

OakLeaf **Golf Complex**



GOLF COMPLEX SERVICE PLAN

April 2024 to March 2025



GOLF COMPLEX SERVICE PLAN

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1. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome to this first Oak Leaf Golf Complex Service Plan.

The Oak Leaf Golf Complex is a facility provided by Great Aycliffe Town Council.

The facility is open 7 days a week, and comprises an 18-hole golf course, an 18-bay floodlit driving range, practice putting area, toilets, showers and changing rooms and a well-stocked golf shop, which offers a range of golfing equipment including clubs, bags, gloves, shoes and balls, as well providing a club custom fitting service.

The golf course was originally constructed in the 1970's and was developed into an 18-hole course in 1998. It is a short, well-maintained parkland course of 5,478 yards.

This Golf Complex Service Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Performance Management Framework and aims to demonstrate the links between the overall Strategic Aims and Targets of the Council, as set out in the Council's Service Delivery Plan, and the role carried out by the Oak Leaf Golf Complex in helping to achieve these objectives.

The purpose of this Service Plan is to define the external forces that work for and against the facility and put in place a mission statement, service aims and objectives, performance management arrangements, and an annual action plan to highlight what officers and staff will be doing to improve the Oak Leaf Golf Complex over the next year.

The delivery of the Service Plan during the year will help ensure the Oak Leaf Golf Complex contributes towards the achievement of the Council's Strategic Aims and Targets, deliver service improvements, and effectively meet, and hopefully exceed, the expectations of the members and users of the facility

The Service Plan also sets internal objectives and targets for the officers and staff working within and in support of the Golf Complex, and helps communicate to all other staff and Members of the Council how the Golf Complex contributes towards the Council's overall vision and strategic aims.

This Plan has been prepared for the purposes of the 2024/25 financial year and will be updated on an annual basis. The Plan will be reported to and approved by the Recreation Committee, and progress on the Action Plan will be monitored by the Head of Leisure and Events and Golf Administrator throughout the year.

The Plan will be updated on an annual basis to include the evaluation of performance against actions and targets, and to ensure that progress towards the achievement of the mission statement, and aims and objectives is maintained.

If you have any comments or feedback on the Service Plan, please feel free to forward these to the Head of Leisure and Events, who will ensure that any views are taken into account in future updates of the Service Plan.

2. GREAT AYCLIFFE TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGIC VISION AND AIMS

The Council has adopted a strategic mission statement, which is that Great Aycliffe Town Council aims to be:-

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

In support of this mission statement, the Council agreed the following eight strategic aims:

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

Each of the aims is supported by targets found in the Town Council Service Delivery Plan and Service Plans.

3. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

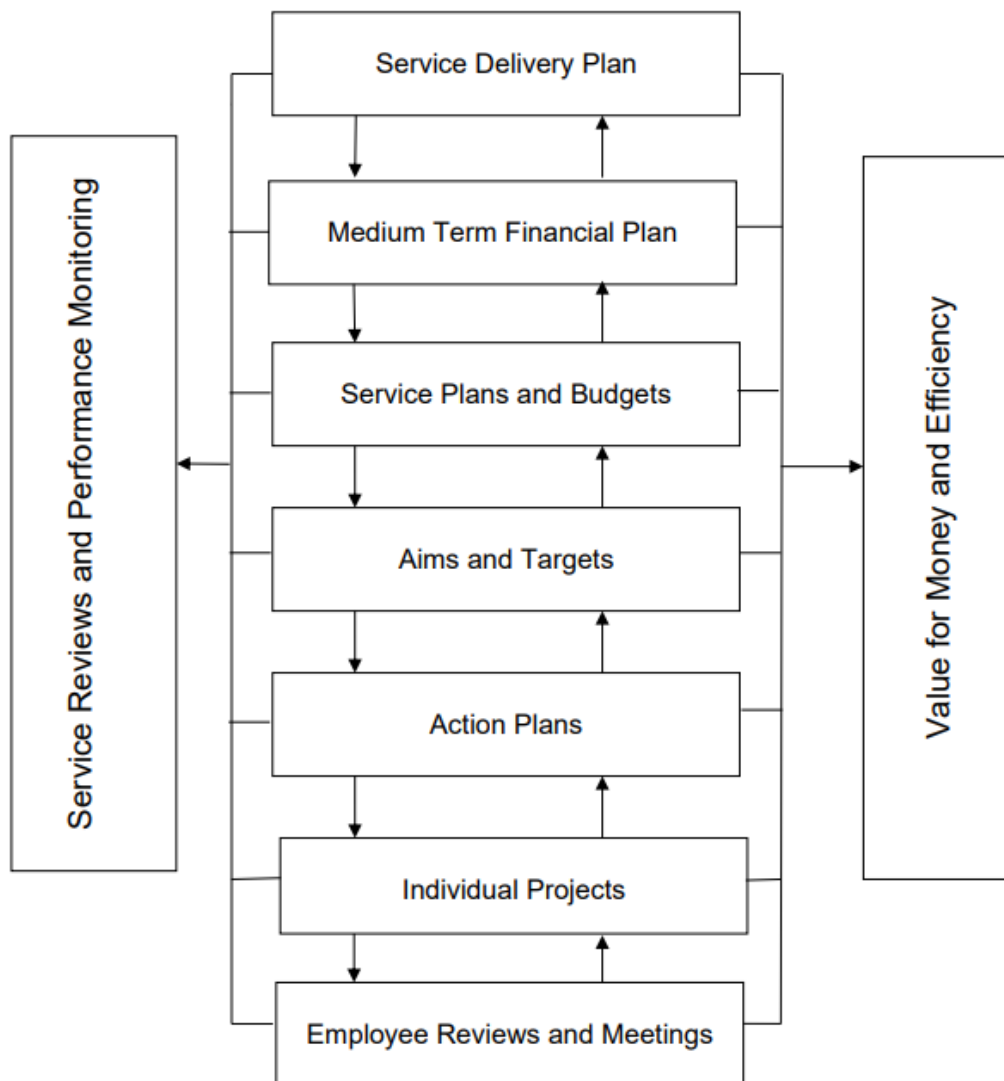
The Oak Leaf Golf Complex directly contributes towards three of the Council’s Strategic Aims:-

- 1. To provide good quality governance and management of the Council.*
- 2. To manage the council’s finances and assets in a responsible manner.*
- 3. To provide accessible, affordable leisure facilities and opportunities.*

4. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Council has in place an approved Performance Management Framework which helps to demonstrate how the Council’s Strategic Aims and Targets from the Service Delivery Plan link into the Council’s other strategies, and how they feed down into the aims and objectives of individual service areas and the day-to-day objectives of individual officers, and how these combine to help the Council deliver its aims.

The Performance Management Framework is summarised in the diagram on the following page:



5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Monitoring and management of the performance of the Golf Complex is undertaken by the Head of Leisure and Events and Golf Administrator.

Monitoring and management of the maintenance of the golf course and driving range is undertaken by the Grounds Maintenance Services Co-Ordinator.

An annual Action Plan is included within the Golf Complex Service Plan setting out specific actions that are planned during the year to improve the quality of the service.

This Service Plan and Action Plan will be monitored via:

- a) Six-monthly team meetings between management, golf shop and greenkeeping staff; and
- b) Reporting of the Service Plan to the Recreation Committee.

6. EQUALITIES STATEMENT

Although this is an internal working document, this Service Plan is also available to anyone who may be interested in the work of the Oak Leaf Golf Complex.

Great Aycliffe Town Council, its employees and elected members are expected to treat each other and members of the public equally and with respect and are committed to the removal of all barriers preventing access to our services arising from age, disability, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity special needs, language differences, learning difficulties, sexual orientation, or geographic location.

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

7. INVESTMENT IN EMPLOYEES

It is recognised that employees are the Council's greatest asset in delivering services effectively, and investment in employees is therefore paramount in helping the Council to deliver its strategic aims and targets.

It is also acknowledged and recognised that the Oak Leaf Golf Complex is a customer-oriented service and as such should maintain a customer focused approach. It is therefore vitally important that the employees should have sufficient skills and training to meet customer expectations and requirements.

The Council is committed to investing in the training and development of all of its employees and operates a Performance and Development Appraisal Scheme which helps to monitor and improve the performance of all staff as well as identify training and personal development needs.

A training budget is in place for the Golf Complex staff to provide for any identified training needs.

