

Great Aycliffe Town Council



Service Delivery Plan 2021/22



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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 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 has enable young people from the area to have a choice of educational and vocational routes with excellent prospects for employment in nearby facilities.

There is 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 is home to around 500 companies and around 10,000 employees and continues to expand, with a mixed-use retail development and trade park.

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. 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.

Coronavirus

The Coronavirus Pandemic and associated restrictions have made delivering last years' Service Delivery Plan and anticipating this plan extremely difficult. As shown in the aims and targets for 2020 to 2021, a large number of actions were not completed. The continuing uncertainty has already led to some community events being cancelled and future bookings have been delayed for the financial year 2021/22.

Work on our green spaces, environment, burials, and graveyards carried on throughout the lock downs and restrictions, with no redundancies or staff being furloughed. The pre-school also remained open throughout the pandemic. The corporate and financial sections have continued providing essential support and staff have had to adjust to working from home; again there have been no redundancies or staff being furloughed. The Oak Leaf Sports Complex and Oak Leaf Golf Complex have opened whenever possible, with no redundancies, however, staff were furloughed for extended periods of time.

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: Daniel Austin, Town Clerk, Great Aycliffe Town Council, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham, DL5 6QF

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.

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.

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 actually **DOES** and what it is **NOT** responsible for.

Great Aycliffe Town Council:

- ✓ Manages 10 parks, all with play equipment:

Town Park	West Park
Moore Lane Park	Aycliffe Village
Simpasture Park	Byerley Park
St Oswald's Park	Woodham Park
Horndale Park	Cobbler's Hall
- ✓ Provides additional play areas at Scott Place, School Aycliffe, and the Oak Leaf Sport Complex. Plus five Multi Use Games Areas, a BMX Track, a Scoot Track, and a Skate Park
- ✓ Provides 6 football pitches, Mini-soccer, and six-a-side pitches
- ✓ Runs the Oak Leaf Sports Complex - indoor bowls, sports hall, squash courts, bar and catering, children's holidays courses, indoor/outdoor sports activities
- ✓ Runs the Oak Leaf Golf Complex – 18-hole golf course and an 18-bay floodlit driving range and practice putting area

- ✓ Manages Stephenson Way Cemetery and West Cemetery and provides grounds maintenance and burial service at St Andrew's Churchyard
- ✓ Runs St Oswald's pre-school play setting – with a 'good' Ofsted rating and Tots in the Park
- ✓ Provides and manages a wide range of special community events – Firework Display, Fun-in-the-Parks, Santa Tours, Sk8 Fest, Senior Citizens' Excursions and Christmas Lights
- ✓ Assists and supports other event organisers – 10k race, 3k Fun Run, Remembrance Parade, Junior Cross Country, Annual Indoor Bowls Competition and Community Enhancement Awards
- ✓ Provides a range of civic events
- ✓ Provides and continues to maintain Aycliffe Angels Memorial Garden
- ✓ Maintenance of war memorial and flagpole
- ✓ Provides 214 allotment plots in 5 different locations. 2 allotment sites with pigeon or poultry facilities
- ✓ 5 Bee keeping plots and 2 training plots
- ✓ Provides an environmental centre at Moore Lane
- ✓ Encourages interest in the environment of Great Aycliffe through the Works and Environment Manager and his team who work with the community and schools
- ✓ Employs a Town Pride Team
- ✓ Employs a team of Park Patrol Operatives to assist with crime prevention
- ✓ Provides public seats in many locations
- ✓ Provides over 50 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
 - 2 nature areas on the business park
 - Aycliffe Village Greens (custodians & maintenance)
- ✓ Assists Aycliffe Youth Council
- ✓ Provides a lorry park
- ✓ Encourages Community Empowerment through the Customer Panel, Consultation and Open Days
- ✓ Provides small grants to local voluntary organisations
- ✓ Developing and updating the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan
- ✓ Comments 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

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CORPORATE SERVICES SECTION

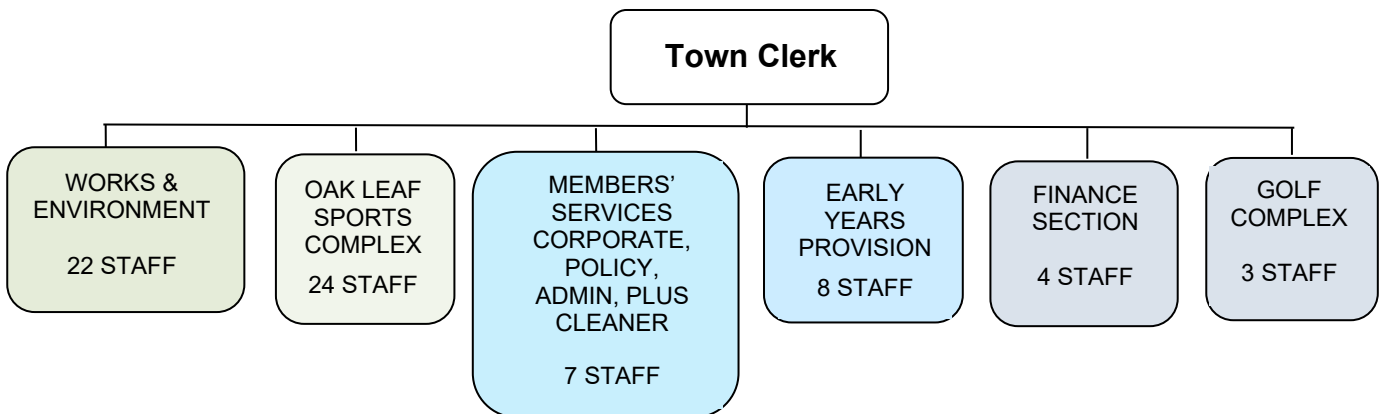
The Town Council

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 £1,697,500 in 2021/22.

The Council currently employs 69 staff, made up of 42 full-time and 27 part-time employees supported by a number of casual staff, who do not form part of the formal staff establishment.

A number of posts are currently being held vacant due to the pandemic.



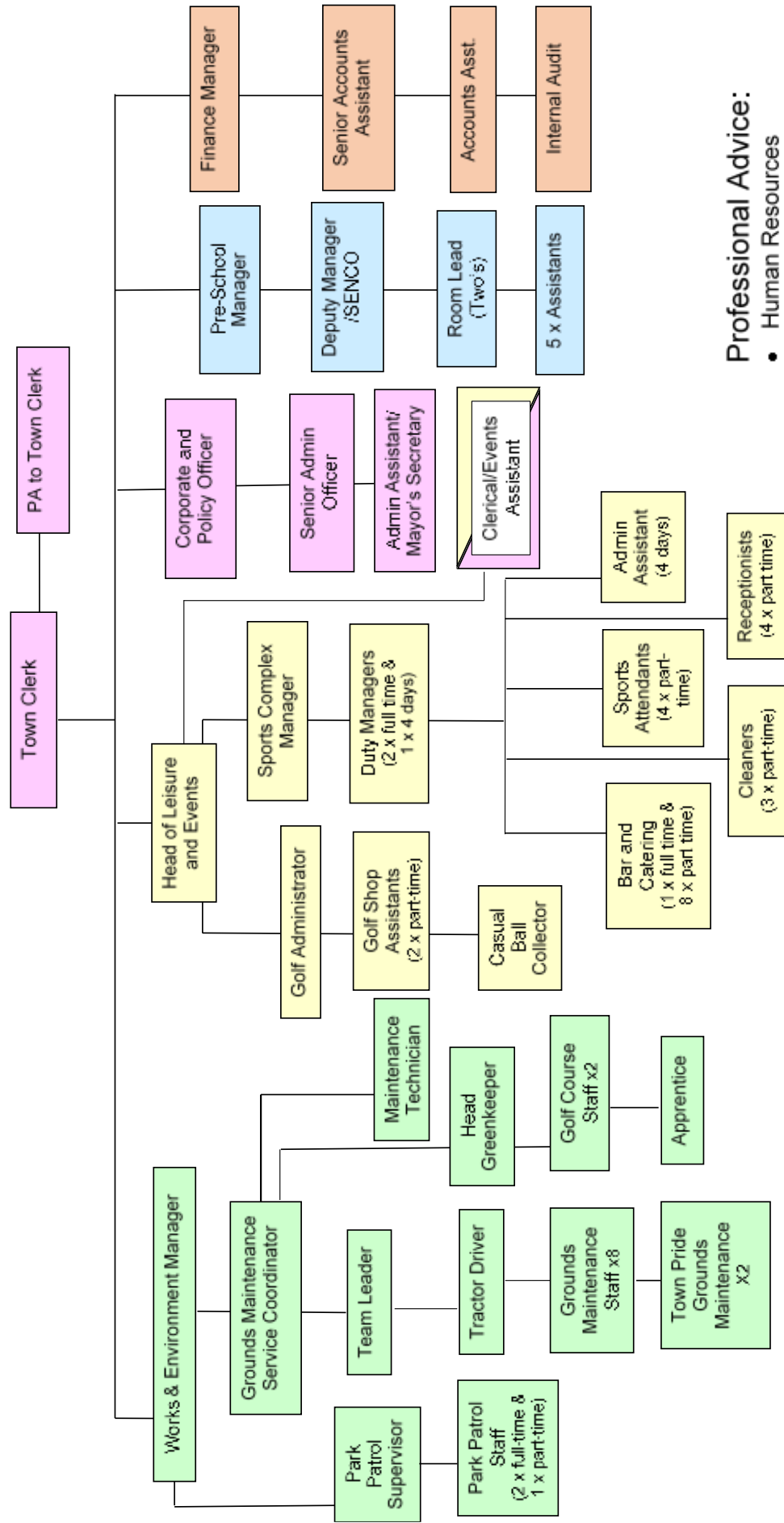
The Council's Establishment

The Council also retains the services of consultants for human resources matters, health and safety, legal, procurement, planning advice, occupational health services and other speciality services such as IT.

