



GREAT AYCLIFFE TOWN COUNCIL

Service Delivery Plan

2022-23



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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. 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 continuing government restrictions had an impact on last years' Service Delivery Plan. As shown in the aims and targets for 2021/22, a number of actions were not completed, and a number of community events could not go ahead earlier in the year.

However, work on our green spaces, environment, parks, cemeteries and allotments carried on throughout the restrictions, while St Oswald's Pre-School and the Oak Leaf Golf Course also remained open throughout the pandemic.

The Oak Leaf Sports Complex and driving range have both since fully re-opened during 2021/22.

A return to a complete provision of Council facilities and services, plus a full schedule of special events is planned for 2022/23.

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 Day Parade, Cyclocross, various schools partnership activities, 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 233 allotment plots in 5 different locations. 2 allotment sites with pigeon or poultry facilities
- ✓ 7 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:
 - South 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
 - Aycliffe Nature Park
 - Byerley Park Nature area
 - 2 nature areas on the business park
 - Aycliffe Village Greens (custodians & maintenance)
- ✓ Assists Aycliffe Youth Council
- ✓ Encourages Community Empowerment through Consultation and Open Days
- ✓ Provides small grants to local voluntary organisations
- ✓ Develops and updates 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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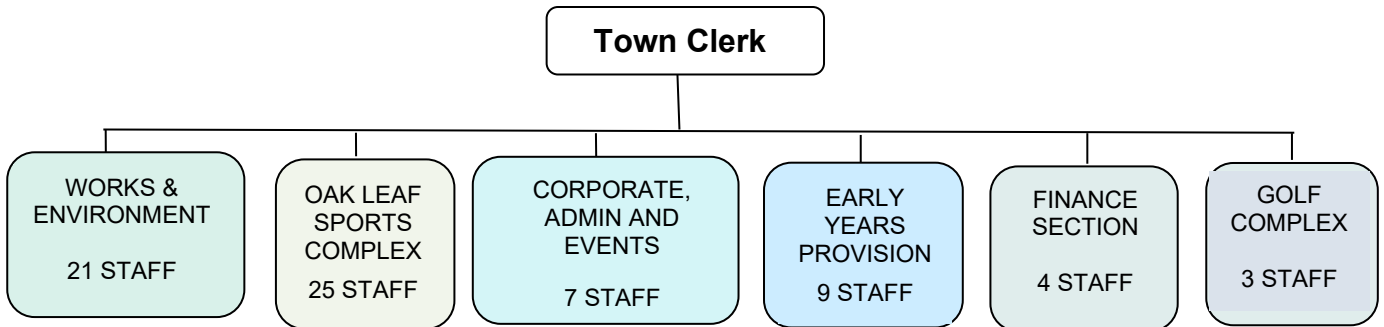
CORPORATE SERVICES SECTION

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 £1,746,869 in 2022/23

The Council currently employs 70 staff, made up of 44 full-time and 26 part-time employees supported by a number of casual staff, who do not form part of the formal staff establishment.