The staffing structure relating to the Oak Leaf Golf Complex, split between the Golf Shop and Driving Range and the Greenkeeping Team, is included in this Service Plan.

8. OAK LEAF GOLF COMPLEX SERVICE PROFILE

The Oak Leaf Golf Complex is a discretionary (non-statutory) service area.

The golf shop and driving range is managed and administered on a day-to-day basis by the Golf Administrator, a team of golf shop assistants, and a part-time driving range ball picker, and overseen by the Head of Leisure and Events.

The golf shop staff are responsible for opening and closing the premises, customer service and care, taking payments, cleaning, ordering and managing shop stocks, picking up balls on the range, organising coaching, marketing, and undertaking club repair services.

The maintenance and upkeep of the golf course and driving range is undertaken by the greenkeeping team and overseen by the Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator. The golf course employs three permanent greenkeeping staff, with additional cover provided from the works section as and when required.

The various vehicles and machinery required to maintain the golf course and driving range are managed and maintained by the works section, and include fairways, tees and greens mowers, and the range ball collector, ball washer and ball dispenser.

The Golf Complex Budget provides for the costs of the golf shop and green keeping staff, the running costs of the golf complex building, incorporating the driving range, changing rooms, toilet facilities and golf shop, the running costs of the golf course irrigation system, equipment such as flags, range balls and nets, equipment maintenance, course maintenance materials, pesticide spraying works undertaken by external contractors, insurance, subscriptions, marketing, and scorecards.

The golf course had a total membership of 185 in 2023/24 and also has a significant number of casual 'pay as you play' users.

There were 10,267 rounds played on the golf course in 2023/24, broken down as follows:-

Member Rounds	6,358
Casual Rounds	3,909

Driving range usage increased to 17,281 baskets of balls in 2023/24.

This year's 'Your Town, Your Choice, Your Voice' Satisfaction Survey provided some positive feedback as to public satisfaction with the golf complex with the facility highly valued by those residents who use it. A summary of the survey results is shown below:

	Very Good or Good	Poor or Very Poor
Quality of Golf Course	70%	30%
Quality of Driving Range	72%	28%
Golf Shop	89%	11%
Customer Facilities	89%	11%
Value for Money	67%	33%

A number of individual comments were made regarding how services and facilities could be improved, with some of the more common observations set out below:-

- Improving drainage on the golf course and driving range
- Facility should be self-funded and not provided at a subsidy from the taxpayer
- Invest in footpaths on the golf course
- Review pricing e.g. 12-month memberships, but only 8 or 9 months of golf
- Improve maintenance of the greens
- Consider sponsorship of holes

9. OAK LEAF GOLF COMPLEX MISSION STATEMENT

The Oak Leaf Golf Complex has adopted the following statement as its mission statement:-

“To ensure the provision of a high-quality, well-maintained and affordable golf course and driving range facility that meets the needs and aspirations of all users”.

10. SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to deliver the Golf Complex Mission Statement: *“to ensure the provision of a high quality, well-maintained and affordable golf course and driving range facility that meets the needs and aspirations of all users”*; the Oak Leaf Golf Complex has set the following key Service Aims and Objectives:-

Budget, Income and Usage

1. To ensure the long-term financial viability of the Golf Complex by controlling costs, increasing income and undertaking capital investment to drive down the net cost of the service.
2. To provide value for money activities and facilities for all users of the facility.
3. To increase membership numbers.
4. To increase casual usage (green fees and visiting parties) of the golf course.
5. To increase usage of the driving range.
6. To increase golf shop sales.

Standard of Facilities

7. To provide clean, safe and attractive golf shop and driving range facilities.
8. To maintain high standards of maintenance on the golf course.

Service Quality

9. To provide a customer focussed, professional and friendly service.
10. To operate sound and consistent business practices.
11. To maintain or improve customer satisfaction to a high level.

Staff

12. To provide a positive working environment for employees.
13. To maintain staff satisfaction.

Young People

14. To encourage young people's participation in sport.
15. To nurture talented athletes within available resources.

Health and Well Being Opportunities

16. To provide opportunities to improve community health and well-being and increase wider community participation in physical activity.
17. To participate in sports development initiatives.
18. To ensure the Golf Complex plays a role in supporting sustainable communities and fosters social inclusion in partnership with other organisations.

