

# ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE

## AGENDA



**Thursday 15 June, 2023**

**at 10.00 am**

**in Council Chamber,  
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

MEMBERS: ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors Allen, Buchan, Darby, Hall, Little, Thompson and Young.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

**3. MINUTES**

- 3.1 To receive the Minutes and Decision Record in respect of the meeting held on 9 March 2023.

**4. PRESENTATION**

- 4.1 Presentation – The Role and Remit of the Adults and Community Based Services Committee – *Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services*

**5. KEY DECISIONS**

None.

**6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

- 6.1 Adult Social Care Quality Assurance Report – 2022/23 – *Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services*
- 6.2 Parks and Open Spaces: Place-Based Plans – *Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services*

**CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE**

In the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alarm, please leave by the nearest emergency exit as directed by Council Officers. A Fire Alarm is a continuous ringing. A Bomb Alarm is a continuous tone.

The Assembly Point for everyone is Victory Square by the Cenotaph. If the meeting has to be evacuated, please proceed to the Assembly Point so that you can be safely accounted for.

**7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- 7.1 Community Hubs Update – *Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services*
- 7.2 Tall Ships Races 2023 – Update – *Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services*

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

**FOR INFORMATION**

Forthcoming meeting dates are set out below. All meetings will be held in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Thursday 7 September, 2023 commencing at 10.00 am.  
Thursday 9 November, 2023 commencing at 10.00 am.  
Thursday 7 December, 2023 commencing at 10.00 am.  
Thursday 25 January, 2024 commencing at 10.00 am.



# **ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

9 MARCH 2023

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

### **Present:**

Councillor: Bob Buchan (In the Chair)

Councillors: Gary Allen, Ged Hall and Sue Little.

Also present: Councillor Pamela Hargreaves as substitute for Councillor Ben Clayton in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2.  
Frank Harrison and Evelyn Leck.

Officers: Jill Harrison, Director of Adult and Community Based Services  
Ian Gardiner, Head of Leisure, Recreation and Participation  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

### **46. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ben Clayton and Tim Fleming.

### **47. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **48. Minutes of the meetings held on 16 January and 19 January 2023**

Received.

### **49. Commissioned Services Update** (*Director of Adult and Community Based Services*)

#### **Type of decision**

For information.

**Purpose of report**

The report provided the Adult and Community Based Services Committee with an update on commissioned services that support people with social care needs, which are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The Director of Adult and Community Based Services reported that there were now 15 older peoples care homes in Hartlepool, with a maximum of 748 beds available if all homes were operating at full capacity. A new home, Merlin Manor had recently opened on a phased basis and currently had 46 residents with a potential of 92.

On Home Care for Older People, the Director reported that home care services have recently been re-tendered with new contracts due to commence in April 2023. Contracts had recently been awarded, one to an incumbent provider and one to a provider new to Hartlepool but well established elsewhere within the region. Transitional arrangements were currently being worked through to enable smooth implementation of the new contracts.

The Director reported that Rosedale and Rosewood (a care home for up to 6 people with specialist needs in Hartlepool operated by Community Integrated Care) along with a supported living scheme operated by the same provider had advised the Council that they were considering closing. The Director was pleased to report at the meeting that detailed work with the provider had led to a change in that decision.

The director also informed Members that the annual process used by the Council to set fees had recently concluded. The process took into account a range of factors including National Living Wage, pension contributions and the cost of food and energy and a basket of indices is used to calculate an overall increase or decrease to current fee levels. The proposed increases to fees from April 2023 were significantly higher than in previous years due to the impact of inflation over the past 12 months. Care home fees would increase by 13.60% and home care fees would increase by 10.18%.

Members were pleased to note that all the CQC rated homes in Hartlepool were 'Good' though it was noted that some had not been inspected for some time and the newest homes was still to be inspected. The Director stated that all new homes opening received an initial compliance inspection prior to opening and a full inspection at Merlin Manor was expected sometime this year. Some other inspections had taken place though the reports had not yet been published. Much of the CQC's inspection work had been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members noted the uplift in fees for care homes and home care and questioned if this would impact on the departmental budget. The Director

stated the uplift had been included in the MTFS recently approved by Council so was built into the 2023/24 budget.

**Decision**

That the report be noted.

**50. Creative Hartlepool Service Branding** (*Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services*)**Type of decision**

For information.

**Purpose of report**

To share details of the rebranding of the department's performance venues, outdoor performance spaces, arts development and events/festivals function, as Creative Hartlepool.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The Head of Leisure, Recreation and Participation reported that following the restructure of the former cultural services section, a rebranding exercise, similar to that for the Active Hartlepool brand, had been undertaken. The new Creative Hartlepool brand logo was included with the report and a short promotional video was also shown to the Committee.

Members understood the need for the rebranding of the service and the potential cost of doing nothing to promote the Council's services but there were some concerns expressed at the number of individual brands now under the 'HBC' umbrella. It was indicated that the Creative Hartlepool brand would always sit alongside the HBC logo to ensure a direct link could be drawn by the public with the new service branding.

In response to Member questions, the Head of Leisure, Recreation and Participation stated that other cultural services outside the Council had not been consulted specifically regarding the rebranding though the work through the branding company TA6 showed that, particularly through social media outlets, people liked the compartmentalising of their interests. The service needed to get a wider audience across the region and even locally was competing against the revamped Billingham Forum and Stockton Globe theatres.

The Committee discussed the wider issues around marketing and particularly the comments made by the recent peer review team. The Head of Leisure, Recreation and Participation indicated that online booking for Active Hartlepool services was to come online during the year and the aim was to have online ticket purchasing through Creative Hartlepool also in the near future.

**Decision**

That the report be noted

**51. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent**

None.

The meeting concluded at 2.40 pm.

**H MARTIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 16 MARCH 2023**

# ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE

15 June 2023



**Subject:** ADULT SOCIAL CARE QUALITY ASSURANCE  
REPORT – 2022/23

**Report of:** Executive Director of Adult and Community Based  
Services

**Decision Type:** Non-Key

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## 1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

<b>Hartlepool will be a place:</b>
- where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives.
- where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To present to members the first Annual Adult Social Care Quality Assurance Report covering the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The White Paper: People at the Heart of Care sets out a ten-year vision based on three objectives:
- People have choice, control and support to live independent lives.
  - People can access outstanding quality and tailored care and support.
  - People find adult social care fair and accessible.
- 3.2 Along with a range of other measures, the White Paper introduces a duty for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to independently review and assess local authority performance in respect of its duties under the Care Act.

- 3.3 The assurance framework for adult social care is currently being used within a number of pilot sites nationally and will then be rolled out across all Councils from October 2023. It is anticipated that a baseline assessment of all Local Authorities will be completed within a two year period.
- 3.4 The White Paper makes clear that the focus is on supporting local authorities' activities in meeting individuals' care needs, through:
- maintaining oversight of the whole social care workforce in their local area, across public and provider organisations, though supporting staff retention and professional development;
  - managing transitions between services – for example, between health and social care, and the transition from children's to adults' services;
  - preventing people from requiring social care in the first instance – for example, by supporting and developing community organisations working on prevention and reablement;
  - carrying out their safeguarding duties;
  - ensuring good outcomes for people through effective leadership;
  - managing their commissioning and contracting responsibilities;
  - shaping the care market to meet people's needs with diverse and quality provision, enabling choice and independence;
  - meeting the needs of unpaid carers; and
  - assessing the needs of people who may be eligible for care and supporting them to access what they need, whether or not they receive local authority support or will fund their own care.
- 3.5 There has been a significant amount of work undertaken regionally through the North East Branch of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (NE ADASS) to support preparation for assurance, as well as work within individual local authorities.

#### 4. ANNUAL REPORT

- 4.1 The Adult Social Care Quality Assurance Report (attached as **Appendix 1**) provides an overview of work undertaken within adult social care during 2022/23 relating to quality assurance. Areas of work covered in the report include: feedback from carers and people who use services; case audits; peer review; and feedback from the workforce.
- 4.2 Some aspects of quality assurance have been established for many years but the work has not previously been collated into an annual report that informs future planning and priorities.
- 4.3 The learning from quality assurance activity, along with a range of other sources including national policy direction, Council Plan strategic priorities and local performance data, will inform the Adult Social Care Strategy and Delivery Plan which will be brought to Adult and Community Based Services Committee for approval within the next 3-6 months.

## 5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	The risks associated with CQC assurance range from reputational damage and impact on staff morale if the outcome achieved is not as positive as expected, to Secretary of State for Health and Social Care intervention if a local authority is identified as having significant failings.
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are potential financial considerations associated with adult social care assurance as there is limited capacity within existing staffing structures to prepare for CQC assurance.
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	The White Paper forms the basis of primary legislation to reform adult social care and the current legal framework for adult social care provided by the Care Act 2014, is being amended by the Health and Social Care Bill.
<b>CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY</b>	No child and family poverty considerations identified.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no specific equality and diversity considerations identified. A national equalities impact assessment has been completed in respect of the White Paper.
<b>STAFF CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no staff considerations identified at this point in time but it may be necessary to invest in additional staff capacity to support the assurance agenda.
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	No asset management considerations identified.
<b>ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	None identified.
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	There is no consultation required in relation to this report. Staff are involved in quality assurance work via case file audits, Practice Month and the Health Check and receive feedback via staff newsletters and staff briefings.

**6. RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Adult and Community Based Services Committee approve the Adult Social Care Quality Assurance Report and note the work that has been undertaken to ensure the quality of practice and to understand the views of people with lived experience and the workforce.

**7. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 The Adult and Community Based Services Committee has responsibility for adult social care provision and should seek assurance about the quality of services being provided.

**8. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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Sign Off:-

Managing Director	Date: 05/06/2023
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 05/06/2023
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 05/06/2023



# **ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

# **QUALITY ASSURANCE** **REPORT**

**April 2022 – March 2023**

## 1. **INTRODUCTION**

This report summarises activity undertaken during 2022/23 to assure the quality of adult social care services and covers a range of quality assurance activities including:

- Survey Feedback
- Tees Safeguarding Adults Board Quality Assurance Framework - September 2022
- Practice Month – October / November 2022
- Annual Conversation – December 2022
- Peer Review of Adult Safeguarding – March 2023
- Continuous Professional Development
- Feedback from the Workforce
- Peer Discussions
- Review of Complaints and Compliments
- Celebrating Successes

Quality Assurance is overseen by a Continuous Improvement Group with actions agreed in response to any activity undertaken and progress monitored.

## 2. **SURVEY FEEDBACK**

As part of the national Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) all Local Authorities are required to undertake an annual survey of people who use their services, and a similar survey every two years for carers. The results of these surveys are published which allows regional and national comparisons.

The most recent survey of people who use services was undertaken in 2022/23. Performance improved in five of the eight measures compared to the results for the previous year, and reduced very slightly in the remaining three. The measures where performance has changed significantly (by over 3%) are:

- The proportion of people who use services who have control over their daily life (improved from 81.2% to 84.5%).
- The proportion of people who use services who reported that they had as much social contact as they would like (improved from 42.1% to 51%).
- The proportion of people who use services who find it easy to find information about services (improved from 76.7% to 84.5%).

Although the impact of the Covid pandemic may have influenced reporting on some measures, the improved performance in relation to social contact and access to information can also be attributed to the implementation of Community Led Support and the delivery of services through Community Hubs.

The most recent survey of carers was undertaken in 2021/22 and covers five measures. Hartlepool has consistently performed well in this survey over a number of years with performance for all five measures ranked in the top four regionally.

## 3. **TSAB QAF SUBMISSION**

The Tees Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) uses a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) to assess how organisations perform against the following standards:

1. The organisation has a Safeguarding Adults Policy / Strategy in place and a senior staff member that has the responsibility to 'champion' safeguarding.
2. Safeguarding Practice is safe, effective and person centred.
3. Your organisation has a focus on the need for preventing abuse and neglect.
4. Your organisation has written guidance & procedures for handling complaints and allegations against staff which is clearly accessible to all staff.
5. Your organisation can assure the Board that the learning, recommendations and key findings from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and Other Reviews are effectively implemented within your organisation and disseminated to the appropriate staff.
6. The organisation's staff supervision policy and reflective practice supports effective safeguarding. It recognises that skilled and knowledgeable supervisions focused on outcomes for adults is critical in safeguarding work and enable staff to work confidently and competently with difficult and sensitive situations.
7. All staff and elected members (where appropriate) working within the organisation should receive appropriate training and work within an environment to enable them to competently respond to safeguarding concerns and meet the needs of adults at risk.
8. Service provision commissioned by partners meets the individual needs of adults who are most at risk of abuse or neglect.

As a statutory partner of the TSAB, the Council is required to complete the QAF every two years, and the latest self-assessment was submitted in September 2022.

### Good Practice

Overall, the evaluation group felt that the Council made a comprehensive, detailed submission, with some excellent evidence supplied to support the ratings given. There was good evidence of the organisation thinking more broadly to promote safeguarding in different ways. The evaluation group also commented how they found it easy to navigate through the evidence supplied which made the evaluation process much easier.

The evaluation group felt the one area self-assessed as amber (*this is not yet fully achieved, we do this moderately well within our agency, with some pockets of good work*) was very close to achieving a green rating (*this is fully achieved, and we do this consistently well within our agency with evidence of good practice*) and TSAB were assured this would be achieved in the near future. The group commended this submission as being a transparent and very good example of how the QAF process can be completed by a Statutory Partner.

### Areas for Improvement

The only standard within the QAF which was rated as amber / not fully achieved relates to 'all elected members receive appropriate training that enables them to competently respond to safeguarding concerns'. At the time of the submission Safeguarding Awareness Training was available to elected members but had only been attended by 8 of the 36 members that make up Hartlepool Borough Council.

### Action Taken

As part of the QAF process, there is a requirement for QAF Assurance Reports for each agency to be presented to TSAB, to ensure the assurance and appropriate learning is shared amongst partner agencies. The report was presented to TSAB in December 2022.

The Council's development programme for members has been reviewed and the requirement for all members to undertake safeguarding awareness training has been strengthened.

#### **4. PRACTICE MONTH**

Practice month took place in November 2022 and included case file audits, observations and service user feedback from across the service.

A random sample of 65 cases was audited including care management cases, Hartlepool Carer cases and hospital discharge cases. Cases were selected based on the agreed audit criteria that included that all cases should have a review or assessment within the previous three months, and a completed support or care plan. An algorithm was applied to ensure that the sample was proportionate in terms of age group, gender and team caseload. Twelve auditors completed audits.

##### Audit Process

During practice month, case file audits were completed using the audit tool template alongside the social worker. The practice month model allows for any concerns about individual practice to be followed up with team managers. Similarly, comments about good practice are passed on to team managers and examples of excellent practice shared across the teams.

There is a dual purpose to the process, the intention being both to assure the quality of work and also to influence front line practice by facilitating reflection on case direction, work undertaken and case recording. Comments and feedback are provided to practitioners on an individual basis (copied to team managers) to encourage learning.

##### The Feedback Learning Loop

Collection of this wealth of information needs to be purposeful and useful in providing a feedback loop to improve practice. We need to know where our strengths and weaknesses lie and to respond to themes that emerge. Shortfalls in practice identified during practice month have already been fed back to team managers with feedback given about the judgements that auditors have made.

This overall analysis report draws on all of evidence collected as part of practice week. The report will look at the contextual issues that impact on practice and consider learning opportunities.

##### Findings from Case File Audits

The majority of workers could tell the story of the person in detail. Auditors commented on the obvious competence and commitment of workers who are striving to achieve the best possible outcomes for people. There was evidence of a good rapport, trust and openness between the worker and the person being supported.

Auditors were generally very positive about the assessments audited. The majority were person centred with evidence of strength based practice. It was clear that the individual's

preferences and choice were considered and there was evidence of good use of technology with the use of minor adaptations evident in promoting independence.

There were however, examples of overly professional language and use of acronyms and it was not always evident that the assessment had been shared with the person (a requirement of the Care Act 2014). It was also noted that in some cases there was no explicit focus on wellbeing.

### Findings from Support Plans

Generally the findings from the audit were positive in relation to planning. Plans were proportionate, person led, strength based and accessible. One auditor noted: "There is a good use of "I" and "my" and (plan) is written very sensitively".

There was evidence that plans had been shared with individuals but it was not clear whether they had been signed and returned. In addition, there was limited evidence of community options being considered in plans.

### Findings from Reviews

There was evidence of good compliance with the Care Act with reviews taking place at least once a year. Auditors noted that reviews were person centred, timely, identified outcomes and responded to needs and wellbeing although there were examples of language being overly professional.

### Carers

There was evidence that the needs of carers were considered when an assessment was completed, although the recording of carers being offered an assessment was not always evident. There was also evidence of input and opinions of carers when the cared for person was assessed.

There was limited evidence of the worker considering the broader carer network (i.e. where there were multiple carers in the family).

### Staff Support

There was very positive feedback in relation to staff support. Formal supervision was recorded on records and staff spoke very positively of the informal support available from team managers and principal practitioners and from other team members. Staff reported that they felt that there was a focus on their wellbeing both in their formal supervision and in more informal ways with the team.

### Audits of Carers Support

There were 10 audits carried out of carers who have been assessed by Hartlepool Carers. Assessments and reviews were identified as being strength based with a good focus on the wishes and feelings of the carer. Reviews were being held at the appropriate time and there were good examples of the worker taking a whole family approach by identifying and linking support to young carers and ex carers.

The only issue identified by auditors was a tendency for workers to focus on and provide too much detail regarding the person being cared for.

### Observations

Four auditors completed observations at the Risk Enablement Panel, Continuing Health Care Panel and Mental Health Huddle. 17 workers were observed with the auditors looking at evidence of management oversight, ability of the worker to set the scene, evidence that the information was clear and concise, that the worker advocated well for the individual, that there was a clear evidence base and analysis regarding the request and there was consideration of the least restrictive approach.

In all cases observed auditors were complementary regarding the worker's ability to present their case and advocate for the service user. They found that there was clear evidence and analysis from workers, evidence of good management oversight and it was highlighted that workers and panel members took a least restrictive approach.

### Service User Feedback

The auditors collected feedback from 19 service users. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive with service users reporting that they felt respected, listened to and were treated with dignity. Staff were described as being "caring and professional", "really friendly and professional made me feel at ease", reliable and excellent support.

People were happy with the communication they received from the worker and were pleased with the level of support they received.

### Analysis and Lessons Learned

Evidence from the case file audits, observations and service user feedback suggests that worker practice is generally very positive. Front line practice is good, it is person-centred, strength based and least restrictive which is supported by good supervision and informal support from management, teams and peers.

Emerging evidence suggests that the commissioning of Hartlepool Carers to deliver carers assessments is also a very positive development relieving some pressure on care management teams whilst providing a good approach and support mechanism to carers.

Where issues were raised around practice they can be themed as being:

- Language – the use of jargon and acronyms making assessments, reviews and support plans less accessible.
- Co-production – the service user 'voice' was not always present in documents – this apparent lack of involvement is reflected in a lack of evidence around the sharing and signing of documents.
- Wellbeing – consideration of wellbeing and associated outcomes need to be made more explicit in documentation together with clarity of any costs of support. Community solutions should also be explored in more details with consideration being given to the individual's wider network including family and friends to provide informal, community based support.

### Response to Findings

The promotion of Wellbeing (also known as the Wellbeing Principle) is the principle duty of the Care Act 2014. The Act states that “every action taken, function performed or decision made by the local authority both corporately and operationally must give demonstrable regard to the impact on the person’s wellbeing”. The Care Act Bite Sized Learning training was updated in April 2022 emphasising and reinforcing the Wellbeing Principle, both in terms of how it should inform assessments and reviews but also ensure that people’s wishes and views are paramount. The Act also stipulates that documentation should be shared with people.

The revised training has been rolled out across the department and although there is no suggestion that staff are not considering people’s wellbeing or sharing documentation, there is an issue around how this is recorded. Accordingly, a review of the assessment, support plan and review documentation will be undertaken to ensure the Wellbeing Principle is clearly stipulated to allow workers to explicitly demonstrate compliance.

In addition, a review of how we record and track the sharing and return of documents will take place to ensure transparency.

Community Led Support continues to be embedded across the department with the range of opportunities available for people in the community promoted via Hartlepool Now and the Community Hubs. Promotion will continue and a prompt will be added to documentation to ensure community options are considered by workers.

The issue of language and jargon has been raised with staff as part of the audit process. The department continues to offer training on using clear and accessible language in care documents and staff will be reminded of this opportunity. In addition, team managers and principal practitioners will be reminded of the need to ensure that all documentation is accessible and avoids jargon and acronyms.

## **5. ANNUAL CONVERSATION - DECEMBER 2022**

The North East Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (NE ADASS) commissioned Dr Carol Tozer, a former DASS, to complete annual conversations with the 12 North East Local Authorities to support Councils in their preparation for CQC Assurance. Conversations took place between September 2022 and February 2023 and involved a significant amount of data being reviewed and triangulated prior to a half day conversation involving the adult social care senior management team. The process was very robust and challenging and produced feedback on areas of good practice and areas for further development.

### Findings for Hartlepool

The annual conversation process identified that:

- Performance compared to other local authorities is very good with performance in 10 out of 25 measures ranked in the top 10 nationally.
- Quality of commissioned services is very good.
- Hartlepool Now is easy to navigate and a good resource.
- The range of work taking place through Community Hubs is impressive.
- Positive progress is being made in relation to waiting lists and times.

- Practice month demonstrates a strong focus on quality of frontline practice.
- An obvious sense of identity and pride in place.

There were a series of recommendations as a result of the annual conversation including:

- An increased focus on adult social care in the Council Plan.
- A refresh of the adult social care strategy.
- Further work on safeguarding thresholds and referral pathways.
- An audit of safeguarding referrals that did not result in formal safeguarding enquiries.
- Further work to develop assistive technology and digital solutions.
- More systematic capturing of feedback from people who use services, including co-production.

All recommendations have been incorporated in an action plan with lead officers and timescales identified and regular reviews of progress. A number of the recommendations have already been addressed in full.

In addition to feedback to individual Local Authorities feedback was provided to NEADASS in March 2023 identifying best practice, which is being shared through a series of webinars and areas where Councils may wish to work together to deliver improvements.

### Regional Findings

The identified strengths of the NE Councils included:

- Compassionate, humble, tenacious and expert leadership.
- Clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement.
- Recognition of the importance of housing.
- Pride in the workforce.
- Commitment to strengths based approaches.
- Commitment to reablement.
- Partnership working in hospital discharge and discharge to assess arrangements.

A range of areas were identified as priorities for the region to work on collectively including:

- Managing demand at the front door.
- Coproduction.
- Progressing the digital agenda.
- Safeguarding thresholds.
- Improving outcomes at transition.
- Workforce planning.

### Response to Regional Findings

As part of the work to share best practice, HBC has been asked to deliver a webinar on managing demand at the front door for adult social care, and the delivery of Community Led Support through Community Hubs. Regional Sector Led Improvement workstreams and action plans are being reviewed to incorporate agreed regional priorities and additional capacity has been funded within NE ADASS to support the Quality Assurance agenda.

### Next Steps

To supplement the annual conversation process and provide further independent feedback on how adult social care operates in Hartlepool, a 'mock inspection' week has been arranged which will take place from 15 - 19 May 2023. This will focus on the quality of adult social care practice as well as views from partners, staff, providers and people who use services.

## **6. PEER REVIEW OF ADULT SAFEGUARDING – MARCH 2023**

In November 2022 there was an offer to Local Authorities from Partners in Care & Health Support regarding independent input relating to adult safeguarding. The purpose of the work was to provide expert evaluation and advice on safeguarding adults work, in preparation for the forthcoming CQC inspection framework. The support offer comprised 3-5 days of expert consultancy with the focus of the work and the output to be determined by the Local Authority. Hartlepool Borough Council submitted a bid which was successful and the review was completed in March 2023.

### Review Focus and Methodology

The bid set out the context for requesting the review:

- The work of the safeguarding team has evolved and expanded in recent years creating strong partnerships with police and community safety at a local level.
- A rapidly changing focus on greater collaborative working with other statutory partners is creating tensions with operational capacity.
- Referrals and conversion rates from concerns to S42 enquiries are not in step with statistical neighbours and are above the England average.
- Data reflects a growing number of concerns and section 42 enquiries, including repeat referrals.
- Resilience is therefore being tested.

The areas of focus for the review were:

- Review of decision support guidance – is screening and decision making consistent?
- If safeguarding pressures continue to increase, is the structure fit for purpose?
- Team Around the Individual (TATI) repeat referrals and cases where risk remains continue to increase – how can this be addressed?
- Transitions is an area of concern in terms of numbers and potential complexity of need – how to maximise resources with wider processes and partners?

The methodology used was as follows:

- Scoping meeting in advance of the review with Head of Safeguarding & Specialist Services and Assistant Director - Adult Social Care.
- Desktop review of relevant documents from HBC and TSAB.
- Meetings with key operational staff, managers and partners.
- Discussion of headline findings with review commissioners.

The review was undertaken by Teresa Bell, a former Director of Adult Social Care who is currently Independent Chair of SABs in North Somerset, Bromley and the Isle of Wight.

### Findings

The findings recognised the demographic challenges faced by HBC in terms of deprivation, health inequalities, high prevalence of health related conditions and the incidence of drug

related deaths being twice the national average. It was acknowledged that HBC had very good comparative performance in adult social care and a clear vision focused on Community Led Support and helping people to be as independent as possible for as long as possible. There was also evidence of strong collaborative working with statutory and community partners and a view that HBC 'punched above its weight' in terms of partnership engagement and innovation.

Data shows that Hartlepool receives a very high rate of safeguarding concerns with referrals increasing by 49% over a three year period, with almost half of these not progressing to formal safeguarding enquiry following initial triage investigations.

#### What's working well

The reviewer found lots of good practice and innovative working with highlights including:

- Daily police huddle working effectively to triage Police Protection Notices.
- Troubled Individuals Officer role as a key point of contact and information across partners.
- Community Hubs: early intervention and prevention; strengths based approach reconnecting people with their community.
- Team Around the Individual (TATI): working across partnerships to ensure identified risk below thresholds are monitored and managed.
- Being 'a large village': strong partnership connections, collaboration and working flexibly across professional relationships.
- Community Led Support approach: has increased awareness of risk and potential safeguarding concerns.

#### Challenges being faced

- High awareness of safeguarding has led to more referrals, leading to concerns regarding managing and holding risk at an earlier point and making decisions more proportionate.
- TSAB decision support tool and resources are well regarded by HBC practitioners, but there seems to be a lack of awareness from other partners, or a lack of confidence in applying it.
- Increased complexity of safeguarding risks, e.g. modern slavery, exploitation and self-neglect. The Care Act is limited in its ability to offer a framework for managing these newer challenges, and locally appropriate measures will vary across TSAB.
- Current structure requires all concerns to be triaged by the safeguarding team and information isn't always sufficient to allow decisions to be made.
- The practice of recording cases as NFA is unrepresentative of the scale and scope of actions being taken to manage risk.

#### What is important for the future?

- Audit of safeguarding referral pathways between front doors and the safeguarding team; comparing practice with the TSAB decision making support tool to review appropriateness of referral.
- More use of Community Hubs and Community Navigators to support proportionate responses to risk management. This could include a network of risk management champions trained to support and offer guidance to front line workers, or confidence

building and support for front line workers in housing, community resources etc, to enable proportionate risk management.

- Communication across Hartlepool seems effective, but we need to better understand where and why informal networks amongst some key people may be compensating for more formal systems, to ensure sustainability and to inform succession planning.
- The increased complexity for managing risks and safeguarding since the Care Act was introduced suggests that the shape of the workforce across core safeguarding partners may need to change to be better able to meet the new contexts.

### Response from HBC

A number of actions were already being implemented prior to the review taking place including:

- Further review and audit of repeat safeguarding and TATI referrals; and
- A review of cases recorded as NFA, with changes being made to the recording system to better capture actual outcomes (including care management intervention, signposting to appropriate community resources, action taken by the commissioning team etc).

In response to the review, further work is being undertaken to:

- Audit referral pathways between front door(s) and safeguarding, considering appropriateness of referral; and
- Review the current safeguarding team structure and identify options to manage demand more effectively (with additional investment identified to support this).

In response to findings being shared with TSAB, the following actions are also being taken:

- Review of referral forms to ensure they encourage the referrer to provide appropriate and sufficient information for their reasons to seek a safeguarding response.
- Lack of clarity for some partners in terms of making safeguarding referrals for cross boundary issues (e.g. probation).
- TSAB to have an open discussion to find a way to balance consistency of policy and practice across 4 council areas with the ability for partners to shape local solutions to unique contexts and varying resource levels.

## **7. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Council has a Workforce Development Programme which recognises that staff are motivated and committed when they are supported well and allowed to grow. This programme covers a range of areas including Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Health & Safety, Management, Personal Effectiveness and Wellbeing.

There is also a comprehensive Learning & Development Programme for Adult & Community Based Services which includes a wide range of informal development opportunities such as bite size training on the Care Act, Direct Payments and Commissioning as well as more formal development opportunities. Learning & Development offered includes: Appropriate Adult training, Best Interest Assessor training and legal updates, Mental Capacity Act awareness and a range of Safeguarding Adult training commissioned via TSAB.

Staff have been able to access over 30 development opportunities through the Learning & Development Programme for Adult & Community Based Services during 2022/23 as well as over 40 e-learning courses, 10 taught courses and a range of workbooks through the TSAB Training Programme. Examples of training undertaken include:

- 54 Best Interest Assessors receiving a legal update.
- 60 staff accessing a 3 day coaching programme.
- Over 130 staff trained in awareness of the Mental Capacity Act.
- Over 300 staff trained to use CareFirst7, the updated case management system.
- 7 staff training to be Practice Educators.

The commitment of the Council to developing the existing workforce in Adult Social Care is evidenced by the number of staff undertaking significant developments that support career progression. Examples of this include a high proportion of staff within the Direct Care & Support Service undertaking the Care Certificate and the Lead Adult Practitioner NVQ, a member of staff undertaking an Occupational Therapy Apprenticeship and four staff undertaking a Social Work Apprenticeship with two more starting in September 2023.

## **8. FEEDBACK FROM THE WORKFORCE**

The Employer Standards Health Check is a national project involving an annual survey measuring how well employers deliver the Employer Standards for Social Workers, how employees perceive their working environment and what factors influence them to engage with their work and stay with the organisation.

The eight standards that are covered within the survey are:

- Strong and clear social work framework
- Effective workforce planning systems
- Safe workloads and case allocation
- Wellbeing
- Supervision
- Continuing professional development
- Professional registration
- Strategic partnerships

In the 2022/23 survey of social workers there were 48 responses from adult social care in Hartlepool (which represents 73% of the Social Work workforce). The survey results are scores out of a hundred and are categorised as either; relatively poor outcomes – a clear sign that improvement is needed (score of 0-50); moderate outcomes – room for improvement (score of 51-74); or good outcomes – to be celebrated (score of 75-100).

All scores for Hartlepool were ranked as good outcomes which were to be celebrated. The average score against each standard ranged from 90-95 and the lowest score for any single question was 81. This is incredibly positive and is reflected in high retention rates for social workers, and other staff across adult social care.

Areas where outcomes were particularly high related to:

- Support for staff and staff feeling cared for
- Access to training and development

- Support to develop professional skills
- Ethical practice and quality standards

The areas where outcomes were lower than average (noting that all outcomes were categorised as good outcomes to be celebrated) were:

- Balancing demands of caseloads
- Access to wellbeing support
- Dedicated time for continuous professional development

The outcome of the Health Check is shared with the workforce through staff briefings along with feedback on actions being taken in response. As an example, wellbeing advocates have recently been appointed (including a Social Work Team Manager) to help signpost staff to available resources.

## **9. PEER SUPERVISION & REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**

For a number of years there has been a Risk Panel in operation within adult social care, providing a mechanism for frontline staff to escalate concerns about people they're working with. This might relate to a person who is reluctant to engage with services, someone who presents particular risks and challenges or a situation the staff member has not encountered before. The Risk Panel involves a range of senior managers who can facilitate discussion and offer guidance and support.

During 2021/22 the number of referrals to the Risk Panel increased significantly prompting concern from senior managers about the level of peer discussion and support taking place within teams (recognising that this may have been impacted by working arrangements during the Covid pandemic and new staff in particular missing out on opportunities for informal discussion and sharing). To address this, the process for Risk Panel referrals was reviewed and staff are now required to demonstrate that there has been peer discussion and challenge before a Risk Panel referral is accepted. This has reduced the number of referrals to Risk Panel by more than 50%, which means senior manager time is being used more effectively, and frontline staff are empowered to manage their workloads within teams. Feedback from the workforce is very positive and indicates that the peer discussion process is very valuable as it facilitates knowledge sharing, develops problem solving skills and helps staff to feel supported.

Teams have also developed other ways to promote reflective practice such as a 'Theory of the Week' approach which also supports continuous professional development,

## **10. CELEBRATING SUCCESS**

Celebrating success and sharing positive feedback is really important in terms of staff morale and motivation and this is done through regular Adult Social Care newsletters and staff briefings that are held twice a year. At the most recent staff briefings in December 2022 there were a range of successes shared with staff including:

- performance and value for money based on the latest LG Futures report;
- compliments and complaints;
- feedback from user and carer surveys;
- carers celebration event;

- the first adult social care apprentice social worker graduation; and
- a lifetime achievement award at the National SAB Awards.

Staff briefings were also used to update staff on:

- results of the Health Check and actions being taken as a result;
- early themes from Practice Month in November 2022;
- preparation for assurance;
- adult social care vision and values; and
- outcomes being delivered through Community Led Support.

The next series of staff briefings in June / July 2023 will focus on the outcome of the 'mock inspection' in May 2023.

## **11. REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS**

A review of complaints and compliments received is carried out on an annual basis with a clear focus on learning from and responding to complaints that identify areas where improvements can be made.

The report for 2012/22 was approved by Adult & Community Based Services Committee in July 2022. During 2021/22 56 compliments were recorded and 19 complaints were investigated. In the same period 5 complainants contacted the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) as they weren't happy with the outcome of their complaint to the Council regarding Adult Social Care. In 3 of the 5 cases the LGSCO did not feel there were grounds for further investigation. In the remaining 2 cases, the LGSCO completed an investigation and found no fault with the actions taken by the Council.

The report provides a summary of the complaints made and actions taken as a result, which included: apologies issued when practice fell short of the expected standards, staff being reminded to record exchanges by text message in case records and action by the Commissioned Services Team to monitor record keeping and communication in care homes.

Compliments received are routinely shared with the staff member or team concerned and feedback is shared more widely through staff briefings and newsletters.

An Annual Complaints & Compliments Report for 2022/23 is being compiled and will be presented to Adult & Community Based Services Committee in September 2023.

## **12. CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS**

There has been a significant amount of quality assurance work undertaken in 2022/23 and the overall picture is very positive in terms of the quality of frontline practice and the performance of Adult Social Care. This is particularly pleasing to see in the context of recovering from the Covid pandemic and some of the challenges facing adult social care on a national basis.

There is an interim Action Plan in place to address issues raised through Quality Assurance activities, which is monitored by the Continuous Improvement Group. This will inform and be incorporated within the Adult Social Care Strategy and Delivery Plan which is currently being developed.

An Annual Quality Assurance Report will be produced on an ongoing basis, which will be shared with the Executive Leadership Team and reported to the Adult & Community Based Services Committee.

# ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE

15 June 2023



**Subject:** PARKS AND OPEN SPACES: PLACE-BASED PLANS

**Report of:** Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services

**Decision Type:** Non-Key

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## 1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

<b>Hartlepool will be a place:</b>
- where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives.
- of resilient and resourceful communities with opportunities for all.
- that is sustainable, clean, safe and green.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To provide the Committee with information on the management plans that have been developed for the four parks within the borough and to seek approval to consult with the public on those plans.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Hartlepool is rich in parks, open spaces, coast and recreation grounds to support communities to engage in infrastructure that facilitates play, physical activity, social engagement, community development and more.
- 3.2 Throughout the Covid pandemic there was a significant increase in the use of outdoor spaces with this continuing as lockdown measures eased and people were able to engage with others in an outdoor environment.

- 3.3 Considering the volume of people using our outdoor spaces, most people have used them responsibly, although a minority of people cause significant concern in these environments. Although this has always been an issue, these problems have increased in recent years including damage to park assets such as public toilets, bowling greens, play equipment, benches and fences.
- 3.4 The impact of this has been significant and the demand on resources is challenging. This has led to a review of the way these spaces are managed, and consideration of how this can be done differently.

#### 4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Place-based management plans have been developed for each park, which will be followed by the development of plans for the open spaces. This will enable a more proactive approach to review the strengths, challenges, opportunities and risks within each site. Sitting alongside these documents is a summary document to provide strategic aims and objectives for all of the sites (attached as **Appendix 1**)
- 4.2 Accompanying this report are the plans for Ward Jackson Park (**Appendix 2**), Burn Valley Gardens (**Appendix 3**), Seaton Park (**Appendix 4**) and Rossmere Park (**Appendix 5**). These are in draft form and will be taken out to public consultation prior to their adoption.
- 4.3 The plans focus on the Green Flag Award guidance themes to ensure a consistent approach to; planning and integration of wider priorities; outcomes, and working with other services and organisations.