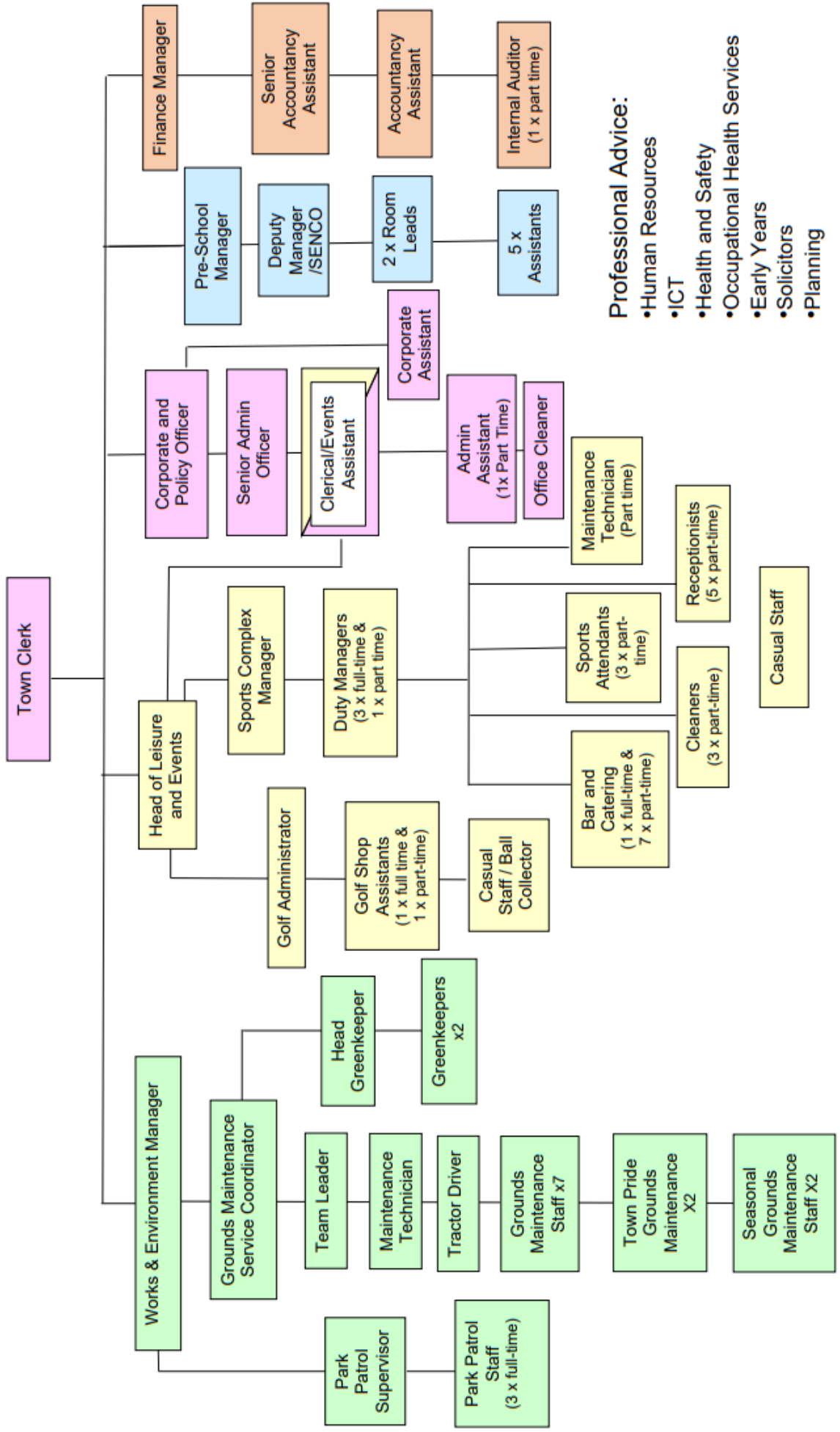
The Council's Establishment

The Council also retains the services of consultants for human 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 and Policy Officer	Amanda Donald	amanda.donald@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Works and Environment Manager	Steve Cooper	steven.cooper@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Head of Leisure and Events	Judith Thexton	judith.thexton@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
Sports Complex Manager	Andy Clark	andrew.clark@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

Town Council Organisation Structure



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:-

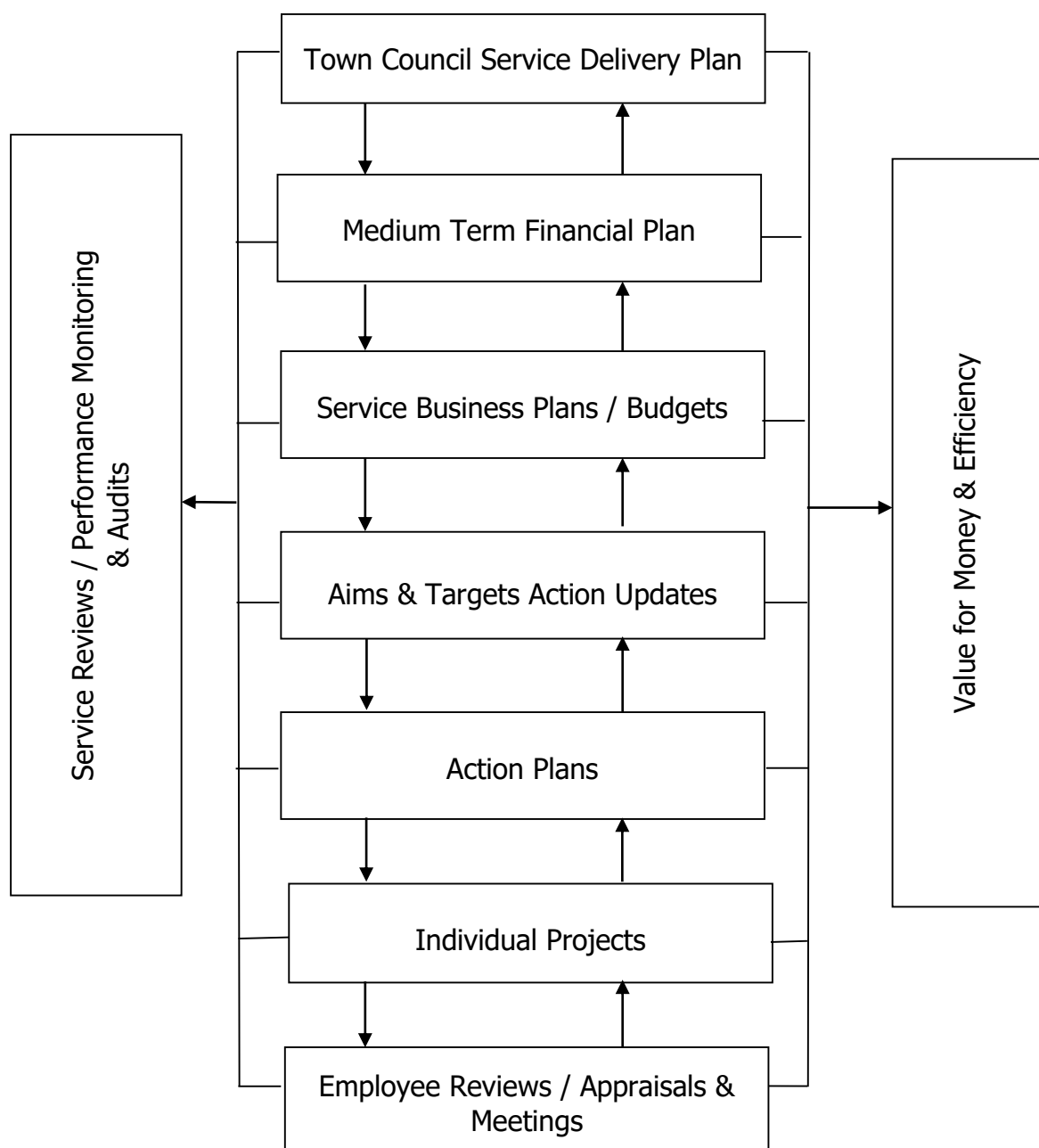
1.	To provide good quality governance and management of the Council.
2.	To manage the council’s finances and assets in a responsible manner.
3.	To provide accessible, affordable leisure facilities and opportunities.
4.	To provide pre-school education as appropriate in Great Aycliffe.
5.	To contribute 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 Council 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, while residents are informed and consulted via the Council's newsletters and through engagement with community groups and organisations. The progress made during the year informs the development of targets for the following year.