Environment

19. To manage the golf course land in an environmentally responsible manner to protect and promote biodiversity.
20. To protect and maintain the ancient ridge and furrow found on the course.

Oak Leaf Golf Club

21. To maintain a positive, collaborative relationship with Oak Leaf Golf Club.

11. CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

The following challenges and constraints have been identified in relation to the successful operation of the Oak Leaf Golf Complex:

1. Climate change and the increasingly wet weather and ground conditions.
2. The economic environment, cost of living crisis and reduced consumer confidence.
3. Increased public and golf club expectations.
4. Demographic issues, including an aging membership, low numbers of junior members, and high local levels of deprivation.
5. Budget pressures and restrictions on investment in the facility.
6. Asset management issues including an aging building and machinery upgrades.
7. Recruiting and retaining suitable staff.
8. Staff capacities e.g. only one member of staff in the golf shop at any one time, no dedicated golf manager, and limits on greenkeeping capacity.

Please note that these issues are discussed in more detail in the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis.

12. ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2023/24

Despite a very challenging year last year, due to the exceptional levels of rainfall and very wet ground conditions on the golf course and driving range throughout the year, the Oak Leaf Golf Complex delivered the following key achievements last year:-

1. Development of a Long-Term Improvement and Investment Plan.
2. Record levels of usage at the driving range.
3. Record golf shop sales.
4. Implementation of a less risk-averse policy for decisions around course closures and hole restrictions during inclement weather.
5. Drainage improvements completed on the 16th and 17th holes.
6. Footpath improvements on the wettest areas of the golf course.
7. Tree planting funding totalling £60,000 secured from the North East Community Forest to undertake tree planting on the golf course.

As this is the first Golf Complex Service Plan there is currently no information on the achievement of targets or comparison with previous years.

13. POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND TECHNOLOGICAL (PEST) ANALYSIS (EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT)

In analysing the external macro-environment, it is important to identify the factors that are likely to influence service planning, golf complex usage and income levels and costs.

Review of these external factors is undertaken via a Political, Economic, Social and Technological (PEST) Analysis which categorises external issues into those political, economic, social and technological forces that may impact on the work of the Oak Leaf Golf Complex.

The PEST Analysis for the Oak Leaf Golf Complex is detailed on the following pages.

Political Factors:

Political Factors	Impact on Golf Complex	Potential Impact: High Medium Low Undetermined	Type: Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat	Impact: Increasing Unchanged Reducing Unknown	Importance: Critical Important Unimportant Unknown	Action
Government policy and new legislation	Impact on service planning	Medium	Opportunity / Threat	Unknown	Unknown	Keep up to date with legislation
National Living Wage Increases	Increased costs	High	Threat	Increasing	Important	Medium-Term Financial Planning

Social Factors:

Social Factors	Impact on Golf Complex	Potential Impact: High Medium Low Undetermined	Type: Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat	Impact: Increasing Unchanged Reducing Unknown	Importance: Critical Important Unimportant Unknown	Action
Demographic changes	Affects demand for services and usage of facility	Medium	Opportunity / Threat	Unknown	Unknown	Monitor and react
Fads and trends	Changes in health and fitness priorities	Medium	Opportunity / Threat	Unknown	Important	Monitor and react
Relationship with Oak Leaf Golf Club	Impact on membership numbers and availability of competitive golf	Medium	Opportunity / Threat	Unchanged	Important	Golf Working Group
Member & customer perceptions e.g. that the golf course is always closed during wet weather	Affects usage of facility	High	Weakness	Reducing	Important	Less risk-averse policy, drainage improvements, footpaths & improvement & investment plan

Economic Factors:

Economic Factors	Impact on Golf Complex	Potential Impact: High Medium Low Undetermined	Type: Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat	Impact: Increasing Unchanged Reducing Unknown	Importance: Critical Important Unimportant Unknown	Action
Cost-of-Living Crisis	Affects customer spending capacity and usage of facility	High	Weakness	Unchanged	Important	Pricing policy and promotions
Inflation	Increased costs	High	Weakness	Reducing	Important	Medium-Term Financial Planning
Local economy and unemployment	Affects customer spending and usage and impacts upon the availability of staff	High	Weakness	Increasing	Important	Pricing policy and promotions and recruitment policy

