

GREAT AYCLIFFE TOWN COUNCIL



SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2017 - 2018

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Introduction to Great Aycliffe

The Parish of Great Aycliffe comprises the town of Newton Aycliffe and the villages of Aycliffe and School Aycliffe and is the oldest New Town in the North East. The population of Great Aycliffe is approximately 26,633 (Census data 2011) and is projected to grow over the next few years.

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.

There are a great many walking routes, with a number of public rights of way and bridleways giving easy access to extensive areas of green spaces, nature areas and local wildlife areas. Many of the main thoroughfares have tree lined avenues which enhance the green feel of the town.

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 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.

Schools in the area are generally good, and are increasingly linked to the higher education network. The investment and building of a University Technological College on the Business Park will enable young people from the area to have a choice of educational and vocational routes with excellent prospects for employment in nearby facilities.

It has excellent connectivity within and around the town with the A1(M) to the east and the Bishop Auckland to Darlington rail line running through the western side of the town and Business Park with two stations serving the Parish.

Aycliffe Business Park has grown beyond its original 'industrial' title to become the largest business park in the North East, attracting a wide range of international, national and local companies to its premises. The Aycliffe Business Park comprises approximately 250 hectares with plans for a large expansion.

There is a strong community feel with a wide range of community facilities, 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 across the Parish with something for everyone.

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

However, parts of Great Aycliffe are ranked within the poorest 20% of deprived areas nationally. As a 'new town' Newton Aycliffe has a higher than average ageing population. Social housing in the Great Aycliffe area is mainly provided by Livin a 'not for profit' housing association, as well as a number of other registered social and private landlords and private houses.

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 and is still on-going. 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. The planned expansion for Aycliffe Business Park and the investment by Hitachi Rail Europe is assisting Aycliffe to have higher aspirations for the Town.

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 Durham County Council, other organisations and partners to ensure the best results for Great Aycliffe residents.

Views on the Plan

The Town Council welcomes your views and comments on the Town Council Service Delivery Plan (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
- ◆ Oak Leaf 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.

Equalities

Great Aycliffe Town Council, its 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.

Services Provided by Great Aycliffe Town Council

The Town Council Service Delivery Plan is a corporate strategic document for the whole of the Town Council. The next few pages set out what the Town Council **DO** and what they are **NOT** responsible for.

Great Aycliffe Town Council:

- ✓ Manage 9 parks, all with play equipment:

Town Park
Moore Lane Park
Simpasture Park
St Oswald's Park
Horndale Park

West Park
Aycliffe Village
Byerley Park
Woodham Park

- ✓ Provide additional play areas at Scott Place, School Aycliffe and the Oak Leaf Sport Complex. Plus four Multi Use Games Areas, a BMX Track, a Scoot Track and a Skate Park
- ✓ Provide 5 football pitches, Mini-soccer and six-a-side pitches
- ✓ Run the Oak Leaf Sports Complex - indoor bowls, sports hall, squash courts, bar and catering, children's holidays courses, indoor/outdoor sports activities
- ✓ Run the Oak Leaf Golf Complex – 18 hole golf course and an 18 bay floodlit driving range and practice putting area
- ✓ Manage Stephenson Way Cemetery and West Cemetery and provide grounds maintenance and burial service at St Andrew's Churchyard
- ✓ Run St Oswald's pre-school play setting – with a 'good' Ofsted rating
- ✓ Provide and manage a wide range of special community events – Firework Display, Fun-in-the-Parks, Santa Tours, Senior Citizens' Excursions, Aycliffe Festival and 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
- ✓ Provide a range of civic events
- ✓ Provide and continue to maintain Aycliffe Angels Memorial Garden
- ✓ Maintenance of war memorial and flagpole

- ✓ Provide 212 allotment plots in 5 different locations. 2 allotment sites with pigeon or poultry facilities
- ✓ Provide an environmental centre at Moore Lane
- ✓ Encourage interest in the environment of Great Aycliffe through the Works and Environment Manager and his team who work with the community and schools
- ✓ Employ a Town Pride Team
- ✓ Crime prevention – the Town Council employs a team of Park Patrol Operatives
- ✓ Provide public seats in many locations
- ✓ Provide bus shelters with litter bins (not the ones with adverts)
- ✓ Grounds maintenance and environmental management at:

North Agnew Plantation	Cobbler's Hall Plantation
Woodham Burn	Simpasture Railway Walk
Great Aycliffe Way	Millfields/Bickford Terrace
Butterfly Meadow at Rail Halt	The area known as Seven Hills
School Aycliffe Wetlands	Byerley Park Nature area
Aycliffe Village Greens – custodians and maintenance	

- ✓ Assist Aycliffe Youth Council
- ✓ Provide a lorry park
- ✓ Encourage Community Empowerment through the Customer Panel, Consultation and Open Days
- ✓ Provide small grants to local voluntary organisations
- ✓ Comment on planning applications

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.

The Town Council is **NOT RESPONSIBLE** for the **Town Centre**, which is in private ownership. The Town Council **DOES NOT**:

- X Own or provide services in the town centre
- X Empty household or business refuse bins
- X Manage schools
- X Manage the Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre
- X Run economic development
- X Manage the highways
- X Manage the police, fire or ambulance services
- X Grant planning permission
- X Provide library services
- X Run social services
- X Run housing services
- X Provide bus services

CORPORATE SERVICES SECTION

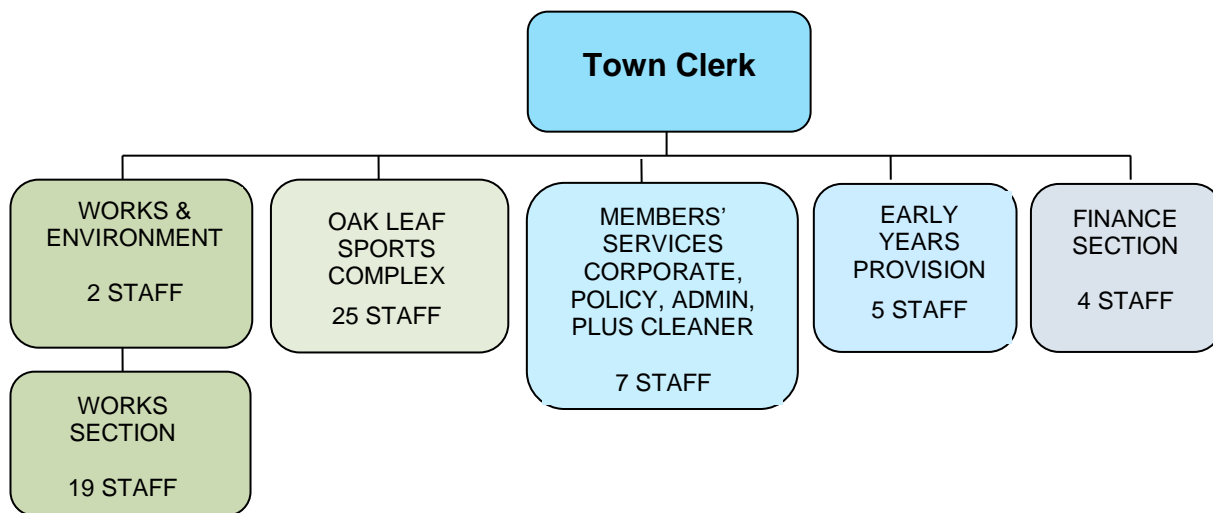
The Town Council

The Town Council Service Delivery Plan will be used as the Corporate Service Plan.