#### 5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	There are significant challenges relating to some of the infrastructure in the parks. In implementing these plans, it will be possible to identify areas where funding and investment are required to manage this.
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<p>Budgets will be reviewed as part of the ongoing planning process and financial considerations will evolve throughout. It is however hoped that having the plans in place will open up opportunities to draw down funding as medium to long term plans develop, as part of the wider strategy.</p> <p>Priorities for each site have been clearly presented throughout the plans, to easily identify where funding should be targeted.</p>

<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	No specific legal considerations are identified at this time.
<b>CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY</b>	Improved planning and development of outdoor spaces will help to address the health and social inequalities that many communities face.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	Impact on equality and diversity will be considered throughout the process.
<b>STAFF CONSIDERATIONS</b>	To support this process a two year fixed term Project Officer has been appointed to lead on this work and build capacity within the team.
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	This proposal supports improved asset management and considerations will be an integrated part of the planning.
<b>ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	Environment, sustainability and climate change considerations form a key part of the management plans, with specific sections dedicated to each point.
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	<p>It is proposed that public consultation will be carried out over the summer, with plans to host an online consultation via 'Your Say, Our Future', on-site drop in sessions at the parks, and engagement with active volunteers and residents groups.</p> <p>The consultation will ensure that the plans are reflective of the needs and aspirations of the wider community.</p>

## 6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Committee support the proposal to engage in public consultation on the place based plans for parks.

## 7. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 This consultation will enable residents, and other interested parties to feed into the plans, ensuring that the documents reflect the needs of the wider community of Hartlepool.

## 8. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Sign Off:-

Managing Director	Date: 05/06/2023
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 05/06/2023
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 05/06/2023

# Parks and Open Spaces

## Place-Based Management Plans Summary Document

## Overview

Place-based management plans are working documents, developed to demonstrate the visions and priorities for the future of Hartlepool's parks and open spaces.

They act as strategic guides for the effective management and development of these sites. Place-based management plans should be considered as a flexible tool, subject to frequent review and adjusted accordingly in response to economic and environmental uncertainty and pressures.

Individual plans have been developed for each of Hartlepool's parks based on the strengths, challenges, opportunities and risks within each site. This enables a more proactive and joined up approach to the management of Hartlepool's parks. Through clearly communicated priorities, plans aim to inform key stakeholders of the sites management from day-to-day tasks to long term strategic planning. These plans have been developed in line with Hartlepool Borough Council's Council Plan (2021/22—2023/24), which sets out the town's vision. Directly feeding in to the scope of park management and carefully considered throughout the development of the plans, are the following aims:

*"Hartlepool will be a place...*

*...where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives:*

- *There is an increased participation in physical activity through access to fit for purpose leisure, sport and recreational facilities including parks and open spaces.*

*...of resilient and resourceful community with opportunities for all:*

- *People are involved in their local community rather than being socially isolated;*
- *Communities are well served with appropriate facilities;*
- *There is a cross sector and coordinated programme of volunteering.*

*...that has an inclusive and growing economy:*

- *We have a high quality visitor attractions and increased visitor numbers.*

*...that is sustainable, clean, safe and green:*

- *Initiatives are in place to tackle climate change;*
- *There is access to good quality, well maintained parks, streets and public spaces."*

**- Council Plan (2021/22—2023/24), Hartlepool Borough Council**

Split into clear areas of focus, specific aims and objectives have been identified which detail a clear road map to success—with success being a series of healthy, welcoming and safe parks that serve the local community and allow nature to thrive.

# Aims and Objectives

## Welcome and Access

*Parks are welcoming, easily accessible sites that cater to all users.*

- Review signage and landscaping to create an inviting atmosphere to each place
- Ensure the atmosphere of the park appropriately matches the functionality of the site
- Review accessibility of site assets including footpaths, seating, play equipment and signage

## Healthy, Safe and Secure

*Parks provide an inclusive and safe space, focused on health and wellbeing.*

- Develop walking routes and interactive trails between green spaces, to encourage active choices for all ages and abilities
- Outreach workers to engage with groups exhibiting continued antisocial behaviour in order to reduce damage to park assets and to encourage a safer, more welcoming atmosphere
- Reduce opportunity for trespassing and antisocial behaviour in current problem areas and future developments, through consideration of extra security measures, design techniques and natural surveillance

## Maintenance and Cleanliness

*Parks are kept to a high standard, through impactful maintenance and cleansing routines.*

- Conduct regular audits to monitor the site, ensuring issues are resolved in a timely manner and contributing to the longevity of assets Ensure the atmosphere of the park appropriately matches the functionality of the site
- Review accessibility of site assets including footpaths, seating, play equipment and signage

## Environmental Management

*Park management ensures nature is considered and not compromised, protecting and futureproofing the parks natural assets against an uncertain climate.*

- Adopt best practice management methods including alternatives to pesticide use and a circular economy for natural waste
- Investigate nature-based solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change, such as flood alleviation schemes and restoration of natural assets and habitats, to protect residential areas, for the benefit of the community and future generations

## Biodiversity and Landscape

*Parks provide a mosaic of biodiverse habitats that support a wide range of wildlife*

- Ensure biodiversity net gain and carbon sequestration is considered in future developments
- Retain a diverse tree canopy including replacement of felled trees and strategic tree planting, as well as monitoring tree health
- Provide a variety of suitable habitats for wildlife, allowing nature to thrive

# Aims and Objectives

## Heritage and Conservation

*Historical park features are preserved and the site heritage is celebrated, with educational resources readily available for visitors.*

- Restore park features and heritage assets
- Research the history of each site for future heritage based educational resources and celebration events
- Ensure recent park additions are responsibly looked after, as they will be future generations' heritage features

## Community Engagement

*Partnerships with local businesses, charities, community groups and residents are supported and encouraged throughout the parks and open spaces.*

- Ensure active volunteering and community groups are supported in their activities
- Enable local people to feel pride and establish a sense of ownership, through a number of volunteering and engagement opportunities

## Marketing and Communication

*Parks and open spaces updates are communicated across a variety of channels including digital information, physical signage and in person events.*

- Improve communication about park management, including information sharing and consultation processes to enhance user experience
- Develop a brand identity for Hartlepool's parks and open spaces

## Looking Forward

*Parks are futureproofed against uncertain economic and environmental scenarios.*

- Ensure there is an appropriate monitoring process in place to evaluate the performance of management methods and developments
- Use plans to priorities future funding and resources, as and when they become available.

Plans will be subject to a full, formal consultation, review and re-publication every five years. Regular check-ins, surveys and informal consultations will take place annually. This will identify any changes in site usage and public perception, ensuring parks continue to provide appropriate facilities for the community. Plans will also be regularly updated in line with any feedback, works progress, or changes to plans and budgets, on an ad-hoc basis. footpaths, seating, play equipment and signage

## Get in Touch

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HARTLEPOOL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES



**HARTLEPOOL  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# Burn Valley Gardens Management Plan 2023



**HARTLEPOOL**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



**HARTLEPOOL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

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# Introduction

- 1.1 THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PLACE-BASED PLANS
- 1.2 CONTEXT AND WIDER POLICY
- 1.3 SITE OVERVIEW
- 1.4 SITE MAP
- 1.5 ROAD MAP

# Introduction

## 1.1 THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PLACE-BASED PLANS

A place-based plan is a working management plan that aims to provide an overview of a specific site, detailing the sites features and the maintenance, management and conservation involved. It considers the unique characteristics of the site and the needs of all users.

Place-based plans can be viewed as a guide for the effective management and development of a site. An adaptive management process is required to effectively manage a site and appropriately plan for the future. Therefore, place-based plans should be considered a flexible tool, subject to frequent review and adjusted accordingly, in response to economic and environmental uncertainty. The primary goal for a place-based plan is to ensure a site is managed in a sustainable and responsible way, balancing the needs of its visitors and the environment with future budgets and capacity.

Plans enable users to understand why decisions are made with regards to a site, and how such decisions are reached. Through clearly communicated priorities, place-based plans will inform key stakeholders of the sites management from the day-to-day tasks to long term strategic planning.

The management of a park involves a number of factors from varying disciplines, that come together to ensure a site is well-maintained, attractive, functional and sustainable. Based on the Green Flag Assessment

Criteria, these factors include a welcoming atmosphere, maintenance and upkeep, safety and security, environmental considerations, conservation of landscape and heritage, recreation and events, and community involvement.

Through the following sections, this plan will provide details of the site in relation to the above factors, whilst identifying opportunities for development. Within the final section (Section 10 – Looking Forward), the future of the site will be discussed in terms of opportunities, budgets, capacity and assessment. Aims and objectives have been set at the close of each section detailing a clear road map to success, with success being a healthy, welcoming and safe park that serves its local community and allows nature to thrive.

### Development Phases

The development of place-based plans has taken place over five phases—initial consultation, developing written plans, formal consultation, implementation and review.

The first phase saw an initial public consultation and SWOT analysis, providing a baseline understanding of public perception and site usage. Following this, written plans were developed and reviewed internally within HBC by a number of services and the Parks Management Board. Phase three consisted of a formal public consultation, to ensure plans and priorities for the

town's parks were, and continue to be, in line with community needs. Following public consultation, phase four consists of the commencement and continuation of works discussed throughout the plans, undertaken by the Parks and Open Spaces team and led by the Parks Management Board.

The fifth and final phase will see plans formally reviewed and re-published on a five year cycle. In between re-publications, regular check-ins, surveys, and informal consultations will take place on an annual basis to provide updates to the plans. This will identify any changes in site usage and public perception, ensuring parks continue to provide appropriate facilities for the community. Plans will be regularly updated in line with any feedback, works progress, changes to plans and budgets, or with any national trends. This will be done on an ad-hoc basis.

# Introduction

## 1.2 CONTEXT AND WIDER POLICY

A series of place-based plans have been developed for Hartlepool's formal parks and local nature reserves. These have been produced by Hartlepool Borough Council's Parks and Open Spaces team within the Coast, Countryside and Heritage service, in collaboration with a number of other services including (but not limited to) Grounds Maintenance, Planning and Net Zero. The Parks Management Board of Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) oversee the management and implementation of these plans. The management structure within HBC currently stands as:

Hartlepool Borough Council

Adults and Community Based Services

Preventative and Community Based Services

Coast, Countryside and Heritage

Parks and Open Spaces

There are a multitude of factors from varying social, environmental and economic standpoints that influence the management of parks and open spaces. Nature, public health, culture, community, tourism, sport, recreation – to name a few – all come together to influence the management of these sites. Parks do not exist in isolation from each factor, and so a wide range of strategies, policies, plans and partnerships have fed into

the development of this management plan, as shown in figure 1 on the following page.

First and foremost is the HBC Council Plan (2021/22 – 2023/24), which sets out the town's vision. Directly feeding in to the scope of park management, are the following points that have been carefully considered throughout the development of the plan.

*"Hartlepool will be a place...*

*...where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives:*

- *There is an increased participation in physical activity through access to fit for purpose leisure, sport and recreational facilities including parks and open spaces.*

*...of resilient and resourceful community with opportunities for all:*

- *People are involved in their local community rather than being socially isolated;*
- *Communities are well served with appropriate facilities;*
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*...that has an inclusive and growing economy:*

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**- Council Plan (2021/22—2023/24), Hartlepool Borough Council**

# Introduction

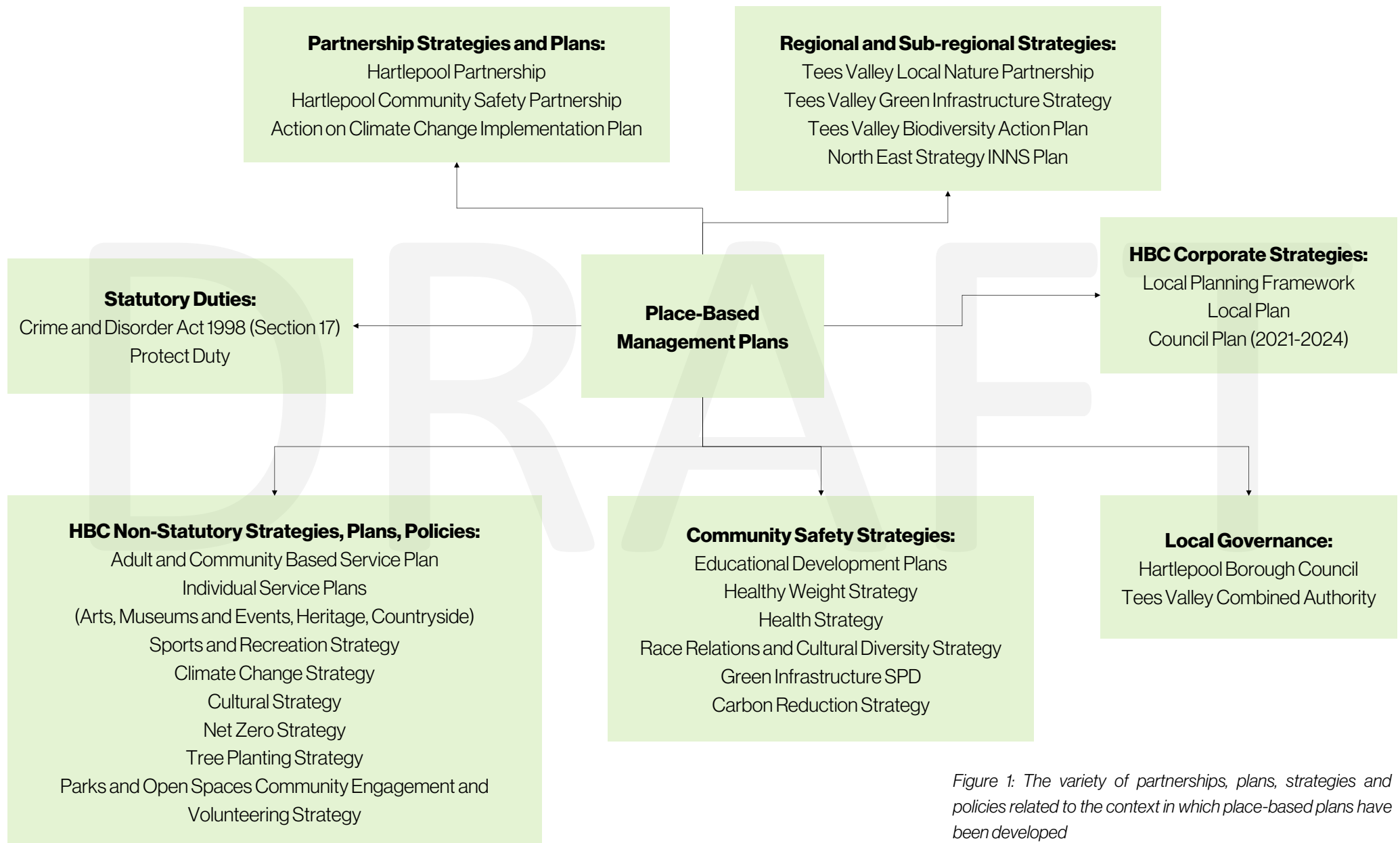


Figure 1: The variety of partnerships, plans, strategies and policies related to the context in which place-based plans have been developed

# Introduction

## 1.3 SITE OVERVIEW

Burn Valley Gardens is a linear park central to Hartlepool, running west from York Road, through to Catcote Road. The park opened in 1898 and was the second park to open in the town, following Ward Jackson Park. It is the main green space serving the centre of town, connecting Hartlepool centre to the countryside via Family Wood and Summerhill Country Park. Burn Valley Beck runs west to east through the park, providing the focus for a network of footpaths.

Covering approximately 8 hectares, the park is divided into two areas by Brinkburn Road, commonly referred to as the Upper and Lower Burn Valley Gardens. Spanning the two areas are a number of wildflower meadows, tree planting, and nature trail. Lower Burn Valley Gardens is a more formal park with street lights, a traditional playground and bowling green. The main entrance is positioned on York Road, with multiple smaller entrances throughout the site.

As you travel west from Brinkburn Road into Upper Burn Valley Gardens, the site becomes increasingly less formal. This section is home to a further two bowling greens, a natural play area with sensory maze, and a works depot with storage. Much of the boundary is directly adjacent to neighbouring properties including residential housing, allotments, and local college. Upper Burn Valley Gardens connects to Family Wood, leading out toward the countryside.

## Demographics

The park serves some of the most densely populated wards in Hartlepool; Foggy Furze (8,505) and Burn Valley (8,216); but links to one of the least densely populated areas; Rural West (7,628). However, recent trends from 2001 to 2019 show Rural West has the second fastest growing population within the borough. The park sits within two LSOA's (009A and 007A), both positioned within the first and second decile on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, respectively.

Residential housing that borders the park often lacks in private garden space, and so the park provides these households with a large area of accessible green space.

## Profile

Site Name—Burn Valley Gardens

Site Address—Burn Valley Grove

Town—Hartlepool

Region—North East England

Postcode—TS25 5QS

OS Grid Reference—NZ498316

Total Area—8 Hectares

Plan Prepared By—Hartlepool Borough Council

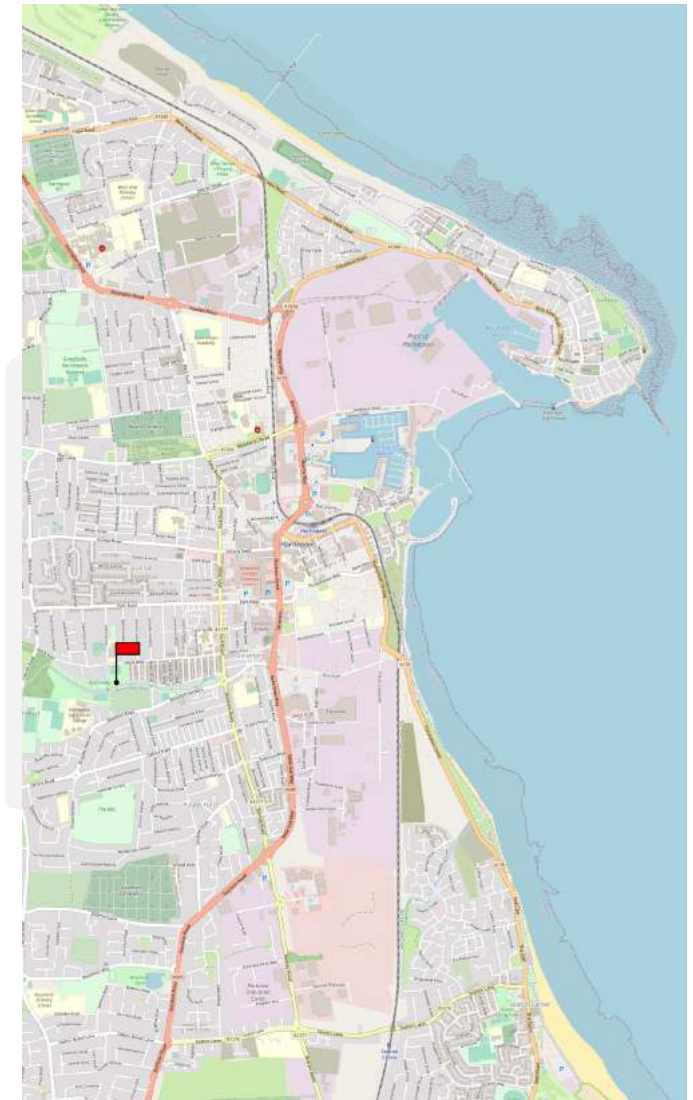


Figure 2: Burn Valley Gardens location within wider Hartlepool  
Map Credit: OpenStreetMap

# Introduction

## 1.4 SITE MAP



# Introduction

## 1.5 ROADMAP

### Where are we now?

An initial consultation took place in August 2022 to gain further understanding of public perception of Hartlepool's four town parks (Ward Jackson Park, Burn Valley Gardens, Rossmere Park and Seaton Park), and how they are used.

Burn Valley Gardens was voted as the second most frequently visited park, following Ward Jackson Park, with the majority of respondents noting they were most satisfied with the ease of access. When asked which features could be improved within the park, cleanliness, security and playground facilities ranked highest and the majority of respondents were dissatisfied with these features. Despite its popularity among walkers and families, the park suffers from antisocial behaviour and vandalism, which was highlighted through additional survey comments. Further information and survey charts for the consultation results relating to Burn Valley Gardens are available in appendix B.

Using feedback from the public consultation along with local and anecdotal knowledge, a SWOT analysis has been conducted (figure 3). The outcomes of these initial studies provided a baseline on which the place-based plans have been developed. Discussed through sections 2 to 9 of the plan is a detailed overview of a number of the sites features, its maintenance and conservation, and the community it serves. These sections have been

developed in line with the Green Flag Assessment Criteria as a guideline.

### Where do we want to be?

There is a clear vision for Hartlepool's parks and open spaces, with the following aims:

- Parks are welcoming, easily accessible sites that cater to all users.
- Parks provide an inclusive and safe space focused on health and wellbeing.
- Parks are kept to a high standard, through impactful maintenance and cleansing routines.
- Park management ensures nature is considered and not compromised, protecting and futureproofing the parks natural assets against an uncertain future climate.
- Parks provide a mosaic of biodiverse habitats that support a wide range of wildlife.
- Historical park features are preserved and the site's heritage is celebrated, with educational resources readily available for visitors.
- Partnerships with local businesses, charities, community groups and residents are supported and encouraged throughout the parks and open spaces.

- Parks and open spaces updates are communicated across a variety of channels including digital information, physical signage and in person events.
- Parks are futureproofed against uncertain political, economic and environmental scenarios.

In order to achieve these, a series of objectives and actions have been identified in line with each section. Specific actions for these objectives can be seen in an action log, available in appendix C.

### How do we get there?

The objectives and associated action points have been identified in order to demonstrate the development priorities for the site. When funding, resource and capacity allow, action points will be implemented. It is important to note that the purpose of these plans are to provide strategic guides for the effective management and development of the sites, through identifying site priorities. It may not always be possible to commence works on each action, due to budgets and capacity. Outlining priority areas for development is essential in order to be prepared for when opportunities become feasible. The final section of this plan (Section 10 – Looking Forward) will discuss the future plans, monitoring, budgets and assessments anticipated for the site.

# Introduction

## Strengths

- The linear nature of the site provides a safe walking and cycling route from the urban centre of the town out towards the countryside
- Key area of green space for densely populated parts of the town
- Burn Valley Beck focal point
- Strong community links
- Wide variety of habitats and landscape features
- Re-naturalised areas of the park provide interesting focal points and habitat for wildlife
- Accessibility and close proximity to the town centre

## Weaknesses

- Limited budgets and capacity for maintenance routine
- No public facilities such as a café or toilets
- Negative public image, the park is often perceived as 'run-down'
- Excessive litter and fly tipping, especially in Lower Burn Valley Gardens
- Antisocial behaviour is common on the site with incidents including arson, theft and graffiti
- Herbicide use across the site to control weeds in shrub areas and pathways

## Opportunities

- Green Flag Status
- Improved signage for wildlife identification, heritage and culture
- Linear nature of the site provides excellent walking trails
- Further re-naturalisation of the beck to alleviate flood risk and improve habitats for a variety of habitats
- Wilder nature of the park provides ideal trial zone for herbicide phase-out
- Mobile catering unit or permanent structure for facilities
- Restart of a Friends of Burn Valley Gardens volunteering group
- Location and accessibility provides potential for frequent events

## Threats

- Worsening public perception of the site
- Perceived lack of maintenance regime
- Changing climate impacting on the natural flora and fauna
- Flooding possible in high rainfall events, particularly after build up of litter and debris within the beck
- Increased financial and staffing pressures for maintenance and preservation of the site
- Continued antisocial behaviour
- Loss of tree canopy due to age, fungus or disease

Figure 3: SWOT Analysis for Burn Valley Gardens

# 2

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# Welcome and Access

**2.1 A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE**

**2.2 ACCESS AND INCLUSIVITY**

**2.3 SIGNAGE**

**2.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Welcome and Access

## 2.1 A Welcoming Atmosphere

The main entrance to Burn Valley Gardens is located on York Road, and is home to a set of bespoke gates that welcome visitors into the park. Tree lined avenues guide visitors into the park from a number of the other entrances on the northern side of the park, whilst a winding pathway leads visitors in from the north-western corner.

Clear lines of sight along the majority of pathways throughout the site allow visitors to see what is ahead of them, increasing feelings of safety for park users. The site is popular among dog walkers and families, so there are often visitors on the site throughout the day. This provides a decent amount of natural surveillance.

The Horticultural team at HBC, as well as groups of dedicated volunteers, work to ensure the park is well kept and continues to welcome a variety of visitors to enjoy the space. Work includes trimming of hedges and shrubs to reduce any potential hiding places that may shield unwanted behaviours, as well as litter picking and bulb planting to improve the aesthetic of the park. HBC staff and volunteer groups are easily identifiable with relevant logos visible on hi-vis jackets worn by individuals.



# Welcome and Access

## 2.2 Access and Inclusivity

### Access

Burn Valley Gardens is an accessible site, close to the centre of Hartlepool. It can be reached on foot, via public transport, and private vehicle. There are multiple access points throughout the park as shown in the site map (section 1.4). These all lead to a network of footpaths spanning the site, mostly following the linear route of Burn Valley Beck.

Hartlepool town centre and railway station is approximately 30 minutes walking distance to the park, along relatively flat and accessible paving. The nearest bus stops serving Burn Valley Gardens are located on York Road, which are served by the main bus routes leading to the town centre. Further bus stops can be found on Burn Valley Grove and Catcote Road, offering access to Family Wood and Upper Burn Valley Gardens.

The formal parking area for the site is located at the York Road entrance, however a number of on-street parking options are available on Blakelock Road and Elwick Road at the entrance to Family Wood. Vehicle access within the park is provided for approved vehicles including emergency services or council maintenance vehicles.

### Inclusivity

Within the York Road car park are a number of accessible car parking spaces, and the bus stops positioned here are all step-free. The footpath network is mostly tarmac across the site, the majority of which provides level access including a number of bridges over the beck. Pathways are suitable for a range of needs, including mobility impairment vehicles and pushchairs.

The children's play area has a number of accessible pieces to encourage inclusive play, including a basket swing. The sensory maze located in the natural play area is specifically designed to be inclusive of wheelchair users. For the formal sporting facilities, the bowling greens located within the park include access ramps.



## 2.3 Signage

The park is well equipped with varying signage of both formal and informal design. At the parks main entrance on York Road is a formal information board, introducing the park through a brief history, an overview of the site including a map, relevant byelaws and photographs.

Continuing through the park there are a number of functional information signs with details of dog control orders, expected behaviours on the site and at the playgrounds, as well as contact details to report any potential issues to.

In addition to the functional signage there are also a number of educational resources related to nature and wildlife. Within the wetland conservation area is a Nature Watch wildlife identification panel that provides images and descriptions of a selection of wildlife supported in the wetland.

The nature trail and associated way-finder posts and map provide information about the variety of flora and fauna that can be found within Burn Valley Gardens, in a simple digestible format that caters to a wide variety of age groups. The materials of which the posts and signage plinth are constructed was chosen to be in keeping with the natural feel of the park. QR codes fixed to the posts provide an interactive element to the trail, and allow for further educational content to be added.

# Welcome and Access

## **Parks are welcoming, easily accessible sites, that cater to all users**

- Review signage and landscaping to create an inviting atmosphere to each place.
- Ensure the atmosphere of the park appropriately matches the functionality of the site.
- Review accessibility of site assets including footpaths, seating, play equipment and signage.

## **2.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Increase bulb and wildflower planting at park entrance points for decorative purposes and to welcome park users in to the site
- Review signage throughout the park, with outdated signs removed. Where budgets allow, update and replace signage
- Effectively manage graffiti on park signage
- Ensure pathways are kept safe and accessible for all users

# 3

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## Healthy, Safe and Secure

**3.1 FEATURES AND FACILITIES**

**3.2 HEALTH AND ACTIVITY**

**3.3 LEGAL**

**3.4 PERSONAL AND PARK SECURITY**

**3.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## 3.1 Features and Facilities

### Provision

Burn Valley Gardens has a variety of features and facilities for play, exercise and to support wildlife. Facilities include three bowling greens with associated pavilions, used regularly throughout the bowling season by the Hartlepool and District Bowling Association. There are two dedicated play areas comprising of both traditional play equipment and natural play. The children's play area in Lower Burn Valley Gardens has a variety of play equipment in line with traditional play areas. In the Upper Burn Valley Gardens the natural play area comprises of a rockery, sensory maze and trim trail that encourages imaginative and active play.

There are no toilet facilities available for park users. The park also lacks in providing any refreshment facilities, such as a café or mobile catering unit. There is, however, ample space on the site to provide a pitch for temporary traders such as a coffee van.

There are a number of interesting features through the site including a variety of wooden sculptures, most notably the Peter Pan and Tinkerbell carved tree, donated to the park by the Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces volunteering group. The park is also home to various 'wilder' areas, including a wetland conservation area, re-naturalised section of Burn Valley Beck and seasonal wildflower meadows.

### Safety

Health and safety checks occur regularly within the site. Playgrounds are routinely inspected by the Quality and Safety Officer, with inspections taking place multiple times a week. A full inspection of the playgrounds is carried out on a monthly basis, and an independent assessment is made annually to ensure the site continues to be safe and meet appropriate regulations. The site as a whole undergoes a quarterly inspection audit carried out by the Parks and Open Space team, where any other dangerous equipment is flagged (section 4.6). A list of relevant risk assessments related to the park and playground inspections and maintenance can be viewed in appendix D.

## 3.2 Health and Activity

### Public Health

There are a number of procedures in place for the instance of a public health emergency such as the recent Covid-19 pandemic, as well as animal health such as avian influenza. HBC's Public Protection service are contacted in the event of an emergency, and external organisations such as Defra or the Environment Agency are contacted if required.

Parks can provide a positive impact on the overall health of the community, through both psychological and physical benefits. Time spent in parks and open spaces

is seen to enhance a person's overall wellbeing by reducing stress and improving mental health, leading to potential positive impacts on their physical health.

### Air Quality

Vegetation such as trees, plants and grass help to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, whilst replenishing the oxygen levels, promoting a healthier environment. Through particulate matter filtration, vegetation in the parks also act as natural filters that trap and remove particulate matter from the air, thus improving the surrounding air quality. Additionally, parks with dense tree cover can have a cooling effect, reducing the ambient temperature and thus preventing higher temperatures exacerbating air pollution.

### Active Choices

Parks serve as spaces that encourage physical activity. The linear nature of Burn Valley Gardens, and its connections to further areas of green space at Family Wood and Summerhill Country Park, means the site is a strong walking route, encouraging active travel. Sporting facilities in the park include the three bowling greens.

The natural play area encouraged imaginative play, with different elements and terrains for activity. The trim trail, rope climbing frame, rocket and sensory maze encourage movement and active play.

# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## 3.3 Legal

### Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO)

The Parks and Open Spaces PSPO 2021 (HBC) states that at any time, it will constitute an offence should any person:

- Use a skateboard, bicycle or scooter in a manner likely to cause annoyance, nuisance or damage;
- Camp or otherwise stay overnight;
- Fish in the areas when the park is closed to the public or;
- Use an unauthorised mechanically propelled vehicle (MPV) such as motorbikes, scooters, quad bikes and motor cars.

This Order came into force on 1st April 2021 and shall remain in force for a period of three years, from that date. HBC may extend, vary, or discharge it before the expiry of the Order.

Another PSPO is currently in place covering the control of dogs in relation to:

- Dog fouling and dog walkers carrying the means to pick up their dog's mess.
- Dogs must be on a lead where signposted.
- Dogs must not enter the children's play area.
- Dog walkers cannot take more than four dogs at a time to the park.

Site visits by HBC Enforcement Officers are made on request, should it be made apparent that the above are regularly being ignored, however there are a good number of dog waste bins provided on site and the majority of users respect the space.

### Byelaws

There are a number of byelaws made by HBC in effect at the site. These are in relation to the following:

- Entry outside of public opening times;
- MPV's and rights of way;
- Cycling;
- Overnight vehicle parking;
- Horse riding;
- Climbing of walls, fences, trees, barriers or railings;  
Removal or displacement of barriers, railings, posts, seats, or any structure/ornament;
- Erection of posts, and;
- Camping.

A full breakdown of the byelaws in place at the park can be made available on request.



# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## 3.4 Personal and Park Security

### Maintenance Techniques and Design Out Crime

For future developments and installations within the site, designing out crime principles must be considered. The aim of this is to reduce the vulnerability of both people and property to crime and antisocial behaviour by removing opportunities within the site through specific design techniques.

Burn Valley Gardens has suffered from vandalism and antisocial behaviour on multiple occasions including arson, graffiti and theft. When providing new amenities to the site, considerations are made in terms of the materials used and the location identified for installation. Fire retardant materials such as low scrap value metal or robinia wood are preferred as these have withstood theft and arson attempts at other sites. This helps to extend the longevity of new park assets, while reducing future maintenance costs related to the removal or replacement of amenities.

In addition to this, horticultural maintenance techniques help to control areas where antisocial behaviour is prevalent. Within Burn Valley Gardens there is a small area close to the natural play equipment where the positioning of trees and shrubs have resulted in an enclosed space often used for groups gathering. Drug and alcohol related litter is often left within this space. In order to reduce unwanted behaviours, staff and volunteers have used maintenance techniques to

manipulate the growth of surrounding trees and shrubs to improve sightlines in to this space. This increases the amount of natural surveillance, thus reducing the groups' ability to shield from other park users.

### Protect Duty

In preparation for the Protect Legislative Duty, HBC has formed part of a network across the north east that has launched the North East Pilot. This includes 33 local authorities and 7 police forces, and aims to build capability for security considerations and mitigations. The Pilot focuses on Publicly Accessible Locations (PALs), including town parks. The formation of a PAL group involving public and private sector partners uses a joined-up approach to identify risks and reduce vulnerabilities. Burn Valley Gardens was chosen for a site assessment, forming part of the Pilot.

### Park Staff

The site is regularly maintained with 2 members of staff permanently placed and a further 14 staff forming a core workforce across all parks and open spaces. Parks staff participate in a varied training programme to ensure up to date skills and knowledge, in order to maintain the site and provide support to those who need it. This has included counter terrorism training for open spaces and first aid training.

### Park Security

For public safety, there is CCTV camera coverage of the site. Regular meetings regarding antisocial behaviour are held to update the police and partner organisations of any issues, including vandalism.



# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## **Parks provide an inclusive and safe space, focused on health and wellbeing**

- Develop walking routes and interactive trails between green spaces, to encourage active choices for all ages and abilities.
- Outreach workers to engage with groups exhibiting continued antisocial behaviour in order to reduce damage to park assets and to encourage a safer, more welcoming atmosphere.
- Reduce opportunity for trespassing and antisocial behaviour in current problem areas and future developments, through consideration of extra security measures, design techniques and natural surveillance.

### **3.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### Site Objectives

- Continue with targeted horticultural maintenance to improve sightlines to areas where antisocial behaviour is prevalent
- Encourage walking routes between Hartlepool's green spaces by providing resources to clearly map out available routes, such as trails and digital information
- Create rentable pitch for refreshments offer at the park such as a coffee van
- Provide varied play area offer with combination of traditional equipment and natural play area
- Consider further designing out crime techniques and principles for future park developments

# 4

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# Maintenance and Cleanliness

- 4.1 LITTER AND WASTE MANAGEMENT
- 4.2 FACILITIES, BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
- 4.3 EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE
- 4.4 HORTICULTURAL MAINTENANCE
- 4.5 ARBORICULTURAL MAINTENANCE
- 4.6 MONITORING
- 4.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## 4.1 Litter and Waste Management

Waste bins are situated throughout the park and are emptied weekly, with a site-wide litter pick taking place five days a week. Excess litter found is removed on a reactionary basis. Regular litter picks are also organised by volunteering groups and the local community, on a reactive and more casual basis.

## 4.2 Facilities, Buildings and Infrastructure

Buildings on site include the bowling green pavilions and a storage compound. Access to the compound is restricted to HBC staff, and access to the bowling green is restricted to HBC and members of the District Bowling Association. Building maintenance on the site is the responsibility of HBC as well as the District Bowling Association for the bowling pavilions.

Other park infrastructure such as footpaths, roads inside the site boundary, gates and signage are the responsibility of multiple services within HBC. This includes Highways, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance. Regular park inspections record issues such as graffiti, potholes, broken fencing or railings, and building issues, with the appropriate teams then notified to take action. The severity of the issue will determine the timescale in which it is dealt with. If the issue poses an immediate risk to park users then teams will be called out to deal with the issue as soon as possible (section 4.6).

The culvert positioned at the York road entrance of Burn Valley Gardens is frequently cleared by the Highways team at HBC. Waste and debris that is present in the beck flows downstream, causing a blockage at the culvert which then leads to flooding. Waste removal is funded by the Environment Agency in order to prevent flood risk. Waste is dredged from the beck and left for a short time in the green waste deposit area, next to the culvert. This enables any wildlife collected within the debris may return to the beck before waste is removed from site.