The Senior Officers within the Council are:

Town Clerk	Daniel Austin	daniel.austin@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Finance Manager	Tracey Woodhead	tracey.woodhead@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Corporate & Policy Officer	Chrissy Walton	christine.walton@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Works & Environment Manager	Steve Cooper	steven.cooper@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Head of Leisure & Events	Judith Thexton	judith.thexton@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Grounds Maintenance Co-Ordinator	Lee Williams	lee.williams@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Senior Admin Officer	Sharna Stretch	sharna.stretch@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Pre-School Manager	Julie Gale	julie.gale@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

Management Structure



Professional Advice:

- Human Resources
- Health and Safety
- Occupational Health Services
- Early Years

In February 2015, following the town wide survey undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process and after consideration by Council, it was agreed that the Town Council strategic mission statement should 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:-

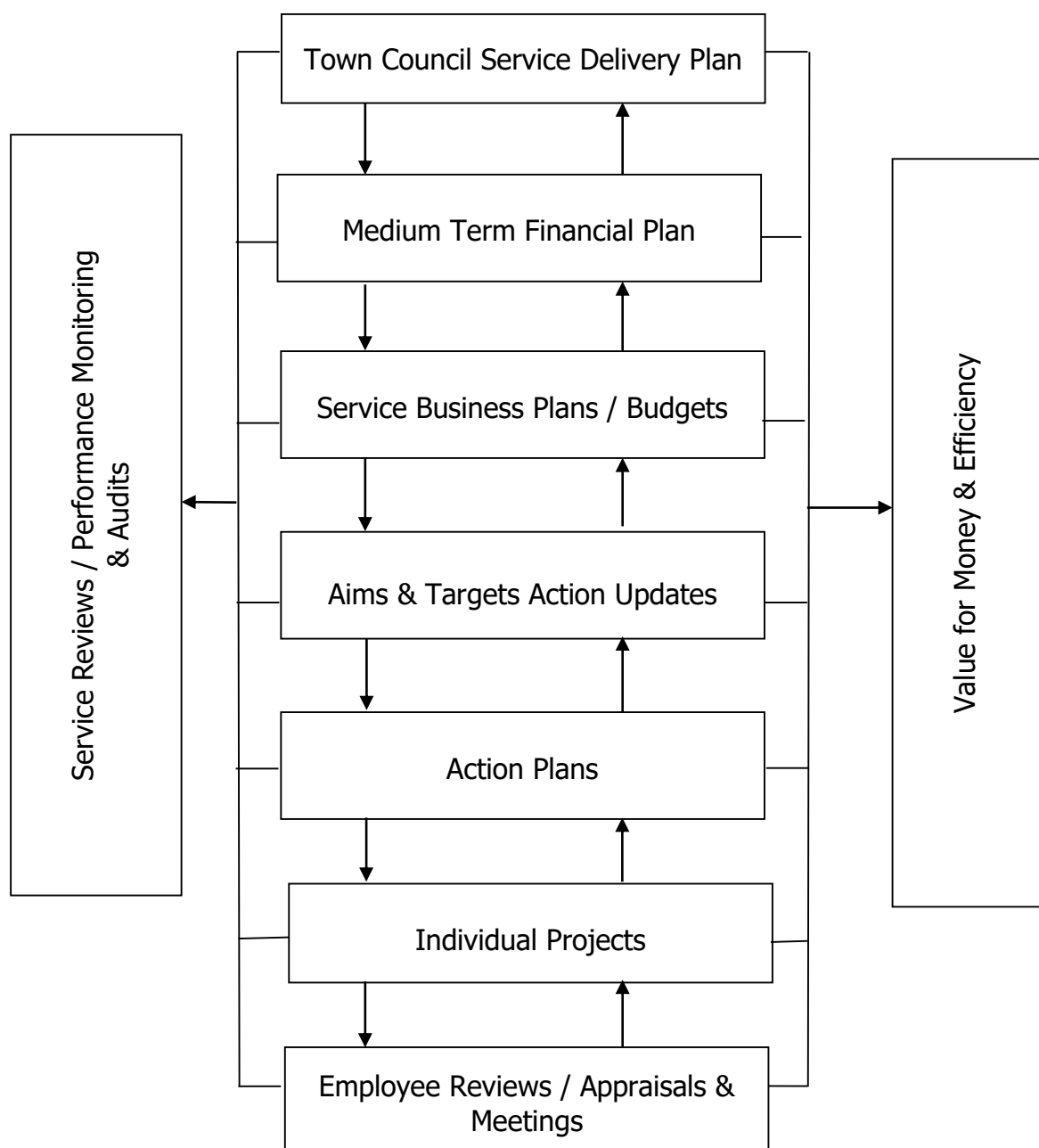
1.	To provide good quality governance and management of the Council.
2.	To manage the council’s finances and assets in a responsible manner.
3.	To provide accessible, affordable leisure facilities and opportunities.
4.	To provide pre-school education as appropriate in Great Aycliffe.
5.	To contribute 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 annually. The progress made during the year informs the development of targets for the following year.

Council Targets 2020/21

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 other 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 2021/22

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.
- ◆ To ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- ◆ To maintain and update the Council's Constitution and Standing Orders.
- ◆ To provide professional support and advice to Members and staff.
- ◆ To ensure the effective organisation and running of the Committees of the Council and oversee the production of agendas and minutes of meetings.
- ◆ To provide timely and appropriate advice in relation to all employee and employer relations issues.
- ◆ To monitor and manage the Council's risks.
- ◆ To manage and oversee the Council's arrangement for health and safety.
- ◆ To provide advice in relation to training requirements for members and employees, including delivering training when possible.
- ◆ To deal with Town Council land and property matters including village greens, sales, and acquisitions.
- ◆ To prepare the annual Town Council Service Delivery Plan, including the setting of aims and annual targets.
- ◆ To manage and administer the Council's Performance Management Framework.
- ◆ To oversee the use of consultants by the Council.
- ◆ To maintain the Town Council's website and ensure an effective IT support service is provided across the Council.
- ◆ To ensure the effective running of the Youth Council.
- ◆ To provide support and guidance for any elections.
- ◆ To support the annual external audit inspection.
- ◆ To ensure 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.
- ◆ To manage 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 provide 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 Report.
- ◆ Preparing the Statement of Accounts.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Managing 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.
- ◆ Providing 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 Investment 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 2021/22 totals £198,500** and includes provision for the following planned projects:

- Replacement of windows and blinds at the council offices;
- Upgrade of the alarm system sensors at the depot;
- Internal CCTV system and redecoration at St Oswald's Pre-School;
- Purchase of electrical alternatives for works machinery;
- Replacement of the rotary mower;
- Replacement of the golf course utility vehicle
- Computer replacements and website development;
- Replacement office photocopier (provisional sum);
- The ongoing programme of replacement festive lighting;
- The ongoing programme of play area surfacing replacement;
- Skate park maintenance;
- Golf shop carpet, launch monitor and alarm system upgrade;
- Provision to replace the bowls hall roof at the sports complex;
- Provision for ongoing drainage repairs at the sports complex;
- External redecoration at the sports complex;
- Deep cleaning of the function room carpet at the sports complex;
- Replacement of remainder of the fence at St Oswald's Allotments;
- Replacement public seating and further memorial seating;
- Testing of street lighting columns;
- Provision for the removal of trees affected by Ash Dieback disease and re-planting;
- The ongoing programme of footpath repairs.

A large number of delayed capital projects have also been carried forward from the 2020/21 financial year and added to the 2021/22 Capital Budget. These projects total £308,000 and include the council office flat roof replacement, pre-school extension, the unspent elements of the information technology budget relating to server replacement and implementation of paperless office and governance, Woodham Park play area upgrade, replacement of the driving range ball washer machine, golf irrigation system repairs, various works at the sports complex including roofing repairs, sports hall and squash court flooring, bar furniture and kitchen equipment and the unspent balance on the Ash Dieback disease budget.

The 2021/22 Capital Programme Budget will be funded in full from the Council's Earmarked Capital Reserves, which are set aside for this purpose.

The Council made **capital investment of £100,000 in 2020/21** and the main capital works completed, or nearing completion, are listed below:

- Purchase of electric machinery
- Purchase of laptops and remote working set up
- Oak Leaf server upgrade
- Website accessibility improvements
- Replacement festive lighting
- Shutter safety improvements at Moore Lane Pavilion
- St Oswald's play area safety surfacing works
- St Oswald's Allotments fencing
- Purchase of VE Day benches

- Commencement of Ash Tree dieback works

Capital investment in 2020/21 was significantly impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Further details on the Council's recent capital spending and capital investment plans for the future are provided in the 2021/22 Budget Document and the forthcoming 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 Citizens' 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' views.