Great Aycliffe Town Council is one of the largest Town Councils in the country, with a planned Net Revenue Budget of £1,453,500 in 2017/2018.

The Council currently employs 63 staff, made up of 38 full-time and 25 part-time employees supported by a number of casual staff, who do not form part of the formal staff establishment.

The Council's Establishment



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

The Senior Officers within the Council are:

Town Clerk	Andrew Bailey	info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Corporate & Policy Officer	Chrissy Walton	christine.walton@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Finance Manager	Dan Austin	daniel.austin@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Works & Environment Manager	Steve Cooper	steven.cooper@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Leisure Manager	Judith Thexton	judith.thexton@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Grounds Maintenance Co-Ordinator	Lee Williams	lee.williams@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Senior Admin Officer	Christine Ryder	christine.ryder@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Pre-School Manager	Julie Gale	julie.gale@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

In February 2005 the Council agreed a strategic mission statement 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."**

However, following the town wide survey undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan Process from July to November 2014 it was suggested that 'quality' should be replaced with 'proactive and responsive'. Residents also suggested changing 'to bring excellent services to Great Aycliffe' to 'contributing towards making Great Aycliffe an excellent place in which to live for all its residents'.

After consideration by Council it was agreed that this more accurately reflects our aspirations which is 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 a number of strategic aims, which are reviewed on a regular basis. These are still considered fit for purpose and will help achieve the overall vision. The eight strategic aims are:-

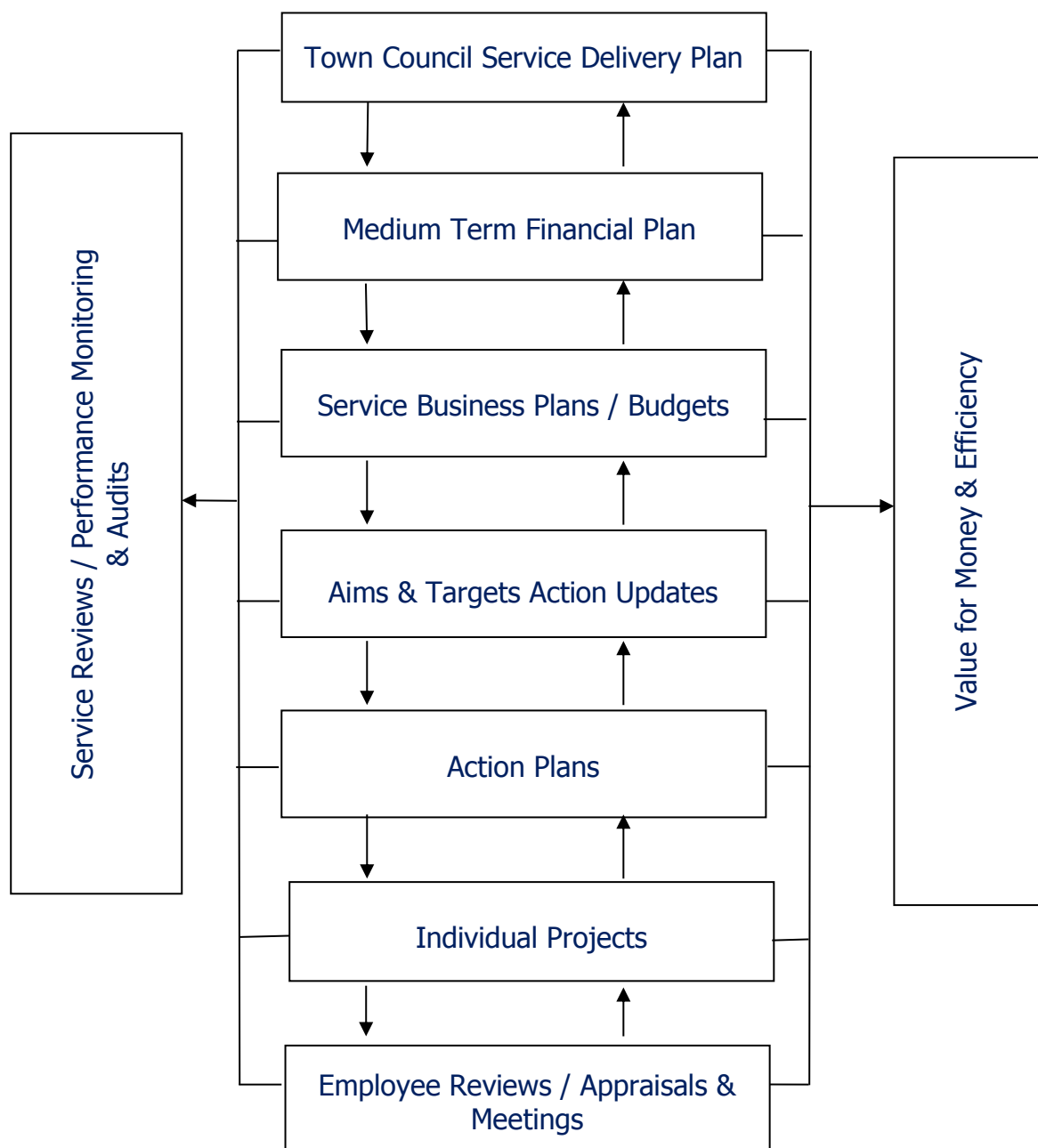
1.	To provide good quality governance and management of the Council.
2.	To manage the council's finances and assets in a responsible manner.
3.	To provide accessible, affordable leisure facilities and opportunities.
4.	To provide pre-school education as appropriate in Great Aycliffe.
5.	To contribute 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.

As part of the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan (GANP) consultation process, residents were asked specifically about Town Council services, including if they considered the vision and strategic aims were still relevant for the Town Council and the residents of Great Aycliffe. 93% of respondents agreed the vision and 92.5% of respondents agreed the strategic aims were still appropriate.

The Council sets a series of targets under each aim to ensure that the aims are met. The targets are reviewed annually as part of the end of year assessment process. Following the GANP consultation, a more robust and comprehensive review was undertaken by Senior Management Team and the Performance Management Group to ensure comments made during the consultation process could be incorporated into the targets for the Town Council.

Performance Management

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.



Progress on Council targets is discussed at Performance Management Group, which all service managers attend. The Review Sub-Committee regularly reviews progress on the existing targets and works with Senior Officers to set new targets for the coming year. 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.

Council Targets 2016/17

When setting targets every effort is made to ensure the aims and targets are closely linked to medium term financial planning, the budget setting process and within the context of the Council's Asset Management Plan. It is acknowledged 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 Town Council Service Delivery 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.

The targets for the last financial year including a statement of progress achieved against each target are set out in Appendix 1 which provides the close out status on the targets.

Council Targets 2017/18

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.

Consultations, questionnaires and attending public meetings ensure we are able to reflect the needs of the residents when we set and prioritise the targets for the Council. The Council's budgets are developed in line with these targets. In addition, Members, the Customer Panel and Youth Council have also been consulted and an annual budget consultation is also held.

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 new targets for the coming financial year can be found at Appendix 2.