Council Targets 2021/22

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 (2021/22) 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 2022/23

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 and an annual budget consultation is also held with residents.

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 (2022/23) 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, particularly 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 its strategic and corporate activities.
- ◆ 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 provides an important support service to the Council's front-line service areas, and to officers and members of the Council.

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

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

- ◆ Updating and monitoring compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for Contracts and Procurement.
- ◆ Managing and developing the Council's accounting systems, internal controls, financial records, financial policies, and procedures.
- ◆ Reporting on the Council's financial performance.
- ◆ Providing financial information to Members and Officers including the regular reporting of budgetary control during the year.
- ◆ Preparing the Annual Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.
- ◆ Preparing the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- ◆ Preparing the Annual 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 2022/23 totals £280,600** and includes provision for the following planned projects:

- Replacement of two single cab works vehicles;
- Ongoing purchase of electrical alternatives for petrol powered works machinery;
- Ongoing Computer replacements and website development;
- The ongoing programme of replacement festive lighting;
- Roofing replacement at Moore Lane and Simpasture Park Pavilions;
- Replacement goals for Simpasture sports pitches;
- The ongoing programme of play area surfacing replacement;
- Provision to drain and repair West Park Lakes;
- Provision for ongoing repairs to the golf course irrigation system;
- Purchase of golf trolleys for hire at the golf shop;
- Provision for ongoing drainage repairs at the sports complex;
- Replacement of the air conditioning units in the sports complex kitchen;
- Replacement blinds and curtains for the sports complex bar and function room;
- Replacement public seating;
- Provision to upgrade parish lighting to LED lights;
- Ongoing provision for the removal of trees affected by Ash Dieback disease; and
- The ongoing programme of footpath repairs

The 2022/23 Capital Programme Budget will be funded in from the Council's Earmarked Capital Reserves, which are set aside for this purpose.

Based on the latest projections available at the time of writing this plan, the Council was forecast to have made **capital investment of £263,100 in 2021/22** and the main capital works completed during the year are listed below:

- Extension of the St Oswald's Pre-School building;
- Purchase of machinery including a rotary mower, golf course fairways mower and utility vehicle and electrical machinery;
- Computer replacements;
- Replacement of the infant play area at Woodham Park;
- Footpath repair works;
- Replacement Christmas lighting;

- Sports complex roofing works;
- Play area surfacing replacement;
- Allotments fencing works;
- Installation of a footpath to Aycliffe Village play area
- Ash tree dieback works.

Further details on the Council's recent capital spending and capital investment plans for the future are provided in the 2022/23 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. We are flexible in our approach to consultation, but our methods are realistic in terms of cost and available resources.

We produce and publish a quarterly newsletter.

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 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.

We also continue to develop our social media and other online methods for 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.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan (GANP) was agreed by public referendum in 2017 after an extensive period of public consultation. It is a statutory planning document, which covers the parish of Great Aycliffe. Its planning policies relate to land and business use in the parish for 20 years from the date of the Plan. The GANP is community led; it sets out the vision and objectives of the residents of the parish, which are:

'To make Great Aycliffe a vibrant community, the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan will seek to enhance the natural environment, support and encourage high quality housing, local jobs and improved retail and leisure facilities in a healthy, green and attractive town'.