A Customer Panel was set up in August 2007 and although we do not 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, which 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 the 2019 Town Wide Consultation

The results of the fourth Great Aycliffe wide satisfaction survey for Town Council facilities and services, show an improvement in nearly all areas.

Whilst nationally, overall satisfaction trends are falling, with a 9% drop, from 72% to 63%, the Town Council has shown a 16% increase to 88%. In addition, nationally, only 59% of people feel they are kept informed about local services as compared to 72% within the Great Aycliffe area. These are both great results and reflect the hard work undertaken by the Town Council.

A number of questions were asked for each service area, with the option to add any individual comments, which are set out below.

Allotments

85% of respondents agreed the allotments were good value for money.

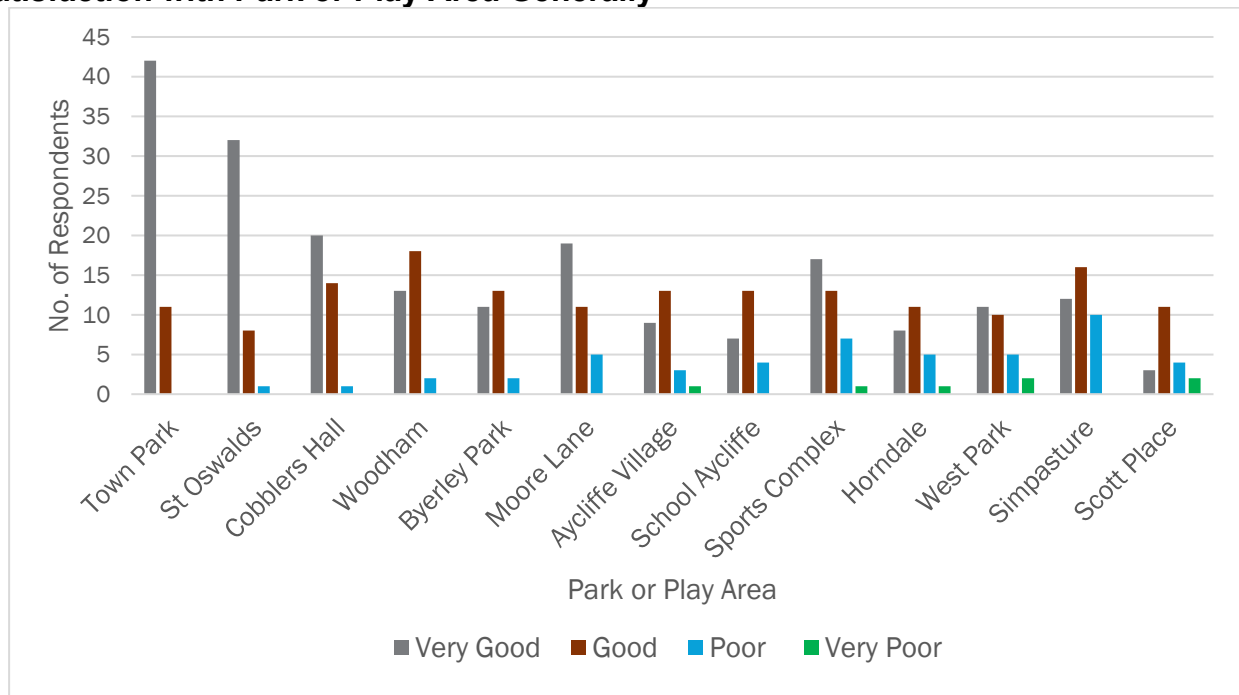
There were 29 individual comments received with the main comments summarised being –

- Charge more/make them self-funding
- Have more available/reduce the waiting lists
- Keep them tidy/more inspections and checks

Parks and Play Areas

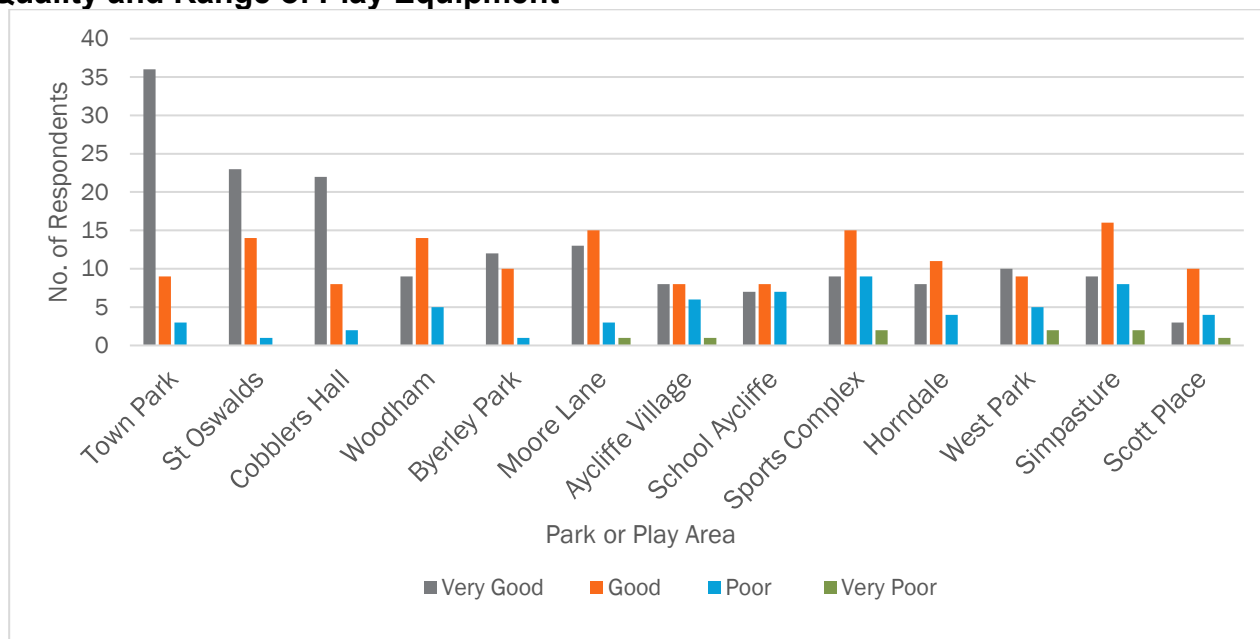
Residents were asked to think about the parks or play areas they used and rank them as the park generally then for the quality and range of play equipment with 4 being very good and 1 being very poor.

Satisfaction with Park or Play Area Generally

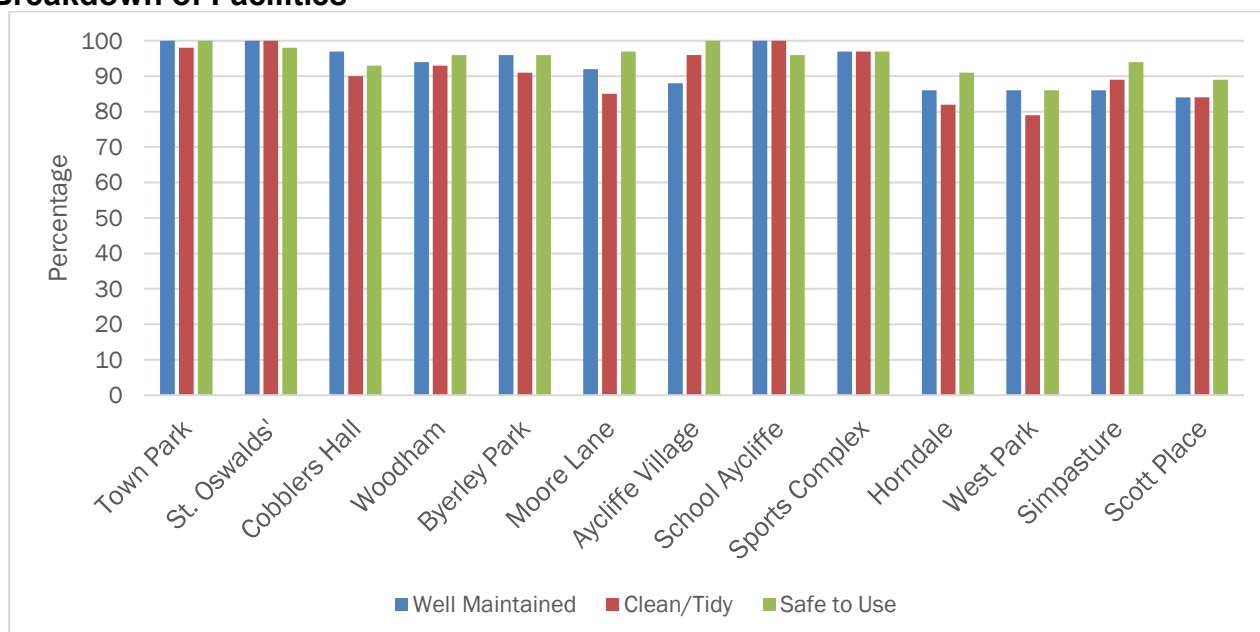


The Town Park, St. Oswald's Park and Cobblers Hall Play Area received the highest scores for satisfaction, quality, and range of equipment. Scott Place received the lowest satisfaction rate (70%) and School Aycliffe Play Area received the lowest score for the quality and range of equipment (68%).