Corporate Services and Personnel

This service area covers corporate and cross-cutting issues which have an effect across the entire Council. These are policy, planning, risk management, administrative and committee services, training and customer engagement. In addition, 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.
- ◆ Maintaining and updating the Council's Constitution and Standing Orders.
- ◆ Providing professional support and advice to Members and staff.
- ◆ Ensuring the effective organisation and running of the Committees of the Council and overseeing the production of agendas and minutes of meetings.
- ◆ Providing timely and appropriate advice in relation to all employee and employer relations issues.
- ◆ Monitoring and managing the Council's risks.
- ◆ Managing and overseeing the Council's arrangement for health and safety.
- ◆ Providing advice in relation to training requirements for members and employees including delivering training when possible.
- ◆ Town Council land and property matters including, village greens, sales and acquisitions.
- ◆ Preparing the annual Town Council Service Delivery Plan including the setting of aims and annual targets.
- ◆ Managing and administering the Council's Performance Management Framework.
- ◆ Overseeing the use of consultants by the Council.
- ◆ Maintaining the Town Council's website and ensure an effective IT support service is provided across the Council.
- ◆ Ensuring the effective running of the Youth Council.
- ◆ Providing support and guidance for any elections.
- ◆ Supporting the annual external audit inspection.
- ◆ Ensuring the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan is a robust document helping to maintain high standards of development appropriate to the Parish.

Administration

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

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

- ◆ To provide effective, efficient typing and administrative support to officers and Members and reception services to the public in relation to the Council's functions.
- ◆ Managing the records of the Council.
- ◆ To assist with the upkeep of information on the Town Council's website.
- ◆ To provide the necessary support at meetings of the Council and its Committees.

Members and 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 the necessary civic functions agreed annually by the Council.
- ◆ To assist with civic hospitality for the Council and its guests.
- ◆ To manage the Members' Allowances Scheme.

Finance Section

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 Finance Section also plays an important corporate role in helping to ensure 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 **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.
- ◆ Provision of financial advice and training.

Detailed information on the Town Council's finances can be found in the Medium Term Financial Plan, Revenue and Capital Budget, Accounts and Finance Service Plan.

Capital Projects and Asset Management

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 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 document.

The **Capital Programme Budget for 2017/18 totals £255,500** and includes provision for the following planned projects:

- ◆ Widening of the Town Park access gate.
- ◆ Play area surfacing replacement (first year of a new rolling programme of full replacement).
- ◆ Replacement roller door and separation tank cleaning at the depot.
- ◆ Three replacement works vehicles; a multi-use mowing machine, compact tractor and a wood chipper.
- ◆ Computer replacements and website development.
- ◆ Replacement festive lighting (first year of a new rolling programme of full replacement).
- ◆ External lighting replacement for the driving range.
- ◆ Replacement of the small flat roof at the sports complex;
- ◆ Provision for ongoing drainage repairs at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex.
- ◆ Replacement of the bar service lift at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex.
- ◆ Internal CCTV improvements at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex.
- ◆ Replacement shutters for the Oak Leaf Sports Complex function room door.
- ◆ An air conditioning unit for the Oak Leaf Sports Complex function room.
- ◆ New leisure equipment including bubble balls, targets and foam fencing equipment for use at the sports complex;
- ◆ Additional drainage works at Stephenson Way Cemetery.
- ◆ Refurbishment of the Remembrance Garden at West Cemetery.
- ◆ Provision for the on-going programme of footpath repairs.
- ◆ Further investment at St Oswald's pre-school (changing the office building into a possible second pre-school setting) including an outdoor play area fencing and surfacing.
- ◆ A provisional sum for the possible conversion of two squash courts into one multi-purpose room which could also be rented out to local fitness, dance or martial arts organisations.

The Council made **capital investment of £221,000 in 2016/17** and the main capital works completed, or nearing completion, are listed below:

- ◆ Conversion works to St Oswald's pre-school office building.
- ◆ Golf complex and Moore Lane Heating Systems.
- ◆ Replacement office computers, photocopier and telephone system.
- ◆ Replacement of Park Patrol vehicles and works machinery.
- ◆ Replacement play equipment in West Park and Byerley Park play areas.
- ◆ A new Scoot Track at Horndale Park.
- ◆ The purchase of wild flower meadow machinery.

- ◆ Play area safety surfacing repairs and footpath repairs.

Further details on the Council's recent capital spending and capital investment plans for the future are provided in the 2017/18 Annual Report and Statement of Accounts and the 2017/18 Budget and 2016/17 to 2020/21 Medium Term Financial Plan.

Community Consultation

A wide range of consultations take place on a regular basis and we use a number of different methods to encourage all ages to take part and give us their views.

Surveys are undertaken each year for users of the Oak Leaf Sports Complex and Senior Citizen's Excursions.

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

Officers from the Town Council attend community events to highlight the services it provides and gather residents view.

A Customer Panel was set up in August 2007 and although we don't meet as often as in previous years they are involved in the setting of Council targets, 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.

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 users of our services, and we continue to publish a quarterly newsletter.