## 4.3 Equipment Maintenance

### Tools and Vehicles

Park maintenance equipment used by HBC staff is maintained in line with relevant Health & Safety policies and legislation. Where required, staff undergo training and certification to operate equipment or machinery and are issued with PPE for use. Equipment is serviced on an annual basis by HBC Stores with records kept. Vehicles are kept in a central hub where they are serviced and maintained to standard. Regular checks are undertaken by drivers with a standard check taking place before the use of each vehicle. Any issues flagged during this check or during use of the vehicle are immediately passed to Fleet Services, who are responsible for resolving vehicle issues.

### Volunteers

Volunteering groups have access to hand tools for basic park maintenance. Trained and certified individuals may also use power tools under the supervision of the Parks and Open Spaces team. Further details are available in the Parks and Open Spaces Community Engagement and Volunteering Strategy that can be made available upon request. For all volunteering groups who wish to operate within the site, supervised or unsupervised, there is an Operating Agreement in place covering all health and safety information. This agreement must be signed by both parties (volunteer group & HBC) before an activity is able to take place.

### Play Equipment

Play equipment on site is inspected multiple times a week and a full operational inspection is undertaken on a monthly basis. Inspections are completed in house by an RPII Operational Inspector. In addition to regular in house checks, an annual inspection is completed by an independent RPII Annual Inspector. This ensures the equipment is fit for use, adheres to all relevant legislation, and meets appropriate safety regulations.

# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## 4.4 Horticultural Maintenance

Maintenance of natural features including shrubs, planting and lawns is overseen by the Horticultural Operations Officer, and consists of:

- Maintenance of grassed areas within the park, carried out bi-weekly during the growing season (March to November).
- Weed control within the shrub beds and hard standing areas using approved herbicides, as and when required, during the growing season.
- Litter picking of shrub bed areas within the park, as and when required, throughout the year.
- Removal of litter, fly tipping and debris from the lake when deemed necessary.
- Planting bulbs, bedding plants and perennials during the planting season.

A full breakdown of the yearly horticultural maintenance schedules can be found in appendix E.

## 4.5 Arboricultural Maintenance

The parks trees are visually inspected by on-site staff on a regular basis. Works are carried out during the winter period of November to March, by qualified internal Arborists under the direction of the Horticultural Operations Officer, in liaison with the Arboricultural

Officer. A reactive call out service is provided outside of the core working months in the case of fallen trees or dangers that may be present to users of the park.

Trees situated adjacent to pathways, playgrounds and seating areas are within high usage zones, where it is more likely that park users are present in these areas. Sections of wider open spaces are considered lower usage zones, due to the frequency in which these spaces are used in comparison to the more congested areas listed above. Trees located in high usage zones are therefore prioritised for maintenance works when required, including pruning and felling of trees.

In some cases, it is possible and most favourable to remove hazardous limbs/branches in order to make the tree safe rather than felling the whole tree. This is both the more environmentally favourable and lower cost option. Larger and older trees have sequestered the most carbon from the atmosphere and are therefore valuable park assets, in terms of climate sustainability. Additionally, standing dead wood can provide excellent habitats for invertebrates and other wildlife. Further information about procedures for managing the tree canopy including tree pests and diseases can be found in section 5.6.



# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## 4.6 Monitoring

### Park Inspections

In addition to the maintenance schedules already in place for Burn Valley Gardens, there are regular checks and inspections taking place to keep on top of any arising issues.

Park inspections are completed regularly by the Parks and Open Spaces team as well as informal checks by on-site staff, with an in-depth site audit taking place on a quarterly basis. Park audits include a review of all the parks features and facilities, including (but not limited to) pathways, buildings and infrastructure, tree health, bodies of water, graffiti, litter and sports facilities. A full breakdown of features reviewed can be provided on request. During an audit, features are logged as compliant, monitoring or non-compliant, in order to provide an overall park performance score. Non-compliant features are reported via an online portal service following each audit, directing the issue to the relevant team for action. A flowchart can be viewed in appendix F, detailing the process for reporting on any issues related to the park.

Reports are completed following each inspection with records kept including date, a list of the features, overall score and associated photographs of issues. Reports are reviewed throughout the year to identify any trends or continuously non-compliant features that may require further intervention.

### Online Portal

The online portal service is provided by HBC and is used both internally, and available to the public. The portal allows users to submit any issues, comments, or service requests (such as cleansing) and is sent directly to the relevant service within HBC. Internal access to the portal is used to effectively manage any arising issues across the town. The service is used for a wide range of issues across Hartlepool, and park specific forms should be submitted through the Parks and Recreational Areas Portal.

There are a number of teams involved in the resolution of park related issues, and in some extreme instances it may be necessary to involve external organisations for assistance or advice. Key teams are as follows:

- **Parks and Open Spaces**—responsible for the overall management and development of the site.
- **Quality and Safety Officer**—playgrounds, safety of equipment and water safety.
- **Horticulture**—horticultural maintenance across the borough, including tree works and a team of arborists.
- **Arboricultural Officer**—monitoring of tree health, development of tree strategy.
- **Street Cleansing/Grounds Maintenance**—general maintenance of park and wider areas, litter and waste management.
- **Highways Operations**—fixing path network. Building Maintenance: responsible for resolving issues with buildings and infrastructure.
- **Public Protection**—public and animal health.
- **Conservation** (within Heritage and Countryside)—heritage assets and features.
- **Volunteering Groups**—help with upkeep of any installations within the park they have developed, along with regular maintenance of the park.
- **Natural England**—event of an emergency related to their works.
- **Environment Agency**—as above.
- **Defra**—advice and action on animal health.

# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## **Parks are kept to a high standard, through impactful maintenance and cleansing routines**

- Conduct regular site audits to monitor the site, ensuring issues are resolved in a timely manner and contributing to the longevity of assets.
- In future developments, prioritise self-maintaining or low maintenance schemes.

## **4.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Increase park maintenance activities through mobilisation of volunteering groups.
- Conduct regular park inspections to ensure issues are dealt with in a timely manner.

# 5

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# Environmental Management

**5.1 WASTE MINIMISATION**

**5.2 CHEMICAL USE**

**5.3 PEAT USE**

**5.4 MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

**5.5 CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION**

**5.6 BIOSECURITY**

**5.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Environmental Management

## 5.1 Waste Minimisation

The park is supplied with ample waste bins (including dog waste) to encourage park users to dispose of waste responsibly. Where possible, natural waste from park maintenance is shredded on site and used as mulch. Larger pieces of timber from tree works are removed by an external company and repurposed. Excess materials to the needs of the park, and any other green waste, is removed to the council's transfer station for recycling.

## 5.2 Chemical Use

Pesticide use has been reduced to a minimum within Burn Valley Gardens, where possible. Glyphosate is present in the Round-Up 360 product used as weed control on a regular basis within shrub beds, around street furniture and along grass verges. Records are kept for the total amount of glyphosate used across the borough. A small amount of fungicide is also used to control turf-borne disease on the bowling green. An economically and environmentally sustainable alternative has not yet been identified.

Due to the wilder nature of the park, the site has been chosen as a pilot for trialling herbicide free zones, in order to eventually phase out the use of herbicides across the site and wider borough. Specific zones have been identified to eradicate the use of herbicide, allowing grass verges to grow. Wildflower seeds will be planted

during the planting season to create scenic areas throughout the park, demonstrating the benefits of allowing growth.

## 5.3 Peat Use

There is currently no peat used within the site.

## 5.4 Managing Environmental Impact

There are a number of points to consider when addressing the environmental impact of a site – both positive and negative. Site buildings such as the bowling pavilion building have an environmental impact on the park through the use of electricity, water and gas, which are required for the use of the facilities. Park maintenance has an environmental impact through its use of vehicles, power tools and equipment, herbicides, and waste disposal methods. These impacts are mitigated by keeping public vehicles out of the park beyond the parking spaces, using hand tools instead of power tools where possible, minimising herbicide use and using composting bins for organic waste disposal instead of landfill sites.

As well as the potential negative impacts of activities and buildings within the site, the park as a green space can have a number of positive environmental impacts extending beyond the boundaries of the site. Green spaces can serve as nature reserves within an urban

setting, they act as 'lungs' for towns through green infrastructure such as tree cover, contributing toward improved air quality and natural carbon sequestration.

Not only must we consider the impact of the site on the wider environment, but also the impacts of a changing environment on the site. When managing green spaces it is important to consider how different interventions can be utilised in order to adapt to a changing climate, while mitigating the impacts where possible. Possible environmental impacts to consider include rising temperatures, which may lead to increased heat stress in wildlife, drought periods which may affect water availability, and changes in seasonal growth of plants. The following section will discuss a number of climate change adaptation strategies relevant to Burn Valley Gardens.

## 5.5 Climate Change Adaptation

A changing climate can pose many risks to a green space site, including increased risk of flooding, pressure on drainage systems, habitat and species loss, threats from extreme weather events such as storms or droughts, as well as changing temperatures and the impact that will have on native flora and fauna. Green spaces such as Burn Valley Gardens provide a crucial opportunity to adapt, mitigate and reduce the impacts of climate change, through numerous interventions and strategies.

# Environmental Management

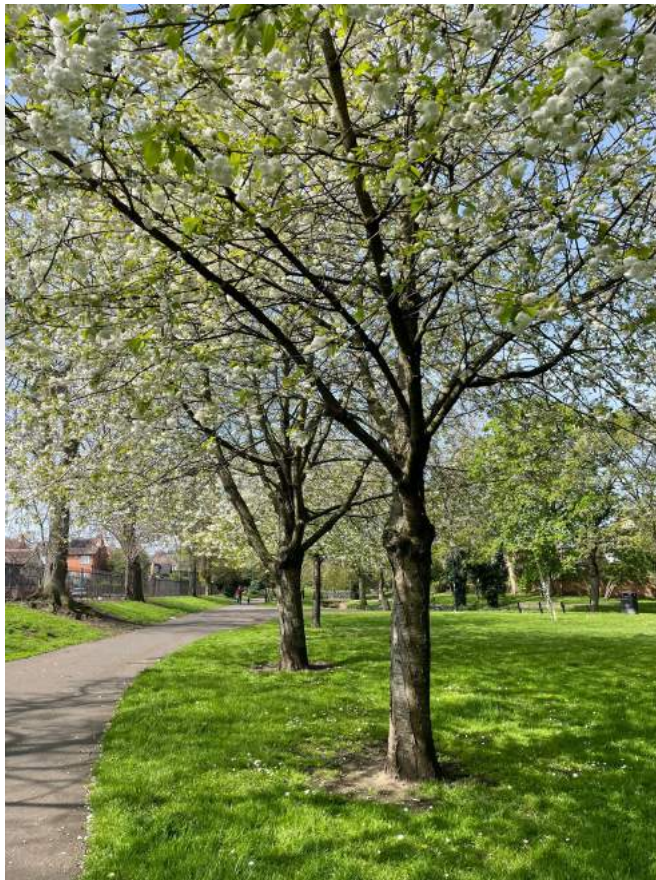
## Tree Cover

The current climate is altering how both native and non-native trees in the UK are now reacting. Hotter summers and milder winters can alter the phenology of trees, meaning that a different approach to planting may be required. The local environment must be carefully considered when selecting and implementing a diverse and lasting range of species. While prioritising native species is beneficial for promotion biodiversity, mitigating the risks of invasive non-native species (INNS) and diseases, and supporting the local ecosystem, it is also important to recognise the value of incorporating non-native species. Non-native tree species can provide additional ecological functions and contribute to the adaptability of green spaces in the face of a changing climate. Ensuring each species will be carefully matched to an ideal planting location will be essential, taking into account the longevity and suitability of the site.

Retention and expansion of the current tree canopy will help to combat extreme heat, by providing more shade for a direct cooling effect. Tree establishment will focus more on ensuring that existing and new planting schemes are able to establish and flourish within their environment, in turn giving a higher percentage yield of successful planting whilst reducing the need and effects of having to replant failed saplings.

Unlocking funding and resource to increase planting efforts across the borough and within the town's parks is

a priority going forward, and current regional schemes such as Trees on Tees and the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund will be utilised to assist with this. More information can be made on request.



## Droughts and Flooding

Extended periods of drought are being experienced more frequently, having a serious impact on green spaces. Droughts and high temperatures can kill off or weaken plant life, as well as reducing the permeability of the grounds surface layer. Less rainfall is able to be absorbed and therefore we see an increase in surface run-off and flash flooding events. Preparing the ground and plant life for extreme weather events such as drought or flooding is one way to address this. Creating changes to areas of open space through installing different schemes such as wetland conservation areas, dipping ponds and rain gardens will help to control excess water in flooding instances, and in drought periods help with water retention. Future planting schemes must also consider how well certain species can survive in these extreme weather events.

Extensive work has previously been undertaken to divert the Burn Valley Beck culvert, creating natural ponding areas thus encouraging wildlife and alleviating flood risk with drainage systems being installed. Regular clearing of debris build up from the culvert is also aimed at alleviating flood risk, allowing the beck to continuously flow. Further improvement of drainage systems will help to alleviate flooding and storm water management during extreme weather events which will become more frequent as a result of climate change. Burn Valley Beck water levels are monitored and can be viewed via the Government Flooding Service.

# Environmental Management

## 5.6 Biosecurity

Biosecurity is the prevention of the introduction and spread of harmful organisms (Forestry Commission). These include non-native pests such as insects, and disease causing organisms (pathogens) such as some bacteria and fungi. Pests and diseases can be introduced through a number of ways, via:

- Live plants and trees;
- Timber and wood packaging;
- Dirty tools, kit, machinery and vehicles;
- Organic matter such as soil, and;
- Natural methods such as water and wind.

### Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Although not present in Burn Valley Gardens, three species in particular pose a threat within the parks and open spaces in Hartlepool and across the wider Tees Valley. These are Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam, and are all classed as amber-list species. In line with the North East INNS Strategy Action Plan (2020), the aim for amber-list species is to reduce their impact through controlled measures, as they are already widespread within the region and so eradication is therefore not feasible.

### Control Measures

There are a number of control measures in place for HBC staff and teams to manage the spread of any INNS. These include:

- Staff are informally trained to identify INNS.
- Kit, clothing, boots, equipment and tools cleaned as part of routine maintenance before and after use, to prevent spread of seeds.
- Planting stock is sourced responsibly, using British grown plants where possible, to reduce the risk of accidental introduction of non-native pests and diseases.
- Accurate and up to date records are kept of all stock, in case an outbreak occurs.
- Regular inspections of all tree stock are completed to informally check for signs of ill health.

Any recordings of INNS by HBC staff are shared with the Environmental Records Information Centre (ERIC) North East, that works with a range of users to collate environmental data for nature conservation. Resources such as ERIC and iRecord (figure 3) are accessible to members of the public, allowing a wider range of people to be involved in reporting sightings of INNS or other threats. Resources are shared with volunteering and community groups, through signage on site, and available on the Parks and Open Spaces webpage.



Figure 3: ERIC North East method of reporting.

# Environmental Management

## Tree Pests and Diseases

Since the early 2000's, there has been a significant increase of tree pests and diseases that have been introduced into the UK due to a number of different factors including increasing global trade, evolution/cross breeding, climate change, air pollution and poor soil quality. A decrease in woodland management has also allowed pests and diseases to go unnoticed for a longer period. It is important to educate teams to be able to spot any signs of poor plant health.

According to the UK Plant Health Risk Register, there are 1,414 pests and diseases posing a potential risk to the UK.



## Ash Dieback

In particular Ash Dieback has been identified as a threat to trees, not only in Hartlepool but on a national scale. Multiple cases of Ash Dieback have been spotted within the town's parks. On-site staff have been informally trained to identify the signs and symptoms of Ash Dieback in order to report and monitor trees suspected to be infected with the disease. A borough-wide tree health survey is planned in order to effectively manage the situation before it worsens. As there is minimal knowledge surrounding the disease and its implications, the process currently stands to mark trees requiring immediate attention or ongoing surveillance. Tree works will then take place during the winter period or via the reactive call-out service, if required outside of winter maintenance.

Figure 4 shows examples of ash trees infected with different levels of Ash Dieback, categorised by four different classes according to the severity of the disease. Ash health class 4 is the worst level of Ash Dieback infection, whereby the majority of the tree has been infected with the disease and only 25-0% of the tree crown remains. Signs of possible Ash Dieback include spots on the leaves, wilted leaves, branches losing leaves and 'dying back', and dark patches (lesions) on the branches and/or trunk.

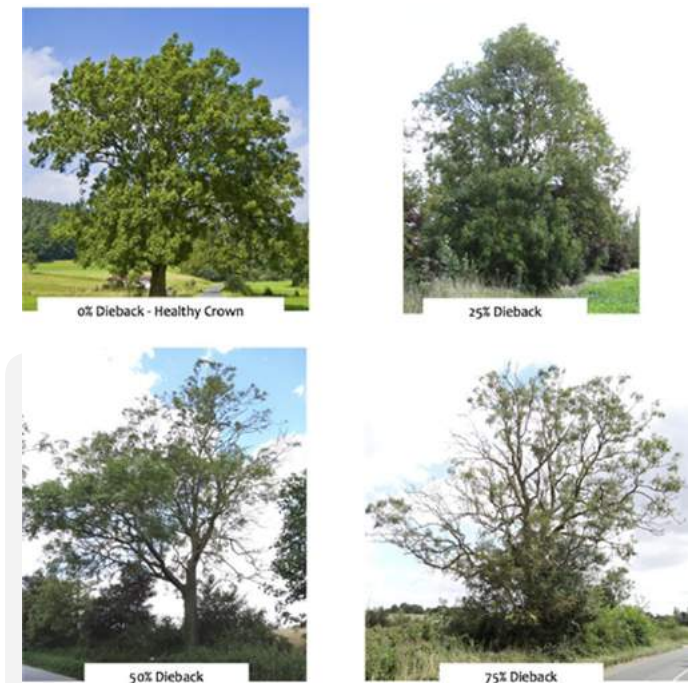


Figure 4: Ash Tree Health, Assessing the severity of ash trees suffering with Ash Dieback

- Ash Health Class 1: 100-75% of crown remains
- Ash Health Class 2: 75-50% of crown remains
- Ash Health Class 3: 50-25% of crown remains
- Ash Health Class 4: 25-0% of crown remains

# Environmental Management

## **Park management ensures nature is considered and not compromised, protecting and futureproofing the parks natural assets against an uncertain climate**

- Adopt best practice management methods including alternatives to pesticide use and a circular economy for natural waste.
- Investigate nature-based solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change, such as flood alleviation schemes and restoration of natural assets and habitats, to protect residential areas for the benefit of the community and future generations.

## **5.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Phase out herbicide use across the parks and open spaces, with initial trial zones in Burn Valley Gardens
- Use natural waste from tree works and other horticultural maintenance for reuse, such as mulch, logs and forage
- Protect and enhance the current tree cover, with borough-wide tree survey to monitor species and health

# 6

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# Biodiversity and Landscape

- 6.1 NATURAL FEATURES, WILD FLORA AND FAUNA
- 6.2 LANDSCAPE AND DESIGNED FEATURES
- 6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY
- 6.4 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN
- 6.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Biodiversity and Landscape

## 6.1 Natural Features, Wild Flora and Fauna

Burn Valley Gardens forms an integral part of the Burn Valley Green Wedge wildlife corridor, extending from central Hartlepool out towards Summerhill Country Park and the wider countryside to the west.

The park includes a range of important wildlife habitats including the central watercourse, Burn Valley Beck, a wetland conservation area with pond, and mature trees connecting to an area of developing woodland to the west known as Family Wood. These habitats provide an important resource for wildlife, and as a consequence the park supports a population of bats, woodland birds, and common toad.

### Wildlife

Burn Valley Gardens supports a variety of bird life throughout the park. Previous sightings have included blackbird, woodpigeon, house sparrow, collared dove, blue tit, great tit, magpie, long tailed tit and carrion crow. Further ecological surveys are required to gain a better understanding of the bird population supported at Burn Valley Gardens.

### Tree Cover and Planted Areas

Throughout the park are a number of planting initiatives including trees and wildflowers, as well as a variety of

bulbs and other planted areas.

Tree species in Burn Valley Gardens include Ash, Sycamore, Beech, Birch, Holly, Elm, Maple and Oak. A full list of the tree species present within the site can be found in appendix G. As part of the Levelling Up Parks Fund granted to the site in 2022/23, a variety of trees were planted to replace some of the ageing canopy deemed dangerous within the site. Part of this included creating a small orchard with pear (*Pyrus communis*) and apple (*Malus Butterball*) trees. **Two of the planted trees were dedicated to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 and the King Charles' Coronation in 2023.**

Annual wildflower meadows are scattered throughout the site. These areas support the parks population of pollinating insects including bees and butterflies, through the provision of forage. Also supported is a variety of invertebrates. The meadows bloom with colour during



the summer months, adding another interesting feature for park visitors. Sowing of wildflower seeds is completed during late spring, with flowers expected to appear during the summer. The meadows require minimal maintenance once established, including one cut and re-sow (where required) toward the end of summer.



# Biodiversity and Landscape

## Wetland Conservation Area

The wetland area was created by the Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces Charity, in order to assist with drainage in the park. Its aim is to better manage excess surface water flooding as well as retain water during drier periods. It supports a variety of wildlife which is signposted to via educational Nature Watch signs located within the wetland area, to inform visitors on the species visible here. The signage includes information and diagrams of pond skaters, pondweed, caddisfly and common toad.



## 6.2 Landscape and Designed Features

### Lower Burn Valley Gardens

The lower section of the park is a smaller site, with a traditional playground and bowling green. This area is more in keeping with the traditional town parks, due to its clear landscaped sections with neat lawn edges along the paths, benches positioned close to pathways and a traditional playground. The playground consists of traditional play equipment and the site is bordered with railings. Aside from the playground and bowling green, the other focus of this section is the linear pathway that follows the direction of the beck.



### Upper Burn Valley Gardens

This area has a more rural feel to it with larger areas of open space, increased tree coverage and wilder sections of planting. At the centre of the upper section is a terraced area with sensory maze, natural play area and rockery. This provides a central focal point to the park. Within the upper section is also the wetland conservation area, with a pond dipping boardwalk and associated wildlife identification signage.

Due to the 'wilder' nature of this section, it has provided a clear opportunity to trial herbicide free zones, in which there is a spraying ban. Grass verges, tree bases and other areas are allowed to grow, beneficial for wildlife and biodiversity.



# Biodiversity and Landscape

## Burn Valley Beck

Burn Valley Beck runs west to east through the park and is mostly bound by harsh concrete banking that controls the channel. Previous works were completed in partnership with the Environment Agency to restore and re-naturalise a section of the beck. Within this section, the artificial banksides have been removed to create gently sloping banks vegetated with riparian plants. The re-naturalised section has been inhabited by a variety of wildlife including fish and bats using the river for forage.

Gentle sloping banks with the appropriate vegetation planted along the sides can help to reduce the risk of flash flooding events. Re-naturalisation of further sections of the beck is a priority for the park, however external funding would be required to commence any project works.



## 6.3 Environmental Conservation Strategy

If relevant funding can be unlocked, there is clear opportunity to re-naturalise further sections of Burn Valley Beck as discussed previously. This will result in a more natural river, better prepared for environmental changes that may pose an increased risk of flooding events. The below photographs show the contrast between the reinforced beck edges and the re-naturalised beck section, with increased vegetation.

Additionally, the eventual phase-out of herbicides will benefit the park in terms of biodiversity and water quality. Currently herbicides sprayed throughout the park and in close proximity to the beck will find their way into the watercourse, affecting the quality of the water that flows through.



## 6.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is an important concept for town parks. It is a measure of how much biodiversity a park has lost, and how much it has gained. The overall goal for any town park is to achieve a net gain in biodiversity. This can be achieved by planting native plants – which are more resistant to pests and diseases than non-native plants – and by taking care of the existing plants within the parks.

In order to monitor biodiversity within the park, plans are in place to conduct baseline ecological surveys with volunteers. Repeat surveys will take place seasonally and/or annually, dependent on capacity. This will continually evaluate and review the impacts of management practices on biodiversity, in response to climate change and anthropogenic impacts.



# Biodiversity and Landscape

## **Parks provide a mosaic of biodiverse habitats that supports a wide range of wildlife**

- Ensure biodiversity net gain and carbon sequestration is considered in future developments.
- Retain a diverse tree canopy including replacement of felled trees and strategic tree planting, as well as monitoring tree health.
- Provide a variety of suitable habitats for wildlife, allowing nature to thrive.

## **6.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Increase planting for biodiversity and wildlife
- Make informed choices for future planting schemes, with species best suited to ever changing climate conditions
- Re-naturalise further sections of Burn Valley Beck to improve water quality, flood resistance and habitat for wildlife

# 7

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# Heritage and Conservation

- 7.1 HISTORY OF BURN VALLEY GARDENS
- 7.2 HERITAGE FEATURES
- 7.3 HERITAGE CONSERVATION STRATEGY
- 7.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Heritage and Conservation

## 7.1 History of Burn Valley Gardens

Opened in 1898, Burn Valley Gardens was the second park to open in Hartlepool, following Ward Jackson Park. The site was originally part of land purchased from the Blakelock Trustees, to satisfy the need for allotment provision. Part of this land was then developed into a small park. Since its opening, further pieces of land have been added to the park through donation, land exchange and purchases, to form the park that is seen today. In the late 1920s, Claremont Ornamental Garden was created in the park by a team of unemployed workmen. The garden was officially opened in May 1935.

Over the years, the park has looked different to what is seen today. Upper Burn Valley Gardens was home to a Peter Pan pond and statue, with fairy steps placed throughout the rockery area. The pond has since been filled in and is now the site of a natural play area with sensory maze. The park also featured a number of manicured flower beds and planted areas.

## 7.2 Heritage Features

Burn Valley Gardens has been home to a variety of features over the years. Although some of these have been lost, the park has retained some features and more recent additions add to the variety.

### Peter Pan and Tinkerbell Statue

In the past, a Peter Pan statue sat in the centre of an ornamental pond known locally as the Peter Pan pond. This statue was gifted to the park in 1937 by the Guides and Brownies to celebrate the coronation of King George VI. In 1961 the statue was replaced from donations and fundraising after it had been vandalised, but was sadly further damaged in 1962 and eventually removed. In 2017, the Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces volunteering group raised the funds via the Tesco Bags of Help scheme to commission a new Peter Pan and Tinkerbell wooden sculpture for the park, which now sits close to where the fairy steps used to be in Upper Burn Valley Gardens.



The sculpture was carved by Tom Craggs.

There is opportunity to install further features to the park inspired by the Peter Pan statue, with a storybook theme related to fairy-tales. This could include a 'fairy doors' trail which has previously been installed to the park but suffered a number of vandalism attempts resulting in removal. A different approach to design and installation will be required for success.



Photo credit for Peter Pan Pond: <https://www.hhtandn.org/relatedimages/11246/a-big-change-1960s-to-2016-1>

# Heritage and Conservation



## Carved Wooden Sculptures

In addition to the Peter Pan and Fairy statue, there are a small number of other carved wooden statues located by the eastern entrance to Upper Burn Valley Gardens.

There is an opportunity within the site to install more of these carved statues, dotted throughout the park forming a trail to find each installation.



## Bespoke Metal Gates and Sculpture

At the York Road entrance to the park there is a set of bespoke metal gates welcoming visitors in to the park. Completed by the same artist are a number of other sculptures situated throughout the park, such as shown in the above image.

Similar to the wooden carved sculptures, these are all relatively recent additions to the park in terms of the parks age. These will become heritage assets for future generations and so it is important to look after these elements now, to ensure they are still there in years to come.

## 7.3 Heritage Conservation Strategy

Heritage features within Burn Valley Gardens will be maintained and preserved where possible in order to conserve the Victorian heritage of the park.

Newer assets such as the replacement Peter Pan statue and bespoke metal gates will be looked after in order to preserve these pieces for future generations.

There is an opportunity to celebrate the parks history through its features, both old and new.

# Heritage and Conservation

**Historical park features are preserved and the site heritage is elaborated, with educational resources readily available for visitors**

- Restore park features and heritage assets.
- Research the history of each site for future heritage based educational resources, celebration events, and signage.
- Ensure recent park additions are responsibly looked after, as they will become future generations' heritage features.

## 7.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Site Objectives

- Ensure park features, old and new, are carefully looked after and well respected to preserve them for future generations of park visitors.
- Celebrate the parks history through educational resources such as QR code trails.
- Use the parks heritage features to creatively inspire new features.

# 8

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# Community Engagement

- 8.1 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
- 8.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OWNERSHIP
- 8.3 VOLUNTEERING IN BURN VALLEY GARDENS
- 8.4 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP
- 8.5 EVENTS
- 8.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Community Engagement

## 8.1 Community Consultation

The main way in which public consultations are held is via the online platform, Your Say, Our Future. This tool is public facing and allows people to comment on a variety of topics, making their views known and ultimately helping to shape decision making and the future of the site. As discussed in section 1.5 (Road Map), the platform has been used to conduct an initial baseline survey of the parks to gather basic information about public perception of the town's parks and features. The platform will continue to be used for future surveys and consultations.

There is also the opportunity to host drop-in sessions, which would allow park users to chat directly with the Parks and Open Spaces team at HBC as well as on site parks staff. This enables visitors to share their views in an informal setting, rather than a structured and directed survey response. In addition to informal drop-in sessions for the public, the creation of formal stakeholder and interest groups would also benefit the future planning of priorities for the site. This would ensure a variety of voices are heard and represented, providing HBC with a deeper insight. A group could consist of representatives from volunteering groups, residents associations, a youth spokesperson and any other interested parties. Consultation with the community, through surveys, drop-in sessions or formal group consultations, are crucial in order to involve a wider range of voices in the development and future management of the parks.

## 8.2 Community Engagement and Ownership

Ongoing pressures on budgets and capacity has impacted park maintenance and development. The input from active volunteering groups and individuals across the community is invaluable to the continued success of the parks and open spaces. Continuous engagement with local community groups and volunteers, as well as continuing the provision of opportunities to get involved with activities in the park, improves the sense of community ownership of the park. There are plenty of opportunities available within Burn Valley Gardens and across the other parks and open spaces for volunteers to get involved at any level. A seasonal calendar of volunteering opportunities can be viewed within appendix H.

## 8.3 Volunteering in Burn Valley Gardens

### Volunteering Strategy

To improve the offer for future volunteers, a volunteering strategy has been developed in order to support existing volunteer groups, whilst opening the offer to a wider group of potential volunteers, including corporate partnerships (see section 8.4). The strategy aims to incorporate the concept of 'micro-volunteering', which allows individuals to volunteer their time on their terms, for as little or long as they are able to. This type of volunteering offer does not require a specific level of

commitment and can suit different groups and individuals interested in getting involved, who may not be able to commit the time required by established groups. All volunteering contribution, whether big or small, has a positive impact and helps with the upkeep of green spaces. By widening the offer to incorporate casual and micro-volunteering, it aims to break down some of the barriers that can stop willing people from getting involved.

As well as activities such as weeding, litter picks and other physical works, volunteers can assist with the management of a site simply by paying attention to their surroundings. For example, dog walkers, families and other general park visitors can conduct wildlife surveys, check tree health and look for invasive species whilst going about their daily activities. With the correct knowledge and the tools to report findings, anyone can get involved with these types of activities. Information on how to get involved can be shared with the public via physical signage throughout the park, online, or through volunteer training days for those with more time to give.

# Community Engagement

## Volunteering Groups



The Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces group are a registered charity, who undertake a variety of works that maintain green spaces across Hartlepool, as well as raising funds for additional features to the site. Using the Tesco Bags for Help scheme, the group successfully raised the funding to commission and install the Peter Pan and Fairy statue into the park. The group are also responsible for the creation and upkeep of the wetland conservation area and incorporated wildlife identification signage. Supported by the Parks and Open Spaces team at HBC, the group meet once a week at sites

across Hartlepool to contribute to the maintenance and upkeep. This includes activities such as weeding, litter picking, repairs to boardwalks and features, horticultural maintenance and planting.

The Big Town Tidy Up are another established group operating across Hartlepool, who provide an invaluable contribution to keeping the town free of litter. They are supported by the Grounds Maintenance team at HBC who assist with the removal of bags of litter when required. The group conduct organised events as well as supporting individuals or smaller groups with their own litter picks. This is done on a more casual basis and run via an active Facebook page, which sees a wide variety of the town's residents involved. The group also work with a local CIC and charity, HartlePower, who help to organise the responsible recycling of aluminium cans. This helps to raise funds for the ongoing activities of the group.

There is currently no dedicated *Friends of Burn Valley Gardens* group for the park, however the other volunteering groups mentioned operate across all of the parks and open spaces within Hartlepool. The creation of a Friends of Burn Valley Gardens group would benefit the site, increasing the amount of individuals actively contributing to the maintenance, conservation and enhancement of the site. Friends Of groups act as park advocates, creating a strong sense of community ownership.



# Community Engagement

## 8.4 Working in Partnership

### Corporate Partnerships

The wider volunteering strategy aims to involve corporate partners in volunteering activities. This can be mutually beneficial to the council and supporting businesses, as it provides valuable contributions to the management of a site and can also contribute to a business's corporate social responsibilities (CSR). In addition to corporate volunteering, there are aims to establish working relationships with businesses in Hartlepool. Involvement and contribution from local business allows projects to expand and have a bigger impact, with additional materials, people and input.

### Community Involvement

There are also opportunities to involve a wider range of groups, through activities such as social prescribing and restorative justice. Working with other organisations will provide valuable opportunities for members of the community who may not otherwise make use of these sites.

## Opportunities for Collaboration

A variety of opportunities for the park have been identified throughout this plan, some of which can only be achieved through collaboration with other businesses, groups and communities. These opportunities include:

- Creation of a mural along the allotment wall, to add colour and interest to the area.
- Create and install 'fairy doors' and other small features in the area that used to be known as the fairy steps.
- Ecological surveys to monitor wildlife and biodiversity net gain.
- Water quality surveys for Burn Valley Beck.
- Physical works to clean up Burn Valley Beck, including litter pick and cleaning out sediment and other natural blockages.
- Creation of further wooden carved sculptures by artists and creators, to form a trail through the park.

## 8.5 Events

The mobile outreach from the community hubs make occasional use of the park in summer for events. Aside from this, there is currently no regular events programme for Burn Valley Gardens.

# Community Engagement

**Partnerships with local businesses, charities, community groups and residents are supported and encouraged throughout the parks and open spaces**

- Ensure active volunteering and community groups are supported in their activities.
- Enable local people to feel pride and establish a sense of ownership, through a number of volunteering and engagement opportunities.

## 8.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Site Objectives

- Establish a Friends of Burn Valley Gardens volunteering group.
- Offer wider volunteering opportunities to corporate partners, social prescribing and restorative justice.
- Engage local community through the development of a dedicated stakeholder group.
- Reach out to local businesses, communities and groups for collaboration opportunities.

# 9

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# Marketing and Communication

**9.1 PARK BRANDING**

**9.2 DIGITAL RESOURCES**

**9.3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

**9.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Marketing and Communication

## 9.1 Park Branding



Figure 5: Parks and Open Spaces logo.

Working with the Marketing and Communications team at HBC, a collection of brand guidelines including a Parks and Open Spaces logo has been developed for the four town parks—Seaton Park, Burn Valley Gardens, Ward Jackson Park and Rossmere Park. The creation of a recognisable park logo (as displayed in figure 5) and associated brand guidelines will be used for all future resources, including signage and online. A signage review is expected to take place when resource and capacity allows, with the creation of new park signage

installed when funding becomes available. The logo comprises of four icons, each representative of a different park. The butterfly represents the sensory planting in Seaton Park, the bird a symbol for Rossmere Park's little tern colony, the tree representative of Burn Valley Gardens and the flower a reference to Ward Jackson Park's formal bedding plants.

## 9.2 Digital Resources

The main channels of communication for information and updates about the park are as follows:

- Hartlepool Borough Council Website
- HBC | Parks and Open Spaces
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Explore Hartlepool | Parks and Countryside
- Active Hartlepool | Parks

### Website

The Parks and Open Spaces webpage has historically been somewhat limited in terms of the information provided, lacking in images, maps, history and updates. This is not reflective of the quality of the town's parks. A

website transformation will take place in 2023 in order to provide a more useful and interesting service for users. New information will reflect the content provided in this management plan, giving users a clear overview of the park and its features. The website will also provide information for those interesting in volunteering, joining an existing Friends group, and getting involved in surveys and research. There will also be opportunity for users to submit queries for things like holding an event in the park.

## 9.3 Communication Strategy

### Social Media

A social media strategy has been developed to ensure regular updates are shared with the public. Updates can include information about ongoing works in the parks, as well as photographs to showcase the parks through the seasons. Posts are shared via HBC social media channels, informing subscribers to what is going on within the parks and encouraging visitors.

### Signage

There is scope to add further information in a variety of formats such as QR codes, walking trail posts, and physical signage. Not all park visitors have access to a digital device and therefore there must also be provision throughout the parks to include these groups.

# Marketing and Communication

**Parks and open spaces updates are communicated across a variety of channels including digital information, physical signage, and in person events**

- Improve communication about park management, including information sharing and consultation processes to enhance user experience.
- Develop a brand identity for Hartlepool's parks and open spaces.

## 9.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Site Objectives

- Update the parks website with relevant information about the site, recent photographs, a site map and other useful resources.
- Ensure information about the park, events and volunteering opportunities are clearly communicated to a wider audience.

# 10

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# Looking Forward

**10.1 INCOME, BUDGETS AND FUNDRAISING**

**10.2 MONITORING AND ASSESSMENTS**

**10.3 PARK PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

**10.4 WIDER PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

**10.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Looking Forward

## 10.1 Income, Budgets and Fundraising

### Funding and Investment

At present, Burn Valley Gardens does not generate income for Hartlepool Borough Council. The main source of income for the park is through pre-allocated budgets within the council, or through external grants and fundraising.

An investment strategy will be developed in order to effectively plan for future maintenance, conservation and developments to the site. This will enable a targeted approach to funding opportunities.

### Levelling Up Parks Fund

The most recent investment to the site has been funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to the sum of £85,000. the funding has been allocated to locations identified as having less than 5% of the LSOA near an accessible green space, ranked in the top 2 deciles on the IMD, and among the 300 most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England. Burn Valley Gardens was identified as the most suitable site to invest the grant funding, due to the above criteria. Additionally, the park has not received much funding in recent years and has been viewed as in decline. The funding will go towards the following:

- Refurbishment and expansion of natural play equipment in Upper Burn Valley Gardens.

- Installation of interactive rubbing plaque and QR code trail throughout the park.
- Installation of sensory maze for play equipment and to benefit biodiversity.
- Climate mitigation by removing hazardous trees and replacing lost canopy with additional heavy standards throughout the site,

Works will commence in June 2023 and be followed by a planned celebration event to showcase the new park features. See section 10.3 for further information.

### Future Budgets

Future investment in Burn Valley Gardens must consider ongoing maintenance costs. Low maintenance and sustainable park assets are preferable, due to limited budgets and capacity. Significant refurbishment or installation of new park assets will require external fundraising.

## 10.2 Monitoring and Assessments

### Park Visitor Surveys

Following the initial baseline survey conducted in 2022, there are plans to repeat the survey to identify any changes in perception, use, and satisfaction of visit. Feedback from members of the public is crucial in

helping to focus on public priorities for the future management and development of the park. With the creation of park management plans, there will be an in-depth consultation via Your Say, Our Future, as well as face to face drop-in sessions to be inclusive of those without access to the digital resource. This will help to ensure that the plans and initiatives proposed are in line with the community's needs and wants for the parks.

### Wildlife Surveys

To ensure further understanding of the variety of wildlife supported at the site, ecological and biodiversity surveys are required. These will be essential in calculating biodiversity net gain, the impact of management practices and other initiatives, and to monitor any other emerging trends.

Volunteers and park visitors will be encouraged to conduct small surveys during their visits, with guides and key information shared via the HBC Parks and Open Spaces website. Formal surveys will be conducted when funding and resource becomes available.

# Looking Forward

## 10.3 Park Plans and Strategies

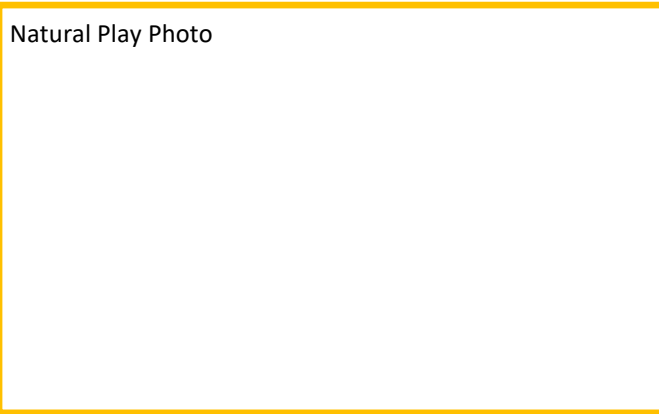
### Natural Play

The natural play area and rockery area in Upper Burn Valley Gardens will be refurbished using funding from the Levelling Up Parks Fund, as discussed. Natural play areas are more open and attractive to a wider age range of children, and smaller elements can be developed from 'waste' materials from tree works. The refurbishment and expansion of the current natural play area situated in Upper Burn Valley Gardens is planned with the addition of a trim trail made from robinia wood. Similar equipment has required little maintenance at other sites, and crucially has survived arson attempts with only minor aesthetic damage and easily fixed. Wooden play equipment is in keeping with the style of the natural play equipment already here. Bonded mulch surfacing will be used as this is known to last and has a natural appearance.



### Nature Trail

As part of the Levelling Up Parks Fund, a nature trail will be developed throughout the site. The trail aims to encourage children and guardians to actively explore the space. It will be educational and provide entertainment in an outdoor environment, benefitting mental and physical wellbeing. A number of oak way marker posts will form the trail, with rubbing plaques attached depicting native animals, trees and plants. They will also include a braille description and can be used to create artwork. The route will begin in the Lower Burn Valley Gardens site near the York Road entrance and will continue out towards Summerhill Country Park. Each way marker post will be engraved with two different logos. One logo will lead trail users on a shorter route within the park, whereas the other logo will lead trail users on a longer route through the park. QR codes will be installed to the posts to create an additional series of trails for mindfulness, education, or heritage. If additional funding is secured in future to



expand the nature trail, way marker posts will be installed to created additional routes in order to promote an active lifestyle.

### Herbicide Free Zone

Herbicide is currently used around many trees, benches and along the lawn edges next to the re-naturalised section of Burn Valley Beck. 'No-spray' trial zones have been proposed in which the use of herbicides will be phased out and grass verges allowed to grow. The photograph displayed in figure 6 shows the proposed area, which stretches from the western border of the park, toward the rockery and play area in Upper Burn Valley Gardens. The area encompasses a number of open spaces, as well as the re-naturalised section of Burn Valley Beck.

Figure 6: Trail 'no-spray' zone location



# Looking Forward

## 10.4 Wider Plans and Strategies

### Connecting Green Spaces

Rather than viewing the parks and open spaces as individual sites that exist in isolation from each other, a joined-up approach has been taken in order to effectively manage the sites as pieces of a larger area.

Part of this will be to look into connecting these sites through wildlife corridors such as grass verges, hedgerows, urban gardens and avenues of trees. These will provide a route of habitats that helps wildlife move around, and will boost biodiversity. Creating connections between the sites will be in line with the National Pollinator Strategy for England.



### Tall Ships Legacy Gardens

As part of the site dressing for the Tall Ships Race 2023 in Hartlepool, a pop-up pallet garden is being created by the Parks and Open Spaces team with input from a variety of businesses who have donated materials and plants, as well as volunteering groups who have assisted with the construction. Individuals across the town have also given their time and expertise to the project, as well as providing plants and trees for the garden.

The key focus of the garden is the reuse of otherwise scrap or wasted materials, such as pallets, encouraging a circular economy. This even includes the plants themselves, as following the event they will be placed within the town's parks as Legacy Gardens.



### Herbicide Free Zones

As discussed, Burn Valley Gardens is currently being tested as a pilot for 'no-spray' zone. Grass verges, tree bases and around furniture have been left to grow as a trial to test capability to eradicate the use of herbicides entirely across the parks. Although herbicides are an effective way to maintain the park for aesthetic purposes and weed removal, there are a number of negative effects associated with the use of them. This includes potential negative health effects, negative effect on the environment through destruction of wildlife habitats, soil and water pollution, and also contributing to 'herbicide resistance' whereby weeds have the ability to adapt and resist chemical use. Pilot no-spray zones and accompanying research into alternatives will eventually lead to the eradication of chemicals across all of the town's parks and open spaces, where possible.



# Looking Forward

## **Parks are futureproofed against uncertain economic and environmental scenarios**

- Ensure there is an appropriate monitoring process in place to evaluate the performance of management methods and developments.
- Use plans to prioritise future funding and resources, as and when they become available.

## **10.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Identify external funding opportunities to enable further developments to the site.
- Conduct repeat of baseline survey to establish any changes in public perception and site use.
- Conduct wildlife and biodiversity studies with increased planting efforts.

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# Appendices

- A    PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**
- B    YOUR SAY, OUR FUTURE CONSULTATION**
- C    ACTION LOG**
- D    RISK ASSESSMENTS**
- E    HORTICULTURAL CALENDAR**
- F    FLOWCHART OF ACTIONS**
- G    FLORA AND FAUNA**
- H    SEASONAL VOLUNTEERING  
OPPORTUNITIES**

# Appendix A—Parks and Open Spaces

Sites Managed under the Parks and Open Spaces team at Hartlepool Borough Council:

## Town Parks:

- Ward Jackson Park
- Burn Valley Gardens
- Rossmere Park
- Seaton Park

## Local Nature Reserves:

- Seaton Common and Dunes (SSSI)
- Hart to Haswell Walkway
- Hart Warren Dunes
- Greatham Beck
- Spion Kop Cemetery

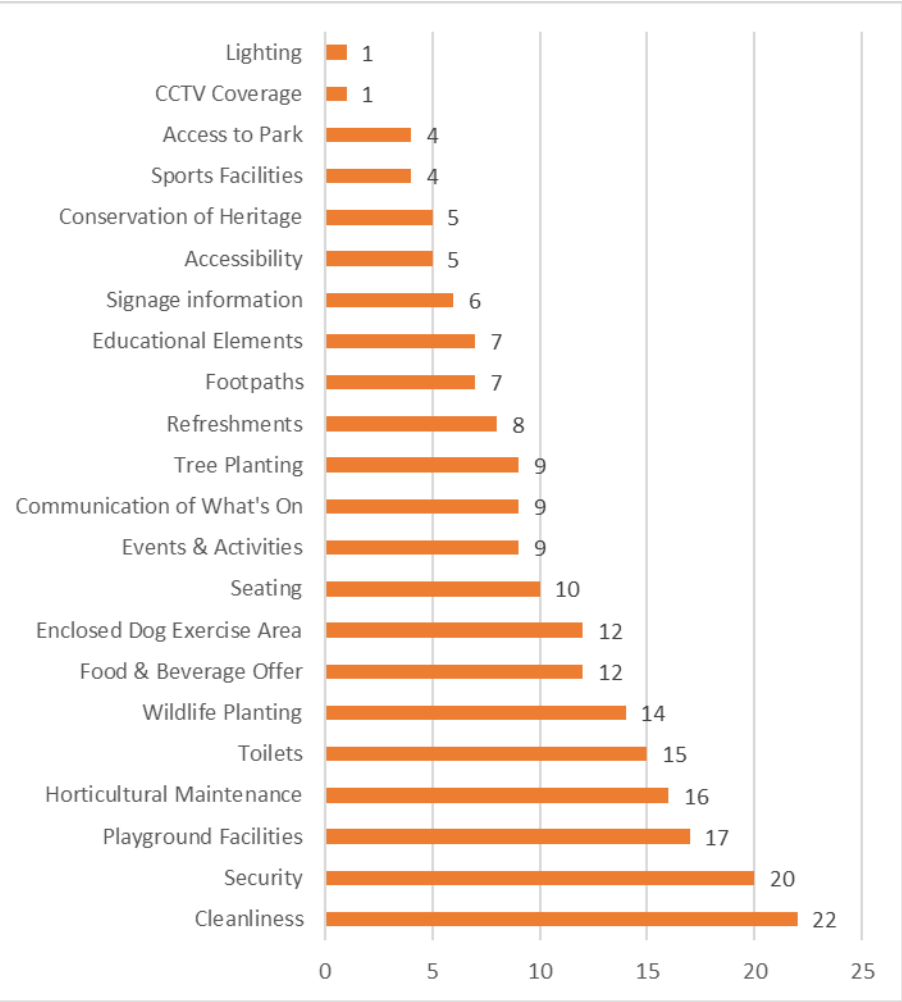
Sites Managed under Active Hartlepool at Hartlepool Borough Council:

- Summerhill Country Park (LNR)

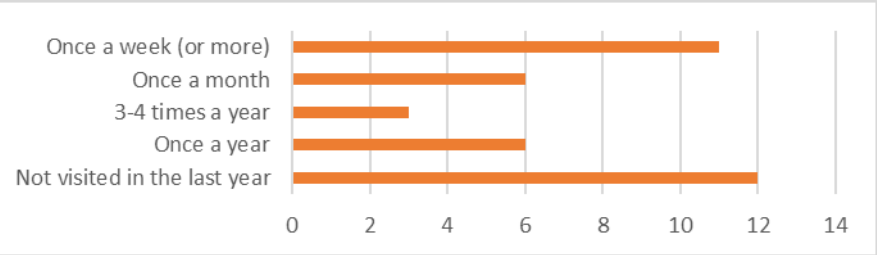


# Appendix B—Your Say, Our Future Consultation

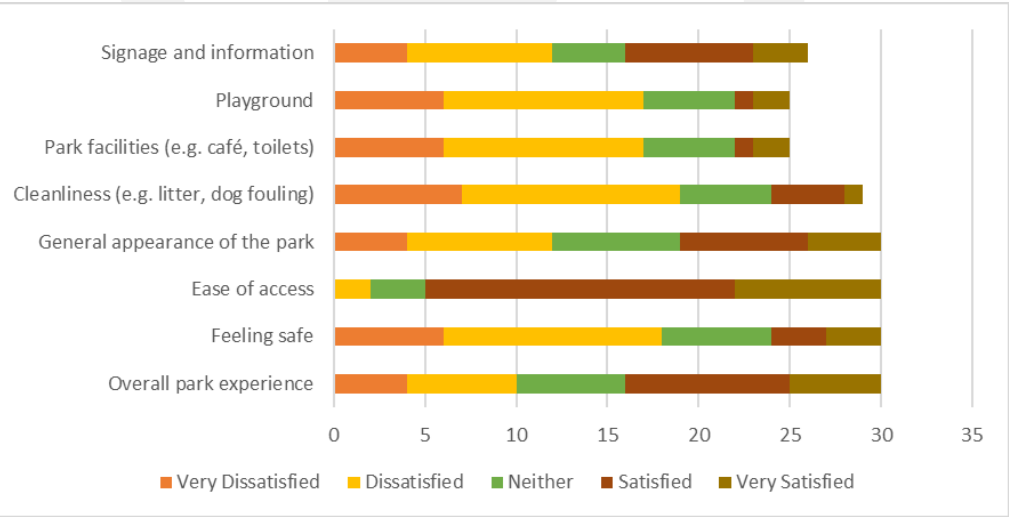
What could be improved in Burn Valley Gardens?



How often do you visit Burn Valley Gardens?



How satisfied are you with the following features?



# Appendix C—Action Log

Item	Action	Comments	Completed (Date)	Actioned By
Welcome and Access				
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove broken or outdated signage including temporary notices.</li> <li>Clean remaining signage of graffiti and other.</li> <li>Replace old signage with updated parks logo, information and contact details.</li> <li>Install notice board for temporary notices.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Signage is damaged on a regular basis and therefore requires frequent replacement, adding to further financial pressures.</i></p> <p><i>Signage replacement dependent on funding.</i></p>	Ongoing	<p>Parks and Open Spaces</p> <p>Street Cleansing</p>
Entrances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plant bulbs and wildflowers along park entrances.</li> </ul>		Completed (Spring 2023)	<p>Parks and Open Spaces</p> <p>Volunteers</p>
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure pathways continue to be accessible to a range of users including wheelchairs and pushchairs.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Awaiting quotes to fill non-compliant potholes (20mm+).</i></p>	Ongoing	<p>Parks and Open Spaces</p> <p>Highways Operations</p>
Healthy, Safe and Secure				
Designing Out Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Horticultural maintenance to clear sightlines into enclosed spaces.</li> <li>Organise site assessments from a Designing Out Crime Officer</li> </ul>	<p><i>In contact with Cleveland Police</i></p>	<p>Completed (January 2023)</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Parks and Open Spaces</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Cleveland Police</p>

# Appendix C—Action Log

Item	Action	Comments	Completed (Date)	Actioned By
<b>Healthy, Safe and Secure</b>				
Play Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace broken/damaged play equipment including trampoline.</li> <li>Expand natural play area with sustainable equipment and increased planting.</li> </ul>	<i>Trampoline replaced spring 2023, also suffered from arson attack. Continued replacement of assets adds extra financial pressures.</i>	Ongoing  Completed (Summer 2023)	Parks and Open Spaces Quality and Safety Officer
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities for creating a rentable space for mobile catering unit such as a coffee van to provide park refreshments.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install trails to encourage walking routes through the park and between sites.</li> <li>Expand active play areas through installation of additional equipment.</li> </ul>	LUPF	Completed (Summer 2023)	Parks and Open Spaces
<b>Maintenance and Cleanliness</b>				
Arboriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a borough-wide tree survey to assess species and health of trees.</li> <li>Remove hazardous trees on the site.</li> <li>Replacement of tree canopy with heavy standard tree planting.</li> </ul>	LUPF	Ongoing  Completed (Winter 2022/2023)	Arboricultural Officer  Horticulture

# Appendix C—Action Log

Item	Action	Comments	Completed (Date)	Actioned By
Maintenance and Cleanliness				
Waste Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trolleys and other fly tipping to be identified and removed from the site in a timely manner.</li> <li>Increased litter picking required in the park with focus on Lower Burn Valley Gardens.</li> </ul>	<i>Continued park inspections and follow-up reports to assist with identifying waste for removal.</i>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces Grounds Maintenance Street Cleansing
Graffiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site-wide graffiti removal required to restore signage, fencing and gates.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Grounds Maintenance
Environmental Management				
Chemical Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trial herbicide free zones.</li> <li>Research alternatives to chemical use in parks and open spaces.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Horticulture Parks and Open Spaces
Waste Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce circular economy for natural waste produced on site, re-using materials as mulch and other.</li> </ul>	<i>Woodchip currently used.</i>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces Horticulture
Biodiversity and Landscape				
Burn Valley Beck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-naturalise further sections of the beck with removal of harsh concrete edging.</li> </ul>	<i>Requires external funding for project costs.</i>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces

# Appendix C—Action Log

Item	Action	Comments	Completed (Date)	Actioned By
<b>Biodiversity and Landscape</b>				
Planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase planting throughout the site for biodiversity.</li> <li>Create wildflower meadows throughout the site.</li> </ul>	<i>Bulbs planted and sensory maze installed.</i>	Completed (Spring/ Summer 2023)	Parks and Open Spaces Volunteers Horticulture
<b>Heritage and Conservation</b>				
Park History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research parks history to inspire future installations and heritage trails with educational element.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create fairy door trail reminiscent of the 'fairy steps' previously in the park.</li> <li>Look into adding further wooden sculptures to create trail.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peter Pan and Fairy statue and other carved wooden sculptures to be adequately looked after to preserve for future generations.</li> </ul>	<i>Peter Pan and Fairy statue to be re-stained and oiled to preserve wood.</i>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces Volunteers
<b>Community Engagement</b>				
Community Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a steering group for the parks to be consulted for park developments.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces

# Appendix C—Action Log

Item	Action	Comments	Completed (Date)	Actioned By
Community Engagement				
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Friends of Burn Valley Gardens volunteering group.</li> <li>Continue to support current volunteering groups in their activities within the site.</li> <li>Provide further opportunities for casual volunteers such as wildlife surveys.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces Volunteers
Marketing and Communication				
Park Branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create 'Parks and Open Spaces' logo for signage and other.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
Parks and Open Spaces Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the parks website with relevant info, resources and logos.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
Looking Forward				
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research external funding opportunities to enable projects.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeat park survey to establish any changes in public perception of the site.</li> <li>Conduct wildlife and biodiversity studies to monitor changes.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Planned for late summer 2023 following installation of new features.</i></p> <p><i>Volunteer input required.</i></p>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces  Volunteers

# Appendix D—Risk Assessments

Risks assessments related to maintenance, inspections and activities that take place at the site, as well as their associated reference numbers are listed below.

Documents and further information can be provided on request.

Risk Assessments and Reference Numbers:

- General Playgrounds (including inspections): NSD OR414
- Various Park Duties: NSD OR422
- Grass Cutting: NSD OR532
- Exterior Plant Maintenance (spraying operations): NSD OR424
- Litter Picking: NSD OR415
- Tree Works: NSD OR533
- Vegetation Clearance: NSD OR459
- Vegetation Clearance and Drainage: NSD OR548
- Tools: NSD OR546
- Vehicles: NSD OR542
- General Parks and Countryside Events (including volunteer work, school groups, and guided walks): NSD OR54

# Appendix E—Horticultural Calendar

The horticultural maintenance works calendar is a basic breakdown of the seasonal maintenance required within the town's parks. This is to be viewed as a rough guide to the horticultural year, that is subject to change due to a number of circumstances such as climate, financial or staffing pressures.

## Winter Maintenance

- Cut back of rose-beds
- Removal of deep rooted weeds and grasses
- Pruning of shrub beds back from footpaths, reduction in height where appropriate
- Tree works including pruning and felling, where appropriate

## Spring Maintenance

- Rose-bed maintenance begins
- Continued shrub and rose-bed maintenance throughout the season
- Herbicide application on shrub beds, tree bases and around furniture

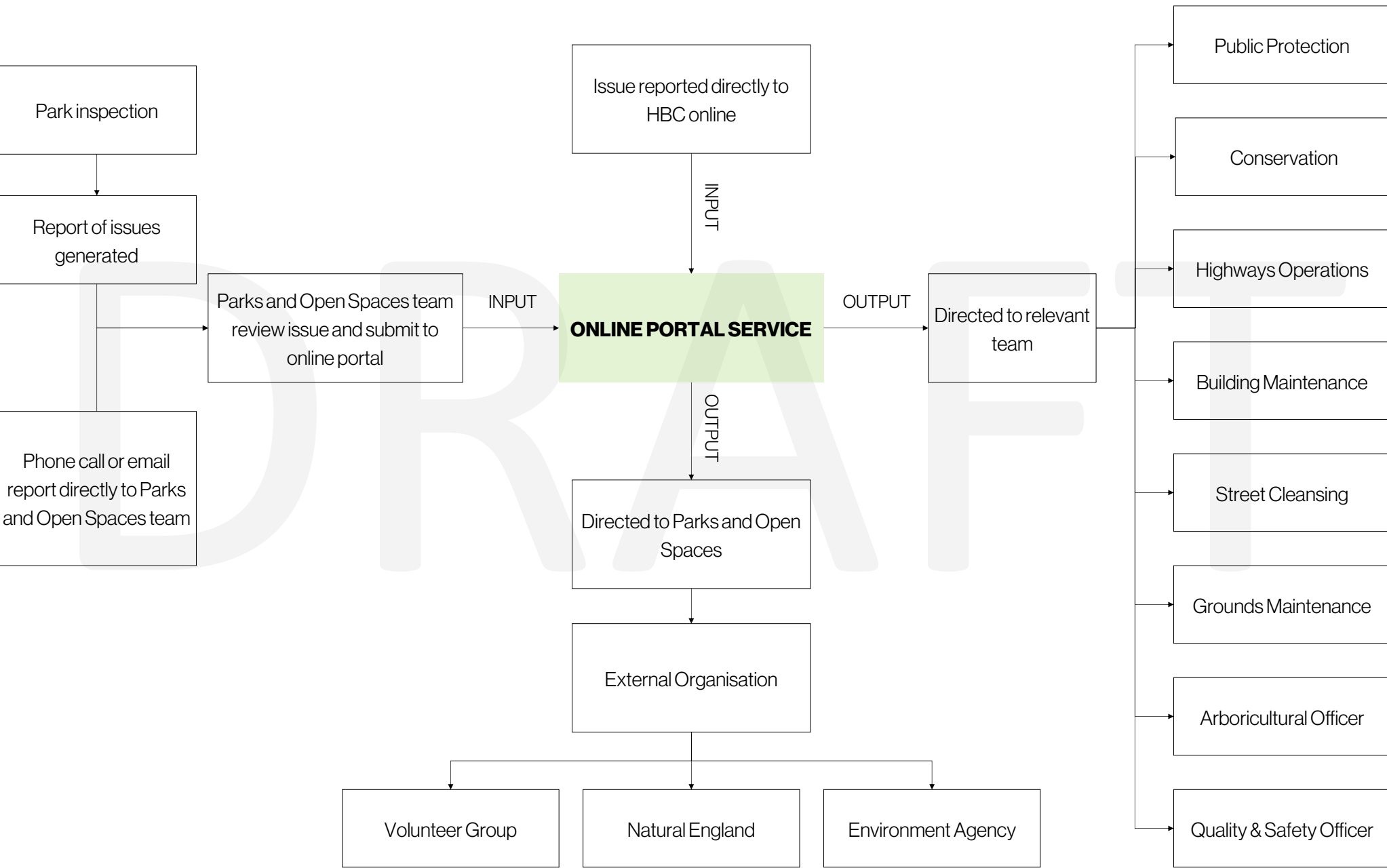
## Summer Maintenance

- Planting of summer bedding plants at the beginning of the season
- Continued maintenance throughout
- Shrub and rose-bed litter picking
- Shrub and rose-bed weed pulling and herbicide application

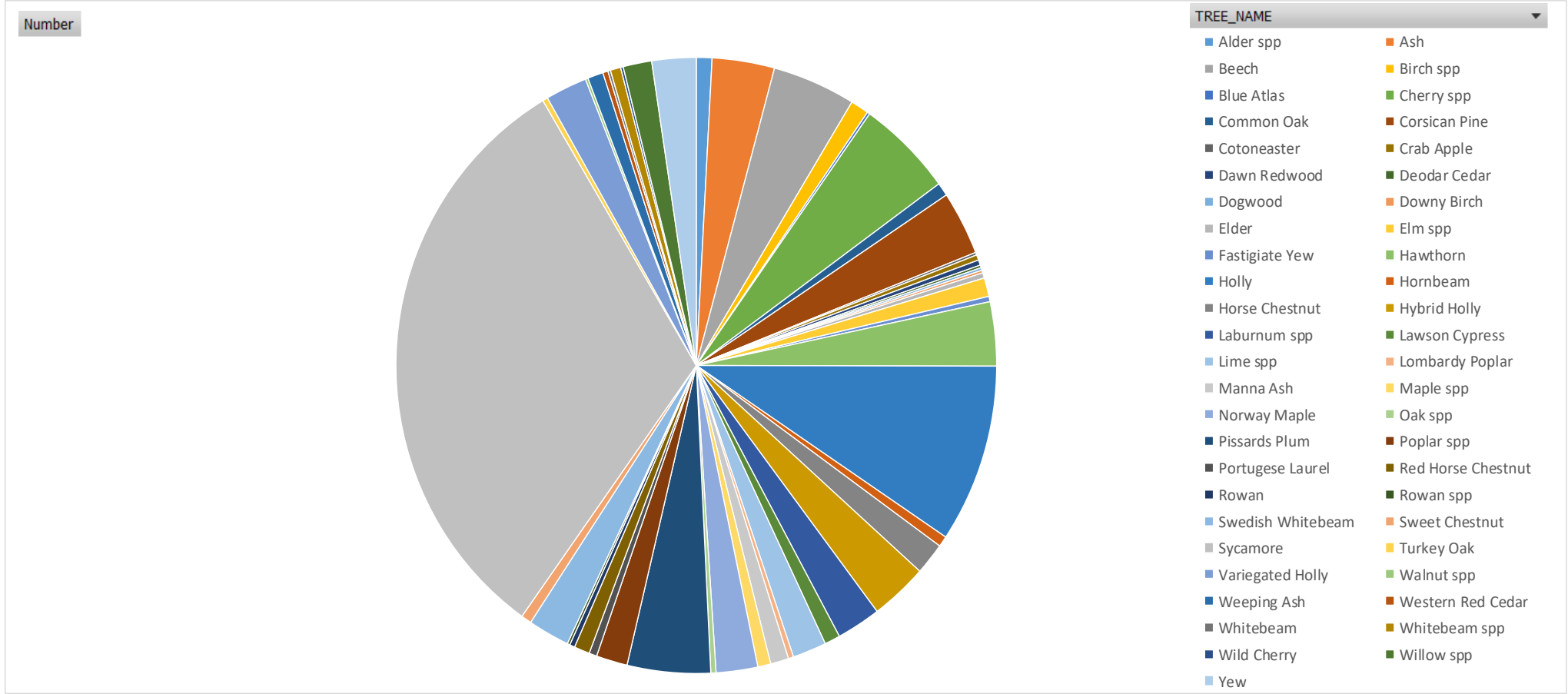
## Autumn Maintenance

- Removal of summer bedding plants at the end of summer season into autumn maintenance
- Replanting of bedding areas
- Tree works including pruning and felling, where appropriate

# Appendix F—Flowchart of Actions



# Appendix G—Flora and Fauna



# Appendix H—Seasonal Volunteering Opportunities

A selection of volunteering opportunities are listed below, split into maintenance seasons.

## Winter Maintenance

- Tree & Bulb Planting
- Wildlife Surveys
- Vegetation Clearance
- Litter Picking
- General Park Maintenance

## Spring Maintenance

- General Park Maintenance
- Wildflower Planting
- Wildlife Surveys
- Litter Picking

## Summer Maintenance

- Wildlife Surveys
- General Park Maintenance
- Litter Picking
- Events
- Flowerbed Maintenance

## Autumn Maintenance

- Wildlife Surveys
- Flowerbed Maintenance
- Bulb & Tree Planting
- Vegetation Clearance
- Litter Picking

## Get in Touch

Parks and Open Spaces  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Victoria Road  
Hartlepool  
TS25 8AY

[parksandcountryside@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:parksandcountryside@hartlepool.gov.uk)

01429 266522

[Hartlepool Borough Council | Parks](#)



**HARTLEPOOL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

# DRAFT

## Ward Jackson Park Management Plan 2023



**HARTLEPOOL**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



**HARTLEPOOL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

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# 1

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# Introduction

- 1.1 THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PLACE-BASED PLANS
- 1.2 CONTEXT AND WIDER POLICY
- 1.3 SITE OVERVIEW
- 1.4 SITE MAP
- 1.5 ROAD MAP

# Introduction

## 1.1 THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PLACE-BASED PLANS

A place-based plan is a working management plan that aims to provide an overview of a specific site, detailing the sites features and the maintenance, management and conservation involved. It considers the unique characteristics of the site and the needs of all users.

Place-based plans can be viewed as a guide for the effective management and development of a site. An adaptive management process is required to effectively manage a site and appropriately plan for the future. Therefore, place-based plans should be considered a flexible tool, subject to frequent review and adjusted accordingly, in response to economic and environmental uncertainty. The primary goal for a place-based plan is to ensure a site is managed in a sustainable and responsible way, balancing the needs of its visitors and the environment with future budgets and capacity.

Plans enable users to understand why decisions are made with regards to a site, and how such decisions are reached. Through clearly communicated priorities, place-based plans will inform key stakeholders of the sites management from the day-to-day tasks to long term strategic planning.

The management of a park involves a number of factors from varying disciplines, that come together to ensure a site is well-maintained, attractive, functional and sustainable. Based on the Green Flag Assessment

Criteria, these factors include a welcoming atmosphere, maintenance and upkeep, safety and security, environmental considerations, conservation of landscape and heritage, recreation and events, and community involvement.

Through the following sections, this plan will provide details of the site in relation to the above factors, whilst identifying opportunities for development. Within the final section (Section 10 – Looking Forward), the future of the site will be discussed in terms of opportunities, budgets, capacity and assessment. Aims and objectives have been set at the close of each section detailing a clear road map to success, with success being a healthy, welcoming and safe park that serves its local community and allows nature to thrive.

### Development Phases

The development of place-based plans has taken place over five phases—initial consultation, developing written plans, formal consultation, implementation and review.

The first phase saw an initial public consultation and SWOT analysis, providing a baseline understanding of public perception and site usage. Following this, written plans were developed and reviewed internally within HBC by a number of services and the Parks Management Board. Phase three consisted of a formal public consultation, to ensure plans and priorities for the

town's parks were, and continue to be, in line with community needs. Following public consultation, phase four consists of the commencement and continuation of works discussed throughout the plans, undertaken by the Parks and Open Spaces team and led by the Parks Management Board.

The fifth and final phase will see plans formally reviewed and re-published on a five year cycle. In between re-publications, regular check-ins, surveys, and informal consultations will take place on an annual basis to provide updates to the plans. This will identify any changes in site usage and public perception, ensuring parks continue to provide appropriate facilities for the community. Plans will be regularly updated in line with any feedback, works progress, changes to plans and budgets, or with any national trends. This will be done on an ad-hoc basis.

# Introduction

## 1.2 CONTEXT AND WIDER POLICY

A series of place-based plans have been developed for Hartlepool's formal parks and local nature reserves. These have been produced by Hartlepool Borough Council's Parks and Open Spaces team within the Coast, Countryside and Heritage service, in collaboration with a number of other services including (but not limited to) Grounds Maintenance, Planning, and Net Zero. The Parks Management Board of Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) oversee the management and implementation of these plans. The management structure within HBC currently stands as:

Hartlepool Borough Council

Adults and Community Based Services

Preventative and Community Based Services

Coast, Countryside and Heritage

Parks and Open Spaces

There are a multitude of factors from varying social, environmental and economic standpoints that influence the management of parks and open spaces. Nature, public health, culture, community, tourism, sport, recreation – to name a few – all come together to influence the management of these sites. Parks do not exist in isolation from each factor, and so a wide range of strategies, policies, plans and partnerships have fed into

the development of this management plan, as shown in figure 1 on the following page.

First and foremost is the HBC Council Plan (2021/22 – 2023/24), which sets out the town's vision. Directly feeding in to the scope of park management, are the following points that have been carefully considered throughout the development of the plan.

*"Hartlepool will be a place...*

*...where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives:*

- *There is an increased participation in physical activity through access to fit for purpose leisure, sport and recreational facilities including parks and open spaces.*

*...of resilient and resourceful community with opportunities for all:*

- *People are involved in their local community rather than being socially isolated;*
- *Communities are well served with appropriate facilities;*
- *There is a cross sector and coordinated programme of volunteering.*

*...that has an inclusive and growing economy:*

- *We have a high quality visitor attractions and increased visitor numbers.*

*...that is sustainable, clean, safe and green:*

- *Initiatives are in place to tackle climate change;*
- *There is access to good quality, well maintained parks, streets and public spaces."*

**- Council Plan (2021/22—2023/24), Hartlepool Borough Council**

# Introduction

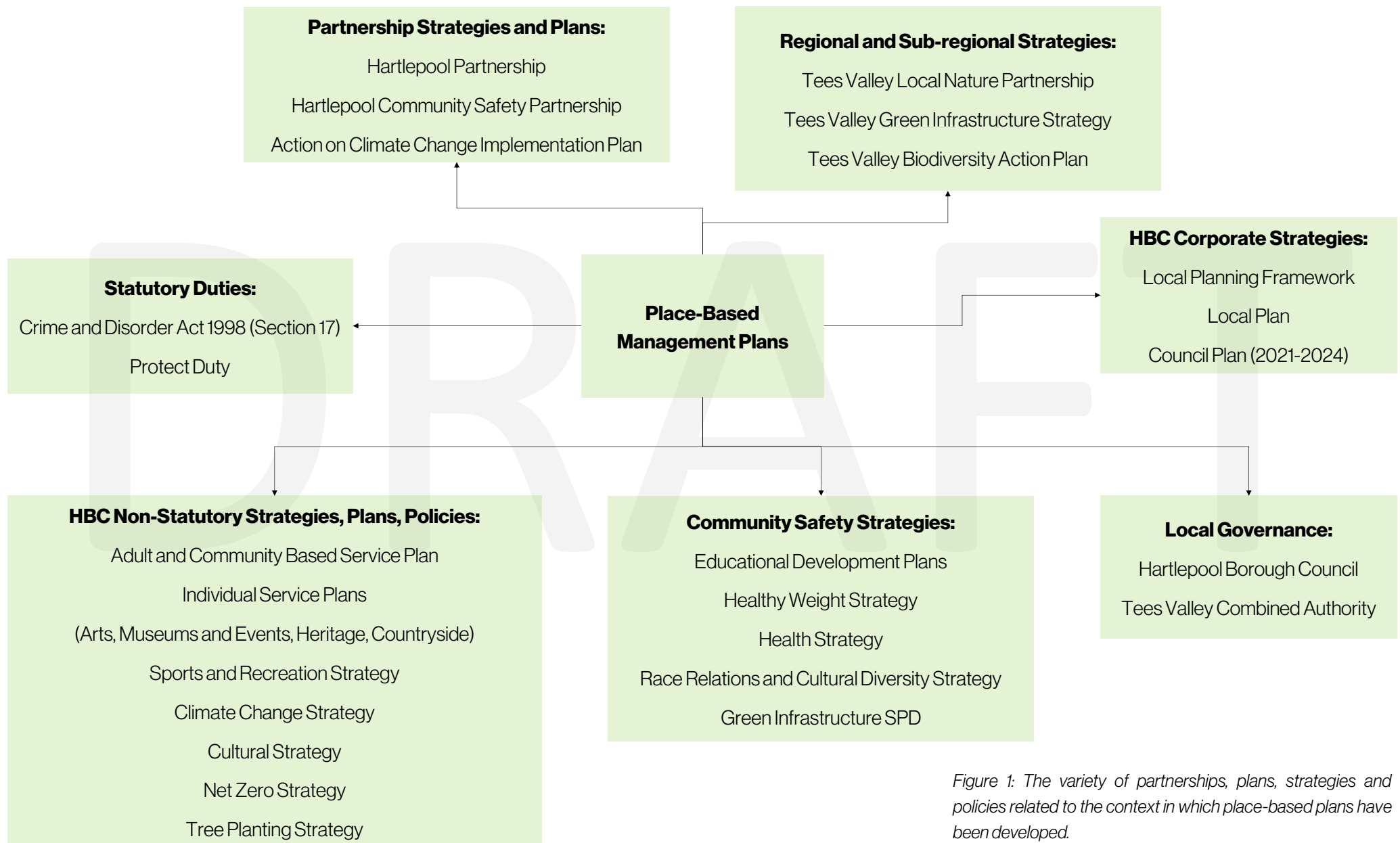


Figure 1: The variety of partnerships, plans, strategies and policies related to the context in which place-based plans have been developed.

# Introduction

## 1.3 SITE OVERVIEW

Ward Jackson Park is a Grade II listed Victorian park located in the Rural West ward of Hartlepool. It was developed by local people in memory of Ralph Ward Jackson, a local industrialist who was one of the benefactors of West Hartlepool. The park opened in July 1883, and has held Green Flag Status since 2008.

The gently undulating site draws visitors from nearby residential areas as well as from across the town, with its easy access and wide range of facilities including a café and toilet block. The park spans 7.4 hectares and is bordered by Elwick Road along the south west edges, and Park Avenue running along the eastern border. On three sides, the park has traditional wrought iron park fencing. Alongside the boundaries are well planted borders, containing trees and shrubs, with a wildlife corridor forming the northern boundary. This side of the park is enclosed by a high timber fence and is adjacent to a residential area.

The site is also home to a 0.65 hectare lake with an island in the centre, on which the parks bird life nest and breed. There are four entrances to the park, two emphasised by a lodge and a clock tower. From any of the entrances, there are pathways along tree lined avenues as well as meandering perimeter routes though trees and shrubs for a different view of the park.

## Demographics

The Rural West ward has a population of 7,628 and is the least densely populated ward, however census data shows the population to be fast growing. Data also shows that within Hartlepool, Rural West has the highest percentage of residents with Level 4 or above qualifications, the lowest income deprivation score, and the lowest percentage of residents reporting bad health (Hartlepool Ward Profiles).

## Profile

Site Name—Ward Jackson Park

Site Status—Grade II Registered Park & Garden

Site Address—Park Avenue

Town—Hartlepool

Region—North East England

Postcode—TS26 0BQ

OS Grid Reference—NZ490325

Total Area—7.4 Hectares

Plan Prepared By—Hartlepool Borough Council



Figure 2: Ward Jackson Park location within wider Hartlepool  
Map Credit: OpenStreetMap

# Introduction

## 1.4 SITE MAP



# Introduction

## 1.5 ROADMAP

### Where are we now?

Using an online engagement platform—Your Say, Our Future—a public consultation was conducted in 2022 focusing on initial views of the town's parks (Ward Jackson Park, Seaton Park, Rossmere Park and Burn Valley Gardens), and how the parks are used by visitors.

Ward Jackson Park was voted as the most frequently visited park, with the majority of respondents stating they were satisfied with the parks features; most notably the general appearance and ease of access. The only feature to score less than 50% satisfaction was 'signage and information', where just under half of respondents said they were neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied. Top voted features for improvement were security, wildlife planting, toilets, playground facilities and cleanliness. Survey outcome charts for Ward Jackson Park are shown in appendix B, and further information can be provided on request.

Using feedback from the public consultation along with local and anecdotal knowledge, a SWOT analysis has been conducted (figure 3). The outcomes of these initial studies provided a baseline on which the place-based plans have been developed.

Discussed through sections 2 to 9 of the plan is a detailed overview of a number of the sites features, its maintenance and conservation, and the community it

serves. These sections have been developed in line with the Green Flag Assessment Criteria as a guideline.

### Where do we want to be?

There is a clear vision for Hartlepool's parks and open spaces, with the following aims:

- Parks are welcoming, easily accessible sites that cater to all users.
- Parks provide an inclusive and safe space focused on health and wellbeing.
- Parks are kept to a high standard, through impactful maintenance and cleansing routines.
- Park management ensures nature is considered and not compromised, protecting and futureproofing the parks natural assets against an uncertain future climate.
- Parks provide a mosaic of biodiverse habitats that support a wide range of wildlife.
- Historical park features are preserved and the site's heritage is celebrated, with educational resources readily available for visitors.
- Partnerships with local businesses, charities, community groups and residents are supported and encouraged throughout the parks and open spaces.

- Parks and open spaces updates are communicated across a variety of channels including digital information, physical signage and in person events.
- Parks are futureproofed against uncertain political, economic and environmental scenarios.

In order to achieve these, a series of objectives and actions have been identified in line with each section. Specific actions for these objectives can be seen in an action log, available in appendix C.

### How do we get there?

The objectives and associated action points have been identified in order to demonstrate the development priorities for the site. When funding, resource and capacity allow, action points will be implemented. It is important to note that the purpose of these plans are to provide strategic guides for the effective management and development of the sites, through identifying site priorities. It may not always be possible to commence works on each action, due to budgets and capacity. Outlining priority areas for development is essential in order to be prepared for when opportunities become feasible. The final section of this plan (Section 10 – Looking Forward) will discuss the future plans, monitoring, budgets and assessments anticipated for the site.

# Introduction

## Strengths

- Green Flag Status since 2008
- Accessibility and close proximity to the town centre
- Variety of play equipment, features and facilities
- Strong heritage and variety of historical features
- Large areas of multipurpose open space
- Regular events programme
- Sense of community ownership
- Active volunteering groups

## Opportunities

- Increased and improved signage for information sharing
- Expansion of events schedule to include a wider variety of groups
- Rentable spaces and assets such as the bandstand
- Heritage and educational trails
- Revenue generating activities and experiences such as fishing, boating, fitness classes

## Weaknesses

- Well presented park appearance requires lots of maintenance, resulting in financial and staffing pressures
- Underused assets such as the bandstand and fountain
- Herbicide use to control weeds in shrub areas and along pathways

## Threats

- Antisocial behaviour and destruction to cherished assets
- Consistent damage to features such as the bowling green, play area and public toilet facilities
- Threats to wildlife in the park and lake
- Loss of dedicated maintenance staff from the park
- Increased financial and staffing pressures

Figure 3: SWOT Analysis for Ward Jackson Park

# 2

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# Welcome and Access

**2.1 A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE**

**2.2 ACCESS AND INCLUSIVITY**

**2.3 SIGNAGE**

**2.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Welcome and Access

## 2.1 A Welcoming Atmosphere

The park is maintained to a high standard with an operative overseeing the site on weekdays. This means that litter and dog fouling can be removed as it is seen, and graffiti cleaned within 24 hours. Parks staff and groups of dedicated volunteers work to ensure the park is well kept, and continues to welcome a variety of visitors to enjoy the space. Works include horticultural maintenance to reduce hiding places that may shield unwanted behaviours, as well as litter picking and bulb planting to improve the overall appearance of the park. Staff and volunteer groups are easily identifiable with relevant logos on hi-vis jackets worn by individuals.

The park has a café situated near the southern entrance. Play equipment is positioned close to the café, with outdoor seating and tables primarily designed and placed to allow parents a good view of the playground while enjoying use of the café and facilities. From here, the park has an open aspect with a large central grassed area, which provides good views across the majority of the rest of the site.

The site is popular among dog walkers and families, and has been voted as the most visited park within the town. This means there are often other visitors present on site throughout the day.

## 2.2 Access and inclusivity

### Access

Ward Jackson Park has four entrances, allowing for pedestrian and vehicular access at specific points. The main park gates are located on Elwick Road in the south-eastern corner, and pedestrian entrances are found on Park Avenue and Elwick Road. Brown signs provide directions for vehicles travelling to the area.

Public transport connects the park with the wider town via an hourly bus service, with the closest bus stop located on Park Avenue. A car park is available on Park Avenue, connected to the park via zebra crossing to provide safe links through to the park. The town centre is approximately 20 minutes walk away, with Hartlepool railway station located close to the centre.

The park is mostly vehicle free, with the exception of a small maintenance vehicle, deliveries to the café, and the provision of accessible parking bays within the site boundary.

### Inclusivity

The car park situated within the main gates of the park is reserved for blue badge holders, accessed via Elwick Road and positioned next to the café and playground. From this point, there is level access throughout the majority of the site with wide paving providing a footpath throughout. The exception to this is the nature corridor

on the north side of the park, where pathways are narrower and may be more unsteady underfoot. Within the play area there are accessible pieces such as the level roundabout, to encourage inclusive play. Accessible toilets are provided at the café as well as the park toilet facilities by the clock tower. They are cleaned daily by the café and park staff.

## 2.3 Signage

The park is well signposted throughout the town, with brown signs directing pedestrians and vehicles. Within the park, signs are installed throughout and provide information about the park, activities and byelaws. At access points, information is provided about security, restricted activities, and a site map. In the wetland conservation area there are wildlife identification signs for educational purposes.

The parks signage is functional, however could be improved with updated information and resources. Most importantly the safety signage located at the playground and by the lake needs attention to ensure the park continues to be a safe place for all visitors.

# Welcome and Access

## **Parks are welcoming, easily accessible sites, that cater to all users**

- Review signage and landscaping to create an inviting atmosphere to each place.
- Ensure the atmosphere of the park appropriately matches the functionality of the site.
- Review accessibility of site assets including footpaths, seating, play equipment and signage.

## **2.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Increase bulb and wildflower planting at park entrance points for decorative purposes and to welcome park users in to the site
- Review signage throughout the park, with outdated signs removed. Where budgets allow, update and replace signage
- Ensure pathways are kept safe and accessible for all users

# 3

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## Healthy, Safe and Secure

**3.1 FEATURES AND FACILITIES**

**3.2 HEALTH AND ACTIVITY**

**3.3 LEGAL**

**3.4 PERSONAL AND PARK SECURITY**

**3.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## 3.1 Features and Facilities

### Provision

Ward Jackson Park is well equipped with features and facilities for a wide range of park users. Facilities include a café, public toilets and bowling green, as well as a traditional playground area with equipment aimed at infants and juniors. There are a number of historical features to highlight including a bandstand, water fountain, clock tower, zeppelin bomber memorial stone, and war memorial statue.

Nature and landscape features include the lake, woodland walk, wetland conservation area, invertebrate garden, and the Victorian terraces with carefully curated bedding plants. Among the other features are large areas of open space that can be used for many activities including sports and picnics.

### Safety

Health and safety checks are regular within the site. Playgrounds are routinely inspected by the Quality and Safety Officer, with inspections taking place multiple times a week. A full inspection of the playgrounds is carried out on a monthly basis, and an independent assessment is made annually to ensure that the site continues to be safe and meet all appropriate regulations.

Around the lake there are two lifebelt stations, inspected weekly as part of a town-wide inspection regime. Park staff report any damage to or missing lifebelts to the Quality and Safety Officer. The site as a whole undergoes a quarterly inspection audit carried out by the Parks and Open Spaces team, where any other dangerous equipment (such as broken park benches) is flagged (see 4.6). A list of relevant risk assessments related to park and playground inspections and maintenance can be viewed in appendix D.

## 3.2 Health and Activity

### Public Health

There are a number of procedures in place for the instance of a public health emergency such as the recent Covid-19 pandemic, as well as animal health such as avian influenza. HBC's Public Protection service are contacted in the event of an emergency, and external organisations such as Defra or the Environment Agency are contacted if required.

Parks can provide a positive impact on the overall health of the community, through both psychological and physical benefits. Time spent in parks and open spaces is seen to enhance a person's overall wellbeing by reducing stress and improving mental health, leading to potential positive impacts on their physical health.

### Air Quality

Vegetation such as trees, plants and grass help to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, whilst replenishing the oxygen levels, promoting a healthier environment. Through particulate matter filtration, vegetation in the parks also act as natural filters that trap and remove particulate matter from the air, thus improving the surrounding air quality. Additionally, parks will dense tree cover can have a cooling effect, reducing the ambient temperature and thus preventing higher temperatures exacerbating air pollution.

### Active Choices

Parks serve as spaces that encourage physical activity.

Ward Jackson Park provides a number of opportunities for activity. Sporting opportunities include bowling, as well as fishing in the lake. The large areas of open space provide excellent setting for activity such as group sports (cricket, football) and the circular network of paths are often used for jogging. The park has also been used for a Park Run. There are many walking routes between nearby green spaces, and to the centre of town.

# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## 3.3 Legal

### Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO)

The Parks and Open Spaces PSPO 2021 (HBC) states that at any time, it will constitute an offence should any person:

- Use a skateboard, bicycle or scooter in a manner likely to cause annoyance, nuisance or damage;
- Camp or otherwise stay overnight;
- Fish in the areas when the park is closed to the public or;
- Use an unauthorised mechanically propelled vehicle (MPV) such as motorbikes, scooters, quad bikes and motor cars.

This Order came into force on 1st April 2021 and shall remain in force for a period of three years, from that date. HBC may extend, vary, or discharge it before the expiry of the Order.

Another PSPO is currently in place covering the control of dogs in relation to:

- Dog fouling and dog walkers carrying the means to pick up their dog's mess.
- Dogs must be on a lead where signposted.
- Dogs must not enter the children's play area.
- Dog walkers cannot take more than four dogs at a time to the park.

Site visits by HBC Enforcement Officers are made on request, should it be made apparent that the above are regularly being ignored, however there are a good number of dog waste bins provided on site and the majority of users respect the space.

### Byelaws

There are a number of byelaws made by HBC in effect at Seaton Park. These are in relation to the following:

- Entry outside of public opening times;
- MPV's and rights of way;
- Cycling;
- Overnight vehicle parking;
- Horse riding;
- Climbing of walls, fences, trees, barriers or railings;  
Removal or displacement of barriers, railings, posts, seats, or any structure/ornament;
- Erection of posts, and;
- Camping.

A full breakdown of the byelaws in place at the site can be made available on request.



# Healthy, Safe and Secure



## 3.4 Personal and Park Security

### Maintenance Techniques and Design Out Crime

For future developments and installations within the site, designing out crime principles must be considered. The aim of this is to reduce the vulnerability of both people and property to crime and antisocial behaviour by removing opportunities within the site through specific design techniques.

Some areas of the park have suffered from antisocial behaviour, focused at the bowling green area and behind the commemorative wall, impacting nearby residential properties. The bowling green is often used by younger groups for activities not fit for purpose such as football, that has damaged the turf leaving it unusable for bowling. Extra security design measures including fencing and locked gates have been installed to combat this issue.

As noted in section 2.1, horticultural maintenance techniques are used to help control areas of antisocial behaviour. For example, cutting back shrubs and trees that create accidental hiding places for groups such as behind the commemorative wall. By exposing these areas it improves natural surveillance thus deterring ASB.

### Protect Duty

In preparation for the Protect Legislative Duty, HBC has formed part of a network across the north east that has

launched the North East Pilot. This includes 33 local authorities and 7 police forces, and aims to build capability for security considerations and mitigations. The Pilot focuses on Publicly Accessible Locations (PALs), including town parks. The formation of a PAL group involving public and private sector partners uses a joined-up approach to identify risks and reduce vulnerabilities.

### Park Staff

The site is maintained by a core workforce of 14 staff across all parks and open spaces. Parks staff participate in a varied training programme to ensure up to date skills and knowledge, in order to maintain the site and provide support to those who need it. This has included counter terrorism training for open spaces and first aid training.

### Park Security and Antisocial Behaviour

The park is well equipped with natural surveillance, through on site park staff as well as every day park visitors. There are multiple CCTV cameras covering the site, providing an extra level of security.

PCSO's regularly patrol the area and can be easily contacted by park staff. Regular meetings regarding ASB are held to update the police and partner organisations of any issues, including vandalism.

# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## **Parks provide an inclusive and safe space, focused on health and wellbeing**

- Develop walking routes and interactive trails between green spaces, to encourage active choices for all ages and abilities.
- Outreach workers to engage with groups exhibiting continued antisocial behaviour in order to reduce damage to park assets and to encourage a safer, more welcoming atmosphere.
- Reduce opportunity for trespassing and antisocial behaviour in current problem areas and future developments, through consideration of extra security measures, design techniques and natural surveillance.

### **3.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### Site Objectives

- Continue with targeted horticultural maintenance to improve sightlines to areas where antisocial behaviour is prevalent
- Encourage walking routes between Hartlepool's green spaces by providing resources to clearly map out available routes, such as trails and digital information
- Consider further designing out crime techniques and principles for future park developments
- Ensure trespassing to bowling green area is stopped through extra security measures

# 4

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# Maintenance and Cleanliness

- 4.1 LITTER AND WASTE MANAGEMENT
- 4.2 FACILITIES, BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
- 4.3 EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE
- 4.4 HORTICULTURAL MAINTENANCE
- 4.5 ARBORICULTURAL MAINTENANCE
- 4.6 MONITORING
- 4.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## 4.1 Litter and Waste Management

Waste bins are situated throughout the park and are emptied weekly, with a site-wide litter pick taking place five days a week. Excess litter found is removed on a reactionary basis. Regular litter picks are also organised by volunteering groups and the local community, on a reactive and more casual basis.

## 4.2 Facilities, Buildings and Infrastructure

On-site buildings and structures include the café, public toilet facilities, bowling green pavilion, clock tower, bandstand, and the old park keeper's lodge. These are maintained by HBC Building Maintenance, with the exception of the lodge and café that are currently externally leased.

Other park infrastructure such as footpaths, roads inside the site boundary, gates and signage are the responsibility of multiple services within HBC. This includes Highways, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance. Regular park inspections record issues such as graffiti, potholes, broken fencing or railings, and building issues, with the appropriate teams then notified to take action. The severity of the issue will determine the timescale in which it is dealt with. If the issue poses an immediate risk to park users then teams will be called out to deal with the issue as soon as possible (section 4.6).

## 4.3 Equipment Maintenance

### Tools and Vehicles

Park maintenance equipment used by HBC staff is maintained in line with relevant Health & Safety policies and legislation. Where required, staff undergo training and certification to operate equipment or machinery and are issued with PPE for use. Equipment is serviced on an annual basis by HBC Stores with records kept.

Vehicles are kept in a central hub where they are serviced and maintained to standard. Regular checks are undertaken by drivers with a standard check taking place before the use of each vehicle. Any issues flagged during this check or during use of the vehicle are immediately passed to Fleet Services, who are responsible for resolving vehicle issues.

### Volunteers

Volunteering groups have access to hand tools for basic park maintenance. Trained and certified individuals may also use power tools under the supervision of the Parks and Open Spaces team. Further details are available in the Parks and Open Spaces Community Engagement and Volunteering Strategy that can be made available upon request.

For all volunteering groups who wish to operate within the site, supervised or unsupervised, there is an Operating Agreement in place covering all health and

safety information. This agreement must be signed by both parties (volunteer group & HBC) before an activity is able to take place.

### Play Equipment

Play equipment on site is inspected multiple times a week and a full operational inspection is undertaken on a monthly basis. Inspections are completed in house by an RPII Operational Inspector. In addition to regular in house checks, an annual inspection is completed by an independent RPII Annual Inspector. This ensure the equipment is fit for use, adheres to all relevant legislation, and meets appropriate safety regulations.

# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## 4.4 Horticultural Maintenance

Maintenance of natural features including shrubs, planting and lawns is overseen by the Horticultural Operations Officer, and consists of:

- Maintenance of grassed areas within the park, carried out bi-weekly during the growing season (March to November).
- Weed control within the shrub beds and hard standing areas using approved herbicides, as and when required, during the growing season.
- Litter picking of shrub bed areas within the park, as and when required, throughout the year.
- Removal of litter, fly tipping and debris from the lake when deemed necessary.
- Planting bulbs, bedding plants and perennials during the planting season.

A full breakdown of the yearly horticultural maintenance schedules can be found in appendix E.

## Lake Maintenance

To control filamentous algae (blanket weed) within the lake, it is treated with barley straw. Algae can deprive the water of oxygen and is therefore detrimental to all aquatic life, especially fish species. The barley straw is a natural algaecide, releasing small quantities of hydrogen

peroxide as it decomposes. Despite the barley not having an effect on established algae within the lake, it prevents reoccurrence and spread by preventing the and growth of algal cells. Barley straw is added during spring/early summer, and one treatment can last up to four months. During periods of excessive filamentous growth, water pumps may have to be used on a temporary basis to move the water and increase oxygen levels within the lake.

## 4.5 Arboricultural Maintenance

The parks trees are visually inspected by on-site staff on a regular basis. Works are carried out during the winter period of November to March, by qualified internal Arborists under the direction of the Horticultural Operations Officer, in liaison with the Arboricultural Officer. A reactive call out service is provided outside of the core working months in the case of fallen trees or dangers that may be present to users of the park.

Trees situated adjacent to pathways, playgrounds and seating areas are within high usage zones, where it is more likely that park users are present in these areas. Sections of wider open spaces are considered lower usage zones, due to the frequency in which these spaces are used in comparison to the more congested areas listed above. Trees located in high usage zones are therefore prioritised for maintenance works when required, including pruning and felling of trees.

In some cases, it is possible and most favourable to remove hazardous limbs/branches in order to make the tree safe rather than felling the whole tree. This is both the more environmentally favourable and lower cost option. Larger and older trees have sequestered the most carbon from the atmosphere and are therefore valuable park assets, in terms of climate sustainability. Additionally, standing dead wood can provide excellent habitats for invertebrates and other wildlife. Further information about procedures for managing the tree canopy including tree pests and diseases can be found in section 5.6.



# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## 4.6 Monitoring

### Park Inspections

In addition to the maintenance schedules already in place for Ward Jackson Park, there are regular checks and inspections taking place to keep on top of any arising issues.

Park inspections are completed regularly by the Parks and Open Spaces team as well as informal checks by on-site staff, with an in-depth site audit taking place on a quarterly basis. Park audits include a review of all the parks features and facilities, including (but not limited to) pathways, buildings and infrastructure, tree health, bodies of water, graffiti, litter and sports facilities. A full breakdown of features reviewed can be provided on request. During an audit, features are logged as compliant, monitoring or non-compliant, in order to provide an overall park performance score. Non-compliant features are reported via an online portal service following each audit, directing the issue to the relevant team for action. A flowchart can be viewed in appendix F, detailing the process for reporting on any issues related to the park.

Reports are completed following each inspection with records kept including date, a list of the features, overall score and associated photographs of issues. Reports are reviewed throughout the year to identify any trends or continuously non-compliant features that may require further intervention.

### Online Portal

The online portal service is provided by HBC and is used both internally, and available to the public. The portal allows users to submit any issues, comments, or service requests (such as cleansing) and is sent directly to the relevant service within HBC. Internal access to the portal is used to effectively manage any arising issues across the town. The service is used for a wide range of issues across Hartlepool, and park specific forms should be submitted through the Parks and Recreational Areas Portal.

There are a number of teams involved in the resolution of park related issues, and in some extreme instances it may be necessary to involve external organisations for assistance or advice. Key teams are as follows:

- **Parks and Open Spaces**—responsible for the overall management and development of the site.
- **Quality and Safety Officer**—playgrounds, safety of equipment and water safety.
- **Horticulture**—horticultural maintenance across the borough, including tree works and a team of arborists.
- **Arboricultural Officer**—monitoring of tree health, development of tree strategy.
- **Street Cleansing/Grounds Maintenance**—general maintenance of park and wider areas, litter and waste management.
- **Highways Operations**—fixing path network. Building Maintenance: responsible for resolving issues with buildings and infrastructure.
- **Public Protection**—public and animal health.
- **Conservation** (within Heritage and Countryside)—heritage assets and features.
- **Volunteering Groups**—help with upkeep of any installations within the park they have developed, along with regular maintenance of the park.
- **Natural England**—event of an emergency related to their works.
- **Environment Agency**—as above.
- **Defra**—advice and action on animal health.

# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## **Parks are kept to a high standard, through impactful maintenance and cleansing routines**

- Conduct regular site audits to monitor the site, ensuring issues are resolved in a timely manner and contributing to the longevity of assets.
- In future developments, prioritise self-maintaining or low maintenance schemes.

## **4.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Ensure graffiti and other vandalism is dealt with in a timely manner
- Increase park maintenance activities through mobilisation of volunteering groups

# 5

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# Environmental Management

**5.1 WASTE MINIMISATION**

**5.2 CHEMICAL USE**

**5.3 PEAT USE**

**5.4 MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

**5.5 CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION**

**5.6 BIOSECURITY**

**5.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Environmental Management

## 5.1 Waste Minimisation

The park is supplied with ample waste bins (including dog waste) to encourage park users to dispose of waste responsibly. There are recycling options available, positioned near to the café and playground.

Where possible, natural waste from park maintenance is shredded on site and used as mulch. Larger pieces of timber from tree works are removed by an external company and repurposed. Excess materials to the needs of the park, and any other green waste, is removed to the council's transfer station for recycling.

## 5.2 Chemical Use

Pesticide use has been reduced to a minimum within the park, where possible. Glyphosate is present in the Round-Up 360 product used as weed control on a regular basis within shrub beds, around street furniture and along grass verges. Records are kept for the total amount of glyphosate used across the borough. A small amount of fungicide is also used to control turf-borne disease on the bowling green. An economically and environmentally sustainable alternative has not yet been identified.

## 5.3 Peat Use

There is no peat used on site through horticultural maintenance. However, there may be traces of peat with

the supply of bedding plants that are used in the formal bedding area. HBC is unable to control what is used by the supplier, however it is likely this will be traces rather than the sole compost used.

## 5.4 Managing Environmental Impact

There are a number of points to consider when addressing the environmental impact of a site – both positive and negative. Site buildings such as the bowling pavilion building and café have an environmental impact on the park through the use of electricity, water and gas, which are required for the use of the facilities. Park maintenance has an environmental impact through its use of vehicles, power tools and equipment, herbicides, and waste disposal methods. These impacts are mitigated by keeping public vehicles out of the park beyond the parking spaces, using hand tools instead of power tools where possible, minimising herbicide use and using composting bins for organic waste disposal instead of landfill sites.

As well as the potential negative impacts of activities and buildings within the site, the park as a green space can have a number of positive environmental impacts extending beyond the boundaries of the site. Green spaces can serve as nature reserves within an urban setting, they act as 'lungs' for towns through green infrastructure such as tree cover, contributing toward improved air quality and natural carbon sequestration.

Not only must we consider the impact of the site on the wider environment, but also the impacts of a changing environment on the site. When managing green spaces it is important to consider how different interventions can be utilised in order to adapt to a changing climate, while mitigating the impacts where possible. Possible environmental impacts to consider include rising temperatures, which may lead to increased heat stress in wildlife, drought periods which may affect water availability, and changes in seasonal growth of plants. The following section will discuss a number of climate change adaptation strategies relevant to Ward Jackson Park.

## 5.5 Climate Change Adaptation

A changing climate can pose many risks to a green space site, including increased risk of flooding, pressure on drainage systems, habitat and species loss, threats from extreme weather events such as storms or droughts, as well as changing temperatures and the impact that will have on native flora and fauna. Green spaces such as Ward Jackson Park provide a crucial opportunity to adapt, mitigate and reduce the impacts of climate change, through numerous interventions and strategies.

# Environmental Management

## Tree Cover

The current climate is altering how both native and non-native trees in the UK are now reacting. Hotter summers and milder winters can alter the phenology of trees, meaning that a different approach to planting may be required. The local environment must be carefully considered when selecting and implementing a diverse and lasting range of species. While prioritising native species is beneficial for promotion biodiversity, mitigating the risks of invasive non-native species (INNS) and diseases, and supporting the local ecosystem, it is also important to recognise the value of incorporating non-native species. Non-native tree species can provide additional ecological functions and contribute to the adaptability of green spaces in the face of a changing climate. Ensuring each species will be carefully matched to an ideal planting location will be essential, taking into account the longevity and suitability of the site.

Retention and expansion of the current tree canopy will help to combat extreme heat, by providing more shade for a direct cooling effect. Tree establishment will focus more on ensuring that existing and new planting schemes are able to establish and flourish within their environment, in turn giving a higher percentage yield of successful planting whilst reducing the need and effects of having to replant failed saplings.

Unlocking funding and resource to increase planting efforts across the borough and within the town's parks is

a priority going forward, and current regional schemes such as Trees on Tees and the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund will be utilised to assist with this. More information can be made on request.

## Droughts and Flooding

Extended periods of drought are being experienced more frequently, having a serious impact on green spaces. Droughts and high temperatures can kill off or weaken plant life, as well as reducing the permeability of the grounds surface layer. Less rainfall is able to be absorbed and therefore we see an increase in surface run-off and flash flooding events.

Preparing the ground and plant life for extreme weather events such as drought or flooding is one way to address this. Creating changes to areas of open space through installing different schemes such as wetland conservation areas, dipping ponds and rain gardens will help to control excess water in flooding instances, and in drought periods help with water retention. Future planting schemes must also consider how well certain species can survive in these extreme weather events.



# Environmental Management

## 5.6 Biosecurity

Biosecurity is the prevention of the introduction and spread of harmful organisms (Forestry Commission). These include non-native pests such as insects, and disease causing organisms (pathogens) such as some bacteria and fungi. Pests and diseases can be introduced through a number of ways, via:

- Live plants and trees;
- Timber and wood packaging;
- Dirty tools, kit, machinery and vehicles;
- Organic matter such as soil, and;
- Natural methods such as water and wind.

### Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Although not present in Ward Jackson Park, three species in particular pose a threat within the parks and open spaces in Hartlepool and across the wider Tees Valley. These are Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam, and are all classed as amber-list species. In line with the North East INNS Strategy Action Plan (2020), the aim for amber-list species is to reduce their impact through controlled measures, as they are already widespread within the region and so eradication is therefore not feasible.

### Control Measures

There are a number of control measures in place for HBC staff and teams to manage the spread of any INNS. These include:

- Staff are informally trained to identify INNS.
- Kit, clothing, boots, equipment and tools cleaned as part of routine maintenance before and after use, to prevent spread of seeds.
- Planting stock is sourced responsibly, using British grown plants where possible, to reduce the risk of accidental introduction of non-native pests and diseases.
- Accurate and up to date records are kept of all stock, in case an outbreak occurs.
- Regular inspections of all tree stock are completed to informally check for signs of ill health.

Any recordings of INNS by HBC staff are shared with the Environmental Records Information Centre (ERIC) North East, that works with a range of users to collate environmental data for nature conservation. Resources such as ERIC and iRecord (figure 3) are accessible to members of the public, allowing a wider range of people to be involved in reporting sightings of INNS or other threats. Resources are shared with volunteering and community groups, through signage on site, and available on the Parks and Open Spaces webpage.



Figure 3: ERIC North East method of reporting.

# Environmental Management

## Tree Pests and Diseases

Since the early 2000's, there has been a significant increase of tree pests and diseases that have been introduced into the UK due to a number of different factors including increasing global trade, evolution/cross breeding, climate change, air pollution and poor soil quality. A decrease in woodland management has also allowed pests and diseases to go unnoticed for a longer period. It is important to educate teams to be able to spot any signs of poor plant health.

According to the UK Plant Health Risk Register, there are 1,414 pests and diseases posing a potential risk to the UK.



## Ash Dieback

In particular Ash Dieback has been identified as a threat to trees, not only in Hartlepool but on a national scale. Multiple cases of Ash Dieback have been spotted within the town's parks. On-site staff have been informally trained to identify the signs and symptoms of Ash Dieback in order to report and monitor trees suspected to be infected with the disease. A borough-wide tree health survey is planned in order to effectively manage the situation before it worsens. As there is minimal knowledge surrounding the disease and its implications, the process currently stands to mark trees requiring immediate attention or ongoing surveillance. Tree works will then take place during the winter period or via the reactive call-out service, if required outside of winter maintenance.

Figure 4 shows examples of ash trees infected with different levels of Ash Dieback, categorised by four different classes according to the severity of the disease. Ash health class 4 is the worst level of Ash Dieback infection, whereby the majority of the tree has been infected with the disease and only 25-0% of the tree crown remains. Signs of possible Ash Dieback include spots on the leaves, wilted leaves, branches losing leaves and 'dying back', and dark patches (lesions) on the branches and/or trunk.

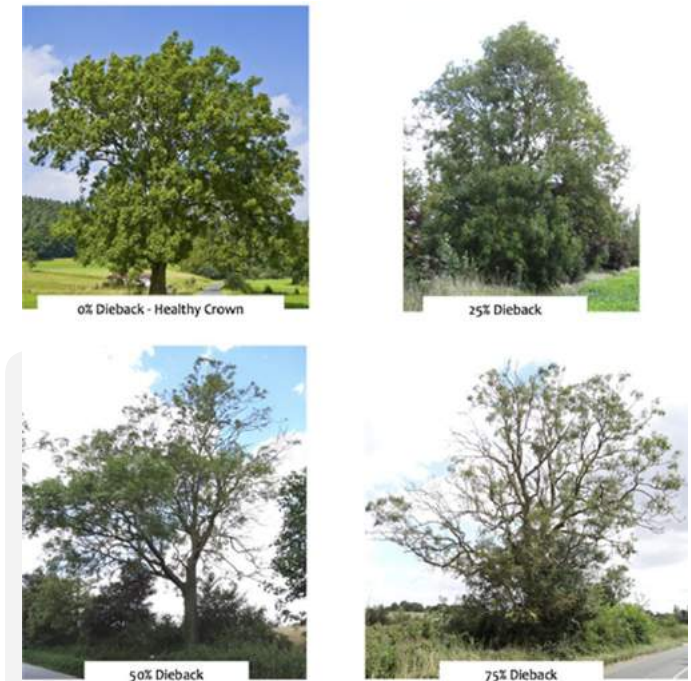


Figure 4: Ash Tree Health, Assessing the severity of ash trees suffering with Ash Dieback

- Ash Health Class 1: 100-75% of crown remains
- Ash Health Class 2: 75-50% of crown remains
- Ash Health Class 3: 50-25% of crown remains
- Ash Health Class 4: 25-0% of crown remains

# Environmental Management

## **Park management ensures nature is considered and not compromised, protecting and futureproofing the parks natural assets against an uncertain climate**

- Adopt best practice management methods including alternatives to pesticide use and a circular economy for natural waste.
- Investigate nature-based solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change, such as flood alleviation schemes and restoration of natural assets and habitats, to protect residential areas for the benefit of the community and future generations.

## **5.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Phase out herbicide use across the parks and open spaces, with initial trial zones in Burn Valley Gardens
- Use natural waste from tree works and other horticultural maintenance for reuse, such as mulch, logs and forage
- Protect and enhance the current tree cover, with borough-wide tree survey to monitor species and health
- Ensure parks staff have sufficient knowledge to identify INNS, pests and diseases to log for further inspection
- Eradicate use of peat within the site

# 6

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## Biodiversity and Landscape

- 6.1 LANDSCAPE AND DESIGNED FEATURES
- 6.2 NATURAL FEATURES, FLORA AND FAUNA
- 6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY
- 6.4 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN
- 6.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Biodiversity and Landscape

## 6.1 Landscape and Designed Features

The park is divided into a series of juxtaposing formal and informal areas including sweeping lawns, smart terraces with formal bedding areas, and small areas of woodland. The elegant design of the park is that of the Victorian era, with original Victorian features remaining in the park.

The large open spaces within the park are carved up by clusters and lines of trees, a mix between mature woodland and ornamental trees representative of traditional Victorian town parks. Trees near the lake were chosen for their overhanging and weeping structure, creating reflections and shadows on the water. Another feature representative of Victorian parks is the terraced section with flat walkways, raised above the lawns providing views across the park. It runs along the north side of the park with steps down the path leading to the lake. The terrace is bordered by the woodland on its northern edge.

Surfaced pathways within the park act to define the designed compartments. Timber and steel sculptures have been positioned around the path system to accentuate the landscaping of the park and to provide focal points. The bowling green consists of flat, manicured turf appropriate for bowling. This area is designed to be smarter, with clipped hedges.

## 6.2 Natural Features, Wild Flora and Fauna

Ward Jackson Park is a valuable area of green space toward the western edge of town, home to a wide variety of natural features including the lake, woodland walk, planted areas, tree canopy, mini-beast reserve, and wetland area.



## Tree Cover and Planted Areas

The park is home to numerous mature parkland trees, with clusters of different planted areas across the site. A list of the park's trees can be found in appendix G. The woodland belt spanning the northern edge of the park provides a shaded walk through a wilder landscape, with a number of small sculptures hidden throughout the trail. Within this section is a mini-beast reserve fenced off from the main walkway. The reserve consists of wood, mulch, leaves and other natural materials that provide an excellent habitat for a range of invertebrates.