Results and Comments from the 2022/23 Budget Consultation

The Council takes residents' views into account when planning services and taking spending decisions.

The annual Budget Consultation provides an opportunity for you to comment on our budget proposals.

The annual budget is important to the community in terms of how our spending plans may impact on the provision of local services and investment in assets for the benefit of the town, and regarding the level of Council Tax that we need to raise from local taxpayers in order to fund these plans.

The budget questionnaire was made widely available in both printed and electronic formats, in local community centres, via the Council's website and on social media platforms.

There were 67 responses in total.

The results of the Budget Consultation for 2022/23 are summarised below.

We asked:

Having considered all of the services provided by the Town Council, and the investment that we make in the Parish of Great Aycliffe, **do you feel that the current Town Council Tax of £166.72 per year provides value for money?**

66 people answered this question, the result being:

YES: 60.6%

NO: 39.4%

The next question was 'All things considered, **are you in support of the proposed 1.99% increase in the Town Council Tax** (equating to £3.32 per year or 28p per month at Council Tax Band A)?'

57.6% of respondees were in support of the increase, while 42.4% said they did not support an increase.

There were several comments regarding passing increases on to taxpayers and people already struggling to cope with bills and other increases in the current economic climate.

Several comments were not about Town Council services.

We asked for any comments on the budget proposals and if there were any changes you wished to see in the final budget. Only 32 people commented on this question, with some wishing to see more investment in family friendly facilities and events. There were a number of requests for improvements that are beyond the remit and responsibility of the Town Council, such as further police patrols and shopping facilities.

Similarly, we asked if there were any services or new initiatives you would like the Town Council to invest in, either by raising the Council Tax or reducing spending in other areas.

Suggestions included more environmental improvements and investment in community and mental health schemes.

The next question asked which Council services are MOST important to you, where budget cuts should not be made and where any future investment should be targeted.

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Environment, Nature Parks and Open Spaces	77.3%	51
2	Flower Beds	47.0%	31
3	Moore Lane Environment Centre & Environment Events	9.1%	6
4	St. Oswald's Pre-School	22.7%	15
5	Cemeteries	40.9%	27
6	Allotments	37.9%	25
7	Oak Leaf Sports Complex	33.3%	22
8	Oak Leaf Golf Course and Driving Range	13.6%	9
9	Football Pitches	24.2%	16
10	Parks and Play Areas	69.7%	46
11	Park Patrol Service	31.8%	21
12	Large Community Events such as the Big Brass Bash	31.8%	21
13	Fireworks Display	48.5%	32
14	Fun in the Parks	47.0%	31
15	Senior Citizens' Trips	27.3%	18
16	Santa Tours	48.5%	32
17	Christmas Lights	36.4%	24
18	Civic Events and the Office of Town Mayor	4.5%	3
19	Councillors	7.6%	5
20	Bus Shelters	28.8%	19
21	Public Seating	30.3%	20
22	Litter and Dog Bins	74.2%	49
23	Corporate Management and Administration	7.6%	5
24	Financial Management	13.6%	9

The responses to this question clearly show how much residents of Great Aycliffe value its green open spaces, plus the leisure facilities and special events provided by the Town Council.

Those areas voted as least important to residents were civic events, finance and administrative functions.

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 taxpayers. It 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.

Members

The Council has a membership of 30, which is made up of 9 Labour, 13 Independents and 7 Liberal Democrats. There is currently one vacancy with a By-Election due in May 2022.

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, the Mayor for 2022/23 being Councillor Ken Robson. The Mayor has chosen Together 21 and Wishing Well as his charities for his term of office.

There are a number of formal civic engagements each year including:

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

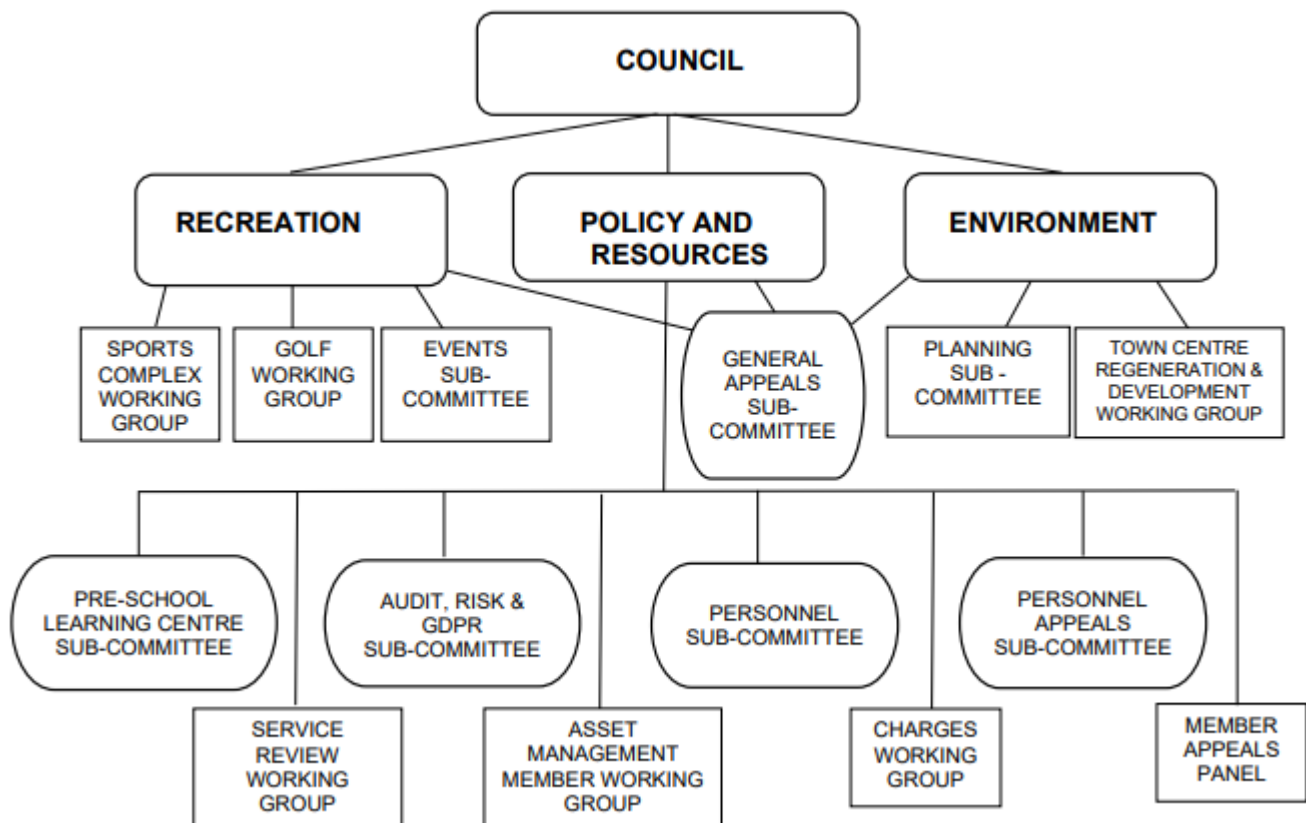


Mrs Sandra Haigh was elected as Mayor of Great Aycliffe in May 2021, with her term of office lasting until the Annual General Meeting of the Council in May 2022. Her consort was Councillor Brian Haigh and Councillor Ken Robson was Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor raised £2,115 for her chosen charity, 'Children's Blessings' during her term of office.

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 2022/23 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 start of 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 Martin Ashcroft and the Town Clerk.
- c) Aycliffe Village Community Association
Councillor Neville Jones
- d) Woodham Village Community Association
Councillors Michael Stead
- 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 Stockton and Darlington Railway
Councillor Brian Haigh

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 priority for GAMP for 2022/23 is 'Community Recovery'.

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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 strategic aims within this Plan.

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 including:

- ◆ 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 wildflower 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 ten parks, all of which have play equipment.

The ten 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 £485 to £690, depending on location and the facilities provided. Junior team fees are charged at £375.

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 233 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 9 sites at St. Oswald's for the specific purpose of keeping bees with 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 Environment 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
- ◆ Santa Letters

In addition, this year, we will be celebrating Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex with a family picnic event, culminating with the lighting of a beacon as part of a national chain of beacons.

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 Centres

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. 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 Golf Club Members 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
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
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	Important	Continue to review all documentation

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	Increasing	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
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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	Increasing	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	Unchanged	Important	Continue to monitor and implement security arrangements
New Communication Technologies	Medium	Opportunity	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 ❖ Strong 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 arrangements ❖ 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 ❖ Limited ability to raise funding ❖ Staff turnover ❖ Lack of career 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 ❖ Working with GAMP ❖ Publicity of Council services and facilities ❖ Project Planning ❖ Increased Tax Base (more houses) ❖ Increased use of social media ❖ Use of information technology to streamline and modernise services ❖ No Government limit on Precept increases 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Financial cuts – Council Tax Support Grant ❖ High inflation on price of goods and services ❖ Pay awards ❖ Political changes ❖ Crime and vandalism ❖ Failure to retain or recruit staff ❖ Fall in staff motivation ❖ Unforeseen budget pressures ❖ Possible government limit on Council Tax increases ❖ Industrial action ❖ GDPR ❖ Confidentiality awareness/compliance ❖ Potential Coronavirus restrictions