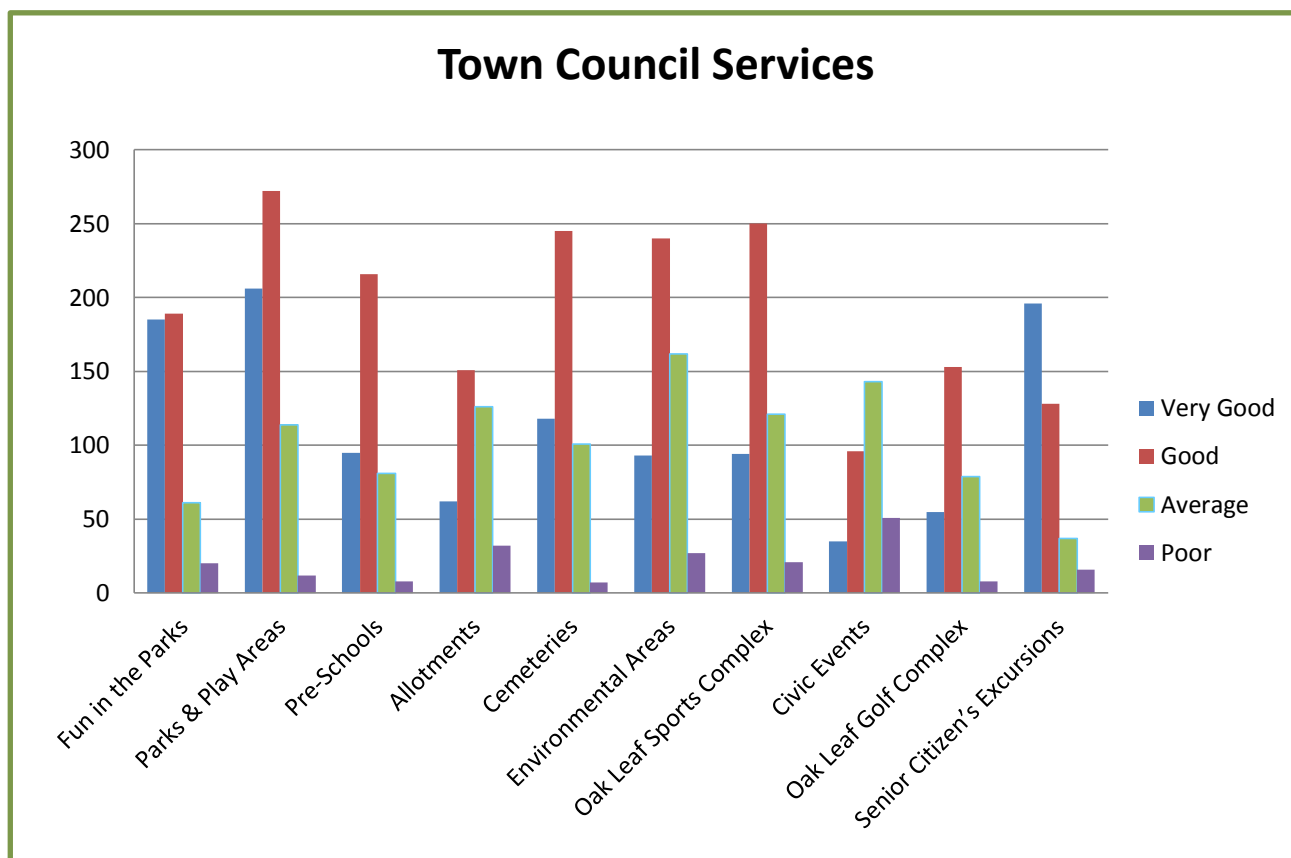
Comments from Residents

(As Part of the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan Consultation)

The development of the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan gave the Town Council to ask residents a number of things specifically about the Town Council and its services. There has not been a specific Town Council survey since the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan consultation. Some of the key items are set out in the following pages.

When asked what the best three things were about living in Great Aycliffe the environment (289) came out top with residents commenting repeatedly about the green and leafy town with lots of open spaces, parks and play areas. Community (116) was ranked second with many comments regarding a good community spirit, a village feel in many areas, friendly neighbours many of whom had lived there for years. Transport (52) was ranked third with the proximity to the motorway and rail links being cited most. Overall 564 people took the time to comment on this section.

Residents were then asked to rate a number of Town Council services, the details of which can be found on the following table.



A few of the comments made by residents are set out below.

- ◆ Unable to differentiate between what GATC and DCC provide and some overlap.
- ◆ There were quite a number of older people who stated they went on the Senior Citizen's Trips but why didn't we charge a small amount to help off-set the cost.
- ◆ There is still a need for better community involvement in a range of projects.
- ◆ Need to focus on activities for all ages not just young children – teenagers need to be kept engaged.
- ◆ Once again, mention of parks, pre-schools etc. which is admirable but what about extra seating in parks for the elderly.
- ◆ There were a number of comments stating the Town Council didn't listen to the residents.
- ◆ I am impressed with how the town has developed and is thriving, well done.
- ◆ There were a number of comments to review the Civic Events and are they needed.

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process residents were also provided with some financial information regarding the cost of Town Council services and then asked to make three choices from a list and rank them in order preference for continued service delivery.

In summary:

- ◆ 23% of respondents ranked grass cutting and flower beds **on Town Council owned land** as the top priority;

- ♦ parks and play areas were ranked second with 22%; and
- ♦ public seating, bus shelters and litter bins were ranked third with 17%.

These responses are generally, in line with previous surveys and questionnaires, the least important areas for residents were Civic Events and the Oak Leaf Golf Course with only 1% support for each.

Value for Money

Although the previous best value legislative requirements have been removed from Town and Parish Councils, 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 (this had been postponed for a number of years as a town wide survey would be undertaken as part of the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan process).

A section on Town Council Services was incorporated into the neighbourhood plan consultation including questions on 'value for money' and 'satisfaction with services'. It was extremely pleasing, in the current economic climate, to receive the following responses which showed continual improvement on previous surveys:-

Provides value for money		
2007	2009	2014
63%	72%	79%

Satisfied with the work of the Town Council		
2007	2009	2014
67%	72%	77%

However, after more detailed analysis when the negative responses, which do not relate to Town Council services, such as the state of the town centre, comments about street lights, refuse collection and the state of the refuse tip are removed altogether this would take the adjusted figures to:-

Providing Value for Money	84%
Satisfaction with the Town Council	82%

The Town Council undertakes an annual review of its functions, measures performance on a quarterly basis and produces a number of strategic documents, including this plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Consultations on specific projects and the annual budget consultation continue to take place.

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 in the use of public money.

The Council will continue to undertake a programme of 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.

A **Review Sub-Committee** was established in May 2015 which is tasked with reviewing the work of corporate services including the following specific responsibilities:

- ◆ To review the Town Council Service Delivery Plan to ensure it is fit for purpose and clearly defines the work of the Town Council.
- ◆ To consider the setting and review of the Council's strategic targets on an annual basis.
- ◆ To undertake a review of the Council's policies.
- ◆ To prioritise the services of the Council and make recommendations to the Service Review Working Group to ensure that a joined up approach is delivered when reviewing both service delivery and targets.

Members

The Council has a membership of 30, which is made up of 21 Labour and 9 Independents.

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

◆ Aycliffe Village	1 member
◆ Aycliffe Central	3 members
◆ Byerley Park, Horndale and Cobblers Hall	6 members
◆ Neville	2 members
◆ Shafto/St Mary's	4 members
◆ Simpasture	2 members
◆ Woodham	6 members
◆ West	6 members

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 Constitution and are reviewed annually. The Member contact details can be found at the end of this document.

Election of Mayor

The Council elects a Town Mayor annually from amongst its members and the Mayor for 2017/18 is Councillor Wendy Hillary, the Mayor/Consort is Councillor Jed Hillary. The Mayor has chosen the MRI Scanner Appeal at Darlington Memorial Hospital as her charity for her term of office.



Councillor Mr Jed Hillary was elected as Mayor of Great Aycliffe in May 2016 and his term of office lasted until the Annual General Meeting of the Council in May 2017.