Other smaller planted areas within the park include a dahlia garden and herb garden installed and maintained by the Friends of Ward Jackson Park and Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces groups. There are also clusters of bulbs planted throughout the site.

The formal bedding area is a well presented feature positioned on the terraces, with annually replaced bedding plants. This is in keeping with the Victorian heritage of the park. When plants are removed toward the end of their flowering period, park visitors are welcomed to take home the plants upon request to reduce green waste. The formal bedding area is also home to a patch of annual wildflowers, which burst with colour every summer and provide additional forage for pollinators.

# Biodiversity and Landscape

## Lake and Island

The lake spans 0.63 hectares, and supports a range of wildlife. There are a series of boardwalks spanning the perimeter of the lake, equipped with pond dipping/fishing platforms. In the centre of the lake is an island that provides habitat for waterfowl. The island has gradually eroded over time reducing nesting habitat for the waterfowl in the park. Funding opportunities are being considered to reduce the risk of further erosion (see 6.3).



## Wildlife

A list of bird and fungi species known to the park can be viewed in appendix G. There are plans in place for further studies within the park, in order to gain a better understanding of the variety of wildlife supported at this site. The first of these will be a bird survey, as part of the Big Garden Bird Watch (RSPB) in January 2023.

The lake supports a range of wildfowl, including tufted duck, moorhen, coot and mallard which breed within the park. The lake also supports a range of fish and other wildlife. As with other green spaces nearby, the area is likely to be of use to foraging bats.



## Wetland Conservation Area

The wetland area was created by the Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces Charity, in order to assist with drainage in the park. Its aim is to better manage excess surface water flooding as well as retain water during drier periods. It supports a variety of wildlife which is signposted to via educational Nature Watch signs located within the wetland area, to inform visitors on the species visible here. The signage includes information and diagrams of pondweed, pond skaters, dragonflies and caddisflies.



# Biodiversity and Landscape

## 6.3 Environmental Conservation Strategy

As mentioned in section 6.2, the island situated within the lake is gradually eroding. Research is being undertaken to find potential nature based solutions to restore the island habitat, and stall the rate of erosion around the island perimeter. Restoration of the lake perimeter is also required to replace a number of coping stones that form the border. This work is also funding dependant (see action log).

## 6.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is an important concept for town parks. It is a measure of how much biodiversity a park has lost, and how much it has gained. The overall goal for any town park is to achieve a net gain in biodiversity. This can be achieved by planting native plants – which are more resistant to pests and diseases than non-native plants – and by taking care of the existing plants within the parks.

In order to monitor biodiversity within the park, plans are in place to conduct baseline ecological surveys with volunteers. Repeat surveys will take place seasonally and/or annually, dependent on capacity. This will continually evaluate and review the impacts of management practices on biodiversity, in response to climate change and anthropogenic impacts.



# Biodiversity and Landscape

## **Parks provide a mosaic of biodiverse habitats that supports a wide range of wildlife**

- Ensure biodiversity net gain and carbon sequestration is considered in future developments.
- Retain a diverse tree canopy including replacement of felled trees and strategic tree planting, as well as monitoring tree health.
- Provide a variety of suitable habitats for wildlife, allowing nature to thrive.

## **6.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Increase planting for biodiversity and wildlife and associated surveys
- Make informed choices for future planting schemes, with species best suited to ever changing climate conditions
- Investigate lake conservation methods and funding opportunities to complete works,

# 7

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# Heritage and Conservation

- 7.1 HISTORY OF WARD JACKSON PARK
- 7.2 HERITAGE FEATURES
- 7.3 HERITAGE CONSERVATION STRATEGY
- 7.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Heritage and Conservation

## 7.1 History of Ward Jackson Park

Ralph Ward Jackson was a local industrialist, and one of the benefactors of West Hartlepool. When he fell on hard times, a fund was set up by the people to support him, however on his sudden death the money collected was used to develop the park. A competition was launched to design the space, and the design proposed by Matthew Scott (son of the Town Surveyor) was chosen.

## 7.2 Heritage Features

Ward Jackson Park is on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. The main purpose of this register is to celebrate designed landscapes of note, and encourage appropriate protection. Such recognition identifies that the space is cherished not only locally, but nationally as well.

There are a number of Grade II listed buildings and structures in the park including the fountain, bandstand, clock tower, lodge house, and war memorial. As well as these, there are a number of other notable and interesting historical features including the zeppelin bomber memorial stone and commemorative wall.



Commemorative Wall

The commemorative wall located on the northern edge of the park is inscribed with an extract said during a speech at the parks opening. It reads, "A place of recreation, of amusement, and of life and health, where young and old might join together, where all might enjoy themselves and benefit in getting the pure air".



Zeppelin Bomber Memorial Stone

The zeppelin bomber memorial stone is positioned near the terrace walkway, and is to commemorate the event of November 1916 when two bombs fell into Ward Jackson Park, by the lake and terrace.

It is currently partially hidden by grass and the ground surrounding it, and therefore would benefit from a carefully curated border of plants.

# Heritage and Conservation



**Clock Tower**

The clock tower can be found next to the north-east entrance to the park. It was presented to the park in 1921, and is made of red brick with stone dressings, a lead roof and stone ball finial. It is approximately 6m tall.



**War Memorial**

The South-African Boer War Memorial & plinth was erected in 1905 to commemorate those who lost their lives to conflict. The previous bronze figure atop the plinth was stolen in the 1960s, and so a recent public campaign raised funds to restore the figure. It was replaced in September 2022.



**Lodge House**

Built in 1883, the lodge house is divided into functional spaces including garage and gardens as well as a grounds maintenance depot, open yard and storage building. The lodge itself is no longer associated with the use of the park, however it is leased out providing a sustainable use of the building.

# Heritage and Conservation



Bandstand

The octagonal cast-iron bandstand was presented to the park by Sir William Gray in 1900, also to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The bandstand provides an aesthetic focus and point for social gatherings, as it did in the Victorian times. It has a brick and stone base, cast-iron Corinthian columns and a sweeping, decorative metal roof. Most of the original zinc roof was lost in a 1979 storm and so today it is turn-coated stainless steel. Timber roller shutters were installed as part of the restoration works to provide an extra level of security for the structure.

The bandstand is currently used for storage but has been opened on various occasions for performances.



Fountain

The cast iron fountain was built in 1902 and presented to the park by Alderman Dickinson, to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

The fountain is not currently in use due to ongoing issues with flooding of the underground power source. A permanent intervention is required to protect the electric system and restore the fountain to its former function.

## 7.3 Heritage Conservation Strategy

Ward Jackson Park sits within a Conservation Area, contributing through its historical and ecological features. This ensures some level of protection for the park and surrounding properties.

Previous restoration works to a number of the heritage assets were carried out in 1999/2000 through the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which saw the creation of the commemorative wall and restoration to the bandstand. Additionally, in 2018, Friends of Ward Jackson Park raised £10,000 with the Gus Robinson Foundation to restore the bandstand. Upon completion, a brass band concert was held to celebrate its reopening. Since this time the structure has frequently been used, and in 2021 it was utilised as part of the build up to the Waterfront Festival. The bandstand is currently being used as tool an equipment storage for the group, however alternative storage is being investigated in order to re-utilise the bandstand for its original purpose. Funding for restoration to a number of features including the fountain is currently being investigated to enable use of these assets.

## Celebrating the Park's History

Ward Jackson Park and its surrounding area has a rich and interesting history, shown through its variety of buildings, structures, and other installations. There is clear potential to place more of a focus on the park's heritage and to educate park visitors on its history. This could be done through increased signage and the installation of different trails that would be positioned to highlight the historical features.

# Heritage and Conservation

**Historical park features are preserved and the site heritage is elaborated, with educational resources readily available for visitors**

- Restore park features and heritage assets.
- Research the history of each site for future heritage based educational resources, celebration events, and signage.
- Ensure recent park additions are responsibly looked after, as they will become future generations' heritage features.

## 7.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Site Objectives

- Ensure park features, old and new, are carefully looked after and well respected to preserve them for future generations of park visitors.
- Celebrate the parks history through educational resources such as QR code trails.
- Restore heritage features to former usage

# 8

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# Community Engagement

**8.1 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

**8.2 VOLUNTEERING IN WARD JACKSON  
PARK**

**8.3 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP**

**8.4 EVENTS**

**8.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Community Engagement

## 8.1 Community Consultation

The main way in which public consultations are held is via the online platform, Your Say, Our Future. This tool is public facing and allows people to comment on a variety of topics, making their views known and ultimately helping to shape decision making and the future of the site. As discussed in section 1.5 (Road Map), the platform has been used to conduct an initial baseline survey of the parks to gather basic information about public perception of the town's parks and features. The platform will continue to be used for future surveys and consultations.

There is also the opportunity to host drop-in sessions, which would allow park users to chat directly with the Parks and Open Spaces team at HBC as well as on site parks staff. This enables visitors to share their views in an informal setting, rather than a structured and directed survey response. In addition to informal drop-in sessions for the public, the creation of formal stakeholder and interest groups would also benefit the future planning of priorities for the site. This would ensure a variety of voices are heard and represented, providing HBC with a deeper insight. A group could consist of representatives from volunteering groups, residents associations, a youth spokesperson and any other interested parties. Consultation with the community, through surveys, drop-in sessions or formal group consultations, are crucial in order to involve a wider range of voices in the development and future management of the parks.

## 8.2 Community Engagement and Ownership

Ongoing pressures on budgets and capacity has impacted park maintenance and development. The input from active volunteering groups and individuals across the community is invaluable to the continued success of the parks and open spaces. Continuous engagement with local community groups and volunteers, as well as continuing the provision of opportunities to get involved with activities in the park, improves the sense of community ownership of the park. There are plenty of opportunities available within Ward Jackson Park and across the other parks and open spaces for volunteers to get involved at any level. A seasonal calendar of volunteering opportunities can be viewed within appendix H.

## 8.3 Volunteering in Ward Jackson Park

### Volunteering Strategy

To improve the offer for future volunteers, a volunteering strategy has been developed in order to support existing volunteer groups, whilst opening the offer to a wider group of potential volunteers, including corporate partnerships (see section 8.4). The strategy aims to incorporate the concept of 'micro-volunteering', which allows individuals to volunteer their time on their terms, for as little or long as they are able to. This type of volunteering offer does not require a specific level of

commitment and can suit different groups and individuals interested in getting involved, who may not be able to commit the time required by established groups. All volunteering contribution, whether big or small, has a positive impact and helps with the upkeep of green spaces. By widening the offer to incorporate casual and micro-volunteering, it aims to break down some of the barriers that can stop willing people from getting involved.

As well as activities such as weeding, litter picks and other physical works, volunteers can assist with the management of a site simply by paying attention to their surroundings. For example, dog walkers, families and other general park visitors can conduct wildlife surveys, check tree health and look for invasive species whilst going about their daily activities. With the correct knowledge and the tools to report findings, anyone can get involved with these types of activities. Information on how to get involved can be shared with the public via physical signage throughout the park, online, or through volunteer training days for those with more time to give.

# Community Engagement

## Volunteering Groups

The Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces (FOHWGS) group are a registered charity, who undertake a variety of works across Hartlepool's green spaces, including Ward Jackson Park. The group have successfully raised funding on a number of occasions, which has funded projects such as the wetland conservation area and incorporated wildlife ID signage. The group contribute to the regular maintenance of the park through activities such as weeding, litter picking, repairs to boardwalks and developing other park features. The group are supported by the Parks and Open Spaces team one day a week for works across the town's green spaces.

The Big Town Tidy Up are another established group that operate across Hartlepool, providing an invaluable contribution to keeping the town free of litter. They are supported by the Grounds Maintenance team at Hartlepool Borough Council who assist with removing the bags of litter once collected. The group conduct organised events, as well as supporting individuals or smaller groups on their own litter picks. This is done on a more casual basis and run through an active Facebook page, which sees a wide variety of the town's residents involved. The group work with Hartlepower, where they can drop off all crushed cans for responsible recycling. This helps to raise funds for the ongoing activities of the group.

The Friends of Ward Jackson Park are the dedicated friends group for the park. They often spend time on various volunteering tasks including events, fundraising and other activities. The group host a number of events throughout the year, most notably an Easter and summer event. As discussed previously, the group also raised funds for the park that saw the restoration of the much loved bandstand.



# Community Engagement

## 8.4 Working in Partnership

### Corporate Partnerships

The wider volunteering strategy aims to involve corporate partners in volunteering activities. This can be mutually beneficial to the council and supporting businesses, as it provides valuable contributions to the management of a site and can also contribute to a business's corporate social responsibilities (CSR). In addition to corporate volunteering, there are aims to establish working relationships with businesses in Hartlepool. Involvement and contribution from local business allows projects to expand and have a bigger impact, with additional materials, people and input.

### Community Involvement

There are also opportunities to involve a wider range of groups, through activities such as social prescribing and restorative justice. Working with other organisations will provide valuable opportunities for members of the community who may not otherwise make use of these sites.

## Opportunities for Collaboration

A variety of opportunities for the park have been identified throughout this plan, some of which can only be achieved through collaboration with other businesses, groups and communities. These opportunities include:

- Water quality surveys
- Ecological surveys for wildlife and biodiversity

## 8.5 Events

Ward Jackson Park has been used for various events in the past, hosted by a number of different groups, including the volunteering groups mentioned previously, the Place in the Park café, and HBC.

# Community Engagement

## **Partnerships with local businesses, charities, community groups and residents are supported and encouraged throughout the parks and open spaces**

- Ensure active volunteering and community groups are supported in their activities.
- Enable local people to feel pride and establish a sense of ownership, through a number of volunteering and engagement opportunities.

## **8.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Offer wider volunteering opportunities to corporate partners, social prescribing and restorative justice.
- Engage local community through the development of a dedicated stakeholder group.
- Reach out to local businesses, communities and groups for collaboration opportunities.
- Continue to support existing volunteer and community groups

# 9

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# Marketing and Communication

**9.1 PARK BRANDING**

**9.2 DIGITAL RESOURCES**

**9.3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

**9.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Marketing and Communication

## 9.1 Park Branding



Figure 5: Parks and Open Spaces logo.

Working with the Marketing and Communications team at HBC, a collection of brand guidelines including a logo has been developed for the four town's parks—Seaton Park, Burn Valley Gardens, Ward Jackson Park and Rossmere Park. The creation of a recognisable park logo (as displayed in figure 5) and associated brand guidelines will be used for all future resources, including signage and online. A signage review is expected to take place when resource and capacity allows, with the creation of new park signage installed when funding

becomes available. The logo comprises of four icons, each representative of a different park. The butterfly represents the sensory planting in Seaton Park, the bird a symbol for Rossmere Park's little tern colony, the tree representative of Burn Valley Gardens and the flower a reference to Ward Jackson Park's formal bedding plants.

## 9.2 Digital Resources

The main channels of communication for information and updates about the park are as follows:

- Hartlepool Borough Council Website
- HBC | Parks and Open Spaces
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Explore Hartlepool | Parks and Countryside
- Active Hartlepool | Parks

### Website

The Parks and Open Spaces webpage has historically been somewhat limited in terms of the information provided, lacking in images, maps, history and updates. This is not reflective of the quality of the town's parks. A

website transformation will take place in 2023 in order to provide a more useful and interesting service for users. New information will reflect the content provided in this management plan, giving users a clear overview of the park and its features. The website will also provide information for those interesting in volunteering, joining an existing Friends group, and getting involved in surveys and research. There will also be opportunity for users to submit queries for things like holding an event in the park.

## 9.3 Communication Strategy

### Social Media

A social media strategy has been developed to ensure regular updates are shared with the public. Updates can include information about ongoing works in the parks, as well as photographs to showcase the parks through the seasons. Posts are shared via HBC social media channels, informing subscribers to what is going on within the parks and encouraging visitors.

### Signage

There is scope to add more information in a variety of formats such as QR codes, walking trail posts, and physical signage. Not all park visitors have access to a digital device and therefore there must also be provision throughout the parks to include these groups.

# Marketing and Communication

**Parks and open spaces updates are communicated across a variety of channels including digital information, physical signage, and in person events**

- Improve communication about park management, including information sharing and consultation processes to enhance user experience.
- Develop a brand identity for Hartlepool's parks and open spaces.

## 9.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Site Objectives

- Update the parks website with relevant information about the site, recent photographs, a site map and other useful resources.
- Ensure information about the park, events and volunteering opportunities are clearly communicated to a wider audience.

# 10

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# Looking Forward

**10.1 INCOME, BUDGETS AND FUNDRAISING**

**10.2 MONITORING AND ASSESSMENTS**

**10.3 PARK PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

**10.4 WIDER PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

**10.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Looking Forward

## 10.1 Income, Budgets and Fundraising

### Funding and Investment

The park generates revenue for HBC through the café and lodge, which are leased to external businesses. Beyond this, there are no revenue generating activities that take place at this site. The main source of income for the park is through pre-allocated budgets within the council, or through external grants and fundraising.

An investment strategy will be developed in order to effectively plan for future maintenance, conservation and developments to the site. This will enable a targeted approach to funding opportunities.

### Future Budgets

Future investment into the parks must consider the costs of ongoing maintenance as well as potential future pressures on funding, resources and staff. Capital investment grants will be required for any significant refurbishment, installations or initiatives for the site. However, it must be noted that without additional funding for ongoing revenue costs, it is difficult to use such grants to their full potential. This has been considered when researching future funding opportunities.

### Previous Grants

The most recent significant investment to the park took place in 1999/2000 in which a comprehensive refurbishment of the park was carried out. This saw £1.9m invested into Ward Jackson Park, the majority of which came from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Works included restoration of the boundary railings, bandstand and fountain, as well as the creation of the café building that currently houses the Place in the Park café, and other elements such as sculptures and the commemorative wall.

## 10.2 Monitoring and Assessments

### Park Visitor Surveys

Following the initial baseline survey conducted in 2022, there are plans to repeat the survey to identify any changes in perception, use, and satisfaction of visit. Feedback from members of the public is crucial in helping to focus on public priorities for the future management and development of the park. With the creation of park management plans, there will be an in-depth consultation via Your Say, Our Future, as well as face to face drop-in sessions to be inclusive of those without access to the digital resource. This will help to ensure that the plans and initiatives proposed are in line with the community's needs and wants for the parks.

### Wildlife Surveys

To ensure further understanding of the variety of wildlife supported at the site, ecological and biodiversity surveys are required. These will be essential in calculating biodiversity net gain, the impact of management practices and other initiatives, and to monitor any other emerging trends.

Volunteers and park visitors will be encouraged to conduct small surveys during their visits, with guides and key information shared via the HBC Parks and Open Spaces website. Formal surveys will be conducted when funding and resource becomes available.

### Future Funding

For any future funding invested into the park, there will be relevant and appropriate studies to go alongside. The nature and content of such studies will depend on the purpose and proposed outcomes of investment projects. For example, future planting schemes will require wildlife and biodiversity surveys, whereas new equipment to the park would require surveys to park visitors for feedback.

# Looking Forward

## 10.3 Park Plans and Strategies

### Restoration of Park Assets

Issues with activating the fountain require a long term solution, as previous works have not resulted in full restoration. Repairs to the fountain include moving the control panel above ground to reduce ongoing and costly repairs and replacement of electrical elements that have previously been water damaged as a result of flooding. It will also remove the health and safety risk to staff working in a confined space to undertake repair works, providing easier access to the control panel. Costs and funding are currently being investigated in order to complete the works.

### Lake Boundary

There are currently a number of coping stones missing from the decorative lake boundary, as a result of antisocial behaviour causing their destruction. These are in need of replacement to ensure the lake border is well present and safe for visitors. Costs and funding are currently being investigated in order to complete the works.

### Graffiti Removal on Heritage Assets

Graffiti to the clock tower requires removal by an external company, as a jet-wash (via HBC) risks further

damage to the delicate brick. Costs and funding are currently being investigated in order to complete the works.

### Signage Review

A full review of the signage in place at Ward Jackson Park is ongoing, with hopes to update and replace all of the parks signage. The installation of new signs will be funding dependent and therefore there is no timescale attached to this, at this stage. New information boards will include the park logo that is currently being created.

### Digital Resources

As with the physical information present in the park, the digital resources are also being reviewed. Updates to the parks website are ongoing in order to create a more useful and interactive digital resource, matching the quality of the park.

### Tall Ships

As part of the Tall Ships Race 2023, a series of smaller events are planned including a Miniature Tall Ships Race and Water Safety day at Ward Jackson Park. This will take place in June 2023.

# Looking Forward

## 10.4 Wider Plans and Strategies

### Connecting Green Spaces

Rather than viewing the parks and open spaces as individual sites that exist in isolation from each other, a joined-up approach has been taken in order to effectively manage the sites as pieces of a larger area.

Part of this will be to look into connecting these sites through wildlife corridors such as grass verges, hedgerows, urban gardens and avenues of trees. These will provide a route of habitats that helps wildlife move around, and will boost biodiversity. Creating connections between the sites will be in line with the National Pollinator Strategy for England.



### Tall Ships Legacy Gardens

As part of the site dressing for the Tall Ships Race 2023 in Hartlepool, a pop-up pallet garden is being created by the Parks and Open Spaces team with input from a variety of businesses who have donated materials and plants, as well as volunteering groups who have assisted with the construction. Individuals across the town have also given their time and expertise to the project, as well as providing plants and trees for the garden.

The key focus of the garden is the reuse of otherwise scrap or wasted materials, such as pallets, encouraging a circular economy. This even includes the plants themselves, as following the event they will be placed within the town's parks as Legacy Gardens.



### Herbicide Free Zones

Burn Valley Gardens is currently being tested as a pilot for 'no-spray' zones. Grass verges, tree bases and around furniture have been left to grow as a trial to test capability to eradicate the use of herbicides entirely across the parks. Although herbicides are an effective way to maintain the park for aesthetic purposes and weed removal, there are a number of negative effects associated with the use of them. This includes potential negative health effects, negative effect on the environment through destruction of wildlife habitats, soil and water pollution, and also contributing to 'herbicide resistance' whereby weeds have the ability to adapt and resist chemical use. Pilot no-spray zones and accompanying research into alternatives will eventually lead to the eradication of chemicals across all of the town's parks and open spaces, where possible.



# Looking Forward

## **Parks are futureproofed against uncertain economic and environmental scenarios**

- Ensure there is an appropriate monitoring process in place to evaluate the performance of management methods and developments.
- Use plans to prioritise future funding and resources, as and when they become available.

## **10.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Identify external funding opportunities to enable further developments to the site.
- Conduct repeat of baseline survey to establish any changes in public perception and site use.
- Conduct wildlife and biodiversity studies with increased planting efforts.

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# Appendices

- A    PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**
- B    YOUR SAY, OUR FUTURE CONSULTATION**
- C    ACTION LOG**
- D    RISK ASSESSMENTS**
- E    HORTICULTURAL CALENDAR**
- F    FLOWCHART OF ACTIONS**
- G    FLORA AND FAUNA**
- H    SEASONAL VOLUNTEERING  
OPPORTUNITIES**

# Appendix A—Parks and Open Spaces

Sites Managed under the Parks and Open Spaces team at Hartlepool Borough Council:

## Town Parks:

- Ward Jackson Park
- Burn Valley Gardens
- Rossmere Park
- Seaton Park

## Local Nature Reserves:

- Seaton Common and Dunes (SSSI)
- Hart to Haswell Walkway
- Hart Warren Dunes
- Greatham Beck
- Spion Kop Cemetery

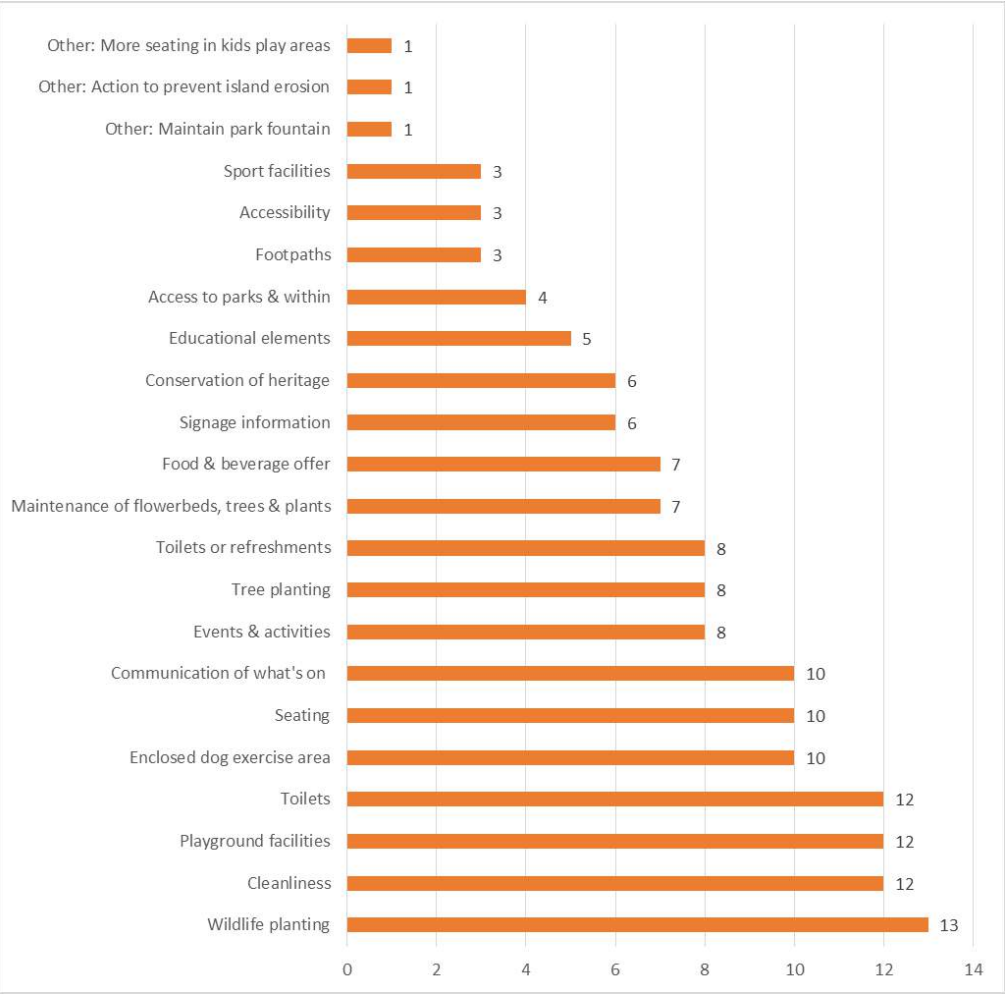
Sites Managed under Active Hartlepool at Hartlepool Borough Council:

- Summerhill Country Park (LNR)

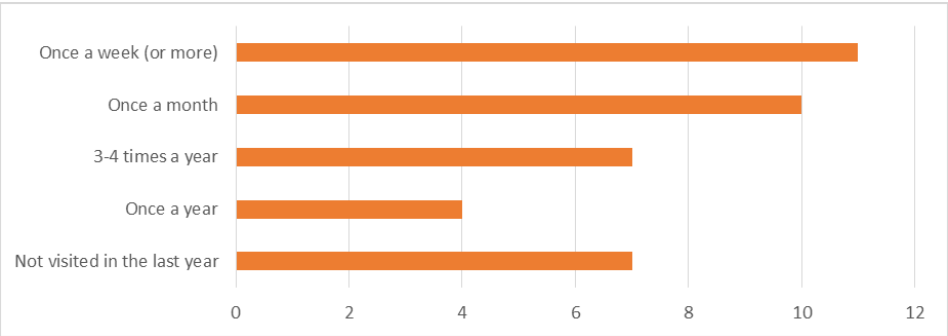


# Appendix B—Your Say, Our Future Consultation

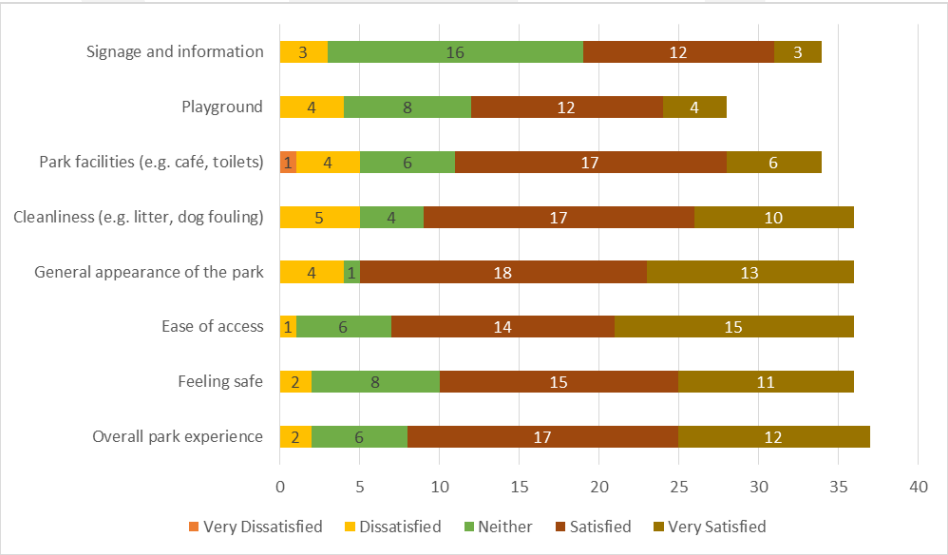
What features could be improved in Ward Jackson Park?



How often do you visit Ward Jackson Park?



How satisfied are you with the following features in Ward Jackson Park?



# Appendix C—Action Log

CHAPTER	ITEM	ACTION	COMMENTS	COMPLETED (DATE)	ACTIONED BY
Welcome and Access	Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update and replace safety signage positioned by the lake and play area.</li> <li>Replace park signage with updated information and parks logo, part of a site wide signage and branding review.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Signage is damaged on a regular basis and therefore requires frequent replacement, adding to further financial pressures.</i></p> <p><i>Signage replaced in line with brand review (see end of table) - funding dependent.</i></p>	Ongoing—aims for 2023	Parks and Open Spaces
Healthy, Safe and Secure	Trespassing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install security fencing around bowling green site to protect turf and building from continued destruction.</li> <li>Install security fencing behind the commemorative wall to protect Bradgate Lodge from continued ASB.</li> </ul>	<p><i>First phase of works completed.</i></p> <p><i>Awaiting approval to allocate the identified funding for extension, works will commence upon approval.</i></p> <p><i>Investigating funding opportunities.</i></p>	Completed (September 2022)	Parks and Open Spaces
	CCTV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install CCTV camera on tower outside café.</li> </ul>		Completed (2022)	Security
Maintenance and Cleanliness	Graffiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove graffiti on clock tower.</li> </ul>	<i>Investigating quotes from external companies (delicate materials). Funding dependent.</i>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Pathways/Surfacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill in potholes throughout park pathways.</li> <li>Resurface external car park (positioned on Park Avenue)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Pathways are monitoring via regular park audits, and non-compliant potholes are covered when required.</i></p> <p><i>External car park is low priority as it does not currently pose risk to users. Funding dependent.</i></p>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Recycling Bin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace recycling bin positioned near the café.</li> </ul>		Completed	Parks and Open Spaces
	Horticultural Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintenance of wetland conservation area required before summer growth.</li> </ul>	<i>Initial works complete with further volunteering days scheduled to maintain this area.</i>	Completed (Winter 2022/23)	Volunteers

# Appendix C—Action Log

CHAPTER	ITEM	ACTION	COMMENTS	COMPLETED (DATE)	ACTIONED BY
Maintenance and Cleanliness	Building and Facilities Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resolve ongoing issues with toilet block facilities.</li> <li>Ensure buildings are maintained to a higher standard.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Under investigation. Regular park audits will help to identify issues as they arise, leading to quicker reporting times.</i></p> <p><i>Continued ASB adds further pressure on funding and capacity to fix recurring issues.</i></p>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces  Buildings Maintenance
Environmental Management	Tree Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct tree health survey across Hartlepool to identify necessary tree works.</li> <li>Train staff to informally identify signs of disease and other threats.</li> </ul>	<p><i>With Arboricultural Officer.</i></p> <p><i>Lantra Tree Survey Course scheduled for parks staff.</i></p>	Ongoing  February 2023	Arboricultural Officer  Parks and Open Spaces
	Chemical Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and implement zones across the site for differing management styles (including no spray zones, no cut zones)</li> <li>Investigate pesticide alternatives to phase out use entirely.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Trial zones have been identified for the upcoming spring/summer months.</i></p>	Ongoing—2023  Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces  Horticulture
Biodiversity and Landscape	Conservation of Lake Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate erosion prevention methods to conserve the lake island.</li> <li>Research funding opportunities to enable intervention project.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Research ongoing however any capital works will require external funding (e.g. grants) as there is no capacity to resolve the issue at this stage,</i></p>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Wildlife Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct baseline wildlife surveys</li> <li>Schedule follow-up surveys on a regular basis with volunteer and community groups.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Big Garden Bird Watch scheduled for Friday 27th January 2023—outcomes available on request.</i></p>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces  Volunteers

# Appendix C—Action Log

CHAPTER	ITEM	ACTION	COMMENTS	COMPLETED (DATE)	ACTIONED BY
Heritage and Conservation	Restoration of Memorial Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace Boer War Memorial Statue.</li> <li>Restore plinth and base with extra landscaping.</li> <li>Add planted border and landscaping around the Zeppelin Bomb Memorial to improve visibility.</li> </ul>		Completed  Completed  Ongoing—aims for 2023	External  Parks and Open Spaces  Grounds Maintenance
	Fountain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fix the electrical issue to enable the use of the fountain.</li> </ul>	<i>Affordable short term fixes have led to continued issues, long term solution required (significantly more expensive). In discussion regarding the allocation of funding for this restoration works.</i>	Ongoing—aims for 2023	Parks and Open Spaces
	Bandstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find alternative storage for tools currently stored in the bandstand.</li> <li>Investigate opportunities for activating bandstand for its intended purpose.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
Community Engagement	Volunteering Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create volunteering handbook to share information about opportunities and practical guide to getting involved.</li> <li>Recruitment drive for new volunteers.</li> </ul>	<i>Handbook is being developed and will be shared out via the HBC social media channels, to prospective volunteers, and within the parks.</i>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Volunteering Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue supporting Friends of Ward Jackson Park.</li> <li>Continue supporting Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces.</li> </ul>	<i>Meet with FOWJP on an ad-hoc basis, providing support when required.</i>  <i>FOHWGS are supported one day a week for activity across all green spaces, often including Ward Jackson Park.</i>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces

# Appendix C—Action Log

CHAPTER	ITEM	ACTION	COMMENTS	COMPLETED (DATE)	ACTIONED BY
Community Engagement	Volunteering Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise volunteering agreement document to allow volunteer groups to work independently of HBC, on their own schedules.</li> </ul>	<i>Working with Health and Safety Officer to draw up an agreement.</i>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces  Health and Safety
	Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share information about regular events held by groups including the café and volunteers.</li> <li>Explore opportunities for HBC to organise further events on the site.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
Marketing and Communication	Park Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresh the parks and open spaces webpage with relevant, up to date information, photographs and other resources.</li> <li>Create park logo to be used on updated signage, website and other resources.</li> </ul>	<i>Currently working with Marketing and Communications for a website refresh.</i>	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
				Completed	Marketing and Communications

# Appendix D—Risk Assessments

Risks assessments related to maintenance, inspections and activities that take place at the site, as well as their associated reference numbers are listed below.

Documents and further information can be provided on request.

Risk Assessments and Reference Numbers:

- General Playgrounds (including inspections): NSD OR414
- Various Park Duties: NSD OR422
- Grass Cutting: NSD OR532
- Exterior Plant Maintenance (spraying operations): NSD OR424
- Litter Picking: NSD OR415
- Tree Works: NSD OR533
- Vegetation Clearance: NSD OR459
- Vegetation Clearance and Drainage: NSD OR548
- Tools: NSD OR546
- Vehicles: NSD OR542
- General Parks and Countryside Events (including volunteer work, school groups, and guided walks): NSD OR54

# Appendix E—Horticultural Calendar

The horticultural maintenance works calendar is a basic breakdown of the seasonal maintenance required within the town's parks. This is to be viewed as a rough guide to the horticultural year, that is subject to change due to a number of circumstances such as climate, financial or staffing pressures.