APPENDIX 1

CLOSE OUT STATUS

AIMS & TARGETS APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022

AIM 1 - TO PROVIDE GOOD QUALITY GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL

No	Target	Comment
1	Publish a Town Council Service Delivery Plan by the end of June each year.	Complete
2	Publish an Annual Report.	Complete
3	Provide an annual training programme for the Town Clerk from his annual appraisal and CPD requirements.	Town Clerk appraisal arrangements under review.
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.	Induction training for members complete. NALC and CDALC training regularly circulated
5	Develop and provide an annual training programme for the staff within each service area, informed by the annual appraisal process.	Complete
6	Undertake an annual review of the Council Constitution, Financial Regulations and ensure compliance with current legislation.	Complete
7	Ensure compliance with GDPR.	Ongoing
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
9	Ensure that social media is used to advertise the Council's services and facilities.	Social media now in regular use and increase in public interaction noted
10	Undertake research where appropriate for new policies and procedures.	Carried out where required
11	Keep up to date with any changes in legislation and report to council as and when required.	Ongoing
12	Continue to monitor energy consumption, implement energy saving initiatives and reduce usage where possible.	Energy consumption being monitored and recorded and various energy saving initiatives implemented.
13	Ensure all staff have an annual appraisal.	Complete
14	To undertake quarterly review of staff sickness and report to service managers.	Complete
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'.	Review of electronic filing system complete. Data to be transferred to Cloud during 2022/23.

No	Target	Comment
16	Continue to implement any Government guidance and recommendations regarding Coronavirus to ensure the safety of staff, members, and public.	Robust risk assessments and safety measures in place and reviewed regularly.
17	All staff to undertake mental health and well-being training.	Complete
18	Undertake a review of Cyber Security arrangements.	Complete
19	Complete a programme of new Member Induction Training to cover all service areas, roles, and responsibilities.	Induction training for members complete. NALC and CDALC training regularly circulated.
20	Continue to review and reduce the Council's use of single use plastic.	Plastic cups for water machine in council chamber and coffee machine at sports complex phased out.
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.	Carbon reduction implications now considered in all reports to committee and council. Hybrid golf mower and further electrical machinery purchased.

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

No	Target	Comment
22	Produce Annual Return by 30 th June each year.	Complete
23	Achieve an unqualified audit opinion of the Annual Return by 30 th September each year.	Complete
24	Ensure the Medium-Term Financial Plan is approved by 30 th June each year.	Complete
25	Deliver the Internal Audit Plan Schedule of Work and report quarterly to Audit Sub Committee then to Council.	Ongoing
26	Manage the financial impact of any cuts to LCTSS funding.	Complete
27	Quarterly budget control reports are presented to P&R Committee.	Complete
28	Budgets/Precepts approved by 31 st January 2022.	Complete
29	Ensure all relevant information is published in compliance with the Transparency Code/Openness of Local Government Regulations.	Ongoing
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

31	Undertake an annual update of the Asset Register including the schedule of expected life and replacement costs for buildings, plant, and machinery.	Complete
32	To consider the Council's Business Risks every March and minute that the full review has taken place by Council.	Complete
33	Ensure that at least one Service Review is completed each year.	Sports Complex Service Review planned for 2022/23

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

No	Target	Comments
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	Complete where these could proceed under Covid restrictions
35	Develop and provide an improved and enhanced yearly programme of events, including new events.	New events planned for 2022/23, subject to Covid restrictions
36	Continue to diversify, improve, enhance, and increase the number of events and activities offered within the Sports Complex.	Limited progress due to Covid restrictions but various new initiatives under investigation.
37	Partner with outside bodies including Wellbeing for Life	Ongoing

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

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

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

No	Target	Comments
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	Covid restrictions impacted this. Tree planting, community events and school visits took place
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	Complete Many trees felled or damaged by recent storms – works undertaken and maintenance and inspection ongoing
42	Continue to work with Northumbrian Water to establish flow rates to lakes at West Park	Ongoing
43	Complete at least 5 targeted Himalayan Balsam removing working parties along The Burn	Complete
44	Undertake maintenance and management of specific Durham County Council environmental areas as per the management agreement	Complete
45	Undertake a review of the current winter maintenance arrangements with Durham County Council	Complete
46	Complete the improvement of Woodham Park/Play area	Complete
47	Proactively monitor Ash Dieback Disease and remove diseased trees as necessary	Ongoing
48	To undertake maintenance and management of the former Elmfield School site, subject to a lease being agreed with Durham County Council.	Ongoing

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

No	Target	Comments
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	On hold until September 2022. Impacted by Coronavirus in 2021/22
50	To continue partnership working with DCC and build on the existing initiatives	Ongoing
51	Work with the Youth Council, DCC Officers, Tidy Britain, schools, community, and voluntary	Covid restrictions impacted this. A number of school visits were still

	groups to hold a Town Pride Environment Week, incorporating an anti-letter campaign.	undertaken by the Works and Environment Manager
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
53	Work in partnership with residents and friends' groups to improve our parks, play areas and environment areas.	Ongoing