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

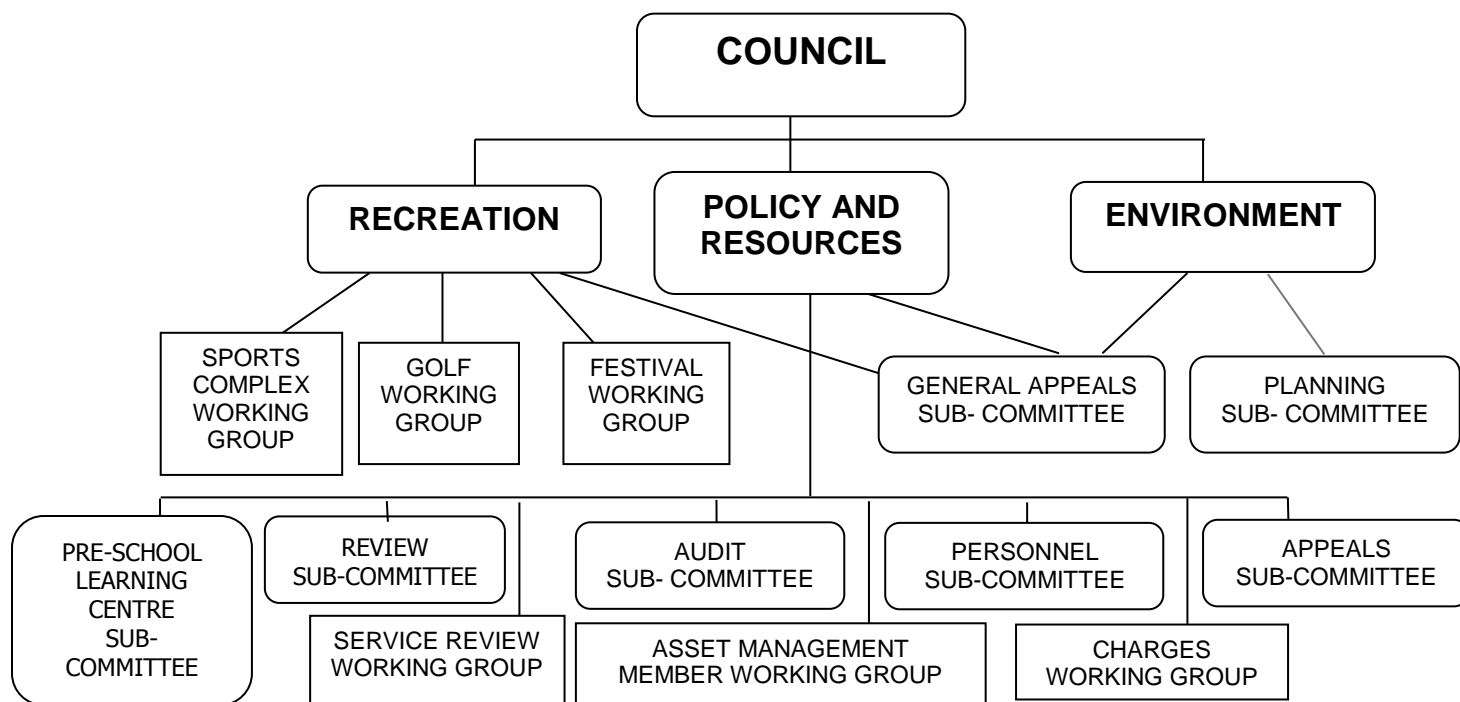
- ◆ The Civic Dinner
- ◆ Remembrance Sunday
- ◆ Mayor's 'At Home'
- ◆ Civic Service
- ◆ Carol Service

In addition, to these, the Mayor attended a further 131 engagements and was escorted by his Consort Councillor Wendy Hillary.

The Mayor raised £5200.00 for his nominated charities in his year of office. The Rifles Care for Casualties received £3200.00, Aycliffe Village Hall Association received £1000.00 and Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre received £1000.00.

Committee Structure

The Council originally considered its Constitution in 2005/06. The Constitution was 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 the 1st May 2003, which allowed the Council to pay each member a basic parish allowance.

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

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 2017/18 is set out in the Council's newsletter and are available on the Council's website.

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

Public Participation

Meetings of the Council, 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 and agendas are displayed on local and Council notice boards. Agendas and reports are available from the Council Offices or website on the Friday afternoon preceding the meeting. Meeting dates are published in the Council's newsletter.

The public entrance to the council chamber opens 30 minutes prior to the meeting.

During the public questions item on Council, Committee and Sub-Committee agendas, members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence in regard to agenda items at the meeting attended. A period of up to 20 minutes has been allocated at each Council or Committee for this purpose. Each person may speak once for 3 minutes only in respect of business itemised on the agenda.

With the exception of the Annual and Extraordinary Council meetings, members of the public may submit a written question, in advance, for the Council agenda. In addition, verbal questions may also be raised by the public.

However, there are strict protocols governing written and verbal public questions and the circumstances in which they may be posed and responded to. Full details governing written and verbal questions to the Council are included on the website or may be obtained from the Council Offices.

Public Filming, recording or other reporting at Council/ Committee meetings

The Council understands that it is required by legislation to allow any member of the public to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings and that **no** prior permission is required. However, we ask that any person wishing to film or audio record a public meeting let Council staff know in order that all necessary arrangements can be made for the public meeting.

The Council will provide “reasonable facilities” to facilitate reporting and provide a space to view and hear the meetings, seats and a table. However, this will not be part of the seating arrangements for the Council itself or an area required by Council staff or invited guests.

It is not permitted to provide a running verbal commentary

Those undertaking reporting must not act in a disruptive manner such as making excessive noise, use of intrusive lighting, use of flash photography or moving around the designated area without the consent of the Chairman.

Public will be excluded from a meeting, under the Council’s Standing Orders, if acting in a disruptive manner.

Recording equipment must be removed from the chamber if at any stage the meeting becomes a private meeting. No trailing cables or plugging in to sockets of electrical equipment will be permitted.

Children and vulnerable adults are not to be filmed, recorded or photographed or otherwise reported about where the relevant responsible adult has not given consent.

Part of the public area will be used, if required, for children and vulnerable adults or those public attending who do not wish to be filmed, however, this is within the limitation of the Council Chamber and its layout.

Persons taking part in the public participation section, excluding children and vulnerable adults as indicated above, may be filmed, recorded or photographed or otherwise reported whether they are in a designated area or not.

Persons filming meetings etc. are likely to record personal data of individuals. These persons must take care to ensure that personal data is used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Representation

Organisations based on the Town may request Members of the Town Council to attend their meetings thereby providing a link between the two, where information and ideas can be shared for the benefit of all.

The Council nominates representatives annually to these organisations and the current list of outside bodies and their representatives are:

- a) Aycliffe Youth Council
Councillors J Atkinson, D Atkinson and the Corporate and Policy Officer.
- b) County Durham Association of Local Councils
Councillors RS Fleming (Leader), M Iveson (Deputy Leader) and the Town Clerk.
- c) Aycliffe Village Community Association
Councillor B Blenkinsopp
- d) Woodham Village Community Association
Councillors Mrs. B Clare and K Henderson
- e) Great Aycliffe and Middridge A.A.P. Local Council's Committee
Councillors B Hall and Jed Hillary and the Town Clerk.
- f) Larger Local Councils' Forum
Councillors RS Fleming (Leader), M Iveson (Deputy Leader) and the Town Clerk.
- g) Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre
Councillor JC Clare
- h) Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society
Councillors I Gray
- i) Friends of Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve
Councillor I Gray
- j) Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway
Councillor D Hardaker

- k) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Councillors J Atkinson, I Gray and B Hall
- l) Crime & Community Safety Task Group
Councillors M Iveson and M Ashcroft

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.

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 education, social services, fire and consumer protection, strategic and local planning, waste collection and disposal, economic development and leisure. Durham County Council has a number of Area Action Partnerships which try to provide a link between the residents and the County Council.

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. Children, Young People & Families
2. Employment, Enterprise & Training
3. Older People

The Town Council aims try to reflect these priorities and to deliver targets in line with the above whenever possible.

TOWN COUNCIL SERVICE AREAS

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, individual service areas have developed service plans and action plans which can be linked back clearly 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.

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, a burial service 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 bus shelters.

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 and 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 Oak Leaf 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 Council owned 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 need to reflect the variety of services provision and is:

- ◆ 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.

Parks and Play Areas

We currently manage and maintain 9 parks, all of which have play equipment.

The 9 parks are:

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

We also provide and maintain play areas at 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 and also employs a Park Patrol Service to carry out regular patrols of these areas to prevent anti-social behaviour and any misuse of the facilities. 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.

Playing Pitches

The Council provides five full sized permanent football pitches for the use of the community with 4 senior teams and various youth football teams using these during each football season. The football pitches are located at:

- ◆ Oak Leaf Sports Complex
- ◆ Simpasture Park
- ◆ Moore Lane Park

In addition, we provide mini-soccer facilities, which cater for junior football teams at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex fields.