## Winter Maintenance

- Cut back of rose-beds
- Removal of deep rooted weeds and grasses
- Pruning of shrub beds back from footpaths, reduction in height where appropriate
- Tree works including pruning and felling, where appropriate

## Spring Maintenance

- Rose-bed maintenance begins
- Continued shrub and rose-bed maintenance throughout the season
- Herbicide application on shrub beds, tree bases and around furniture

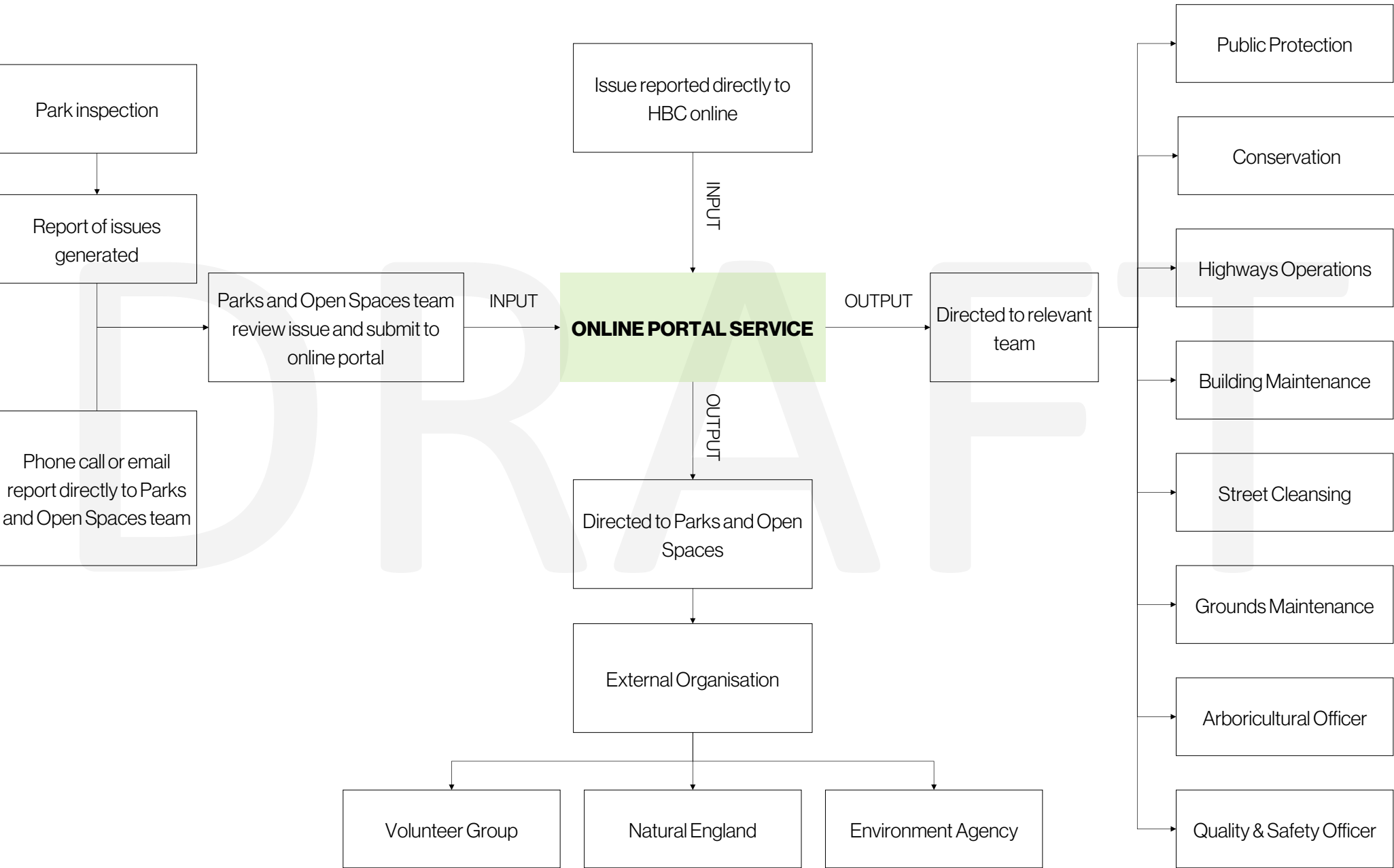
## Summer Maintenance

- Planting of summer bedding plants at the beginning of the season
- Continued maintenance throughout
- Shrub and rose-bed litter picking
- Shrub and rose-bed weed pulling and herbicide application

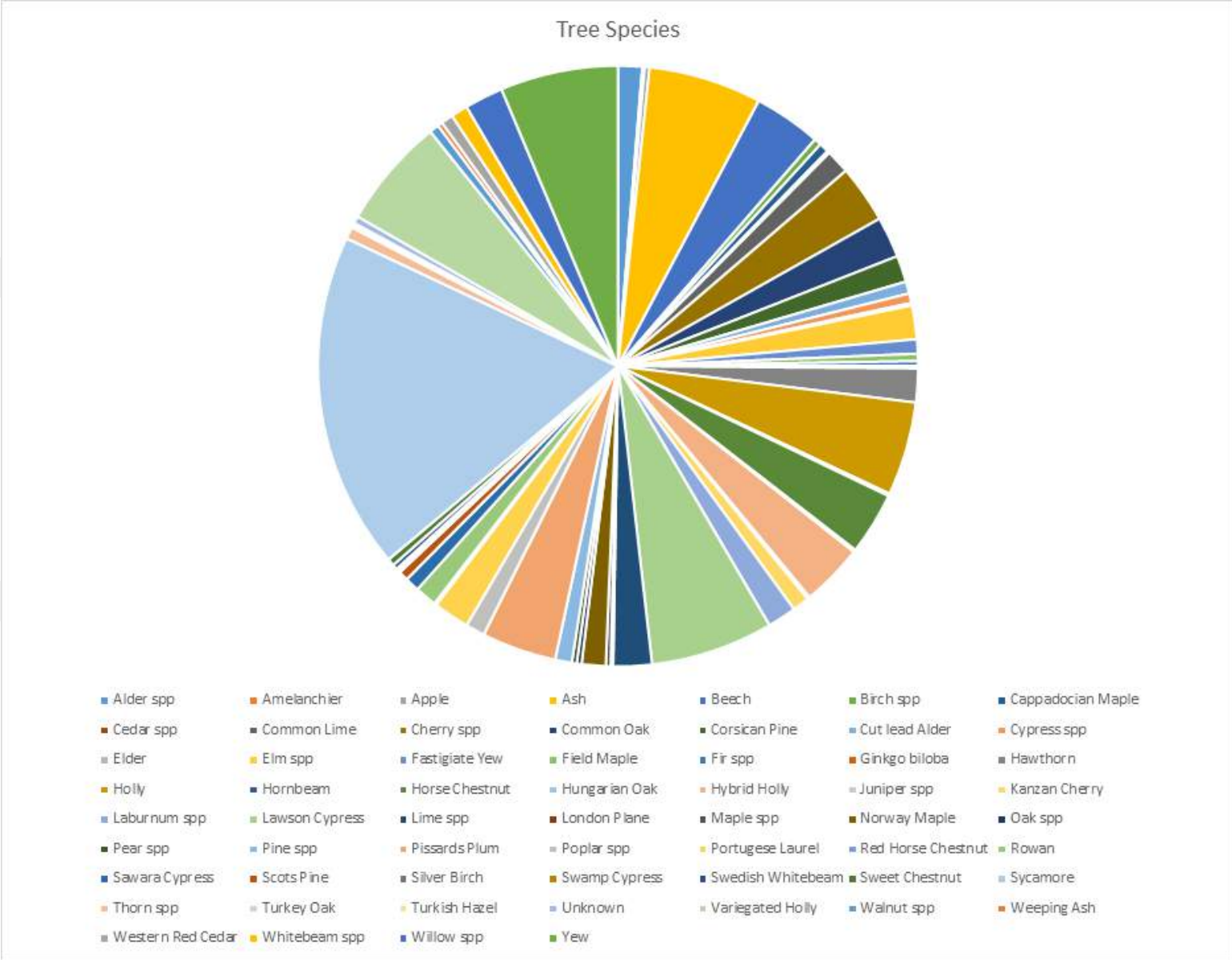
## Autumn Maintenance

- Removal of summer bedding plants at the end of summer season into autumn maintenance
- Replanting of bedding areas
- Tree works including pruning and felling, where appropriate

# Appendix F—Flowchart of Actions



# Appendix G—Flora and Fauna



# Appendix G—Flora and Fauna

## Bird Life

- Barnacle Goose
- Blackbird
- Black Headed Gull
- Blue Tit
- Bullfinch
- Carrion Crow
- Chaffinch
- Coal tit
- Collared Dove
- Coots
- Cormorant
- Dunnock
- Fieldfare
- Goldcrest
- Goldfinch
- Great Spotted Woodpecker
- Great Tit
- Greenfinch
- Heron
- Herring Gull

- House Sparrow
- Jackdaw
- Jay
- Kestrel
- Long Tailed Tit
- Magpie
- Mistle Thrush
- Moorhen
- Mallards
- Marsh Tit
- Muscovy Duck
- Owls
- Robins
- Ring Necked Parakeet
- Pied Wagtail
- Redwing
- Siskins
- Song Thrush
- Starlings
- Swan
- Swallow

- Swift
- Treecreeper
- Tufted Duck
- Woodpigeon
- Wren

## Fungi

- Acer Pseudoplatanus tar spot
- Bracket Fungi
- Bellis Perennis rust
- Mahonia Aquifolium rust
- Rosa Canina rust
- Rosa Spinoissimma rust
- Populus rust
- Field Mushroom
- Inky Cap
- Sulphur Top
- Petasites Hybridus – Coleosporium

# Appendix H—Seasonal Volunteering Opportunities

A selection of volunteering opportunities are listed below, split into maintenance seasons.

## Winter Maintenance

- Tree & Bulb Planting
- Wildlife Surveys
- Vegetation Clearance
- Litter Picking
- General Park Maintenance

## Spring Maintenance

- General Park Maintenance
- Wildflower Planting
- Wildlife Surveys
- Litter Picking

## Summer Maintenance

- Wildlife Surveys
- General Park Maintenance
- Litter Picking
- Events
- Flowerbed Maintenance

## Autumn Maintenance

- Wildlife Surveys
- Flowerbed Maintenance
- Bulb & Tree Planting
- Vegetation Clearance
- Litter Picking

## Get in Touch

Parks and Open Spaces  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Victoria Road  
Hartlepool  
TS25 8AY

[parksandcountryside@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:parksandcountryside@hartlepool.gov.uk)

01429 266522

[Hartlepool Borough Council | Parks](#)



**HARTLEPOOL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

# Seaton Park Management Plan 2023



**HARTLEPOOL**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



**HARTLEPOOL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

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- F Flowchart of Actions
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# 1

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# Introduction

- 1.1 THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PLACE-BASED PLANS
- 1.2 CONTEXT AND WIDER POLICY
- 1.3 SITE OVERVIEW
- 1.4 SITE MAP
- 1.5 ROAD MAP

# Introduction

## 1.1 THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PLACE-BASED PLANS

A place-based plan is a working management plan that aims to provide an overview of a specific site, detailing the sites features and the maintenance, management and conservation involved. It considers the unique characteristics of the site and the needs of all users.

Place-based plans can be viewed as a guide for the effective management and development of a site. An adaptive management process is required to effectively manage a site and appropriately plan for the future. Therefore, place-based plans should be considered a flexible tool, subject to frequent review and adjusted accordingly, in response to economic and environmental uncertainty. The primary goal for a place-based plan is to ensure a site is managed in a sustainable and responsible way, balancing the needs of its visitors and the environment with future budgets and capacity.

Plans enable users to understand why decisions are made with regards to a site, and how such decisions are reached. Through clearly communicated priorities, place-based plans will inform key stakeholders of the sites management from the day-to-day tasks to long term strategic planning.

The management of a park involves a number of factors from varying disciplines, that come together to ensure a site is well-maintained, attractive, functional and sustainable. Based on the Green Flag Assessment

Criteria, these factors include a welcoming atmosphere, maintenance and upkeep, safety and security, environmental considerations, conservation of landscape and heritage, recreation and events, and community involvement.

Through the following sections, this plan will provide details of the site in relation to the above factors, whilst identifying opportunities for development. Within the final section (Section 10 – Looking Forward), the future of the site will be discussed in terms of opportunities, budgets, capacity and assessment. Aims and objectives have been set at the close of each section detailing a clear road map to success, with success being a healthy, welcoming and safe park that serves its local community and allows nature to thrive.

### Development Phases

The development of place-based plans has taken place over five phases—initial consultation, developing written plans, formal consultation, implementation and review.

The first phase saw an initial public consultation and SWOT analysis, providing a baseline understanding of public perception and site usage. Following this, written plans were developed and reviewed internally within HBC by a number of services and the Parks Management Board. Phase three consisted of a formal public consultation, to ensure plans and priorities for the

town's parks were, and continue to be, in line with community needs. Following public consultation, phase four consists of the commencement and continuation of works discussed throughout the plans, undertaken by the Parks and Open Spaces team and led by the Parks Management Board.

The fifth and final phase will see plans formally reviewed and re-published on a five year cycle. In between re-publications, regular check-ins, surveys, and informal consultations will take place on an annual basis to provide updates to the plans. This will identify any changes in site usage and public perception, ensuring parks continue to provide appropriate facilities for the community. Plans will be regularly updated in line with any feedback, works progress, changes to plans and budgets, or with any national trends. This will be done on an ad-hoc basis.

# Introduction

## 1.2 CONTEXT AND WIDER POLICY

A series of place-based plans have been developed for Hartlepool's formal parks and local nature reserves. These have been produced by Hartlepool Borough Council's Parks and Open Spaces team within the Coast, Countryside and Heritage service, in collaboration with a number of other services including (but not limited to) Grounds Maintenance, Planning, and Net Zero. The Parks Management Board of Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) oversee the management and implementation of these plans. The management structure within HBC currently stands as:

Hartlepool Borough Council

Adults and Community Based Services

Preventative and Community Based Services

Coast, Countryside and Heritage

Parks and Open Spaces

There are a multitude of factors from varying social, environmental and economic standpoints that influence the management of parks and open spaces. Nature, public health, culture, community, tourism, sport, recreation – to name a few – all come together to influence the management of these sites. Parks do not exist in isolation from each factor, and so a wide range of strategies, policies, plans and partnerships have fed into

the development of this management plan, as shown in figure 1 on the following page.

First and foremost is the HBC Council Plan (2021/22 – 2023/24), which sets out the town's vision. Directly feeding in to the scope of park management, are the following points that have been carefully considered throughout the development of the plan.

*"Hartlepool will be a place...*

*...where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives:*

- *There is an increased participation in physical activity through access to fit for purpose leisure, sport and recreational facilities including parks and open spaces.*

*...of resilient and resourceful community with opportunities for all:*

- *People are involved in their local community rather than being socially isolated;*
- *Communities are well served with appropriate facilities;*
- *There is a cross sector and coordinated programme of volunteering.*

*...that has an inclusive and growing economy:*

- *We have a high quality visitor attractions and increased visitor numbers.*

*...that is sustainable, clean, safe and green:*

- *Initiatives are in place to tackle climate change;*
- *There is access to good quality, well maintained parks, streets and public spaces."*

**- Council Plan (2021/22—2023/24), Hartlepool Borough Council**

# Introduction

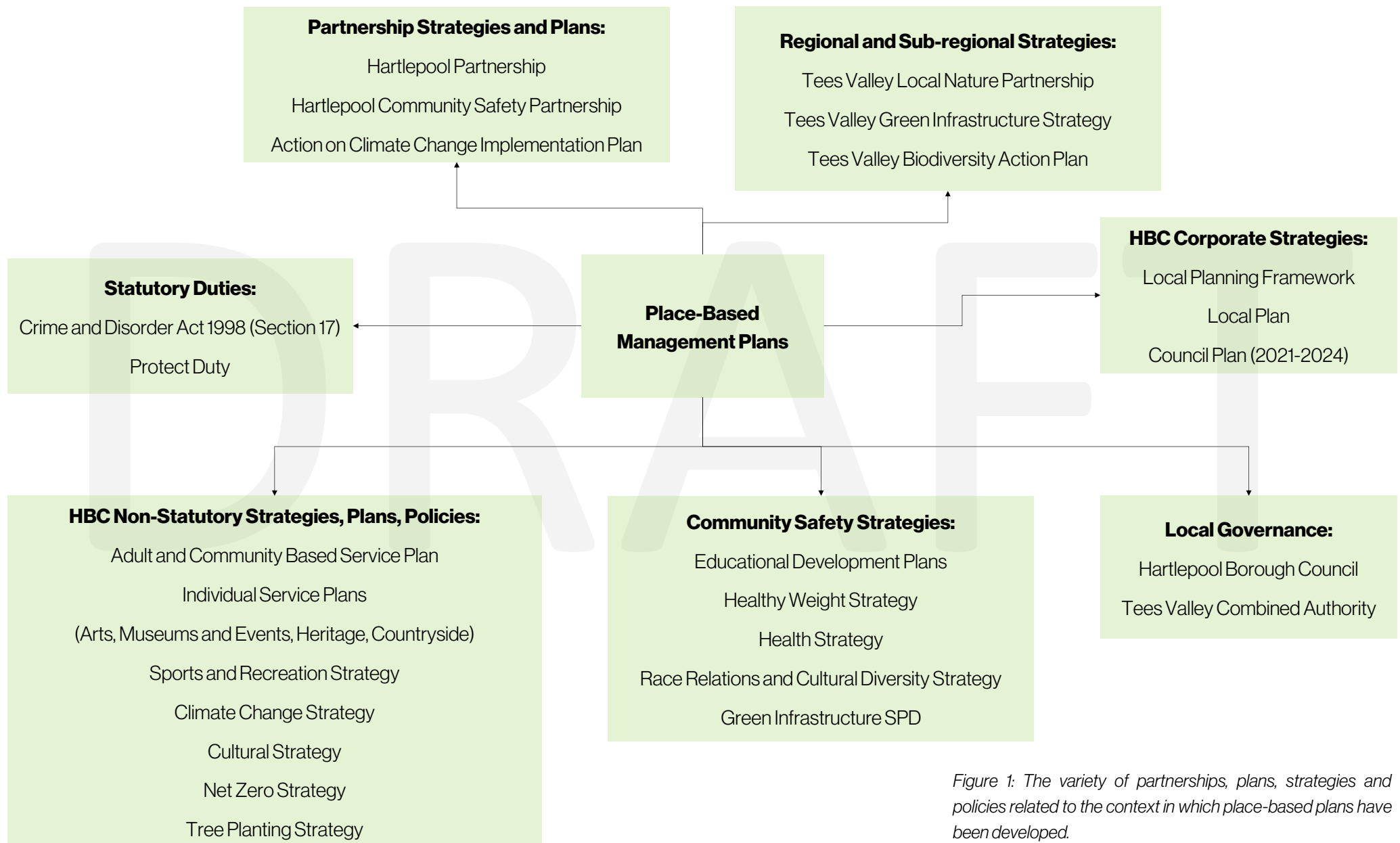


Figure 1: The variety of partnerships, plans, strategies and policies related to the context in which place-based plans have been developed.

# Introduction

## 1.3 SITE OVERVIEW

Seaton Park is a 6.5 hectare park located in the coastal area of Seaton Carew, Hartlepool (figure 2). It is one of 9 sites managed by the Parks and Open Spaces team, a full list can be found in appendix A.

The park is located on land previously forming part of the Glebe Farm Estate, the fields known locally as Dodd's and Eggy's Fields. The fields had many uses including growing crops, for allotments and even grazing for the seafront donkeys. The land was bought in 1961 by Hartlepool Borough Council, and the park officially opened on 28th April 1962.

Its position in Seaton Carew provides a safe area of green space that links the sea front promenade to the residential streets behind. The park is bordered by Station Lane to the north, Holy Trinity School and Church to the south, residential streets (Allendale St, Farndale Road, Grosmont Road) to the west, and Front Street to the east where you can find shops, hotels, cafes and amusements. Park boundaries consist of low brick walls, low steel rail fencing, high wire mesh and concrete posts, as well as a medium high mix wire wooden fencing. There is a variety of tree and shrub planting to form decorative borders inside the site boundaries.

The park is well equipped with features for visitors, including a bowling green, tennis courts, a basketball hoop, sensory garden, wetland conservation area, children's playground and picnic tables.

## Demographics

Seaton Park is situated within the Seaton ward of Hartlepool, which has a population of 7,164 (ONS, 2019). Data shows that the Seaton ward has the second lowest score on the IMD (Indices of Multiple Deprivation), when compared with Hartlepool's other wards, following the Rural West ward, which has the lowest score (Hartlepool Ward Profiles).

## Profile

Site Name—Seaton Park

Site Address—Station Lane, Seaton Carew

Town—Hartlepool

Region—North East England

Postcode—TS25 1AX

OS Grid Reference—NZ524298

Total Area—6.5 Hectares

Plan Prepared By—Hartlepool Borough Council



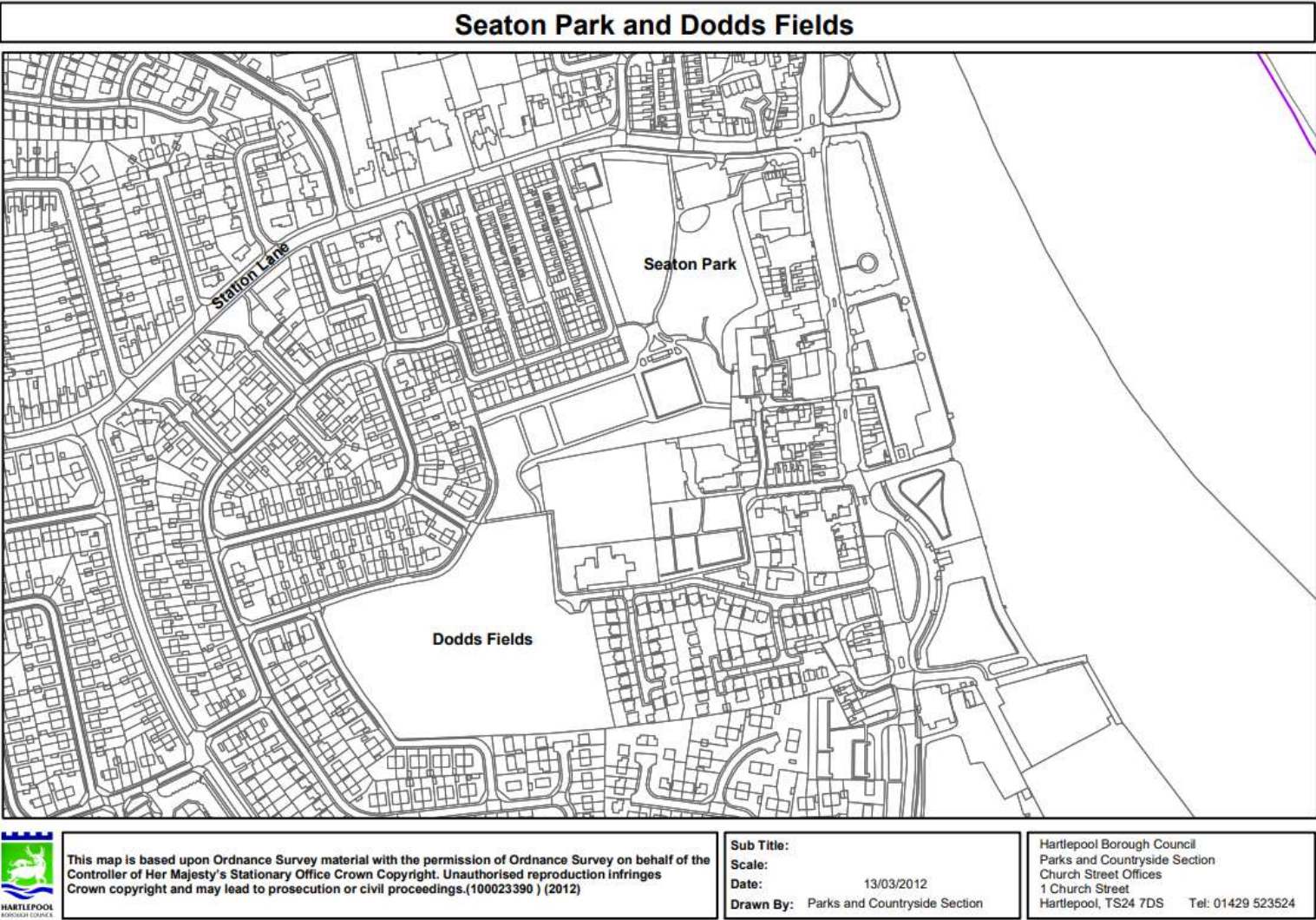
Figure 2: Seaton Park's location within wider Hartlepool

Map Credit: OpenStreetMap

# Introduction

## 1.4 SITE MAP

(Placeholder for detailed site map)



# Introduction

## 1.5 ROADMAP

### Where are we now?

An initial consultation took place in August 2022 to gain further understanding of public perception of Hartlepool's four town parks (Seaton Park, Burn Valley Gardens, Rossmere Park and Ward Jackson Park), and how they are used.

When asked how frequently the parks were visited, over 50% of respondents noted they had not visited Seaton Park within the last year compared with just 18% of respondents having not visited Ward Jackson Park, deemed as the most popular park among users. Despite this, the majority of respondents who have visited in the last year noted they were satisfied with the overall park experience.

There are no public facilities such as a café or toilets available for public use at Seaton Park, and this factor was frequently picked up during the consultation. Park facilities (including 'food and beverage offer' and 'toilets') were voted as some of the top features for improvement, and the features most respondents were dissatisfied with at the park. The playground facilities were also voted as a top feature for improvement as well as maintenance of flowerbeds, trees and plants. Further information and survey charts for the consultation results relating to Seaton Park are available in appendix B.

Using feedback from the public consultation along with

local and anecdotal knowledge, a SWOT analysis has been conducted (figure 3). The outcomes of these initial studies provided a baseline on which the place-based plans have been developed.

Discussed through Sections 2-9 of the plan is a detailed overview of a number of the sites features, maintenance, conservation and community. These sections have been developed in line with the Green Flag Assessment Criteria as a guideline.

### Where do we want to be?

There is a clear vision for Hartlepool's parks and open spaces, with the following aims:

- Parks are welcoming, easily accessible sites that cater to all users.
- Parks provide an inclusive and safe space focused on health and wellbeing.
- Parks are kept to a high standard, through impactful maintenance and cleansing routines.
- Park management ensures nature is considered and not compromised, protecting and futureproofing the parks natural assets against an uncertain future climate.
- Parks provide a mosaic of biodiverse habitats that support a wide range of wildlife.

- Historical park features are preserved and the site's heritage is celebrated, with educational resources readily available for visitors.
- Partnerships with local businesses, charities, community groups and residents are supported and encouraged throughout the parks and open spaces.
- Parks and open spaces updates are communicated across a variety of channels including digital information, physical signage and in person events.
- Parks are futureproofed against uncertain political, economic and environmental scenarios.

In order to achieve these, a series of objectives and actions have been identified in line with each section. Specific actions for these objectives can be seen in an action log, available in appendix C.

# Introduction

## How do we get there?

The objectives and associated action points have been identified in order to demonstrate the development priorities for the site. When funding, resource and capacity allow, action points will be implemented. It is important to note that the purpose of these plans are to provide strategic guides for the effective management and development of the sites, through identifying site priorities. It may not always be possible to commence works on each action, due to budgets and capacity. Outlining priority areas for development is essential in order to be prepared for when opportunities become feasible. The final section of this plan (Section 10 – Looking Forward) will discuss the future plans, monitoring, budgets and assessments anticipated for the site.

### Strengths

- Accessibility from residential areas and Seaton Carew front
- Large areas of uninterrupted green spaces for sports and recreation
- Sports facilities including tennis and basketball
- Safe walking route between residential streets, school, and the popular sea front
- Located in a popular seaside area

### Weaknesses

- Subject to frequent flooding events resulting in waterlogged grassy areas and weakened soil at risk of further damage
- Limited budgets and capacity for maintenance routine and park developments
- No public facilities such as café or toilets
- Lack of diverse planting schemes throughout the park

### Opportunities

- Large areas of open space provide areas for future tree planting
- Installation of a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) to address flooding issues and support wildlife
- Events and activities in large open spaces
- Increased and improved signage
- Promotion of existing sports facilities
- Increased involvement of volunteers

### Weaknesses

- Antisocial behaviour
- Damage to playground facilities
- Increased financial and staffing pressures for maintenance and preservation of the site
- Increase in extreme weather events such as flooding or droughts impacting on grassed and planted areas

Figure 3: SWOT Analysis for Seaton Park

# 2

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## Welcome and Access

**2.1 A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE**

**2.2 ACCESS AND INCLUSIVITY**

**2.3 SIGNAGE**

**2.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Welcome and Access

## 2.1 A Welcoming Atmosphere

Seaton Park welcomes visitors from a number of entrances, the main entrance point being located at the northern edge of the park. From this point, there are clear lines of sight across much of the park due to the large areas of open space stretching to the bowling green and tennis courts.

The Horticultural team, as well as groups of dedicated volunteers, work to ensure the park is well kept and continues to welcome a variety of visitors to enjoy the space. Work includes trimming of hedges and shrubs to reduce any potential hiding places that may shield unwanted behaviours, as well as litter picking to improve cleanliness, and planting bulbs and wildflowers for a touch of colour throughout. HBC parks staff and volunteer groups are easily identifiable, with relevant logos visible on hi-vis jackets worn by individuals.

Residential housing overlooks the majority of the park, and the site is popular with dog walkers and so there are often people present in the park throughout the day. This provides a strong amount of natural surveillance of the site, acting as an effective deterrent to antisocial behaviour.

## 2.2 Access and Inclusivity

### Access

The location of the park within Seaton Carew provides a safe pedestrian link between residential street to the west, and the main promenade to the east. Seaton Park can be reached by car, via public transport, or on foot from nearby stations.

If travelling by car, the main car park serving Seaton Park is located at the northern entrance to the park, with access via Station Lane. From this point, the network of footpaths spans the entire park to the playing fields located at the southern edge of the site. There are a number of other pedestrian access points positioned around the parks boundary.

The closest bus stop is located on Front Street, and has a raised kerb. It is served frequently by the number 1 bus service. Seaton Carew train station is located along Station Road to the west of the park, and is approximately a 15 minute walk away. The station is served by Northern Rail, with trains travelling north to Newcastle and south to Middlesbrough approximately every hour.

### Inclusivity

Seaton Park is an easily accessible site, with a variety of inclusive features. The network of footpaths is constructed of tarmac, providing level paving across the site that leads to the majority of park features. Tarmac paving is suitable for a range of needs including pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility impairment vehicles. The only park feature not accessed via tarmac paving is the wetland conservation area, which can be reached by crossing a flat, grassed area.

For rest and recreation, there are a number of accessible picnic benches positioned close to the children's play area. These benches are inclusive for wheelchair users.

## 2.3 Signage

There is limited signage throughout Seaton Park, in keeping with the neat appearance of the park. A large information board is positioned on the bowling green fencing, which provides an overview of the site, its history and its features. Other park signage includes smaller information boards detailing expected behaviours within the park relating to dogs and litter, as well as relevant signage for the parks features (sensory garden, wildlife identification boards, and the wetland conservation area).

# Welcome and Access

## **Parks are welcoming, easily accessible sites, that cater to all users**

- Review signage and landscaping to create an inviting atmosphere to each place.
- Ensure the atmosphere of the park appropriately matches the functionality of the site.
- Review accessibility of site assets including footpaths, seating, play equipment and signage.

## **2.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Improve accessible and inclusive offer within children's play area and seating areas
- Ensure pathways are kept safe and accessible for all users
- Replace and update park information boards with relevant, up to date information
- Create welcoming park entrances with increased planting

# 3

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## Healthy, Safe and Secure

**3.1 FEATURES AND FACILITIES**

**3.2 HEALTH AND ACTIVITY**

**3.3 LEGAL**

**3.4 PERSONAL AND PARK SECURITY**

**3.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## 3.1 Features and Facilities

### Provision

Seaton Park has a variety of features and facilities for play, exercise and to support wildlife. Sporting facilities include the bowling green and associated clubhouse, as well as tennis courts for public use. The courts also feature basketball hoops for alternative use. The playing fields located to the south of the site provide a large open space for sport and recreation, including football.

The children's play area has a mixture of traditional play equipment, and a wooden sunken ship to encourage imaginative play.

Natural features in Seaton Park include the wetland conservation area and sensory garden, both developed and installed by local volunteering groups (Friends of Seaton Park and Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces). The sensory garden features a number of sculptures and sensory plants to create a calm space within the wider park. Further information is available in section 6 (Biodiversity and Landscape).

There are no toilet facilities or a food and beverage offer available at Seaton Park, however there are a number of cafés located close by in Seaton Carew.

There is also a Community Hub located in the northwest corner of the park, that is expected to see a number of improvements to it commencing in 2023.

### Safety

Health and safety checks occur regularly within the site. Playgrounds are routinely inspected by the Quality and Safety Officer, with inspections taking place multiple times a week. A full inspection of the playgrounds is carried out on a monthly basis, with an independent assessment made annually to ensure the site continues to be safe and meet all appropriate regulations. The site as a whole undergoes a quarterly inspection audit carried out by the Parks and Open Spaces team, where any other dangerous equipment (such as broken park benches) is flagged. For more information see section 4 (Maintenance and Cleanliness). A list of relevant risk assessments related to park and playground inspections and maintenance can be viewed in appendix D.

## 3.2 Health and Activity

### Public Health

There are a number of procedures in place for the instance of a public health emergency such as the recent Covid-19 pandemic, as well as animal health such as avian influenza. HBC's Public Protection service are contacted in the event of an emergency, and external organisations such as Defra or the Environment Agency are contacted if required.

Parks can provide a positive impact on the overall health

of the community, through both psychological and physical benefits. Time spent in parks and open spaces is seen to enhance a person's overall wellbeing by reducing stress and improving mental health, leading to potential positive impacts on their physical health.

### Air Quality

Vegetation such as trees, plants and grass help to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, whilst replenishing the oxygen levels, promoting a healthier environment. Through particulate matter filtration, vegetation in the parks also act as natural filters that trap and remove particulate matter from the air, thus improving the surrounding air quality. Additionally, parks will dense tree cover can have a cooling effect, reducing the ambient temperature and thus preventing higher temperatures exacerbating air pollution.

# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## Active Choices

Parks serve as spaces that encourage physical activity.

As mentioned, Seaton Park provides a variety of opportunities for exercise and activity including the provision of sporting facilities such as outdoor bowls. Within the park are a selection of tennis courts, available for public use throughout the year. The courts also feature basketball hoops along the western edge of the fencing. The park connects to Dodd's fields toward the south of the site, an area often used by the public and schoolchildren from the nearby Holy Trinity School for recreational activities such as football and running. Similar to the playing fields there are smaller areas of open space within the park itself, which can be used for activities such as group sports or picnics. However, these areas often become flooded following heavy rainfall and unsuitable for use (see section 5.5).

Nearby walking trails at Seaton Carew beachfront provide an opportunity to expand trails to include the park within a walking route.

## 3.3 Legal

### Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO)

The Parks and Open Spaces PSPO 2021 (HBC) states that at any time, it will constitute an offence should any person:

- Use a skateboard, bicycle or scooter in a manner likely to cause annoyance, nuisance or damage;
- Camp or otherwise stay overnight;
- Fish in the areas when the park is closed to the public or;
- Use an unauthorised mechanically propelled vehicle (MPV) such as motorbikes, scooters, quad bikes and motor cars.

This Order came into force on 1st April 2021 and shall remain in force for a period of three years, from that date. HBC may extend, vary, or discharge it before the expiry of the Order.

Another PSPO is currently in place covering the control of dogs in relation to:

- Dog fouling and dog walkers carrying the means to pick up their dog's mess.
- Dogs must be on a lead where signposted.
- Dogs must not enter the children's play area.
- Dog walkers cannot take more than four dogs at a time to the park.

Site visits by HBC Enforcement Officers are made on request, should it be made apparent that the above are regularly being ignored, however there are a good number of dog waste bins provided on site and the majority of users respect the space.

## Byelaws

There are a number of byelaws made by HBC in effect at Seaton Park. These are in relation to the following:

- Entry outside of public opening times;
- MPV's and rights of way;
- Cycling;
- Overnight vehicle parking;
- Horse riding;
- Climbing of walls, fences, trees, barriers or railings;  
Removal or displacement of barriers, railings, posts, seats, or any structure/ornament;
- Erection of posts, and;
- Camping.

A full breakdown of the byelaws in place at the site can be made available on request.

# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## 3.4 Public and Park Security

### Maintenance Techniques and Design Out Crime

For future developments and installations within the site, designing out crime principles must be considered. The aim of this is to reduce the vulnerability of both people and property to crime and antisocial behaviour by removing opportunities within the site through specific design techniques.

### Protect Duty

In preparation for the Protect Legislative Duty, HBC has formed part of a network across the north east that has launched the North East Pilot. This includes 33 local authorities and 7 police forces, and aims to build capability for security considerations and mitigations. The Pilot focuses on Publicly Accessible Locations (PALs), including town parks. The formation of a PAL group involving public and private sector partners uses a joined-up approach to identify risks and reduce vulnerabilities. Burn Valley Gardens was chosen for a site assessment, forming part of the Pilot.

