Welcome Pack for new residents to highlight the facilities provided by Great Aycliffe Town Council
55	Develop a Guide to Town Council services, setting out the responsibilities of the Town Council and what facilities they provide along with a list of useful contacts.
56	Investigate options for setting up a Senior Citizens Panel to gather information regarding the needs of our older residents
AIM 8 – TO RESEARCH INFORMATION AND MAKE THE CASE FOR GREAT AYCLIFFE	
57	Produce timely responses to all major consultations carried out
58	Undertake benchmarking and research where appropriate for new policies and procedures
59	Keep up to date with any changes in legislation and report to council as and when required

APPENDIX 3

PEST ANALYSIS

In analysing the macro-environment, it is important to identify external factors that might in turn affect a number of variables that are likely to influence the operation of the Council.

This PEST analysis is merely a framework that categorises issues as political, economic, social and technological forces.

This analysis is not a set of rigid compartments into which ideas need to be sorted it is best thought of as a set of information on what is happening externally that will or may affect the service.

PEST ANALYSIS FACTORS	POTENTIAL IMPACT	IMPLICATION AND IMPORTANCE			ACTION
		Type:	Impact:	Importance:	
	High Medium Low Undetermined	Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat	Increasing Unchanged Reducing Unknown	Critical Important Unimportant Unknown	
Political					
Unitary Council / AAP developments	Medium	Opportunity	Unknown	Important	Make case for Great Aycliffe at every opportunity Feed issues to CDALC for representation
Changes in Government policy / legislation	High	Threat	Unknown	Important	Keep up-to-date Lobby via NALC
Audit Commission Inspections	Medium	Opportunity	Reducing	Important	Comply with FRISSE Maintain internal control Adhere to legislative requirements
Political balance of Council	Medium	Opportunity	Reducing	Important	Be apolitical Work with all parties
Local Government elections	Low	Opportunity	Unchanged	Important	Await outcome Keep up-to-date with changes
Change in Government	Medium	Weakness	Unknown	Important	Await outcome React accordingly

PEST ANALYSIS FACTORS	POTENTIAL IMPACT	IMPLICATION AND IMPORTANCE			ACTION
		Type:	Impact:	Importance:	
	High Medium Low Undetermined	Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat	Increasing Unchanged Reducing Unknown	Critical Important Unimportant Unknown	
Economic					
Tax Base	Medium	Opportunity	Increasing	Important	Monitor
Changes in interest rates	High	Weak	Increasing	Important	Borrowing/repayments Loss on interest Medium Term Financial Plan
Skills Shortages	Medium	Threat	Increasing	Important	Monitor
Inflation	Medium	Threat	Reducing	Important	Efficiency savings Precept rate
Levels of Employment	Medium	Weak	Unknown	Important	Monitor
Demand for Services	Medium	Threat	Reducing	Important	Monitor and offer promotions where possible
Lack of government grant funding/ limited fund raising ability	Low	Weakness	Unchanged	Important	Review Bid for funding whenever possible
Severe Weather	Medium	Threat	Unknown	Important	React accordingly

PEST ANALYSIS FACTORS	POTENTIAL IMPACT High Medium Low Undetermined	IMPLICATION AND IMPORTANCE			ACTION
		Type: Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat	Impact: Increasing Unchanged Reducing Unknown	Importance: Critical Important Unimportant Unknown	
Sociological					
Access to services	Low	Opportunity	Increasing	Important	Develop partnerships DDA work Pricing policy Marketing
Social exclusion Hard to reach groups Equality and diversity Deprivation	Medium	Opportunity	Increasing	Important	Special events Free taster sessions Equal opportunities employer Monitor service users Satisfaction Survey Be aware
Crime/Fear of Crime	Medium	Threat	Unknown	Important	CCTV Wardens
Ageing population	Medium	Threat	Increasing	Important	Provision of services - cost
Health/Obesity	High	Opportunity	Unknown	Important	Partnership working
Technical					
New Communication Technologies	Medium	Threat	Increasing	Important	Keep up-to-date
Mechanical equipment	Medium	Opportunity	Increasing	Important	Risk management Asset management
Environmental Impact / Carbon Footprint	Medium	Opportunity	Increasing	Important	Keep up-to-date with legislation Monitor energy usage