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

No	Target	Comments
54	Undertake a budget setting and aims and targets consultation using social media, survey monkey or another suitable platform	Complete
55	To review the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan in 2022	To be progressed in 2022/23
56	Hold a Parish Meeting	Complete
57	Hold an Allotment AGM	Complete
58	Hold a minimum of 4 allotment representative meetings	No meetings due to Covid
59	Hold or take part in at least 2 events to inform residents about Town Council services with an aim to establish priorities	Complete Display boards and information and officers were in attendance at the Mayor at Home marquee at the Fun in the Park event. Budget survey undertaken to establish priorities
60	Make better use of social media to engage with resident and undertake consultations	Ongoing

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

No	Target	
61	Produce timely responses to all major consultations carried out	Ongoing

APPENDIX 2

TARGETS FOR THE COMING YEAR 2022/23

AIM 1 - TO PROVIDE GOOD QUALITY GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL

No	Target	Target Date
1	Publish a Town Council Service Delivery Plan by the end of June each year.	June 22
2	Publish an Annual Report.	June 22
3	Provide an annual training programme for the Town Clerk from his annual appraisal and CPD requirements.	March 23
4	Maintain a training programme for Members which shows recommended courses with a regular reminder sent and records of attendance and non-attendance kept.	Annually
5	Develop and provide an annual training programme for the staff within each service area, informed by the annual appraisal process.	March 23
6	Undertake an annual review of the Council Constitution, Financial Regulations and ensure compliance with current legislation.	Annually in May
7	Ensure compliance with GDPR.	Ongoing
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
9	Ensure that social media is used to advertise the Council's services and facilities.	Ongoing
10	Undertake research where appropriate for new policies and procedures.	Ongoing
11	Keep up to date with any changes in legislation and report to council as and when required.	Ongoing
12	Continue to monitor energy consumption, implement energy saving initiatives and reduce usage where possible.	Ongoing
13	Ensure all staff have an annual appraisal.	Sept 23
14	To undertake quarterly review of staff sickness and report to service managers.	Ongoing
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
16	Continue to implement any Government guidance and recommendations regarding Coronavirus to ensure the safety of staff, members, and public.	Ongoing
17	Monitor and enhance Cyber Security arrangements in conjunction with TSG	Ongoing

No	Target	Target Date
18	Complete a programme of new Member Induction Training to cover all service areas, roles, and responsibilities.	Ongoing
19	Continue to review and reduce the Council's use of single use plastic.	Ongoing
20	Officers liaise with CDALC, NALC, DCC and Genee Consultancy to discuss progressing the Council's climate change response	Ongoing
21	Officers begin the process of factoring in the possible additional capital costs of tackling climate change in the next update of the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Plan	Ongoing

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

No	Target	Target Date
22	Produce Annual Return by 30 th June each year.	June 22
23	Achieve an unqualified audit opinion of the Annual Return by 30 th September each year.	Sept 22
24	Ensure the Medium-Term Financial Plan is approved by 31 st July each year.	July 22
25	Deliver the Internal Audit Plan Schedule of Work and report quarterly to Audit Sub Committee then to Council.	March 23
26	Manage the financial impact of any cuts to LCTSS funding.	Ongoing
27	Quarterly budget control reports are presented to P&R Committee.	Ongoing
28	Budgets/Precepts approved by 31 st January 2023.	Jan 23
29	Ensure all relevant information is published in compliance with the Transparency Code/Openness of Local Government Regulations.	Ongoing
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
31	Undertake an annual update of the Asset Register including the schedule of expected life and replacement costs for buildings, plant, and machinery.	Ongoing
32	To consider the Council's Business Risks every March and minute that the full review has taken place by Council.	Mar 23
33	Ensure that at least one Service Review is completed each year.	Ongoing

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

No	Target	Target Date
34	Deliver the Council's programme of special events:- Platinum Jubilee Fun in the Parks Senior Citizens' Excursions Firework Display Sk8t Fest Santa Letters Christmas Lights Santa Tours Town's 75 th Anniversary	May 22 Aug 22 July 22 Nov 22 May 22 Dec 22 Dec 22 Dec 22 2023
35	Develop and provide an improved and enhanced yearly programme of events, including new events.	Ongoing
36	Continue to diversify, improve, enhance, and increase the number of events and activities offered within the Sports Complex.	Ongoing
37	Partner with outside bodies including Wellbeing for Life	Ongoing
38	Officers to carry out feasibility study on refurbishment of Simpasture Pavilion	Ongoing
39	Sports Complex Service Review to be completed	March 2023

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

No	Target	Target Date
40	Ensure the continuous improvement of the service and obtain at least a 'good' and aiming for 'excellent' Ofsted Inspection	Ongoing
41	Ensure that all staff undertake all relevant training and that any new staff receive Special Educational Needs training.	Ongoing