Our seasonal charges for the pitches range from £410 to £580, depending on location and the facilities provided. Junior team fees have been frozen at the 2016/17 prices and rounded up to £370.

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.

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 212 allotments and fees range from £20.00 to £40.00 per year depending on the size of the 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.

The annual meeting, which is open to all allotment tenants, ensures that the Charter's standards are adhered to.

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 demand
- ◆ 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.

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, Stephenson Way is now restricted to reserved 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.

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 public seating and 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).

We also provide **some** footpath lighting, dog bins and litter bins on areas for which we have responsibility. Although, **Durham County Council is responsible for the emptying of all dog bins** and provide most dog and litter 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.

Environment

One of the key roles of the Works and Environment Manager is to raise environmental awareness within the Great Aycliffe area and two multi skilled 'Town Pride' operatives enable the Town Council to deal with urgent and also assist with various environmental issues.

In addition, the Works and Environmental Manager coordinates works with other external bodies such as local schools, Police and Youth Offending Service to raise awareness about the environment, climate change and developing a sense of pride in our local area.

The Environment Centre in Moore Lane Pavilion is the base for many community and school events; this is supplemented with various other activities around the town.

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 Town's 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
- ◆ To examine opportunities to improve the green spaces taken over from Durham County Council and bring them in line with Town Council standards.

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 including the following events:

- ◆ Aycliffe Festival
- ◆ Senior Citizen's Trips
- ◆ Community Enhancement Awards
- ◆ Fun in the Parks
- ◆ Fireworks Display
- ◆ Christmas Lighting
- ◆ Santa Tours

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

We continually 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.

Pre-School Learning

The Council's aim is to provide a high quality service, where every child feels protected, is happy and has fun, in a safe and secure learning environment at St Oswald's.

Our standards are high and St Oswald's Pre-school has received a successful inspection from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), 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-school is managed by the Council's Early Years Officer, who ensures the smooth running of the Pre-School in accordance with Council policy and current legislation.

The continual training of the staff is vital to the operation of the Pre-School, 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-school is 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 Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements
- ◆ To ensure that the current high standards within the Pre-school is developed further
- ◆ To ensure that appropriate training is identified and 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.

Oak Leaf Sports Complex

The Oak Leaf Sports Complex is a family friendly facility, open 7 days each week from 9.00 am until 11.00 pm. We continue to provide facilities for five-a-side football, badminton 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 60 users and is able to offer an excellent venue for a number of leisure activities such as private functions, meetings, bridge and various fitness 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.

Oak Leaf 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 main **responsibilities** for the service are:

- ◆ To collect fees for the Golf Course and Driving Range
- ◆ To operate the Driving Range
- ◆ To work with, and provide an administrative service for, the Oak Leaf Golf Club
- ◆ To promote and support junior golf in all appropriate ways
- ◆ 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 provide a warden service to the golf course through the Park Patrol Service
- ◆ To maintain the Golf Course and Driving Range to an acceptable standard.

The Council also has in place a Golf Working Group whose main responsibilities are:

- ◆ To keep the course layout under review, with the intention of all-year-round 18-hole provision
- ◆ To keep under review the management arrangements for the two facilities
- ◆ 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.

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					
County Council Issues	High	Threat	Increasing	Important	Make case for Great Aycliffe at every opportunity Feed issues to CDALC for representation
Regional Assembly for NE	Undetermined	Threat	Unknown	Unknown	Monitor
Changes in Government policy / legislation	High	Threat	Increasing	Important	Keep up-to-date Lobby via NALC
External Audit Inspections	Medium	Opportunity	Unchanged	Important	Comply with FRISSE Maintain internal control Adhere to legislative requirements
Political balance of Council	Low	Strength	Reducing	Important	Be apolitical Work with all parties
Local Government elections	Medium	Opportunity	Increasing	Important	Await outcome Keep up-to-date with changes
Change in Government	Medium	Threat	Unknown	Important	Await outcome React accordingly
Localisation of support for Council Tax Grant	High	Threat	Unknown	Critical	Monitor and await information from Government and Durham County Council

PEST ANALYSIS FACTORS	POTENTIAL IMPACT	IMPLICATION AND IMPORTANCE			ACTION
	High Medium Low Undetermined	Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat	Increasing Unchanged Reducing Unknown	Critical Important Unimportant Unknown	
Economic					
Increase in Tax Base (More houses)	Medium	Opportunity	Increasing	Important	Monitor
Changes in interest rates	Medium	Threat	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	Weakness	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	Medium	Weakness	Increasing	Important	Review Bid for funding whenever possible
Requests for financial assistance from outside bodies	Medium	Threat	Increasing	Important	Monitor
Severe weather	Medium	Threat	Unknown	Important	React accordingly

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

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis is also undertaken each year to review the **internal factors** that may help or prevent the delivery of the service.

This is a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project or in a business venture.

<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 ❖ Adaptability ❖ Health and Safety ❖ Project Planning 	<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Rate of change/speed of decision making ❖ Time and capacity ❖ Lack of specialist knowledge ❖ Reliance on Council Tax Support Grant ❖ Publicity of Council services and facilities ❖ Age of Workforce ❖ Limited ability to raise funding
<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 ❖ Improve skills of existing staff and Members ❖ Increased flexibility ❖ Partnership working ❖ Area Action Partnership ❖ Publicity of Council services and facilities ❖ Project Planning ❖ Increased Tax Base (more houses) 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Financial cuts – Council Tax Support Grant ❖ Political changes ❖ Crime and vandalism ❖ Failure to retain staff ❖ Staff motivation ❖ Age of workforce/loss of knowledge ❖ Unforeseen budget pressures ❖ Possible government limit on Council Tax increase ❖ Industrial action

APPENDIX 1

CLOSE OUT STATUS

AIMS & TARGETS APRIL 2016 – MARCH 2017

AIM 1 - TO PROVIDE GOOD QUALITY GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL				
No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comments
1	Publish a Town Council Service Delivery Plan by 31 st May each year	Annually	CW	Complete Published 8.6.16
2	Publish an Annual Report	Annually	Man'mt Team	Complete Published 3.6.16
3	Provide a Member and Town Clerk training programme	March 17	AB	Complete
4	Undertake an annual review of the Council Constitution, Financial Regulations and Council Policies to ensure compliance with current legislation	Annually	Man'mt Team Review SC	Complete
5	Undertake a review of all records and filing systems annually to comply with Data Protection and Freedom of Information Act	On-going	All	Ongoing
6	Improve advertising of Council facilities and services by targeting a service area in each publication	On-going	All	Complete All areas have been publicised
7	Improve use of all media, including social media, to advertise the Council's services and facilities	On-going	All Managers	Ongoing Some social media training has been undertaken and a social media group has been set up
8	Undertake research where appropriate for new policies and procedures	On-going	CW	Ongoing
9	Keep up to date with any changes in legislation and report to council as and when required	On-going	Man'mt Team	Ongoing
10	Continue to monitor energy consumption and reduce usage where possible	On-going	DA	Ongoing
11	Implement an annual appraisal scheme for all staff with a view to completing all appraisals by September each year	September 2017	All Staff	Complete Interim appraisals to be complete by end of May