APPENDIX 4

SWOT ANALYSIS

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Strong customer focus ❖ Stable and committed workforce ❖ Improved working relationships ❖ Commitment to service ❖ Clear focus on the way forward ❖ Different skills ❖ Performance management ❖ Local employer ❖ Sound finances ❖ Risk management ❖ Investment in people ❖ Quality Council status ❖ Adaptability ❖ Health and Safety 	<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Rate of change/speed of decision making ❖ Equalities implications ❖ Project planning ❖ Time and capacity ❖ Lack of specialist knowledge
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Increased efficiency in service delivery ❖ Customer involvement at a deeper level ❖ Need to increase and build morale through recognition of success ❖ Strengthen aspirations ❖ Develop appropriate strategy documents ❖ Improve skills of existing staff and Members ❖ Increased flexibility ❖ Partnership working ❖ Area Action Partnership ❖ Publicity of Council services and facilities 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Financial cuts ❖ Political changes ❖ Crime and vandalism ❖ Failure to retain staff ❖ Staff motivation ❖ Age of workforce/loss of knowledge ❖ Service reviews ❖ Unforeseen budget pressures ❖ Partnership working ❖ Industrial action

APPENDIX 5

MEMBER CONTACT DETAILS

Advice and information about our services can be obtained by telephoning 01325 300700 or visiting our website at www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk.

There are 30 elected members who represent the 6 wards of the Town.
L – Labour I – Independent LD – Liberal Democrat

BYERLEY PARK, HORNDAL & COBBLERS HALL

COUNCILLOR	TELEPHONE (01325)	EMAIL ADDRESS
Mrs. D. Bowman - L	Home - 308094 Mobile - 07967901477	dorotheskdale62@talktalk.net
I. Gray – L	Home - 313770	ian.gray38@btinternet.com
V. Crosby - L	Home - 315083 Mobile - 07905 738285	vince@vcrosby.plus.com
B. Hall - L	Home - 314105 Mobile - 07899 721573	
Mrs I. Hewitson - I	Home - 318763	
Mrs A. Palmer - L	Mobile – 07810 170325	alison276@hotmail.co.uk

SHAFTO/ST MARYS

R. S. Fleming - L	Home - 310025 Mobile - 07779085948	
B. Haigh - I	Home - 318645 Mobile - 07760 403992	
T. Hogan - I	Home - 313828 Mobile - 07901 552205	terryhogan23@btinternet.com

WOODHAM SOUTH

P. Gittins - I	Home - 317666 Mobile - 07831 269526	
W. Iveson - L	Home - 312490 Mobile - 07946 659663	WilliamIveson@hotmail.com
Mrs V. M. Raw - L	Home - 311447 Mobile – 07804 452865	

WOODHAM NORTH

Mrs B. A. Clare - L	Home - 318333 Mobile - 07980 834977	BarbaraClare@johndclare.net
---------------------	--	-----------------------------

COUNCILLOR	TELEPHONE (01325)	EMAIL ADDRESS
J. D. Clare - L	Home - 318333	jdc@johndclare.net
Mrs M. Dalton - L	Home - 320499	
Mrs J. Gray - L	Home - 313778	
Mrs S. Haigh - I	Home - 318645 Mobile - 07867 788603	
K. Henderson - L	Home - 319542	
<u>SIMPASTURE</u>		
M. Iveson - L	Home - 319759 Mobile - 07882 361492	
A. Warburton - I	Home - 315182	pinkyna51@yahoo.co.uk
<u>NEVILLE</u>		
P. Ducker - I	Mobile - 07950 351830	
G. R. Gray - I	Home - 304480 Mobile - 07881 784299	
Mrs S. J. Iveson - L	Home - 319759 Mobile - 07882 842973	
<u>WEST</u>		
S. Bambridge - I	Home - 300195 Mobile - 07717 301498	sparky1ste@yahoo.co.uk
T.R. Bowman - L	Home - 308094 Mobile - 07944 067396	dorotheskdale62@talktalk.net
B. Curtis - I	Home - 320291	
G.C. Gray - I	Home - 314934 Mobile - 07711 159763	georgecgray@btinternet.com
Mrs K. Hopper - L	Home - 314697	kate@highbarnroad.fsnet.co.uk
Mrs E. M. Paylor - L	Home - 313697 Mobile - 07979 727338	enid.paylor@durham.gov.uk
<u>AYCLIFFE VILLAGE</u>		
B. Blenkinsopp - LD	Home - 788893 Mobile - 07772 921166	blenky27@gmail.com

APPENDIX 6

ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER