Great Aycliffe

Town Council

Works & Environment Services

Service Plan 2018-2019

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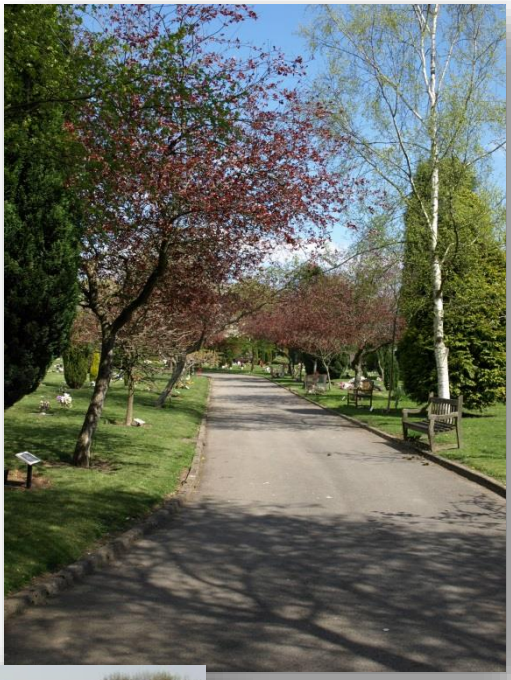
Aycliffe Way

Stephenson Way Cemetery



West Park

West Cemetery

Artworks

Environmental Work

1.0 Executive Summary

The Works and Environmental Services Section provides a range of skilled services to the Council covering the management and maintenance of parks, cemeteries, open spaces, play areas, golf course, sports pitches, allotments, trees and woodlands, buildings, bus shelters, street furniture and the Christmas lighting display.

In addition, the Works and Environmental Services Section supports other areas within the Council such as the Golf Driving Range, Pre-School Learning Centres, improvement projects, Great Aycliffe Way, Nature Park and School Aycliffe Wetlands as well as assisting with all outside events. In effect, the Works and Environmental Services Section service provision has an impact on the majority of Council services.

Our aim is to deliver services in a cost effective, efficient and timely manner.

2.0 Great Aycliffe Town Council

In 2005 following the achievement of quality status the Town Council agreed the following vision, that Great Aycliffe Town Council would be:-

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

Following a town wide survey undertaken as part of the neighbourhood plan process in 2014 residents were asked if the vision, aims and targets were still appropriate. 93% of respondents who answered the question agreed the vision was still suitable and 92.5% of respondents thought the strategic aims were still suitable. The strategic aims will, therefore, remain the same.

However, a number of comments were raised which included replacing 'quality' with 'proactive and responsive' as it was difficult to quantify 'quality'. In addition, it was suggested that 'to bring excellent services to Great Aycliffe' was changed to say ''contributing towards making Great Aycliffe an excellent place in which to live for all its residents'**.** These changes were reported to the Council for consideration and it was agreed that the vision should be updated to say that Great Aycliffe aims to be:

> **"A proactive and responsive Council, working in partnership, listening to and speaking up for the community, contributing towards making Great Aycliffe an excellent place in which to live for all its residents."**

In support of this statement, the Council agreed the following strategic Aims:

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.

3.0 Contribution to Council's Strategic Aims

The development of the Works and Environmental Services Section and the services it provides will assist in achieving the Council aims 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8.

To ensure the 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, the Works and Environmental Services Section will strive to:

- Deliver actions from the Action Plan.
- Demonstrate Best Value by achieving continuous improvement.

4.0 Equalities Statement

Although this is an internal working document we have taken the decision to make this available to anyone whom may be interested in environmental and grounds maintenance work within Great Aycliffe.

All employees and Elected Members of the Council are expected to treat each other and members of the public equally and with respect regardless of – Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage & Civil Partnership; Pregnancy & Maternity; Race; Religion & Belief; Sex or Sexual Orientation.

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.

5.0 Investment in Employees

It is clearly acknowledged and recognised that the Works and Environmental Services Section work within a customer oriented service and as such should maintain a customer focused approach. It is therefore vitally important that the

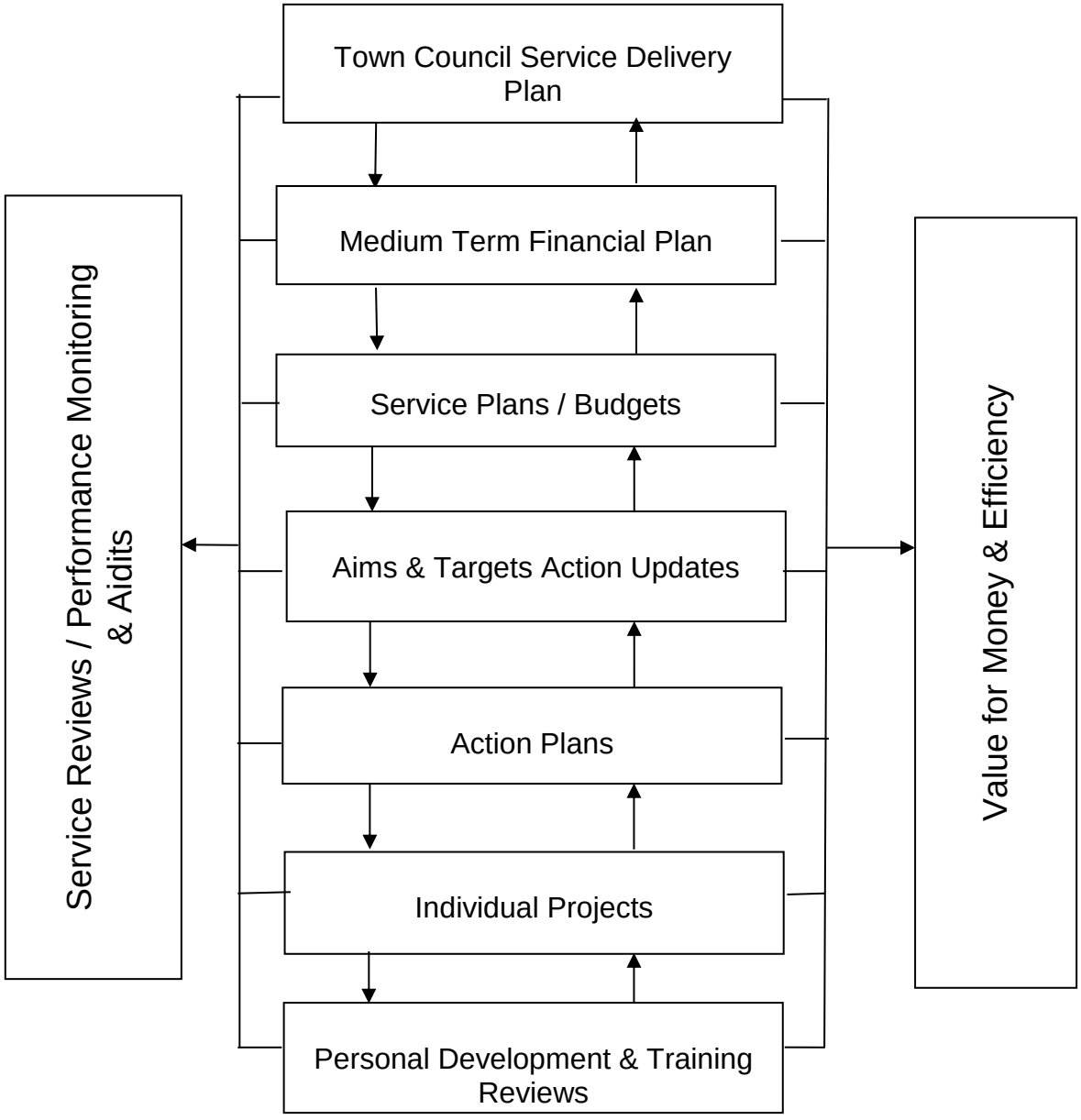
employees delivering front line services should have sufficient skills and training to meet customer expectations and requirements.

Additionally, it is recognised that the employees are the Authority's greatest asset in delivering services in the manner intended, and investment in employees is therefore paramount in achieving this aim.

6.0 Performance Management Framework

The Council's approved performance management framework, shown below, helps to demonstrate how the Council's Strategic Aims and Targets from the Parish Plan link to the Council's other strategies and how they feed down into the aims and objectives of individual service areas, down to the objectives of individual officers, and how these combine to help the Council deliver its aims.

Performance Management Framework



7.0 Works and Environmental Section Profile

7.1 Mission Statement

To ensure the adequate provision and management of safe, well maintained and accessible environmental areas, allotments, cemeteries, parks and play areas which meet the needs of all the community.

7.2 Service Aims

The Works and Environmental Section provide the necessary skills to achieve the following service aims:

- 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.

7.3 Service objectives

- To undertake the grounds maintenance and associated functions within budget and in a timely manner.
- To provide facilities for burials.
- To manage and maintain the Environment Centre.

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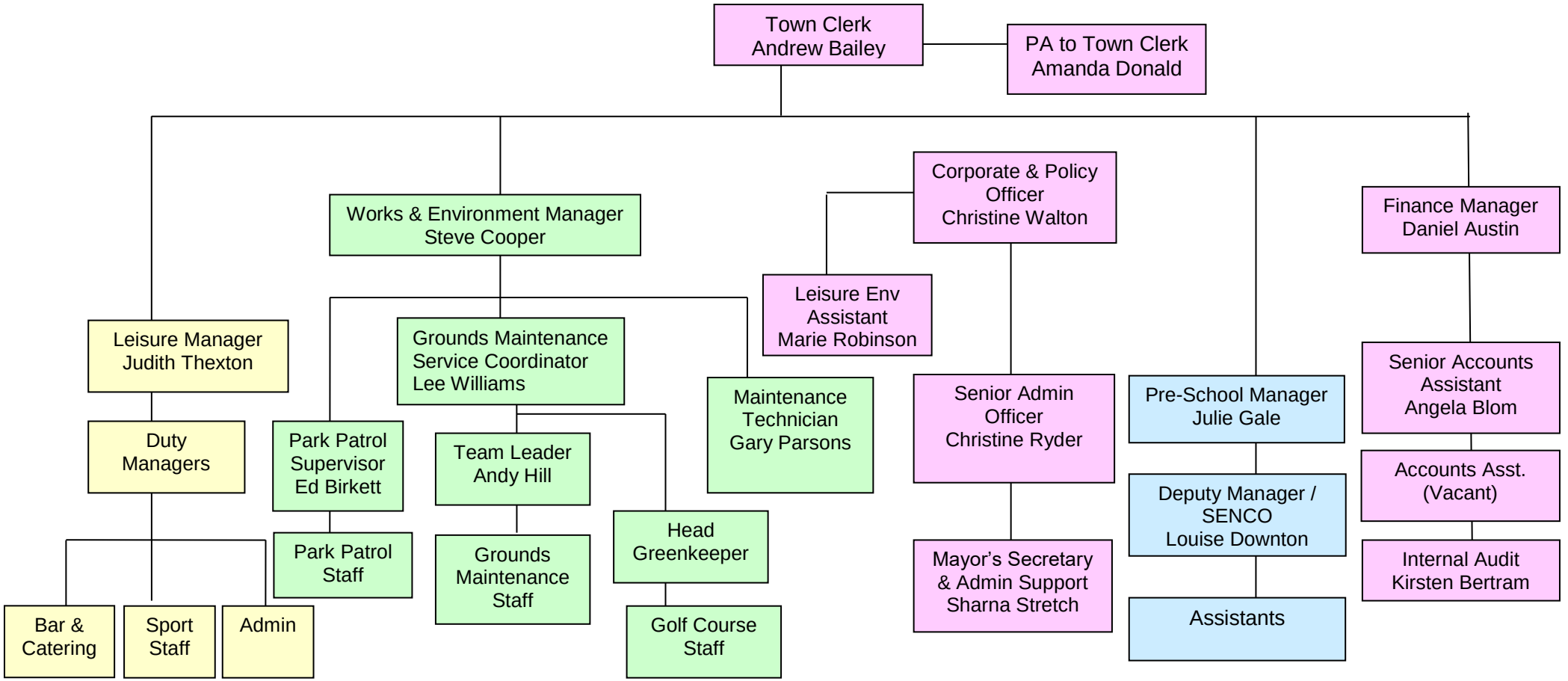
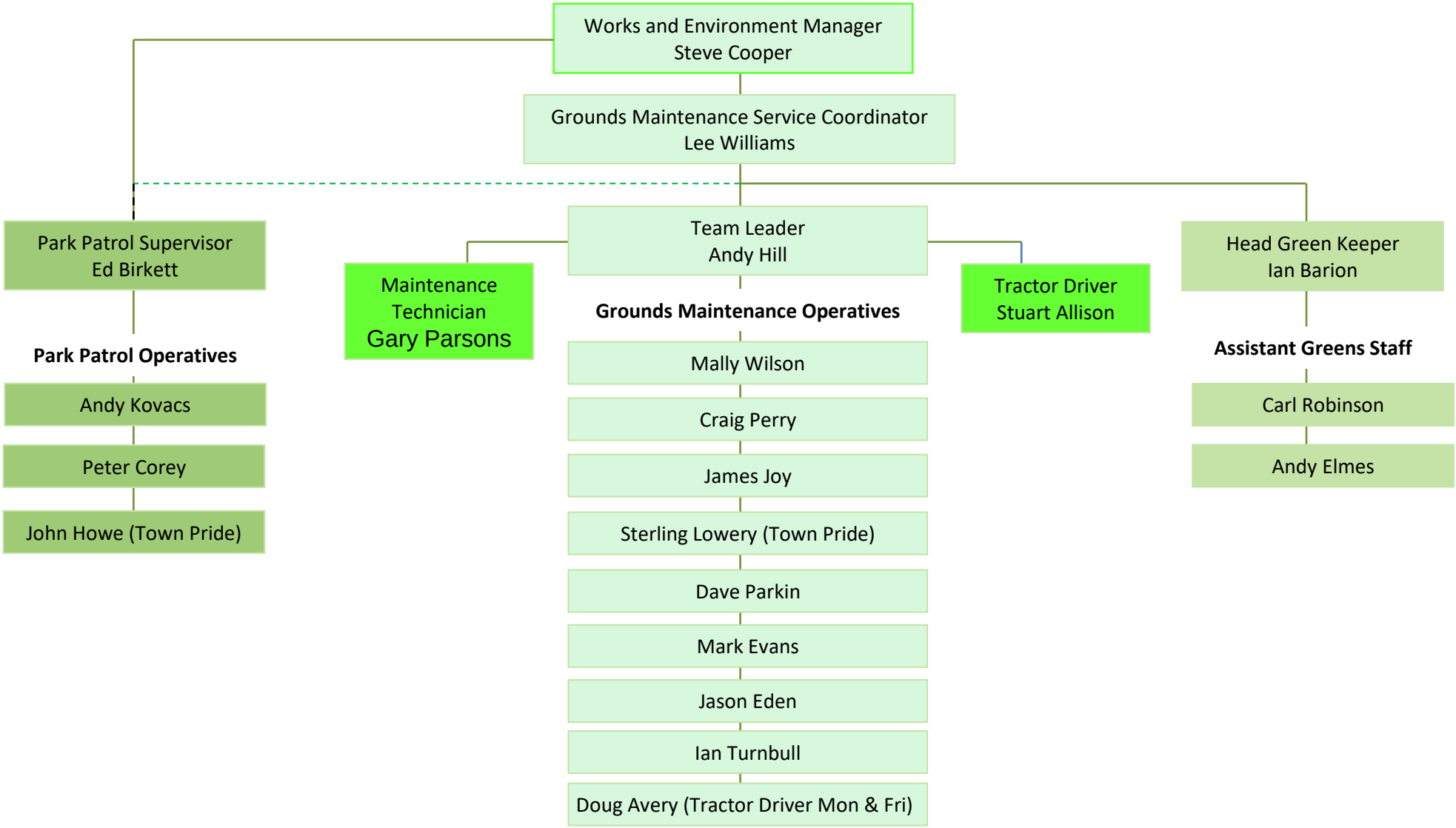
Management Structure



Consultants

- Human Resources
- Health and Safety
- Occupational Health Services

Works Staffing Structure



8.0 Areas of Responsibility

8.1 Parks

St. Oswald's, Town Park, Moore Lane, Horndale, West Park, Simpasture, Woodham and Byerley Park.

8.2 Play Areas

School Aycliffe, Aycliffe Village, Scott Place, Oakleaf Sports Complex, St. Oswald's, Town Park, Moore Lane, Horndale, West Park, Simpasture, Woodham, Byerley Park, Cobblers Hall.

8.3 Open Spaces

Aycliffe Village, Woodham, Horndale, Woodham Burn.

8.4 Cemeteries

Stephenson Way, West Cemetery and Aycliffe Village.

8.5 Allotments

Clarence Chare, Byerley Park, Finchale Road, St. Oswald's, Byerley Park, Aycliffe Village.

8.6 Sports Pitches

Oakleaf Sports Complex, Simpasture, Moore Lane.

8.7 Golf Facilities

Oakleaf Golf Course and Driving Range.

8.8 Bus Shelters, Seats Litter Bins and Dog Bins

Various locations.

8.9 Woodlands

South Agnew Plantation, Cobblers Hall, Rear Greathead Crescent, Seven Hills, School Aycliffe Tree belt.

8.10 Environmental Areas

Nature Park, Woodham Burn, School Aycliffe Wetlands, Seven Hills and Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve. Newt Ponds near Millennium way

8.11 Buildings

Simpasture Pavilion, Moore Lane, St. Oswald's, Council Offices, Town Park, Stephenson Way Cemetery, West Cemetery, Sports Complex Pavilion, Golf Driving Range, Horndale Pavilion.

The Works and Environmental Services Section employs 20 full time staff.

9.0 What we achieved last year

Delivered a programme of grounds maintenance and associated works on time and within budget.

- Provided a Parks Patrol Service.
- Supplied facilities for Football at the Complex, Simpasture and Moore Lane.
- Supplied facilities for Rugby Union at Moore Lane.
- Organised the Christmas lighting display.
- Provided assistance and support to outside events such as Aycliffe Show, 10k Run, Santa Tours and Firework Display.
- Organised the community Enhancement Award Scheme.
- Continued the programme of footpath repairs on Town Council owned land.
- Worked in partnership with Durham County Council to improve training towards snow clearing and gritting services in Great Aycliffe.
- To assist Durham County Council in snow clearance of designated footpaths around the parish.

- Carried out PA testing of Town Council appliances.
- Carried out inspections of footpaths, seating and bus shelters.
- Carried out inspections of play equipment.
- Carried out safety audit of headstones at West Cemetery.
- Carried out annual safety audit of play equipment.
- Updated Legionella building risk assessments.
- Replaced 3 members of staff.
- Provided first aid refresher training to designated first aid staff.
- Complete an employee Appraisal of all Works staff
- Identified and delivered staff training requirements including Chainsaw and pole pruner qualifications, Trailer course, Asbestos Awareness, Legionella training, Abrasive wheel training, Neebosh Health and Safety qualification,
- Held regular meetings with allotment representatives including the Allotments AGM.
- Facilitate and administer an allotment watch scheme for all allotment sites in conjunction with Durham Police.
- Facilitate multi agency meeting with Police, DCC enforcement teams, Livin and other key partners to coordinate the reduction of anti-social behaviour within the town.
- Facilitated several events during Festival programme.
- Completed works arising from a Tree Safety Inspection of trees on Great Aycliffe Town Council land.
- Complete a tree planting programme replacing trees removed due to ongoing maintenance.
- Facilitate the development of the new Under 2 year old building at St Oswalds.
- Clearance of interceptor tank and associated drainage system within the Works depot.
- Installation of new shutter door within depot and improvements to safety features on various shutters within parks throughout the town.
- Clearance of surface drainage system at Stephenson Way cemetery.

- Progressed the delivery of Cobblers Hall play area through the procurement and public consultation stage.
- Creation of new wildflower meadow within Woodham Park.
- Delivered lighting and efficiency improvements to the Oakleaf driving range through installation of LED lighting system.
- Purchase of new LED Christmas lighting and arranged to get street columns structurally tested.
- Improvements to outdoor play area at St Oswalds Pre-School.
- Facilitated new fire detection system within pre-school building at St Oswald's.
- Delivered Capital purchase of works panel and tipper van, compact tractor, Rough Cutter for golf course, wood chipper and tractor gang mower.

- Continued Partnership Working Arrangements with Durham County Council and other agencies to deliver environmental improvements in Great Aycliffe to improve the bio-diversification of the landscape.

- Provided rapid response to customer complaints regarding litter and fly tipping on Council owned land through the Town Pride Team, ensuring a safe environment.

- Provided 21 public countryside events. Organised 20 school education activities and 10 community activities.

- Organised the litter picking campaign- Environment Pride week with all local schools.

- Continued to enhance and expand links with community groups such as with the Friends groups, local College and Local Scout Groups.

In addition to the above list, the Works and Environmental Services section undertakes many other works when requested to, on an ad-hoc basis.

10.0 P.E.S.T. ANALYSIS

In analysing the macro-environment, it is important to identify the factors that might in turn affect a number of vital variables that are likely to influence the operation of the Works and Environmental Services Section.

This PEST analysis is merely a framework that categorizes environmental 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	NOTES	POTENTIAL IMPACT	IMPLICATION AND IMPORTANCE *Type:* *Impact:* *Importance:*			ACTION
	How might the factors on the left impact on our business	High Medium Low Undetermined	Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat	Increasing Unchanged Reducing Unknown	Critical Important Unimportant Unknown	
POLITICAL:						
• Changes in government policies	Determines the priorities for local authorities	High	Threat	Increasing	Important	Keep up to date with legislation
• Employment law	Affects the hours staff can work	Medium	Weakness	Unknown	Unknown	Keep up to date with legislation
• County Council issues	Knock on effect to services for Town Council	High	Threat	Increasing	Important	Make a case for Great Aycliffe at every opportunity

PEST ANALYSIS FACTORS	NOTES	POTENTIAL IMPACT	IMPLICATION AND IMPORTANCE *Type:*	*Impact:*	*Importance:*	ACTION
ECONOMIC:						
• Lack of funding, grants and initiatives		Medium	Weakness	Increasing	Important	Develop partnerships and bid for funding wherever possible
• Inflation/interest rates	Affects the secondary spend capacity	High	Weakness	Reducing	Important	Follow Council's budget setting protocols
• Employment	Affects the spending resources available	High	Weakness	Reducing	Important	
• Energy use and costs	instability of pricing	Medium	Threat	Unknown	Important	Obtain best energy prices available
SOCIAL Health / Obesity	Unwilling/unable to take part in exercise	Low	Opportunity	Increasing	Important	Continue to provide a range of free outdoor activities
TECHNOLOGICAL: • Advances in computerised games systems	More time spent sat at computers playing games	Medium	Weakness	Increasing	Important	Publicise facilities Keep up to date

11.0 S.W.O.T Analysis

In order to improve Works and Environmental Services Section services, it is important to analyse the existing internal strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats which may impact on service delivery.

Works and Environmental Services Section	
Strengths • Committed, well trained and multi-skilled staff. • Flexible approach to work. • Good team work. • Vast local knowledge • Room for expansion • Modern machinery and depot facilities. • Constantly reviewing service delivery. • Experienced workforce • New management restructure	**Weaknesses** • Weather dependant • Attracting skilled replacement staff. • Wage compatibility with other local authorities. • Age of workforce • New management structure
Opportunities • Developing partnerships • Localism Bill proposals • Improved communication	**Threats** • Changes in Government legislation and funding

12.0 Action Plan

Action	Outcome	Responsible Officer (s)	By
General			
Undertake grounds maintenance and associated duties on time and within designated budget	High level of satisfaction and the creation of a pleasant environment for all to enjoy	SC/LW	March 19
Provide a Parks Patrol Service	To provide a safe environment and discourage anti-social behaviour on council owned land	SC/LW Park Patrol	Ongoing
Identify and deliver staff training requirements	Staff are developed to their full potential	SC/LW/All staff	March 19
Work in partnership with Durham County Council to improve snow clearing and gritting services in Great Aycliffe.	Improvements in Winter maintenance.	SC/LW	March 19
Special Events			
Organise Christmas lighting display	Improving and enhancing the Christmas experience for residents and visitors	SC/LW	Dec 18
Organise Community Enhancement Award scheme	The opportunity for residents to nominate gardens and Christmas Light displays that enhance their local area	SC/LW	Dec 18