Quality and Range of Play Equipment

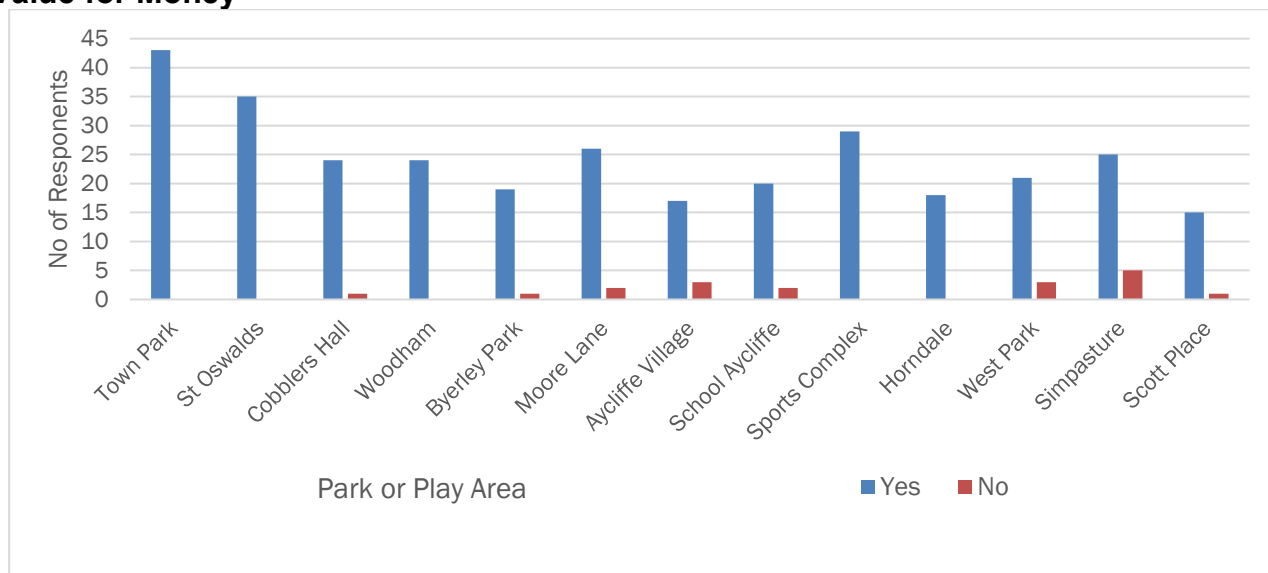


Breakdown of Facilities



The table shows overall high satisfaction with all areas. West Park received the lowest score for being clean/tidy (79%) and the least safe to use (86%). Scott Place received the lowest score for being well maintained (84%). Simpasture Park received the lowest score for value for money (83%).

Value for Money

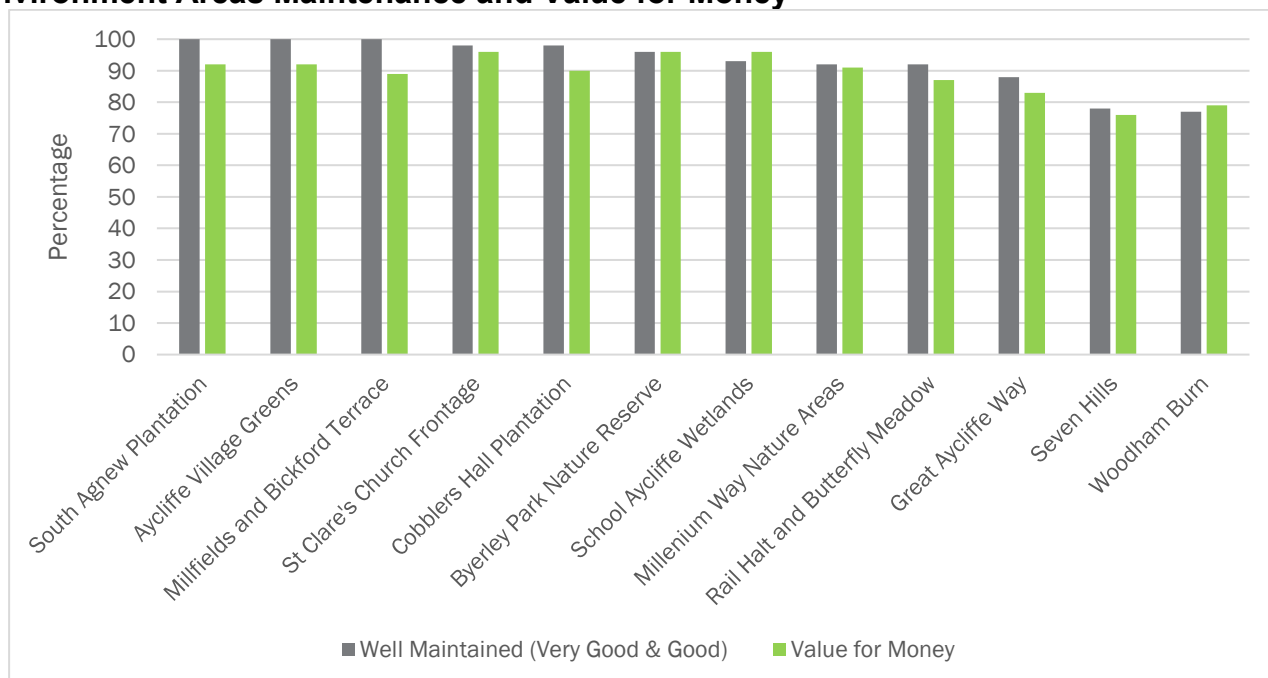


There were 39 individual comments which showed that residents were generally happy with the parks and plays areas and the level of provision around the town. Several residents commented that more equipment was needed, and some equipment was old. There were also several comments asking for more trees to be planted. More litter picking and security issues were also raised.

Environmental Areas

Residents were asked to rate the environmental areas in Great Aycliffe and if they were good value for money.

Environment Areas Maintenance and Value for Money



The table shows high overall satisfaction with all environmental areas. Woodham Burn was considered the least well maintained and scored very low for value for money (79%). The area known as Seven Hills was considered the worst value for money (76%).

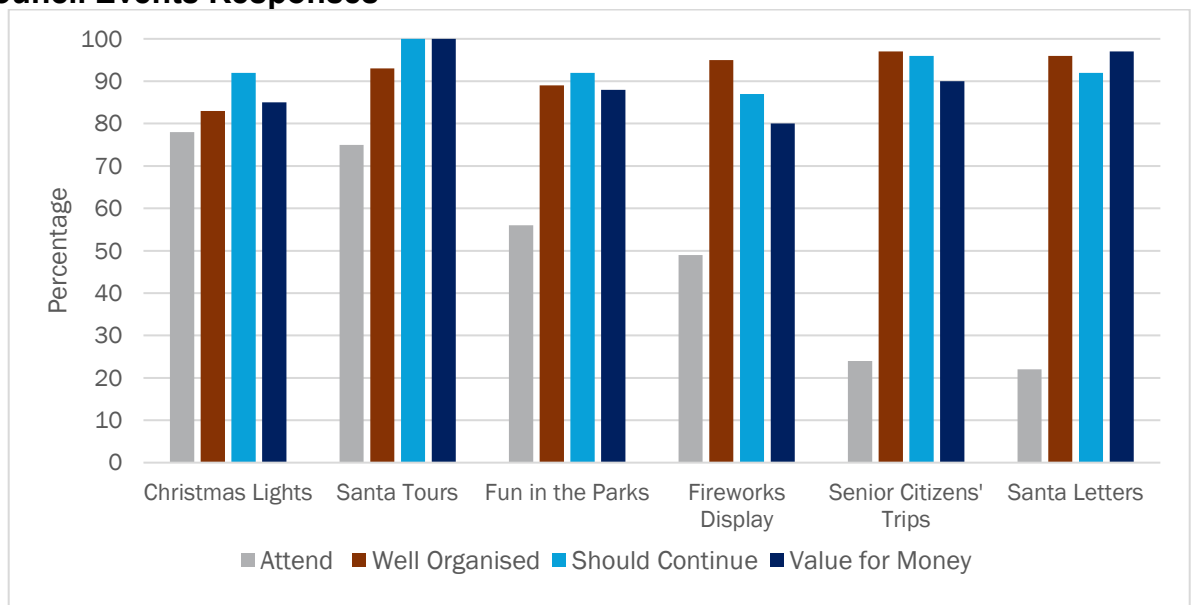
32 comments were made by residents with the main comments being –

- Very happy with the areas
- Clean up The Burn
- Footpaths generally and along the Great Aycliffe Way need more maintenance, they are getting overgrown, but it was acknowledged that the weather and nature did not help
- Improve signage and publicity

Outside Events and Activities

Residents were asked a number of questions about outside events and activities. Initially if residents use or attend the activity, if so, was it well organised and should it continue. As with all the questions residents were then asked if they were good value for money. A large number of people responded to these questions even if they did not use or attend the activity.