AIM 2 - TO MANAGE THE COUNCIL'S FINANCES AND ASSETS IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comments
12	Produce annual statement of accounts by June each year	June 16	DA	Complete
13	Achieve an unqualified audit opinion on the Audit Completion Report	Sept 16	DA	Complete
14	Achieve an unqualified audit opinion of the Accounts by 30.9.16	Sept 16	DA	Complete
15	Ensure the Medium Term Financial Plan is approved by 30 th June each year	June 16	DA	Complete
16	Deliver the Internal Audit Plan Schedule of Work and report to Council	March 17	BW	Complete.
17	Manage the financial impact of the localisation of support for council tax (LCTSS) and any future cuts to LCTSS funding	On-going	AB DA	Complete
18	Ensure compliance with the Transparency Code/Openness of Local Government Regulations.	On-going	AB / CW DA	Ongoing
19	Delivery the work set out in the Asset Management Plan via the capital programme and, a six monthly review is undertaken with Officers and Member Asset Management Group	On-going	AB DA	Ongoing
20	Quarterly budget control reports are presented to Policy and Resources Committee	On-going	DA	Complete
21	Budgets/Precepts approved by 31 st January 2017	Jan 17	DA	Complete
22	Undertake a review of all Council risks every March and report to Council	Mar 17	CW	Complete
23	Continue the programme of financial reviews of all service areas	On-going	DA	Complete - Pre-School Golf Complex Service Review - no longer required Ongoing for catering
24	Undertake an annual update of the Asset Register including the schedule of expected life and replacement costs for buildings, plant and machinery. Ensuring that any works are prioritised by the Equality Act and replacement plant and machinery is built into the capital works programme as necessary	On-going	AB DA	Complete

AIM 3 - TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE LEISURE FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comments
25	Deliver the Council's programme of special events			Ongoing
	Fun in the Parks	Aug 16	JT	Complete
	Aycliffe Festival	July 16	MR	Complete
	Senior Citizens Trips	July 16	MR	Complete
	Firework Display	Nov 16	JT	Complete
	Santa Letters	Dec 16	MR	Complete
	Santa Tours	Dec 16	JT	Complete
	Christmas lights	Dec 16	SC	Complete
26	Undertake a review of the Santa Tours to ensure volunteers and members of the public are safe and as much, as possible, of the Town has a visit from Santa	Nov 16	JT	Complete. New arrangements for route 4 were made and publicised May need to review additional routes
27	Help co-ordinate and deliver the Aycliffe Festival, providing assistance, financial support if required, training and publicity and undertake a review as soon as possible following the event.	July 16	MR	Complete
28	Install a scoot track at Horndale park subject to finance becoming available	June 16	SC	Complete
29	Undertake a review of activity usage and explore the possibility of any new activities that could be implemented at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex	On-going	JT	Complete Budget in place
30	Undertake a review of golf complex usage and explore ways to improve membership and income through new initiatives	To be agreed	Service Review WG	Superseded by procurement of new manager

AIM 4 - TO PROVIDE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AS APPROPRIATE IN GREAT AYCLIFFE

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comments
31	Ensure the continuous improvement of the service and obtain at least a 'good' and aiming for 'excellent' Ofsted Inspection	As and when	CW JG AB	Initial audit undertaken to identify any gaps following the resignation of the EYO
32	To complete a service review of the existing and future provision at St. Oswald's Pre-School	On-going	Service Review WG	Complete New actions being implemented

AIM 5 - TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT OF AYCLIFFE BY MANAGING AND DEVELOPING PARKS, PLAY AREAS AND GREEN SPACES

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	
33	Works & Environment Manager to arrange to work with local schools and community groups to develop volunteer opportunities	On-going	SC	Ongoing
34	Undertake the works arising from the survey of trees on Town Council land in accordance with the Tree Policy and prioritise any work needed	On-going	SC	Complete
35	To continue to monitor the health and condition of the trees on Town Council land	On-going	SC LW	Ongoing
36	Investigate options to obtain hydrology information on the lakes at West Park and investigate ways and means to implement any recommendations	On-going	SC AB	Complete Target will need reviewing
37	Undertake landscaping improvement works at West Park working in conjunction with the Works & Environment Manager and Friends Groups	On-going	SC /Town Pride Team	Complete. Path complete. Three rose beds complete, seats and bin installed.
38	Works and Environment Manager to organise and help deliver public countryside events	On-going	SC	Complete 28 events undertaken
39	Complete at least 5 targeted Himalayan Balsam removing working parties along The Burn	Annually	SC	Complete 6 events undertaken
40	Improve and increase the planting, including additional plant species, in the wildflower meadows	March 17	SC	Complete in part Seed already purchased and Agnew Meadow new site identified
41	Undertake maintenance and management of specific Durham County Council environmental areas as per the management agreement	On-going	SC	Ongoing
42	Undertake a limited snow clearing and gritting service for Durham County Council (DCC) as per the winter maintenance agreement for the benefit of residents	On-going	SC	Complete None required Additional DCC training for GATC staff complete

AIM 6 – HELP AND ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO IMPROVE THE SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR THE RESIDENTS OF GREAT AYCLIFFE

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comments
43	Support and encourage Aycliffe Youth Council (AYC) by: Organising the election process – Holding at least 8 meetings a year – Helping to organise at least 1 project a year	On-going	CW SC	Ongoing Elections took place in January A number of projects are being investigated. Trees purchased for community tree planting events.
44	To continue partnership working with DCC and build on the existing initiatives	On-going	SC	Ongoing
45	Work with the Youth Council, schools, community and voluntary groups hold a Town Pride Environment Week	July 16	SC CW	Complete
46	The Works and Environment Manager, the Town Pride Team and Park Patrol Officers to work with DCC Officers to ensure that at least 2 areas in the Great Aycliffe Parish have a targeted Anti Dog-Fouling campaign in addition to the work already scheduled by DCC	March 17	SC	This target needs reviewing
47	The Works & Environment Manager and Town Pride Team to work with DCC Officers and Tidy Britain to ensure that the Great Aycliffe Parish has a targeted Anti-Littering campaign , in addition to the work already scheduled by DCC	March 17	SC Town Pride Team	Complete
48	Work in partnership with residents and friends groups to improve our parks, play areas and environment areas.	March 17	SC/ Town Pride Team	Ongoing Byerley Park/West Park occasional work session ongoing

AIM 7 – ENCOURAGE THE RESIDENTS OF GREAT AYCLIFFE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN LOCAL DEMOCRACY

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comments
49	Hold an aims and target meeting each March to discuss progress on existing targets and new targets with the Customer Panel Group	March 17	CW AD	Target not met due to conflicting work demands
50	Hold a budget setting consultation meeting with the Customer Panel	Nov 16	DA	Complete took place in November.
51	Continue the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, improving community engagement and encouraging the residents of Great Aycliffe to become involved and help achieve the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help promote the Plan • Review the draft plan • Assist with the independent inspection • Vote in the referendum asap following independent inspection 	On-going May 16 June 16 July 16	CW AD	Complete Referendum will be 22 June 2017.
52	Hold a Parish Meeting	Annually In May	AB	Complete
53	Hold an Allotment AGM	Annually In Nov	SC	Complete Held in November 2016
54	Hold 4 allotment representative meetings	On-going	SC	Complete
55	Hold or take part in at least 2 events to inform residents about Town Council services	Annually	CW AD	Complete

AIM 8 - TO RESEARCH INFORMATION AND MAKE THE CASE FOR GREAT AYCLIFFE

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comments
56	Produce timely responses to all major consultations carried out	On-going	AB CW	On-going