Action	Outcome	Responsible Officer (s)	By
Parks			
Undertake repairs to the safety surfacing at various parks	Provide safe play areas	SC/AH/GP	Ongoing
Continue programme of footpath repairs on Town Council owned land	Ensure a safe surface is provided	SC/AH	March 19
Investigate Hydrology of West Park Lakes via Northumbrian Water.	To assist in the development of a long term strategy for West Park.	SC/LW	June 18
Health and Safety			
Carry out PAT testing of Town Council appliances	A safe environment is provided for staff and visitors	PW	March 19
Carry out inspection of footpaths	A safe environment is provided for users	SC/LW/AH	September 18
Carry out inspections of play equipment	A safe environment is provided for users	LW/GP/AH	March 19
Carry out annual safety audit of play equipment	A safe environment is provided for users	SC/LW	Oct 18
Provide first aid refresher training to designated first aid staff	To meet first aid requirements in the workplace.	SC/LW	Ongoing
Allotments			
Continue with 6-weekly inspections of allotment sites	Sites are maintained to a suitable standard	SC/LW	On-going
Hold allotment representatives meeting every 6 weeks	Tenants' views and comments can be aired and considered	SC/LW	March 19
Hold allotment AGM in November 2016	Tenants' views and comments can be aired and considered	SC/LW	Nov 18

Action	Outcome	Responsible Officer (s)	By
Environment			
▪ Delivered an environmental maintenance programme and improvements of natural areas in Great Aycliffe through the Town Pride Team.	Increased level of customer satisfaction and awareness amongst general population of environmental issues and actions possible to improve the environment.	SC/LW/Town Pride	March 19
▪ Provide 20 public/community countryside events. ▪ Provided 20 environmental workshops for local schools.	Increased level of customer satisfaction and awareness amongst general population of environmental issues	SC/LW	March 19
▪ Organise the litter picking campaign- Environment Pride week with all local schools.	Increased awareness amongst general population of environmental issues	SC/LW/Town Pride	July 18
▪ Provide logistic support for Friends groups including Friends of Byerley Park LNR and Friends of West Park as required	Increased level of customer satisfaction and engagement of Community involvement	SC/LW/ Town Pride	Ongoing
▪ Developed partnership working with the Police, Youth Offending Team, Probation Service, local colleges, scouts, guides etc to provide opportunities and diversionary activities for those at risk of offending.	Action possible to improve the environment.	SC/LW/Town Pride	Ongoing
▪ Provided rapid response to customer complaints regarding litter and fly tipping on Council owned land through the Town Pride Team, ensuring a safe environment.	Ensuring a safe environment	SC/LW	Ongoing
• Managed DCC natural green areas in accordance with agreed environmental plan.	Ensuring a safe environment	SC/LW	Ongoing
• Continue Partnership Working Arrangements with Durham County Council and other agencies to deliver environmental improvements in Great Aycliffe.	Improve the bio-diversification of the landscape in Great Aycliffe.	AB/SC/LW	Ongoing

13.0 Risk Analysis

This years plan has taken an innovative approach to service delivery and could possibly be affected by the risks shown as identified in the Council's risk register.

Detail of Risk	Current Control	Level
Falling behind with grass cutting schedule	Schedule in place. Machinery maintained and serviced	Low
Sabotage of equipment	Hire equipment. Daily checks	Low
Pollution of West Park lakes	Use of specialist contractors to clear lakes	Low
Burial in wrong grave	Registers/maps kept up to date. Checking procedures in place	Low
Headstone erected on wrong grave	Cemeteries officer present prior to fitting. Registers/maps up to date	Low
Unsafe headstones leading to accident	Stonemason registration scheme. Nationally recognised fixing method. Inspection	Low
Play equipment not maintained	Maintenance and inspection programmes. Annual independent inspections	Low
Failure to maintain golf course adequately	Work schedule in place. Annual specialist inspections. Golf Working Group	Medium
Vandalism to golf greens	None	Medium
Closure of golf course due to flooding	None	Medium
Risk of Legionella	Checks in Place	Medium

This list is by no means exhaustive and risk assessments are being undertaken in detail and reviewed on a regular basis.