Technological Factors:

Technological Factors	Impact on Golf Complex	Potential Impact: High Medium Low Undetermined	Type: Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat	Impact: Increasing Unchanged Reducing Unknown	Importance: Critical Important Unimportant Unknown	Action
Website	Up to date information on Golf Complex Website	Low	Opportunity	Unchanged	Important	Improve website content and keep up to date
Social Media	Bad publicity and lack of control over comments	High	Opportunity / Threat	Increasing	Critical	Improved use of social media to promote the facility in a positive way
Online bookings	Increasing expectation, particularly amongst the younger generations to be able to do everything online	Medium	Weakness	Increasing	Important	Investigate online booking system when Torex System is due for upgrade
Computer Games	Younger generation spending more time spent sat at computers playing games	High	Threat	Increasing	Important	Targeted advertising via social media to reach younger audience

14. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS (INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT)

In order to improve services at the Oak Leaf Golf Complex it is important to analyse the existing strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats which may impact on service delivery.

Strengths	Capitalise on Strengths
Committed, knowledgeable, experienced and friendly staff	Continue to provide a positive working environment for employees and maintain staff satisfaction
Good community networks established	Set target to promote new activities and programmes
Competitive pricing policy	Increase membership and usage
Positive and flexible approach to work	Continue to build on successes and encourage further improvement
Good range of shop stock and fitting service	Continue to build on successes and encourage further improvement
Good working relationship with suppliers	Continue to build on successes and encourage further improvement
Continuous review of service	Golf Service Review during 2024/25
Improvement and Investment Plan in place	Commence implementation of priority works and investments

Weaknesses	Address Weaknesses
Stretched capacity of Golf Shop staffing team. Only one member of staff on shift most of the time	New staffing structure allows some overlap of shifts
Stretched capacity of Greenkeeping team particularly during the peak summer months	Possible consideration of additional support in peak season via a seasonal worker
Lack of investment over the years	Improvement and Investment Plan agreed by Council
Golf is very reliant on good weather and the changing climate is resulting in significantly wetter weather	Drainage improvements on golf course and driving range and installation of footpaths on wet areas of the golf course

Opportunities	Maximise Opportunities
Expanding community links and partnerships	Develop links with other agencies
Growing town	Promote facility in areas of new build and on the business park
Improved use of social media	Promote events and special offers and try to continue increasing followers and 'likes'
Offer a range of services which are user friendly for all ages and abilities	Continually review services provided and look for new opportunities
Increase efficiency in service delivery	Continue to review ways of working, monitor usage and financial data regularly
Partnership working with Oak Leaf Golf Club	Develop better links and partnership working with Oak Leaf Golf Club

Threats	Minimise threats
Competition from other facilities	Area has two other courses plus competition in neighbouring towns - ensure pricing is competitive and undertake effective promotion and marketing
Council Budget pressures	Increase usage and income and minimise costs as far as possible
Supplier price increases	Monitor and test the market on a regular basis
Advances in computer games, lack of interest in sport	Marketing and promotion and provide a range of services and facilities
Cost-of-living crisis and reduced consumer spending power	Pricing policy and continue to promote special offers; taster sessions and working with partners

15. 2024/25 TARGETS AND ACTION PLAN

Budget, Income and Usage

Ref	Description	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	Officer and Timescale	Comment(s)
1	Number of visits per annum	27,635	30,000	March 2025 C. Lawson J. Thexton	
2	Net cost per visit £	£4.28	£3.67	March 2025 T. Woodhead	
3	Overall cost of running the Golf Course £	£118,231	£110,050	March 2025 T. Woodhead	
4	Overall cost of running the Driving Range and Golf Shop £	(£1,400)	(£5,350)	March 2025 T. Woodhead	
5	Number of Members	185	200	March 2025 C. Lawson J. Thexton	

Clean, Safe and Attractive Facilities

Ref	Description	2024/25 Target	Officer & Timescale	Comment(s)
6	Undertake an audit of Health and Safety	DCC Audit	March 2025 J. Thexton C. Lawson	Review of Health and Safety File and Risk Assessments and Audit by DCC Health and Safety Advisor
7	Deliver in-house health and safety training for Golf Shop staff	4 per year	March 2025 J. Thexton C. Lawson	
8	Complete Driving Range Drainage Improvement Scheme	Project Completion	July 2024 L. Williams	Work due to take place in late June

Ref	Description	2024/25 Target	Officer & Timescale	Comment(s)
9	Prioritisation of Golf Course Improvements for 2024/25	MTFP	March 2025 L. Williams T. Woodhead	Service Review to help identify key priorities
10	Completion of improvements to tees to comply with regulations regarding measurement, handicapping system, and competition play	Project Completion	March 2025 L. Williams	
11	Completion of improvements to footpaths to allow better access during wet conditions	Project Completion	March 2025 L. Williams	It is hoped to undertake works ahead of the autumn

Service Quality and Staff Satisfaction

Ref	Description	2024/25 Target	Officer & Timescale	Comment(s)
12	Implement Management Team meetings	6-Monthly	March 2025 D. Austin J. Thexton C. Lawson L. Williams	
13	Implement staff meetings to encourage staff involvement with the improvement of services	6-Monthly	March 2025 J. Thexton C. Lawson	
14	Deliver promotional events with sales partners	1 per year	March 2025 C. Lawson A. Neasham	
15	Review and develop visiting party package with a view to increasing usage	6 visiting parties per year	March 2025 C. Lawson A. Neasham	Increase visiting party usage
16	Introduce an annual customer survey feedback to run in May each year and report findings to Recreation Committee.	1 survey per year	May 2024 C. Lawson A. Neasham J. Thexton	Annual

Opportunities for Participation by Young People

Ref	Description	2024/25 Target	Officer & Timescale	Comment(s)
17	Improve youth usage of driving range with schools, colleges and other groups	1 new initiative per year	March 2025 J. Thexton C. Lawson	

Opportunities for Improvements to Health and Well Being

Ref	Description	2024/25 Target	Officer & Timescale	Comment(s)
18	Develop links with outside organisations such Durham County Council Sports Development Team and Aycliffe Business Park	1 new initiative per year	March 2025 J. Thexton C. Lawson	
19	Work with Oak Leaf Golf Club to run regular competitions	2 competitions per year	March 2025 C. Lawson A. Neasham	
20	Develop links and promotions with the Sports Complex	2 new initiatives per year	March 2025 J. Thexton C. Lawson A. Clark	

Environment

Ref	Description	2024/25 Target	Officer & Timescale	Comment(s)
21	To manage the course and land in an environmentally responsible manner to protect and promote biodiversity and protect and maintain the ancient ridge and furrow found on the course.	Project Completion	March 2025 L. Williams	

16. RISK ASSESSMENT

The achievement of the aims and objectives set out in this Service Plan has been subject to a risk assessment, and the following risks to the achievement of the Action Plan have been identified in the Council's Risk Register:-

Detail of Risk	Current Control	Likelihood	Impact	Score	Residual Impact
Failure to maintain golf course adequately	Work schedule in place. Golf Working Group. Regular meetings with Golf Club	1	3	Medium	Loss of reputation/revenue/satisfaction
Vandalism to golf greens	Regular checks undertaken	1	3	Medium	Loss of reputation/revenue/satisfaction
Failure of XN Leisure system	Additional security measures in place and can revert to manual system.	2	2	Medium	Loss of income/reputation
Lone working	Policies and procedures in place.	2	2	Medium	Accident/injury/attack
Lack of staff cover	Casual staff in place. Use agency staff, overtime and prioritise workloads	2	2	Medium	Potential loss of income/reputation
Storage of cash on site	Collected by Loomis, secure entrance, stored in safe, policies and procedures in place around income collection	1	2	Low	Could still happen
Failure of Golf Club section	Temporary arrangements would be put in place via direct Council management	2	1	Low	May still occur
Delays in the supply of materials, equipment and services	Alternative suppliers and equipment considered where possible and appropriate	2	2	Medium	May affect service delivery
Closure of course due to flooding	Drainage checked and maintained; drainage improvements undertaken	2	2	Medium	Loss of income

KEY Likelihood :

3 – High
2 – Medium
1 – Low

Impact :

3 – High
2 – Medium
1 – Low

17. GOLF COMPLEX STAFFING STRUCTURE

Golf Shop and Driving Range Team



Greenkeeping Team