Town Council Events Responses

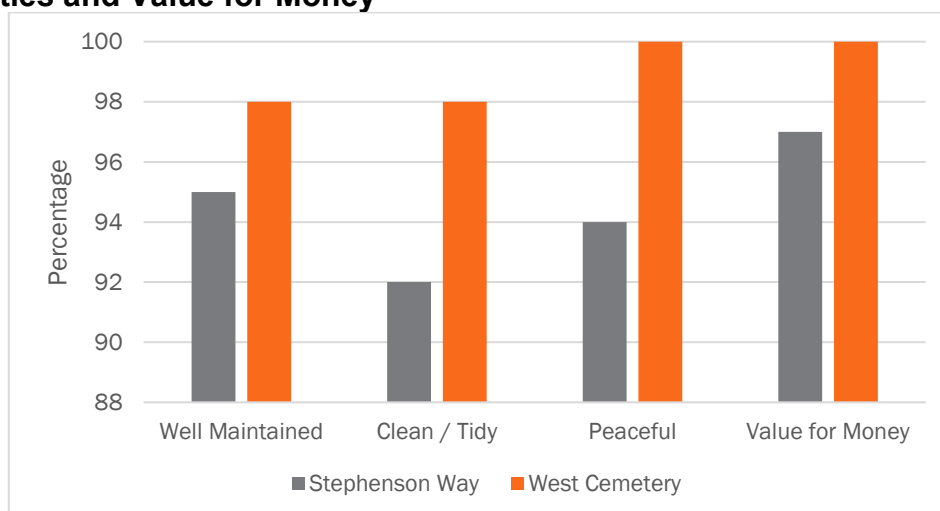


The table shows satisfaction is generally very high for Town Council events, residents would like to see them continue and they are considered value for money.

Cemeteries

Question 11 asked if residents for their views on the cemeteries in a series of yes / no answers.

Cemeteries Facilities and Value for Money

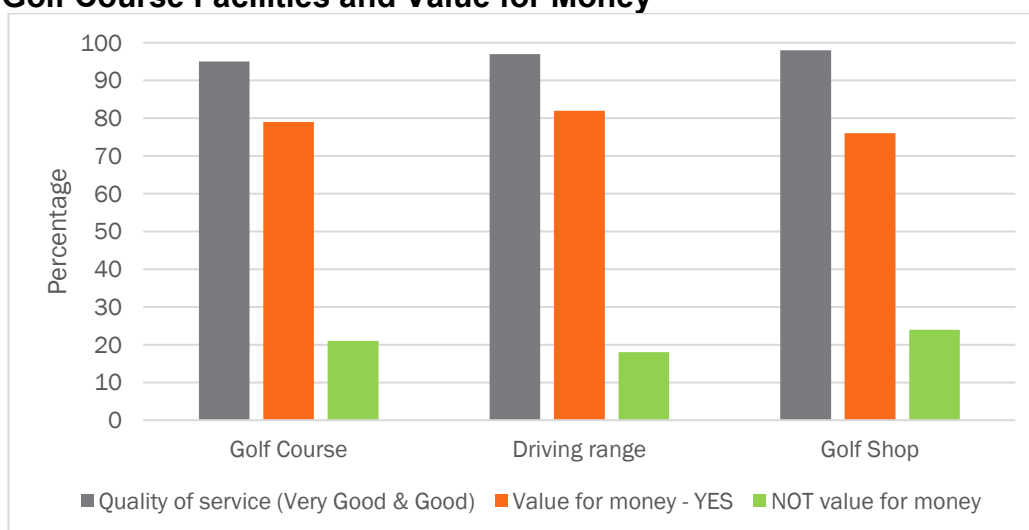


The table shows that the residents who answered these questions rated the cemetery service very highly. There were 19 individual comments made most of which were how good or well the cemeteries look. A few comments were made regarding the hedge at Stephenson Way and a couple suggested improved maintenance was needed.

Golf Course and Driving Range

Question 13 asked residents to rate the Oak Leaf Golf Course, driving range and golf shop and customer facilities as well as if they were good value for money.

Oak Leaf Golf Course Facilities and Value for Money



The table shows high overall satisfaction with the Golf Complex. Although the costs associated with the golf course are queried by residents under the budget questions only 4 people overall thought the quality of service was poor and no respondents thought the facilities were very poor. The golf shop and driving range each had 1 person who thought the services were poor whilst 2 respondents thought the golf course provided a poor quality of service.

23 comments were made regarding the golf course with as expected the greatest number of comments being received about the cost of the course, residents having to subsidise the facility and a couple which suggested selling off the land to gain an income.

It is clear that those who use the golf course and driving range value the service, with a number of positive comments received regarding how good the course was and how it was improving. The shop also received some very positive comments although there were a few comments regarding the lack of choice.

Oak Leaf Sports Complex

- 1.1 Question 15 asked the residents to rate the sports facilities/range of services; maintenance/cleanliness; bar and catering facilities and junior sports at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex and if it provided good value for money.

Oak Leaf Sports Complex Facilities and Value for Money



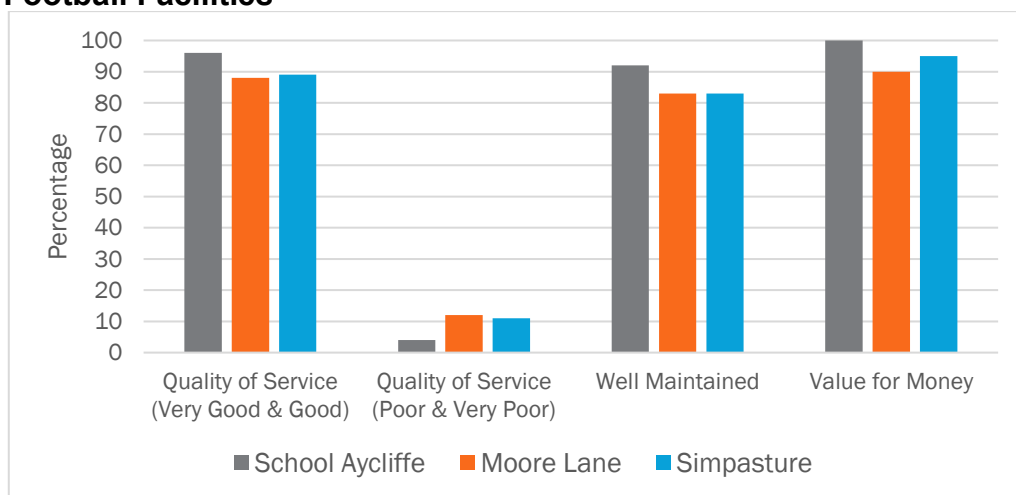
The table shows that overall satisfaction was very high amongst users of the Sports complex. There were also 23 comments made regarding the Oak Leaf Sports Complex and its facilities although there were negative comments the satisfaction overall is still high the largest number of comments were made regarding –

- the cost of running the service
- more advertising needed
- a great facility
- more classes and activities needed and
- a number of people commented on the lack of choice or poor catering

Football Pitches

Question 17 asked if the football pitches at School Aycliffe, Moore Lane and Simpasture were well maintained; good value for money and to rate them as a facility. Only 1 resident thought the facilities were very poor and that was at Moore Lane.

Responses for Football Facilities



The table shows high satisfaction with the football pitches. Only 12 comments were made regarding the football pitches with the following being the main areas of concern

- poor drainage
- better maintenance needed
- dog fouling
- cost / increase fees

Pre-School

Residents were asked if they were aware of the pre-school service. **61%** of respondents said they were. They were then asked if the pre-school service was value for money with **89%** of respondents agreeing it was value for money.

17 comments were made by residents regarding the pre-school provision.

- There were a number of comments regarding the suitability of the Town Council providing a service that comes under the remit of Durham County Council.
- There should be no cost to the council for this service parents should pay it all and increase provision received the same number of comments.
- More advertising was also mentioned.

Council Tax and Budget Information

Question 22 asked if residents felt that the Town Council portion of the Council Tax provides value for money for the services received. **87%** of respondents agreed this was value for money which is a very positive result.

Residents were also given the opportunity to comment on the services and Town Council portion of the Council Tax with the following key responses being received.

There were 21 comments made overall with 6 comments regarding the cost of existing services and spending less money on these services. As expected, the Golf Course and Sports Complex received the most negative comments.

There were 4 comments regarding passing increases on to taxpayers and people already struggling to cope with bills. Several comments were not about Town Council services.

Question 23 asked if residents were in support of the proposed 2.25% increase in the Town Council Tax for 2020/21 equating to £3.67 per year or 31p per month at Council Tax Band A. **80%** of respondents were in support of the proposed 2.25% increase.

Question 24 asked for any specific comments regarding the proposed 2020/2021 budget and what, if any, changes they would like to see. Question 25 asked residents if there were any services or new initiatives they would like to see the Council make by raising the Council Tax by more than 2.25% or reducing spending in other areas. These questions are covered in the Finance Manager's 2020/2021 Budget Setting Report on this agenda.

Question 26 asked residents to choose the 5 most important areas to retain and invest further and the 5 least important areas. Residents were **not** asked to rank their responses therefore the table below shows the number of responses for each service area only, not the priority respondents placed on them.