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

No	Target	Target Date
42	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
43	To continue to monitor the health and condition of the trees on Town Council land in line with the tree management policy and	Ongoing

	undertake a visual tree inspection of a specific area every 6 months to assess the health and condition of the trees	
44	Investigate options and costings for the drainage and repair of West Park lakes	Ongoing
45	Complete at least 5 targeted Himalayan Balsam removing working parties along The Burn	Annually
46	Undertake maintenance and management of specific Durham County Council environmental areas as per the management agreement	Ongoing
47	Proactively monitor Ash Dieback Disease and remove diseased trees as necessary	Ongoing
48	To undertake maintenance and management of the former Elmfield School site, subject to a lease being agreed with Durham County Council.	Ongoing
49	Work with Great Aycliffe Gardeners' Guild to establish a Gardeners' Guild at Clarence Chare Allotments	Ongoing
50	Complete a feasibility study into possible woodland burial site at West Cemetery	Ongoing
51	Carry out repairs to St Oswald's play area safety surface	Ongoing
52	Carry out programme of footpath inspections on Town Council owned land	Ongoing

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

No	Target	Target Date
53	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
54	To continue partnership working with DCC and build on the existing initiatives	Ongoing
55	Work with the Youth Council, DCC Officers, Tidy Britain, schools, community, and voluntary groups to hold a Town Pride Environment Week, incorporating an anti-litter campaign.	Ongoing
56	The Works and Environment Manager and Park Patrol Officers to work with DCC Officers and Police in regard to anti-social behaviour issues	Ongoing
57	Work in partnership with residents and friends' groups to improve our parks, play areas and environment areas.	Ongoing
58	Work with Newton Aycliffe Police to address anti-social behaviour issues	Ongoing

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

No	Target	Target Date
59	Undertake a budget setting and aims and targets consultation using social media or other suitable platforms	Nov 22
60	To review the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan in 2022	2022
61	Hold a Parish Meeting	Annually In May
62	Hold an Allotment AGM	Annually In Nov
63	Hold a minimum of 4 allotment representative meetings	Ongoing
64	Hold or take part in at least 2 events to inform residents about Town Council services with an aim to establish priorities	Annually
65	Make better use of social media to engage with resident and undertake consultations	Annually
66	Re-engage with community groups and organisations following prolonged Covid restrictions	Ongoing

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

No	Target	Target Date
67	Produce timely responses to all major consultations carried out	Ongoing

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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Byerley Park, Horndale & Cobblers Hall

P.J. Bergg - I		07432 070717	p.bergg@btinternet.com
D. Bowman - I	308094	07967 901477	dorothyekdale62@talktalk.net
L. Aston - LD		07472 941016	Linzi532aston@aol.com
I. Gray – L	313770		ian.gray38@btinternet.com
J. Woodward – LD			john.woodward4868@gmail.com
Andrea Miller - LD			andreamiller.aycliffe@gmail.com

Shafto/St Mary's

Tony Armstrong – I			tony4aycliffe@gmail.com
R. S. Fleming – I	310025		robertfleming472@btinternet.com
Brian Haigh – I		07932 563412	Brian.haigh12@gmail.com
Wendy Hillary – L	313273	07814 828317	wendy.hillary@hotmail.com

Woodham

Neil Collinson – L		07547 434096	n.collinson@aol.com
Mrs S. Haigh – I		07867 788603	sandra.haigh47@gmail.com
John Moore – I		07836 385487	jdmmoore.75@gmail.com
Anne Woodward - LD		07538 365086	anne.campion52@gmail.com
Michael Stead - LD	313380	07760 177326	michael.stead@durham.gov.uk

Aycliffe Central

Jim Atkinson - L	310791	07527 730142	jimiack@hotmail.co.uk
Jed Hillary – L	313273	07552 758148	jed.hillary@btinternet.com
Joanne Jones - LD		07436 803533	joanne.g.jones25@gmail.com

Simpasture

J. Clark – L		07972 170190	johnclark.labour@gmail.com
A. Hill – I		07580 426108	Andyhill454@gmail.com

Neville

Phillip Hawkins - I	954293	07825 739765	philhawkins11@gmail.com
Neville Jones - LD		07966 898322	neville.jones@durham.gov.uk

West

Eddy Adam – L		07900 701966	eddy.adam@durham.gov.uk
M. Ashcroft - I		07811 403986	martyc18@mail.com
Arun M. Chandran - I	313224	07711 573043	arunmchandran@aol.com
George Gray – I	314934	07711 159763	
Kate Hopper – L	314697		Catherine.hopper75@gmail.com
Ken Robson - I	321471		kenrobson71@gmail.com

Aycliffe Village

Carl Robinson - I		07928 336263	Cjr4all@sky.com
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