APPENDIX 2

TARGETS FOR THE COMING YEAR

TOWN COUNCIL TARGETS 2017 – 2018

AIM 1 - TO PROVIDE GOOD QUALITY GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL			
No	Target	Target Date	Officer
1	Publish a Town Council Service Delivery Plan by 31 st May each year	Annually	CW
2	Publish an Annual Report	Annually	Management Team
3	Provide a Member and Town Clerk training programme	Mar 18	AB
4	Undertake an annual review of the Council Constitution, Financial Regulations and Council Policies to ensure compliance with current legislation	Annually	Management Team
5	Undertake a review of all records and filing systems annually to comply with Data Protection and Freedom of Information Act	On-going	All
6	Improve advertising of Council facilities and services by targeting a service area in each publication	On-going	All
7	Improve use of all media, including social media, to advertise the Council's services and facilities	On-going	All Managers
8	Undertake research where appropriate for new policies and procedures	On-going	CW
9	Keep up to date with any changes in legislation and report to council as and when required	On-going	Management Team
10	Continue to monitor energy consumption and reduce usage where possible	On-going	DA
11	To continue the annual Performance and Development Appraisal scheme for all staff with a view to being complete by September each year.	Sep 17	All Staff

AIM 2 - TO MANAGE THE COUNCIL'S FINANCES AND ASSETS IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER

No	Target	Target Date	Officer Comments
12	Produce annual statement of accounts by June each year	June 17	DA
13	Achieve an unqualified external audit opinion	Sept 17	DA
14	Achieve an unqualified audit opinion of the Annual Return by 30.9.17	Sept 17	DA
15	Ensure the Medium Term Financial Plan is approved by 30 th June each year	June 18	DA
16	Deliver the Internal Audit Plan Schedule of Work and report to Council	March 18	KB
17	Manage the financial impact of the localisation of support for council tax (LCTSS) and any future cuts to LCTSS funding	On-going	AB DA
18	Ensure compliance with the Transparency Code/Openness of Local Government Regulations.	On-going	AB / CW DA
19	Delivery the work set out in the Asset Management Plan via the capital programme and, a six monthly review is undertaken with Officers and Member Asset Management Group	On-going	AB DA
20	Quarterly budget control reports are presented to Policy and Resources Committee	On-going	DA
21	Budgets/Precepts approved by 31 st January 2018	Jan 18	DA
22	Undertake a review of all Council risks every March and report to Council	March 18	CW
23	Continue the programme of financial reviews of all service areas	On-going	DA
24	Undertake an annual update of the Asset Register including the schedule of expected life and replacement costs for buildings, plant and machinery.	On-going	AB DA

AIM 3 - TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE LEISURE FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES			
No	Target	Target Date	Officer Comments
25	Deliver the Council's programme of special events Fun in the Parks Aycliffe Festival Senior Citizens Trips Firework Display Santa Letters Santa Tours Christmas lights	Aug 17 Jul 17 Jul 17 Nov 17 Dec 17 Dec 17 Dec 17	JT MR MR JT MR JT SC
26	Undertake a review of the Santa Tours to ensure volunteers and members of the public are safe and as much, as possible, of the Town has a visit from Santa	Sep 17	JT
27	Help co-ordinate and deliver the Aycliffe Festival, providing assistance, financial support if required, training and publicity and undertake a review as soon as possible following the event.	Jul 17	MR
28	Construct a new play area at Cobbler's Hall, subject to lease being completed.	Aug 17	SC
29	Undertake a review of activity usage and explore the possibility of any new activities that could be implemented at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex	On-going	JT

AIM 4 - TO PROVIDE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AS APPROPRIATE IN GREAT AYCLIFFE			
No	Target	Target Date	Officer
30	Ensure the continuous improvement of the service and obtain at least a 'good' and aiming for 'excellent' Ofsted Inspection	As and when	JG

AIM 5 - TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT OF AYCLIFFE BY MANAGING AND DEVELOPING PARKS, PLAY AREAS AND GREEN SPACES

No	Target	Target Date	Officer Comments
31	Works & Environment Manager to arrange to work with local schools and community groups to develop volunteer opportunities	On-going	SC
32	Undertake the works arising from the survey of trees on Town Council land in accordance with the Tree Policy and prioritise any work needed	On-going	SC
33	To continue to monitor the health and condition of the trees on Town Council land	On-going	SC LW
34	Investigate options to obtain hydrology information on the lakes at West Park and investigate ways and means to implement any recommendations <i>This will need amending when the Town Council decide on a way forward. Any future works will likely cost around £15,000.</i>	On-going	SC AB
35	Undertake landscaping improvement works as required	On-going	SC /Town Pride Team
36	Works and Environment Manager to organise and help deliver public countryside events	On-going	SC
37	Complete at least 5 targeted Himalayan Balsam removing working parties along The Burn	Annually	SC
38	Improve and increase the planting, including additional plant species, in the wildflower meadows	Mar 18	SC
39	Undertake maintenance and management of specific Durham County Council environmental areas as per the management agreement	On-going	SC
40	Undertake a limited snow clearing and gritting service for Durham County Council (DCC) as per the winter maintenance agreement for the benefit of residents	On-going	SC
41	North Agnew Plantation – to undertake footpath improvements if/when woodland transferred to GATC		SC

AIM 6 – HELP AND ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO IMPROVE THE SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR THE RESIDENTS OF GREAT AYCLIFFE

No	Target	Target Date	Officer
42	Support and encourage Aycliffe Youth Council (AYC) by: Organising the election process – Holding at least 8 meetings a year - Helping to organise at least 1 project a year	On-going	CW SC
43	To continue partnership working with DCC and build on the existing initiatives	On-going	SC
44	Work with the Youth Council, schools, community and voluntary groups hold a Town Pride Environment Week	Jul 17	SC CW
45	The Works and Environment Manager, the Town Pride Team and Park Patrol Officers to work with DCC Officers	Mar 18	SC
46	The Works & Environment Manager and Town Pride Team to work with DCC Officers and Tidy Britain to ensure that the Great Aycliffe Parish has a targeted Anti-Littering campaign , in addition to the work already scheduled by DCC	Mar 18	SC Town Pride Team
47	Work in partnership with residents and friends groups to improve our parks, play areas and environment areas.	Mar 18	SC/ Town Pride Team

AIM 7 - ENCOURAGE THE RESIDENTS OF GREAT AYCLIFFE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN LOCAL DEMOCRACY			
No	Target	Target Date	Officer
48	Hold an aims and target meeting each March to discuss progress on existing targets and new targets with the Customer Panel Group	Mar 18	CW AD
49	Hold a budget setting consultation meeting with the Customer Panel	Nov 17	DA
50	To promote the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan and vote in the referendum.	Jun 17	CW AD
51	Hold a Parish Meeting	Annually In May	AB
52	Hold an Allotment AGM	Annually In Nov	SC
53	Hold 4 allotment representative meetings	On-going	SC
54	Hold or take part in at least 2 events to inform residents about Town Council services	Annually	CW AD

AIM 8 - TO RESEARCH INFORMATION AND MAKE THE CASE FOR GREAT AYCLIFFE			
No	Target	Target Date	Officer
55	Produce timely responses to all major consultations carried out	On-going	AB CW

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 7 wards of the Town.

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