The 5 MOST important areas

The 5 LEAST important areas

Service Area	Votes	Service Area	Votes
Environment and Open Space	48	Civic Events and the Office of Mayor	36
Parks and Play Areas	43	Councillors	30
Senior Citizens' Trips	31	Golf Complex	27
Litter and Dog Bins	31	Fireworks Display	25
Sports Complex	30	Allotments	23
Cemeteries	26	Moore Lane Environment Centre	19
Flower Beds	24	St Oswald's Pre Schools	18
Santa Tours	24	Corporate Management and Admin	18
Park Patrol Service	24	Large Community Events	17
Large Community Events	21	Fun in the Parks	15
Fireworks Display	21	Public Seating	13
Fun in the Parks	20	Sports Complex	11
Christmas Lights	18	Football Pitches	11
Golf Complex	16	Senior Citizens' Trips	11
Public Seating	15	Flower Beds	10
Financial Management	15	Santa Tours	10
Football Pitches	14	Financial Management	8
Corporate Management and Admin	12	Bus Shelters	6
Bus Shelters	11	Environment and Open Space	5
St Oswald's Pre Schools	10	Cemeteries	4
Moore Lane Environment Centre	9	Parks and Play Areas	4
Allotments	8	Litter and Dog Bins	4
Councillors	5	Christmas Lights	4
Civic Events and the Office of Mayor	5	Park Patrol Service	4

Keeping Residents Informed

Questions 27 asked a 5 key questions regarding how well-informed residents felt about our services. As you can see from the information below overall residents felt very well or fairly well informed about the Town Council services.

Keeping You Informed

Aspect	Very Well	Fairly Well	Not Very Well	Poorly Informed	% Very or Fairly Well
Performance Information	21	31	11	7	74%
Keeping Residents Informed	16	36	12	8	72%
Spending Information	24	27	11	9	72%
How To Complain	23	25	15	8	68%
How To Get Involved	19	26	15	10	64%

Questions 28 to 34 were straight forward yes or no answers to a number of questions which are set out below.

If you have ever had to make a complaint to the Town Council, were you satisfied with the way your complaint was handled?

Yes	16	48%
No	17	52%

Have you visited the Town Council Offices in the past two years?

Yes	38	52%
No	35	48%

If you have had to contact Town Council staff, were they able to deal with your enquiry?

Yes	39	83%
No	8	17%

Did you find the staff helpful and courteous?

Yes	48	91%
No	5	9%

As always it is important to gauge how residents feel about the area overall and although recent reports suggest that residents are concerned about anti-social behaviour and crime overall **92%** of residents still consider Great Aycliffe is a pleasant place to live in.

Value for Money

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 normally consults its community on a regular basis from a town wide satisfaction survey undertaken regularly and/or when considered necessary to annual consultations on the Oak Leaf Sports Complex Services and the Senior Citizens' outings.

The most recent town wide satisfaction survey was undertaken in November 2019 and asked 36 specific questions on each of the Town Council services. There was a mix of open and closed questions to provide qualitative and quantitative data. Closed tick box answers were used to score services and rate the quality of service provision, comment boxes were available after each question to enable residents to share their views.

The 'value for money' and 'satisfaction with services' are set out below.

Provides value for money				Satisfaction with the Town Council			
2007	2009	2014	2019	2007	2009	2014	2019
63%	72%	79%	87%	67%	72%	77%	88%

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 13 Labour and 11 Independents and 6 Liberal Democrats.

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 2021/22 is Councillor Mrs. Sandra Haigh. The Mayor has chosen 'Children's Blessings' as her charity for her term of office.

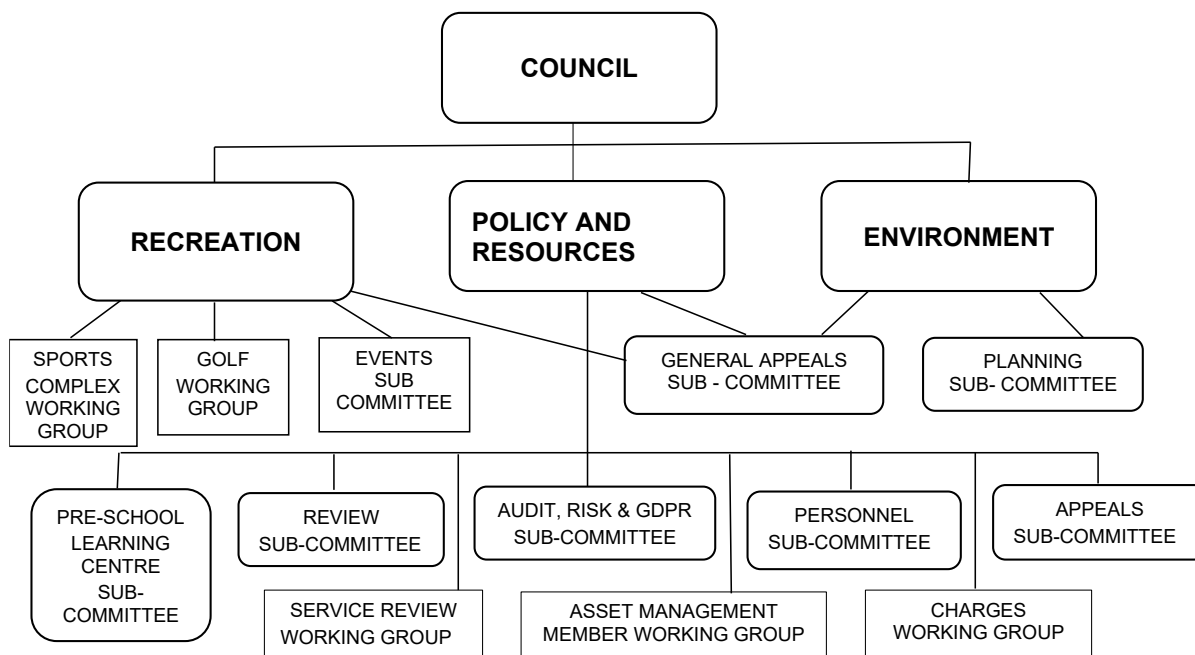
There are a number of formal civic engagements each year, which include:

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

Councillor Mrs. Mary Dalton was elected as Mayor of Great Aycliffe in May 2019 and due to Covid restrictions her term of office lasted until the Annual General Meeting of the Council in May 2021. Councillor Wendy Hillary was Deputy Mayor.

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 Durham County Council in 2018, the level of remuneration was set at £1,330 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 2021/22 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 General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Representation on Outside Bodies

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 Dorothy Bowman, Phil Hawkins and the Corporate and Policy Officer.
- b) County Durham Association of Local Councils
Councillors Arun Chandran and Peter Bergg and the Town Clerk.
- c) Aycliffe Village Community Association
Councillor Jim Atkinson
- d) Woodham Village Community Association
Councillors Michael Stead and Mrs Maureen Shelton
- e) Great Aycliffe and Middridge A.A.P. Local Councils' Committee
Councillors Arun Chandran and Peter Bergg and the Town Clerk.
- f) Larger Local Councils' Forum
Councillors Arun Chandran and Ken Robson and the Town Clerk.
- g) Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society
Councillor Ian Gray

- h) Friends of Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve
Councillor Ian Gray
- i) Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway
Councillor Dave Hardaker

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) serves the Parish of Great Aycliffe. 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. Community Safety
3. Older People

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

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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.

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
- ◆ Partnership work with other agencies to enhance and improve other amenity areas not under the ownership of Great Aycliffe Town Council
- ◆ Provision and management of a park patrol service
- ◆ Provision of an 'out of hours' service for emergency call outs in relation to security or health and safety issues

- ◆ Supply and maintenance of sufficient plant, vehicles and equipment required to undertake the above services
- ◆ Provision of operational duties in a safe manner as a result of employing safe working practices and undertaking risk assessments to ensure the health and safety and welfare of staff and the general public
- ◆ Work with schools to encourage environmental awareness
- ◆ Management and maintenance of 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 are:

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

Parks and Play Areas

We currently manage and maintain 10 parks, all of which have play equipment.

The 10 parks are:

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

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

The Works and Environment Section carries 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, Simpasture Park and Aycliffe Village.

Our seasonal charges for the pitches range from £475 to £675, depending on location and the facilities provided. Junior team fees have been frozen at £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 214 allotments and fees range from £22.50 to £45.00 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.

We provide 5 sites at St. Oswald's for the specific purpose of keeping bees and 2 training sites.

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.

Training was provided to anyone who was interested on 'How to Keep Bees' to ensure that residents who may wish to take on a 'bee plot' fully understand the requirements of keeping bees.

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 Adshell style shelters located on Woodham Way, Williamfield Way, Burnhill Way, and the Business Park).

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.**

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 matters 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:

- ◆ Senior Citizens' Excursions
- ◆ Community Enhancement Awards
- ◆ Sk8 Fest
- ◆ Fun in the Parks
- ◆ Fireworks Display
- ◆ Christmas Lighting
- ◆ Santa Tours

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

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. We provide up to 40 places for three-year olds in our Pre-School and up to 12 places for two-year olds in our Tots in the Park, term-time only from 8.30am until 3.30pm.

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 Pre-school Manager ensures the smooth running of the Pre-School and Tots in the Park, 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 Durham County Council, 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 under normal circumstances. However the opening hours are currently subject to Coronavirus restrictions. 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 to seek to diversify events/activities within the Sports Complex 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 (Political, Economic, Sociological and Technical 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.

Political

Pest Analysis Factors	Potential Impact: High Medium Low Undetermined	Type: Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat	Impact: Increasing Unchanged Reducing Unknown	Importance: Critical Important Unimportant Unknown	ACTION
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	Weakness	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	Maintain internal control Adhere to legislative requirements
Political balance of Council	Medium	Opportunity	Unknown	Important	Be apolitical Work with all parties
Local Government elections	Low	Opportunity	Increasing	Important	Await outcome Keep up-to-date with changes
Change in Government	Medium	Threat	Unknown	Important	Await outcome React accordingly
Council Tax Support Grant	High	Threat	Unknown	Critical	Monitor and await information from Government and Durham County Council
Implementation of General Data Protection Regulation	Medium	Opportunity	Increasing	Critical	Undertake GAP Analysis, review all documentation and implement new procedures Training
BREXIT	Medium	Threat	Increasing	Unknown	Monitor and be aware of potential changes and Impact

Economic

Pest Analysis Factors	Potential Impact: High Medium Low Undetermined	Type: Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat	Impact: Increasing Unchanged Reducing Unknown	Importance: Critical Important Unimportant Unknown	ACTION
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
Coronavirus	Medium	Threat	Unknown	Important	Monitor React accordingly

Sociological

Pest Analysis Factors	Potential Impact: High Medium Low Undetermined	Type: Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat	Impact: Increasing Unchanged Reducing Unknown	Importance: Critical Important Unimportant Unknown	ACTION
Access to services	Medium	Threat	Increasing	Important	Develop partnerships Pricing policy and Marketing
Social exclusion Hard to reach groups Equality and diversity Deprivation	Medium	Strength	Increasing	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

Impact on IT from GDPR	High	Weakness	Increasing	Important	Training Undertake review of systems and implement new procedures, passwords, and encryptions
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
Cyber-attack and loss of data or critical systems	High	Threat	Increasing	Important	Undertake security assessments Ensure security updates implemented Store data off site

SWOT ANALYSIS (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)

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 ❖ Committed workforce ❖ Improved working relationships ❖ Commitment to service ❖ Clear focus on the way forward ❖ Different skills ❖ Performance management ❖ Local employer ❖ Sound finances ❖ Risk management ❖ Adaptable and flexible workforce ❖ 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 ❖ Staff turnover ❖ Lack of progression opportunities ❖ Inconsistent technology
<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) ❖ Increased use of Social Media ❖ GDPR to streamline and modernise ❖ Expanded pre-school provision ❖ Government limit on Council Tax removed 	<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 ❖ Retirement of a number of staff ❖ GDPR ❖ Confidentiality awareness/compliance ❖ Phased retirements ❖ Coronavirus restrictions

APPENDIX 1

CLOSE OUT STATUS

AIMS & TARGETS APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021

TARGETS 2020/2021

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	May 20	CW	Delayed due to Covid-19
2	Publish an Annual Report	June 20	Man'mt Team	Not progressed due to Covid-19
3	Provide an annual member training programme from member requests and the town clerk from his annual appraisal and CPD requirements	March 21	AB	No progress due to Covid-19
4	Develop a recommended training programme for Members which shows highly recommended and recommended courses with a reminder sent quarterly and records of attendance and non-attendance kept	Annually	AB	No progress due to Covid-19
5	Undertake an annual review of the Council Constitution, Financial Regulations and ensure compliance with current legislation	May 20	Man'mt Team	Delayed due to Covid-19
6	Ensure compliance with GDPR	Ongoing	All	Ongoing
7	Improve advertising of Council facilities and services by targeting a service area in each publication making sure each area is targeted at least once	Ongoing	All	No newsletters due to Covid-19
8	Ensure that social media is used to advertise the Council's services and facilities	Ongoing	All Managers	Social media used to update public regarding Covid-19 measures in Council's services and facilities
9	Undertake research where appropriate for new policies and procedures	Ongoing	CW	Ongoing
10	Keep up to date with any changes in legislation and report to council as and when required	Ongoing	Man'mt Team	Ongoing
11	Continue to monitor energy consumption, implement energy saving initiatives and reduce usage where possible	Ongoing	All Managers	SLA in place with DCC for this
12	Ensure all staff have an annual appraisal	Sept 20	All Managers	Informal one-to-one discussions taking place
13	To undertake quarterly review of staff sickness and report to performance management group	Ongoing	All Managers	Not reported yet this year. Figures available from Finance when required

14	Complete review of electronic filing system and implement improvements to enable upgrade of the Council's main server and transferring data to 'the cloud'	Ongoing	All Staff	In progress
15	Continue to implement any recommendations regarding coronavirus to ensure the safety of staff, members, and the public	Ongoing	All Staff	Situation constantly monitored and government advice implemented in all Council facilities

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

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comments
16	Produce Annual Return by 30 th June each year	June 21	DA	Complete
17	Achieve an unqualified audit opinion of the Annual Return by 30 September 20	Sept 20	DA	Unqualified opinion received. Complete
18	Ensure the Medium-Term Financial Plan is approved by 30 th June each year	June 20	DA	Not formally reported due to Covid-19 and lack of information/ uncertainties. Plan updated as information becomes available. Updated MTFP to be prepared in 2021
19	Deliver the Internal Audit Plan Schedule of Work and report quarterly to Audit Sub Committee then to Council	March 21	KB	Complete
20	Manage the financial impact of any cuts to LCTSS funding	Ongoing	AB DA	No cuts to LCTSS grant for 2021/22
21	Quarterly budget control reports are presented to P&R Committee	Ongoing	DA	Complete
22	Budgets/Precepts approved by 31 st January 2021	Jan 21	DA	Complete
23	Ensure all relevant information is published in compliance with the Transparency Code/Openness of Local Government Regulations.	Ongoing	AB / CW DA	Transparency information on website is up to date
24	Deliver the work set out in the Asset Management Plan via the capital programme and ensure that a six-monthly review is undertaken with Officers and Member Asset Management Group	Ongoing	AB DA	Some capital projects delayed due to Covid-19.
25	Undertake an annual update of the Asset Register including the schedule of expected life and replacement costs for buildings, plant, and machinery.	Ongoing	AB DA	Complete
26	To consider the Council's Business Risks every March and minute that the full review has taken place by Council	Mar 21	CW	Complete

27	Ensure that at least one Service Review is completed each year	Ongoing	Man'mt Team	On hold due to Covid-19
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AIM 3 – TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE LEISURE FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comments
28	Deliver the Council's programme of special events Fun in the Parks Senior Citizens Trips Firework Display Santa Letters Christmas lights Santa tours Develop/provide a yearly programme of new events	Aug 20 July 20 Nov 20 Dec 20 Dec 20 Dec 20 Mar 21	JT JT JT JT SC JT JT	Cancelled - Covid-19 Cancelled - Covid-19 Cancelled - Covid-19 Complete Complete Complete Events situation under review alongside government Covid-19 regulations
29	Continue to diversify events/activities within the Sports Complex	Ongoing	JT	Limited due to Covid-19 restrictions
30	Partner with outside bodies including the Sedgefield Sports Partnership	Ongoing	JT	School sports event for July agreed in principle

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

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comment
31	Ensure the continuous improvement of the service and obtain at least a 'good' and aiming for 'excellent' Ofsted Inspection	Ongoing	JG	In progress
32	Ensure all staff undertake training on Special Educational Needs	Dec 20	JG	Complete

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

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comment
33	Works & Environment Manager to arrange to work with local schools and community groups to develop volunteer opportunities	Ongoing	SC	Impacted by Covid-19 restrictions
34	To continue to monitor the health and condition of the trees on Town Council land in line with the tree management	Ongoing	SC LW	In progress

	policy and undertake a visual tree inspection of a specific area every 6 months to assess the health and condition of the trees			
35	Continue to work with Northumbrian Water to establish flow rates to lakes at West Park	Ongoing	SC AB	Ongoing
36	Works and Environment Manager to organise and help deliver 15 public countryside events	Ongoing	SC	Delayed due to Covid-19
37	Complete at least 5 targeted Himalayan Balsam removing working parties along The Burn	Annually	SC	Complete
38	Undertake maintenance and management of specific Durham County Council environmental areas as per the management agreement	Ongoing	SC	Ongoing
39	Undertake a limited snow clearing and gritting service for Durham County Council as per the winter maintenance agreement for the benefit of residents	Ongoing	SC	Nothing to report
40	Investigate the options for the improvement of Woodham Park/Play area and undertake a suitable consultation	March 21	SC	Ongoing. Quotations sought for January meeting
41	Proactively monitor Ash die-back and remove diseased trees as necessary	Ongoing	SC	Ongoing

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

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comment
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	Ongoing	CW SC	Unable to hold meetings due to Covid-19 restrictions
43	To continue partnership working with DCC and build on the existing initiatives	Ongoing	SC	Ongoing
44	Work with the Youth Council, schools, community, and voluntary groups hold a Town Pride Environment Week	July 20	SC CW	Not undertaken due to Covid-19 restrictions
45	The Works and Environment Manager and Park Patrol Officers to work with DCC Officers and Police in regard to anti-social behaviour issues	Ongoing	SC	Postponed due to Covid-19. Virtual meetings taking place
46	The Works & Environment Manager and Town Pride Team to work with DCC Officers and Tidy Britain to ensure that	Ongoing	SC Town Pride Team	Nothing progressed yet

	Great Aycliffe Parish has a targeted Anti-Littering campaign.			
47	Work in partnership with residents and friends' groups to improve our parks, play areas and environment areas.	Ongoing	SC/ Town Pride Team	Restricted due to Covid-19

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

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comment
48	Hold an aims and target meeting each March to discuss progress on existing targets and new targets with residents	March 21	CW AD	Not undertaken due to Covid-19 restrictions
49	Hold a budget setting drop-in consultation meeting with residents at a central location with a view to setting the annual budget	Nov 20	DA	Unable to hold public event due to Covid-19 Survey will be available online
50	To review the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan in 2022	2022	CW AD	
51	Hold a Parish Meeting	Annually In May	AB	Not undertaken due to Covid-19 restrictions
52	Hold an Allotment AGM	Annually In Nov	LW	Not undertaken due to Covid-19 restrictions
53	Hold a minimum of 4 allotment representative meetings	Ongoing	LW	Not undertaken due to Covid-19 restrictions
54	Hold or take part in at least 2 events to inform residents about Town Council services	Annually	CW AD	Not undertaken due to Covid-19 restrictions

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

No	Target	Target Date	Officer	Comment
55	Produce timely responses to all major consultations carried out	Ongoing	AB CW	On-going

APPENDIX 2

TARGETS FOR THE COMING YEAR 2021/22

TOWN COUNCIL TARGETS FOR APRIL 2021 TO MARCH 2022

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 the end of June each year.	June 21	C. Walton
2	Publish an Annual Report.	June 21	Management Team
3	Provide an annual training programme for the Town Clerk from his annual appraisal and CPD requirements.	March 22	D. Austin
4	Develop and provide a training programme for Members which shows highly recommended and recommended courses with a reminder sent quarterly and records of attendance and non-attendance kept.	Annually	D. Austin
5	Develop and provide an annual training programme for the staff within each service area, informed by the annual appraisal process.	March 22	All Managers
6	Undertake an annual review of the Council Constitution, Financial Regulations and ensure compliance with current legislation.	Annually in May	Management Team
7	Ensure compliance with GDPR.	Ongoing	All Managers
8	Improve advertising of Council facilities and services by targeting a service area in each publication making sure each area is targeted at least once.	Ongoing	All Managers
9	Ensure that social media is used to advertise the Council's services and facilities.	Ongoing	All Managers
10	Undertake research where appropriate for new policies and procedures.	Ongoing	C. Walton
11	Keep up to date with any changes in legislation and report to council as and when required.	Ongoing	Management Team
12	Continue to monitor energy consumption, implement energy saving initiatives and reduce usage where possible.	Ongoing	All Managers
13	Ensure all staff have an annual appraisal.	Sept 21	All Managers
14	To undertake quarterly review of staff sickness and report to service managers.	Ongoing	All Managers
15	Complete review of electronic filing system and implement improvements to enable upgrade of the Council's main server and transferring data to 'the cloud'.	Ongoing	All Managers

16	Continue to implement any Government guidance and recommendations regarding Coronavirus to ensure the safety of staff, members, and the public.	Ongoing	All Staff
17	All staff to undertake mental health and well-being training.	July 21	All Staff
18	Undertake a review of Cyber Security arrangements.	Ongoing	Management Team
19	Complete a programme of new Member Induction Training to cover all service areas, roles, and responsibilities.	End of July 2021	Management Team
20	Continue to review and reduce the Council's use of single use plastic.	Ongoing	Management Team / All Staff
21	Continue to review the Council's efforts around carbon reduction and ensure that an 'environmental and climate change implications' item is added to all council reports.	Ongoing	Management Team / All Staff

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

No	Target	Target Date	Officer
22	Produce Annual Return by 30 th June each year.	June 21	T. Woodhead
23	Achieve an unqualified audit opinion of the Annual Return by 30 th September each year.	Sept 21	T. Woodhead
24	Ensure the Medium-Term Financial Plan is approved by 30 th June each year.	June 21	T. Woodhead
25	Deliver the Internal Audit Plan Schedule of Work and report quarterly to Audit Sub Committee then to Council.	March 22	K. Bertram
26	Manage the financial impact of any cuts to LCTSS funding.	Ongoing	T. Woodhead
27	Quarterly budget control reports are presented to P&R Committee.	Ongoing	T. Woodhead
28	Budgets/Precepts approved by 31 st January 2022.	Jan 22	T. Woodhead
29	Ensure all relevant information is published in compliance with the Transparency Code/ Openness of Local Government Regulations.	Ongoing	Management Team
30	Deliver the work set out in the Asset Management Plan via the capital programme and ensure that a six-monthly review is undertaken with Officers and Member Asset Management Group.	Ongoing	D. Austin / T. Woodhead
31	Undertake an annual update of the Asset Register including the schedule of expected life and replacement costs for buildings, plant, and machinery.	Ongoing	T. Woodhead / D. Austin

32	To consider the Council's Business Risks every March and minute that the full review has taken place by Council.	Mar 22	C. Walton
33	Ensure that at least one Service Review is completed each year.	Ongoing	Management Team

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

No	Target	Target Date	Officer
34	Deliver the Council's programme of special events:- Fun in the Parks Senior Citizens Trips Firework Display Sk8t Fest Santa Letters Christmas Lights Santa Tours	Aug 22 July 22 Nov 21 May 22 Dec 21 Dec 21 Dec 21	J. Thexton J. Thexton J. Thexton J. Thexton J. Thexton S. Cooper J. Thexton
35	Develop and provide an improved and enhanced yearly programme of events, including new events.	Ongoing	J. Thexton
36	Continue to diversify, improve, enhance, and increase the number of events and activities offered within the Sports Complex.	Ongoing	J. Thexton
37	Partner with outside bodies including the Sedgefield Sports Partnership.	Ongoing	J. Thexton

Please Note: Some events have already been postponed for 2021 and Covid restrictions will be under constant review.

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

No	Target	Target Date	Officer
38	Ensure the continuous improvement of the service and obtain at least a 'good' and aiming for 'excellent' Ofsted Inspection	Ongoing	J. Gale / L. Downton
39	Ensure that all staff undertake all relevant training and that any new staff receive Special Educational Needs training.	Ongoing	J. Gale / L. Downton

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
40	Works and Environment Manager to arrange to work with local schools and community groups to develop volunteer opportunities by helping to deliver 15 public countryside events	Ongoing	S. Cooper
41	To continue to monitor the health and condition of the trees on Town Council land in line with the tree management policy and undertake a visual tree inspection of a specific area every 6 months to assess the health and condition of the trees	Ongoing	S. Cooper
42	Continue to work with Northumbrian Water to establish flow rates to lakes at West Park	Ongoing	S. Cooper
43	Complete at least 5 targeted Himalayan Balsam removing working parties along The Burn	Annually	S. Cooper
44	Undertake maintenance and management of specific Durham County Council environmental areas as per the management agreement	Ongoing	S. Cooper
45	Undertake a review of the current winter maintenance arrangements with Durham County Council	Dec 21	S. Cooper
46	Complete the improvement of Woodham Park/Play area	Sept 21	S. Cooper
47	Proactively monitor Ash Dieback Disease and remove diseased trees as necessary	Ongoing	S. Cooper
48	To undertake maintenance and management of the former Elmfield School site, subject to a lease being agreed with Durham County Council.	Ongoing	D. Austin / S. Cooper

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

No	Target	Target Date	Officer
49	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	Ongoing	C. Walton / S. Cooper
50	To continue partnership working with DCC and build on the existing initiatives	Ongoing	S. Cooper
51	Work with the Youth Council, DCC Officers, Tidy Britain, schools, community, and voluntary groups to hold a Town Pride Environment Week, incorporating an anti-letter campaign.	July 21	C. Walton / S. Cooper / Town Pride Team

52	The Works and Environment Manager and Park Patrol Officers to work with DCC Officers and Police in regard to anti-social behaviour issues	Ongoing	S. Cooper
53	Work in partnership with residents and friends' groups to improve our parks, play areas and environment areas.	Ongoing	S. Cooper / Town Pride Team

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

No	Target	Target Date	Officer
54	Undertake a budget setting and aims and targets consultation using social media, survey monkey or other suitable platform	Nov 21	T. Woodhead C. Walton
55	To review the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan in 2022	2022	C. Walton / A. Donald
56	Hold a Parish Meeting	Annually In May	D. Austin / S. Stretch
57	Hold an Allotment AGM	Annually In Nov	L. Williams
58	Hold a minimum of 4 allotment representative meetings	Ongoing	L. Williams
59	Hold or take part in at least 2 events to inform residents about Town Council services with an aim to establish priorities	Annually	C. Walton / A. Donald
60	Make better use of social media to engage with resident and undertake consultations	Annually	All Managers

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

No	Target	Target Date	Officer
61	Produce timely responses to all major consultations carried out	Ongoing	D. Austin / C. Walton

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 8 wards of the Town.

L – Labour I – Independent LD – Liberal Democrat

Councillor	Telephone (01325)	Mobile/Alt	e-mail
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