### Park Staff

The site is regularly maintained with 2 members of staff permanently placed and a further 14 staff forming a core workforce across all parks and open spaces. Parks staff

participate in a varied training programme to ensure up to date skills and knowledge, in order to maintain the site and provide support to those who need it. This has included counter terrorism training for open spaces and first aid training.

### Park Security

For public safety, there is CCTV camera coverage of the site.

# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## **Parks provide an inclusive and safe space, focused on health and wellbeing**

- Develop walking routes and interactive trails between green spaces, to encourage active choices for all ages and abilities.
- Outreach workers to engage with groups exhibiting continued antisocial behaviour in order to reduce damage to park assets and to encourage a safer, more welcoming atmosphere.
- Reduce opportunity for trespassing and antisocial behaviour in current problem areas and future developments, through consideration of extra security measures, design techniques and natural surveillance.

### **3.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### Site Objectives

- Connect Seaton Park to the wider green and blue infrastructure surrounding the park to encourage safe and interesting walking trails
- Address ongoing flooding and waterlogging issues, allowing lawns to be used for sport and recreation when dry
- Improve promotion of varied sporting facilities available at Seaton Park
- Consider further designing out crime techniques and principles for future park developments

# 4

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# Maintenance and Cleanliness

- 4.1 LITTER AND WASTE MANAGEMENT
- 4.2 FACILITIES, BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
- 4.3 EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE
- 4.4 HORTICULTURAL MAINTENANCE
- 4.5 ARBORICULTURAL MAINTENANCE
- 4.6 MONITORING
- 4.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## 4.1 Litter and Waste Management

Waste bins are situated throughout the park and are emptied weekly, with a site-wide litter pick taking place five days a week. Excess litter found is removed on a reactionary basis. Regular litter picks are also organised by volunteering groups and the local community, on a reactive and more casual basis.

## 4.2 Facilities, Buildings and Infrastructure

Facilities at Seaton Park include the tennis courts and bowling green, both of which are maintained by HBC. The bowls clubhouse however is the responsibility of the Seaton Outdoor Bowls Club, and access is only granted to the club and HBC staff. The bowling green turf is tended to by the Horticultural team within HBC.

Other park infrastructure such as footpaths, roads inside the site boundary, gates and signage are the responsibility of multiple services within HBC. This includes Highways, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance. Regular park inspections record issues such as graffiti, potholes, broken fencing or railings, and building issues, with the appropriate teams then notified to take action. The severity of the issue will determine the timescale in which it is dealt with. If the issue poses an immediate risk to park users then teams will be called out to deal with the issue as soon as possible (section 4.6).

## 4.3 Equipment Maintenance

### Tools and Vehicles

Park maintenance equipment used by HBC staff is maintained in line with relevant Health & Safety policies and legislation. Where required, staff undergo training and certification to operate equipment or machinery and are issued with PPE for use. Equipment is serviced on an annual basis by HBC Stores with records kept.

Vehicles are kept in a central hub where they are serviced and maintained to standard. Regular checks are undertaken by drivers with a standard check taking place before the use of each vehicle. Any issues flagged during this check or during use of the vehicle are immediately passed to Fleet Services, who are responsible for resolving vehicle issues.

### Volunteers

Volunteering groups have access to hand tools for basic park maintenance. Trained and certified individuals may also use power tools under the supervision of the Parks and Open Spaces team. Further details are available in the Parks and Open Spaces Community Engagement and Volunteering Strategy that can be made available upon request. For all volunteering groups who wish to operate within the site, supervised or unsupervised, there is an Operating Agreement in place covering all health and safety information. This agreement must be signed

by both parties (volunteer group & HBC) before an activity is able to take place.

### Play Equipment

Play equipment on site is inspected multiple times a week and a full operational inspection is undertaken on a monthly basis. Inspections are completed in house by an RPII Operational Inspector. In addition to regular in house checks, an annual inspection is completed by an independent RPII Annual Inspector. This ensure the equipment is fit for use, adheres to all relevant legislation, and meets appropriate safety regulations.

# Maintenance and Cleanliness



## 4.4 Horticultural Maintenance

Maintenance of natural features including shrubs, planting and lawns is overseen by the Horticultural Operations Officer, and consists of:

- Maintenance of grassed areas within the park, carried out bi-weekly during the growing season (March to November).
- Weed control within the shrub beds and hard standing areas using approved herbicides, as and when required, during the growing season.
- Litter picking of shrub bed areas within the park, as and when required, throughout the year.
- Removal of litter, fly tipping and debris from the lake when deemed necessary.
- Planting bulbs, bedding plants and perennials during the planting season.

A full breakdown of the yearly horticultural maintenance schedules can be found in appendix E.

## 4.5 Arboricultural Maintenance

The parks trees are visually inspected by on-site staff on a regular basis. Works are carried out during the winter period of November to March, by qualified internal Arborists under the direction of the Horticultural Operations Officer, in liaison with the Arboricultural

Officer. A reactive call out service is provided outside of the core working months in the case of fallen trees or dangers that may be present to users of the park.

Trees situated adjacent to pathways, playgrounds and seating areas are within high usage zones, where it is more likely that park users are present in these areas. Sections of wider open spaces are considered lower usage zones, due to the frequency in which these spaces are used in comparison to the more congested areas listed above. Trees located in high usage zones are therefore prioritised for maintenance works when required, including pruning and felling of trees.

In some cases, it is possible and most favourable to remove hazardous limbs/branches in order to make the tree safe rather than felling the whole tree. This is both the more environmentally favourable and lower cost option. Larger and older trees have sequestered the most carbon from the atmosphere and are therefore valuable park assets, in terms of climate sustainability. Additionally, standing dead wood can provide excellent habitats for invertebrates and other wildlife. Further information about procedures for managing the tree canopy including tree pests and diseases can be found in section 5.6.

# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## 4.6 Monitoring

### Park Inspections

In addition to the maintenance schedules already in place for Seaton Park, there are regular checks and inspections taking place to keep on top of any arising issues.

Park inspections are completed regularly by the Parks and Open Spaces team as well as informal checks by on-site staff, with an in-depth site audit taking place on a quarterly basis. Park audits include a review of all the parks features and facilities, including (but not limited to) pathways, buildings and infrastructure, tree health, bodies of water, graffiti, litter and sports facilities. A full breakdown of features reviewed can be provided on request. During an audit, features are logged as compliant, monitoring or non-compliant, in order to provide an overall park performance score. Non-compliant features are reported via an online portal service following each audit, directing the issue to the relevant team for action. A flowchart can be viewed in appendix F, detailing the process for reporting on any issues related to the park.

Reports are completed following each inspection with records kept including date, a list of the features, overall score and associated photographs of issues. Reports are reviewed throughout the year to identify any trends or continuously non-compliant features that may require further intervention.

### Online Portal

The online portal service is provided by HBC and is used both internally, and available to the public. The portal allows users to submit any issues, comments, or service requests (such as cleansing) and is sent directly to the relevant service within HBC. Internal access to the portal is used to effectively manage any arising issues across the town. The service is used for a wide range of issues across Hartlepool, and park specific forms should be submitted through the Parks and Recreational Areas Portal.

There are a number of teams involved in the resolution of park related issues, and in some extreme instances it may be necessary to involve external organisations for assistance or advice. Key teams are as follows:

- **Parks and Open Spaces**—responsible for the overall management and development of the site.
- **Quality and Safety Officer**—playgrounds, safety of equipment and water safety.
- **Horticulture**—horticultural maintenance across the borough, including tree works and a team of arborists.
- **Arboricultural Officer**—monitoring of tree health, development of tree strategy.
- **Street Cleansing/Grounds Maintenance**—general maintenance of park and wider areas, litter and waste management.
- **Highways Operations**—fixing path network. Building Maintenance: responsible for resolving issues with buildings and infrastructure.
- **Public Protection**—public and animal health.
- **Conservation** (within Heritage and Countryside)—heritage assets and features.
- **Volunteering Groups**—help with upkeep of any installations within the park they have developed, along with regular maintenance of the park.
- **Natural England**—event of an emergency related to their works.
- **Environment Agency**—as above.
- **Defra**—advice and action on animal health.

# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## **Parks are kept to a high standard, through impactful maintenance and cleansing routines**

- Conduct regular site audits to monitor the site, ensuring issues are resolved in a timely manner and contributing to the longevity of assets.
- In future developments, prioritise self-maintaining or low maintenance schemes.

## **4.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Increase park maintenance activities through mobilisation of volunteering groups.
- Conduct regular park inspections to ensure issues are dealt with in a timely manner.

# 5

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# Environmental Management

**5.1 WASTE MINIMISATION**

**5.2 CHEMICAL USE**

**5.3 PEAT USE**

**5.4 MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

**5.5 CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION**

**5.6 BIOSECURITY**

**5.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Environmental Management

## 5.1 Waste Minimisation

The park is supplied with ample waste bins (including dog waste) to encourage park users to dispose of waste responsibly. There are recycling options available across the site.

Where possible, natural waste from park maintenance is shredded on site and used as mulch. Larger pieces of timber from tree works are removed by an external company and repurposed. Excess materials to the needs of the park, and any other green waste, is removed to the council's transfer station for recycling.

## 5.2 Chemical Use

Pesticide use has been reduced to a minimum within the park, where possible. Glyphosate is present in the Round-Up 360 product used as weed control on a regular basis within shrub beds, around street furniture and along grass verges. Records are kept for the total amount of glyphosate used across the borough. A small amount of fungicide is also used to control turf-borne disease on the bowling green. An economically and environmentally sustainable alternative has not yet been identified.

## 5.3 Peat Use

There is currently no peat used within the site.

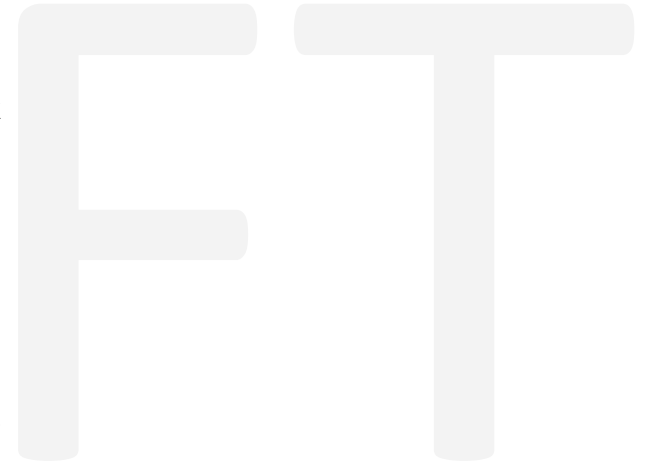
## 5.4 Managing Environmental Impact

There are a number of points to consider when addressing the environmental impact of a site – both positive and negative. Site buildings such as the bowling pavilion building have an environmental impact on the park through the use of electricity, water and gas, which are required for the use of the facilities. Park maintenance has an environmental impact through its use of vehicles, power tools and equipment, herbicides, and waste disposal methods. These impacts are mitigated by keeping public vehicles out of the park beyond the parking spaces, using hand tools instead of power tools where possible, minimising herbicide use and using composting bins for organic waste disposal instead of landfill sites.

As well as the potential negative impacts of activities and buildings within the site, the park as a green space can have a number of positive environmental impacts extending beyond the boundaries of the site. Green spaces can serve as nature reserves within an urban setting, they act as 'lungs' for towns through green infrastructure such as tree cover, contributing toward improved air quality and natural carbon sequestration.

Not only must we consider the impact of the site on the wider environment, but also the impacts of a changing environment on the site. When managing green spaces it is important to consider how different interventions can be utilised in order to adapt to a changing climate, while

mitigating the impacts where possible. Possible environmental impacts to consider include rising temperatures, which may lead to increased heat stress in wildlife, drought periods which may affect water availability, and changes in seasonal growth of plants. The following section will discuss a number of climate change adaptation strategies relevant to Seaton Park.



# Environmental Management

## 5.5 Climate Change Adaptation

A changing climate can pose many risks to a green space site, including increased risk of flooding, pressure on drainage systems, habitat and species loss, threats from extreme weather events such as storms or droughts, as well as changing temperatures and the impact that will have on native flora and fauna. Green spaces such as Seaton Park provide a crucial opportunity to adapt, mitigate and reduce the impacts of climate change, through numerous interventions and strategies.

### Droughts and Flooding

We are experiencing extreme weather events much more frequently, including extended periods of drought as well as storm events, both having a serious impact on green spaces. Droughts and high temperatures can kill or weaken plant life, whilst reducing the permeability of the grounds surface layer. Less rainfall is then able to be absorbed, and therefore we see an increase in surface run-off and flash flooding events. Preparing the ground and plant life for extreme weather events such as drought or flooding is one way to address this. Creating changes to areas of open space through the installation of schemes such as wetland conservation areas, dipping ponds, and sustainable drainage will help to control excess water in flooding instances and in drought periods help with water retention. Future planting

schemes must also consider how well certain species can survive in these extreme weather events. The wetland conservation area in Seaton Park helps with water retention and biodiversity, however the park would benefit from further interventions.

### Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Surface water flooding is a recurrent issue at Seaton Park, where the park's surface is flatter and the lawns become waterlogged. Excess storm water gathers in an area previously believed to have been a historic grazing pond, providing a temporary habitat for wildlife that disappears once the water eventually drains and/or evaporates. Installation of a sustainable drainage system (such as a rain garden) would help to manage excess water through the manipulation of surface run-off and the absorption or retention of water through planting schemes. The system would improve water quality, benefitting a range of wildlife.

### Tree Cover

The current climate is altering how both native and non-native trees in the UK are now reacting. Hotter summers and milder winters can alter the phenology of trees, meaning that a different approach to planting may be required. The local environment must be carefully considered when selecting and implementing a diverse

and lasting range of species. While prioritising native species is beneficial for promoting biodiversity, mitigating the risks of invasive non-native species (INNS) and diseases, and supporting the local ecosystem, it is also important to recognise the value of incorporating non-native species. Non-native tree species can provide additional ecological functions and contribute to the adaptability of green spaces in the face of a changing climate. Ensuring each species will be carefully matched to an ideal planting location will be essential, taking into account the longevity and suitability of the site.

Retention and expansion of the current tree canopy will help to combat extreme heat, by providing more shade for a direct cooling effect. Tree establishment will focus more on ensuring that existing and new planting schemes are able to establish and flourish within their environment, in turn giving a higher percentage yield of successful planting whilst reducing the need and effects of having to replant failed saplings.

Unlocking funding and resource to increase planting efforts across the borough and within the town's parks is a priority going forward, and current regional schemes such as Trees on Tees and the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund will be utilised to assist with this. More information can be made on request.

# Environmental Management

## 5.6 Biosecurity

Biosecurity is the prevention of the introduction and spread of harmful organisms (Forestry Commission). These include non-native pests such as insects, and disease causing organisms (pathogens) such as some bacteria and fungi. Pests and diseases can be introduced through a number of ways, via:

- Live plants and trees;
- Timber and wood packaging;
- Dirty tools, kit, machinery and vehicles;
- Organic matter such as soil, and;
- Natural methods such as water and wind.

### Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Although not present in Seaton Park, three species in particular pose a threat within the parks and open spaces in Hartlepool and across the wider Tees Valley. These are Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam, and are all classed as amber-list species. In line with the North East INNS Strategy Action Plan (2020), the aim for amber-list species is to reduce their impact through controlled measures, as they are already widespread within the region and so eradication is therefore not feasible.

### Control Measures

There are a number of control measures in place for HBC staff and teams to manage the spread of any INNS. These include:

- Staff are informally trained to identify INNS.
- Kit, clothing, boots, equipment and tools cleaned as part of routine maintenance before and after use, to prevent spread of seeds.
- Planting stock is sourced responsibly, using British grown plants where possible, to reduce the risk of accidental introduction of non-native pests and diseases.
- Accurate and up to date records are kept of all stock, in case an outbreak occurs.
- Regular inspections of all tree stock are completed to informally check for signs of ill health.

Any recordings of INNS by HBC staff are shared with the Environmental Records Information Centre (ERIC) North East, that works with a range of users to collate environmental data for nature conservation.

Resources such as ERIC and iRecord (figure 3) are accessible to members of the public, allowing a wider range of people to be involved in reporting sightings of INNS or other threats. These resources are frequently shared with volunteering and community groups,

through signage on site, and available on the Parks and Open Spaces webpage.



Figure 3: ERIC North East method of reporting.

# Environmental Management

## Tree Pests and Diseases

Since the early 2000's, there has been a significant increase of tree pests and diseases that have been introduced into the UK due to a number of different factors including increasing global trade, evolution/cross breeding, climate change, air pollution and poor soil quality. A decrease in woodland management has also allowed pests and diseases to go unnoticed for a longer period. It is important to educate teams to be able to spot any signs of poor plant health.

According to the UK Plant Health Risk Register, there are 1,414 pests and diseases posing a potential risk to the UK.



## Ash Dieback

In particular Ash Dieback has been identified as a threat to trees, not only in Hartlepool but on a national scale. Multiple cases of Ash Dieback have been spotted within the town's parks. On-site staff have been informally trained to identify the signs and symptoms of Ash Dieback in order to report and monitor trees suspected to be infected with the disease. A borough-wide tree health survey is planned in order to effectively manage the situation before it worsens. As there is minimal knowledge surrounding the disease and its implications, the process currently stands to mark trees requiring immediate attention or ongoing surveillance. Tree works will then take place during the winter period or via the reactive call-out service, if required outside of winter maintenance.

Figure 4 shows examples of ash trees infected with different levels of Ash Dieback, categorised by four different classes according to the severity of the disease. Ash health class 4 is the worst level of Ash Dieback infection, whereby the majority of the tree has been infected with the disease and only 25-0% of the tree crown remains. Signs of possible Ash Dieback include spots on the leaves, wilted leaves, branches losing leaves and 'dying back', and dark patches (lesions) on the branches and/or trunk.

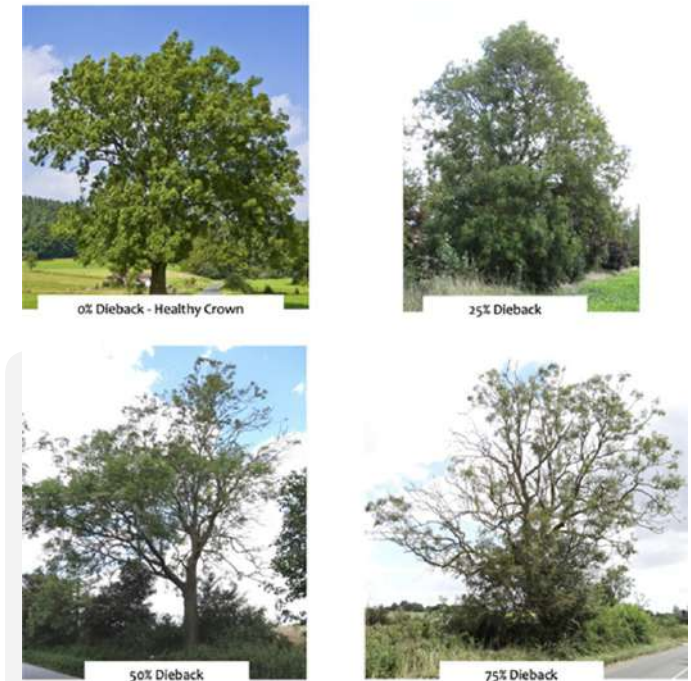


Figure 4: Ash Tree Health, Assessing the severity of ash trees suffering with Ash Dieback

- Ash Health Class 1: 100-75% of crown remains
- Ash Health Class 2: 75-50% of crown remains
- Ash Health Class 3: 50-25% of crown remains
- Ash Health Class 4: 25-0% of crown remains

# Environmental Management

## **Park management ensures nature is considered and not compromised, protecting and futureproofing the parks natural assets against an uncertain climate**

- Adopt best practice management methods including alternatives to pesticide use and a circular economy for natural waste.
- Investigate nature-based solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change, such as flood alleviation schemes and restoration of natural assets and habitats, to protect residential areas for the benefit of the community and future generations.

## **5.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Install sustainable drainage system
- Protect the current tree canopy
- Increase tree planting
- Phase out chemical use across the park

# 6

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# Biodiversity and Landscape

- 6.1 NATURAL FEATURES, WILD FLORA AND FAUNA
- 6.2 LANDSCAPE AND DESIGNED FEATURES
- 6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY
- 6.4 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN
- 6.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Biodiversity and Landscape

## 6.1 Natural Features, Wild Flora and Fauna

Seaton Park provides a number of habitats and forage for wildlife, including the wetland conservation area with pond, hedgerows, and planted sensory garden (Section 6.2). There is also an informal wetland area, adjacent to the sunken pirate ship play area. This section of the park is prone to flooding each winter and during heavy rainfall events. The park lies on seasonally wet deep loam to clay, and so there is potential to create further designed wetland areas such as rain gardens, which are a form of sustainable drainage.

### Bird Life

Seaton Park supports a variety of bird life, and sits within close proximity to the RSPB Saltholme site and little tern colony at Seaton beach. Birds sighted within Seaton Park include House Sparrow, Woodpigeon, Long Tailed Tit, Blackbird, Goldfinch, Magpie, Carrion Crow, Herring Gull, Great Tit, Starling and a Sparrowhawk. These were all sighted during the Big Garden Bird Watch survey conducted in January 2023.

### Planting

Throughout the park are a number of planting initiatives including the trees and hedgerows as discussed, as well as a variety of bulbs and other plants. The sensory garden is home to numerous plants (section 6.2) chosen for their sensory features.

As part of the Woodland Trust Jubilee Woods project in 2012/2013 to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, two stretches of boundary fencing were planted with mixed species hedge. The hedge comprises rowan, hawthorn, hazel, wild cherry and dogwood to provide year round colour, and a selection of fruit and berries. The forage provides food to support a large number of insects.

There are a variety of trees planted throughout the park, including species of sycamore, cherry, poplar and willow. The willow trees are planted specifically within areas where excess water gathers and grass becomes waterlogged, in order to absorb some of the excess.

Located adjacent to the tennis courts is a small area of relaxed mowing strips, where grasses and wildflowers are encouraged to grow. This is beneficial for biodiversity and there is opportunity to replicate this in multiple locations across the site.

### Wetland Conservation Area

In order to support a wide variety of wildlife, the wetland area was created in 2012 by the Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces group, with funding from the SITA Trust. The pond was excavated and a wider space developed surrounding it. A dipping platform was added by the group with help from students from Askham Bryan College, to provide opportunities for local people to enjoy the pond's wildlife.

### Grassed Lawns

There is also an informal wetland area, adjacent to the sunken pirate ship play area. This section of the park is prone to flooding each winter and during heavy rainfall events. The park lies on seasonally wet deep loam to clay, and so there is potential to create further designed wetland areas such as rain gardens, which are a form of sustainable drainage.

# Biodiversity and Landscape

## 6.2 Landscape and Designed Features

### Sensory Garden

Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces and Friends of Seaton Park, in partnership with Heerema and BP, installed the sensory garden in 2012. The collaboration saw the construction of raised beds, planted sensory borders and bespoke benches carved of oak. Sensory plants such as lavender, ivy, jasmine and clematis were chosen to fill the garden, along with a variety of nectar rich flowers, bulbs, and berry-producing shrubs to maximise the flowering period and provide forage for insects. Perennials planted include buddleia, nepeta (cat mint), lavender, achillea (yarrow) and eryngium (sea holly). The garden provides a tranquil, beautiful natural space that can be used and actively enjoyed by visitors of all abilities.

## 6.3 Environmental Conservation Strategy

As discussed, the installation of a sustainable drainage system would help to manage excess water on the site, protecting the grassed lawns and providing improved habitat for wildlife,

## 6.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is an important concept for town parks. It is a measure of how much biodiversity a park has lost, and how much it has gained. The overall goal for any town park is to achieve a net gain in biodiversity. This can be achieved by planting native plants – which are more resistant to pests and diseases than non-native plants – and by taking care of the existing plants within the parks.

In order to monitor biodiversity within the park, plans are in place to conduct baseline ecological surveys with volunteers. Repeat surveys will take place seasonally and/or annually, dependent on capacity. This will continually evaluate and review the impacts of management practices on biodiversity, in response to climate change and anthropogenic impacts.

# Biodiversity and Landscape

## **Parks provide a mosaic of biodiverse habitats that supports a wide range of wildlife**

- Ensure biodiversity net gain and carbon sequestration is considered in future developments.
- Retain a diverse tree canopy including replacement of felled trees and strategic tree planting, as well as monitoring tree health.
- Provide a variety of suitable habitats for wildlife, allowing nature to thrive.

## **6.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Increased planting initiatives throughout the park for biodiversity net gain
- Improve habitat for wildlife including local bird population

# 7

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# Heritage and Conservation

**7.1 HISTORY OF SEATON PARK**

**7.2 HERITAGE FEATURES**

**7.3 HERITAGE CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

**7.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Heritage and Conservation

## 7.1 History of Seaton Park

Seaton Park was officially opened by Alderman K. Gallimore, chairman of West Hartlepool's Parks Committee, on the 28th April 1962. Located on land previously belonging to Glebe Farm Estate, the site consisted of a number of fields used for crop growing, allotments and grazing.

## 7.2 Heritage Features

Sculptures and Sensory Garden

## 7.3 Heritage Conservation Strategy

Despite being a relatively recent addition to the town, in comparison with other sites, Seaton Park has a number of features that will require preservation for future generations.

DRAFT

# Heritage and Conservation

**Historical park features are preserved and the site heritage is elaborated, with educational resources readily available for visitors**

- Restore park features and heritage assets.
- Research the history of each site for future heritage based educational resources, celebration events, and signage.
- Ensure recent park additions are responsibly looked after, as they will become future generations' heritage features.

## 7.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Site Objectives

- Fix wooden sculptures in the sensory garden and ensure conservation of features
- Conduct research into the site's history for educational resources

# 8

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# Community Engagement

- 8.1 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
- 8.2 VOLUNTEERING IN SEATON PARK
- 8.3 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP
- 8.4 EVENTS
- 8.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Community Engagement

## 8.1 Community Consultation

The main way in which public consultations are held is via the online platform, Your Say, Our Future. This tool is public facing and allows people to comment on a variety of topics, making their views known and ultimately helping to shape decision making and the future of the site. As discussed in section 1.5 (Road Map), the platform has been used to conduct an initial baseline survey of the parks to gather basic information about public perception of the town's parks and features. The platform will continue to be used for future surveys and consultations.

There is also the opportunity to host drop-in sessions, which would allow park users to chat directly with the Parks and Open Spaces team at HBC as well as on site parks staff. This enables visitors to share their views in an informal setting, rather than a structured and directed survey response.

In addition to informal drop-in sessions for the public, the creation of formal stakeholder and interest groups would also benefit the future planning of priorities for the site. This would ensure a variety of voices are heard and represented, providing HBC with a deeper insight. A group could consist of representatives from volunteering groups, residents associations, a youth spokesperson and any other interested parties. Consultation with the community, through surveys, drop-in sessions or formal group consultations, are crucial in order to involve a

wider range of voices in the development and future management of the parks.

## 8.2 Community Engagement and Ownership

Ongoing pressures on budgets and capacity has impacted park maintenance and development. The input from active volunteering groups and individuals across the community is invaluable to the continued success of the parks and open spaces. Continuous engagement with local community groups and volunteers, as well as continuing the provision of opportunities to get involved with activities in the park, improves the sense of community ownership of the park. There are plenty of opportunities available within Seaton Park and across the other parks and open spaces for volunteers to get involved at any level. A seasonal calendar of volunteering opportunities can be viewed within appendix H.

### Community Hub Seaton

Works are planned to refurbish the community hub positioned in the north west corner of Seaton Park to integrate the hub into the park. A new pathway will be installed for access into the hub from the park, and vice versa. Community groups can benefit from use of the park, and park users can benefit from use of the community hub.

# Community Engagement

## 8.3 Volunteering in Seaton Park

### Volunteering Strategy

To improve the offer for future volunteers, a volunteering strategy has been developed in order to support existing volunteer groups, whilst opening the offer to a wider group of potential volunteers, including corporate partnerships (see section 8.4). The strategy aims to incorporate the concept of 'micro-volunteering', which allows individuals to volunteer their time on their terms, for as little or long as they are able to. This type of volunteering offer does not require a specific level of commitment and can suit different groups and individuals interested in getting involved, who may not be able to commit the time required by established groups. All volunteering contribution, whether big or small, has a positive impact and helps with the upkeep of green spaces. By widening the offer to incorporate casual and micro-volunteering, it aims to break down some of the barriers that can stop willing people from getting involved.

As well as activities such as weeding, litter picks and other physical works, volunteers can assist with the management of a site simply by paying attention to their surroundings. For example, dog walkers, families and other general park visitors can conduct wildlife surveys, check tree health and look for invasive species whilst going about their daily activities. With the correct knowledge and the tools to report findings, anyone can

get involved with these types of activities. Information on how to get involved can be shared with the public via physical signage throughout the park, online, or through volunteer training days for those with more time to give.

### Volunteering Groups

The Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces (FOHWGS) group are a registered charity, who undertake a variety of works that maintain green spaces across Hartlepool, as well as raising funds to create additional features for the sites. Working with the previous Friends of Seaton Park group, Heerema and BP, FOHWGS unlocked the funding for and created the Sensory Garden located within the park. They are also responsible for the installation and upkeep of the wetland conservation area and incorporated wildlife ID signage, a scheme that has been installed in not only Seaton Park but also Ward Jackson Park and Burn Valley Gardens. As well as working on the additional park features, the group also contribute to the regular maintenance of the park through activities such as weeding, litter picking, repairs to boardwalks and developing other park features. The group are supported by the Parks and Open Spaces team at HBC, meeting every Tuesday for works across the town's green spaces.

The Big Town Tidy Up are another established group that operate across Hartlepool, providing an invaluable

contribution to keeping the town free of litter. They are supported by the Grounds Maintenance team at HBC, who assist with removing bags of litter following a litter pick. This is done on a more casual basis and run via an active Facebook page, which sees a wide variety of the town's residents involved. The group work with a local CIC and charity, HartlePower, who help to organise the responsible recycling of aluminium cans. This helps to raise funds for the ongoing activities of the group.

There is currently no active Friends of Seaton Park group dedicated to the site, however there has been a dedicated group in the past who helped to maintain the park and raise funds for features such as the Sensory Garden. Despite there being no dedicated Friends group, there are a number of volunteering groups who operate across all of the parks and open spaces within Hartlepool.



# Community Engagement

## 8.4 Working in Partnership

### Corporate Partnerships

The wider volunteering strategy aims to involve corporate partners in volunteering activities. This can be mutually beneficial to the council and supporting businesses, as it provides valuable contributions to the management of a site and can also contribute to a business's corporate social responsibilities (CSR). In addition to corporate volunteering, there are aims to establish working relationships with businesses in Hartlepool. Involvement and contribution from local business allows projects to expand and have a bigger impact, with additional materials, people and input.

### Community Involvement

There are also opportunities to involve a wider range of groups, through activities such as social prescribing and restorative justice. Working with other organisations will provide valuable opportunities for members of the community who may not otherwise make use of these sites.

### Opportunities for Collaboration

A variety of opportunities for the park have been identified throughout this plan, some of which can only be achieved through collaboration with other businesses, groups and communities. These opportunities include:

- Increased planting
- Ecological surveys for wildlife and biodiversity

## 8.5 Events

There is currently no regular events programme for Seaton Park.

# Community Engagement

**Partnerships with local businesses, charities, community groups and residents are supported and encouraged throughout the parks and open spaces**

- Ensure active volunteering and community groups are supported in their activities.
- Enable local people to feel pride and establish a sense of ownership, through a number of volunteering and engagement opportunities.

## 8.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Site Objectives

- Restart a Friends of Seaton Park volunteering group
- Offer wider volunteering opportunities to corporate partners, social prescribing and restorative justice
- Engage local community through development of a dedicated stakeholder group

# 9

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# Marketing and Communication

**9.1 PARK BRANDING**

**9.2 DIGITAL RESOURCES**

**9.3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

**9.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Marketing and Communication

## 9.1 Park Branding



Figure 5: Parks and Open Spaces logo.

Working with the Marketing and Communications team at HBC, a collection of brand guidelines including a logo has been developed for the four town's parks—Seaton Park, Burn Valley Gardens, Ward Jackson Park and Rossmere Park. The creation of a recognisable park logo (as displayed in figure 5) and associated brand guidelines will be used for all future resources, including signage and online. A signage review is expected to take place when resource and capacity allows, with the creation of new park signage installed when funding

becomes available. The logo comprises of four icons, each representative of a different park. The butterfly represents the sensory planting in Seaton Park, the bird a symbol for Rossmere Park's little tern colony, the tree representative of Burn Valley Gardens and the flower a reference to Ward Jackson Park's formal bedding plants.

## 9.2 Digital Resources

The main channels of communication for information and updates about the park are as follows:

- Hartlepool Borough Council Website
- HBC | Parks and Open Spaces
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Explore Hartlepool | Parks and Countryside
- Active Hartlepool | Parks

### Website

The Parks and Open Spaces webpage has historically been somewhat limited in terms of the information provided, lacking in images, maps, history and updates. This is not reflective of the quality of the town's parks. A

website transformation will take place in 2023 in order to provide a more useful and interesting service for users. New information will reflect the content provided in this management plan, giving users a clear overview of the park and its features. The website will also provide information for those interesting in volunteering, joining an existing Friends group, and getting involved in surveys and research. There will also be opportunity for users to submit queries for things like holding an event in the park.

## 9.3 Communication Strategy

### Social Media

A social media strategy has been developed to ensure regular updates are shared with the public. Updates can include information about ongoing works in the parks, as well as photographs to showcase the parks through the seasons. Posts are shared via HBC social media channels, informing subscribers to what is going on within the parks and encouraging visitors.

### Signage

There is scope to add more information in a variety of formats such as QR codes, walking trail posts, and physical signage. Not all park visitors have access to a digital device and therefore there must also be provision throughout the parks to include these groups.

# Marketing and Communication

**Parks and open spaces updates are communicated across a variety of channels including digital information, physical signage, and in person events**

- Improve communication about park management, including information sharing and consultation processes to enhance user experience.
- Develop a brand identity for Hartlepool's parks and open spaces.

## 9.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Site Objectives

- Update the parks website with relevant information about the site, recent photographs, a site map and other useful resources.
- Ensure information about the park, events and volunteering opportunities are clearly communicated to a wider audience.

# 10

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# Looking Forward

**10.1 INCOME, BUDGETS AND FUNDRAISING**

**10.2 MONITORING AND ASSESSMENTS**

**10.3 PARK PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

**10.4 WIDER PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

**10.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Looking Forward

## 10.1 Income, Budgets and Fundraising

### Funding and Investment

Seaton Park does not generate an income for the council. The main source of income specified for the park is through pre-allocated budgets within HBC, or by securing external grants and fundraising opportunities.

An investment strategy will be developed in order to effectively plan for future maintenance, conservation and developments to the site. This will enable a targeted approach to funding opportunities.

### Future Budgets

Future investment in Seaton Park must consider ongoing maintenance costs. Low maintenance and sustainable park assets are preferable, due to limited budgets and capacity. Significant refurbishment or installation of new park assets will require external fundraising.

## 10.2 Monitoring and Assessments

### Park Visitor Surveys

Following the initial baseline survey conducted in 2022, there are plans to repeat the survey to identify any changes in perception, use, and satisfaction of visit. Feedback from members of the public is crucial in

helping to focus on public priorities for the future management and development of the park. With the creation of park management plans, there will be an in-depth consultation via Your Say, Our Future, as well as face to face drop-in sessions to be inclusive of those without access to the digital resource. This will help to ensure that the plans and initiatives proposed are in line with the community's needs and wants for the parks.

### Wildlife Surveys

To ensure further understanding of the variety of wildlife supported at the site, ecological and biodiversity surveys are required. These will be essential in calculating biodiversity net gain, the impact of management practices and other initiatives, and to monitor any other emerging trends.

Volunteers and park visitors will be encouraged to conduct small surveys during their visits, with guides and key information shared via the HBC Parks and Open Spaces website. Formal surveys will be conducted when funding and resource becomes available.

## 10.3 Park Plans and Strategies

### Community Hub Seaton

Works are planned to refurbish the community hub positioned in the north west corner of Seaton Park to

integrate the hub into the park. A new pathway will be installed for access into the hub from the park, and vice versa. Community groups can benefit from use of the park, and park users can benefit from use of the community hub.



# Looking Forward

## 10.4 Wider Plans and Strategies

### Connecting Green Spaces

Rather than viewing the parks and open spaces as individual sites that exist in isolation from each other, a joined-up approach has been taken in order to effectively manage the sites as pieces of a larger area.

Part of this will be to look into connecting these sites through wildlife corridors such as grass verges, hedgerows, urban gardens and avenues of trees. These will provide a route of habitats that helps wildlife move around, and will boost biodiversity. Creating connections between the sites will be in line with the National Pollinator Strategy for England.



### Tall Ships Legacy Gardens

As part of the site dressing for the Tall Ships Race 2023 in Hartlepool, a pop-up pallet garden is being created by the Parks and Open Spaces team with input from a variety of businesses who have donated materials and plants, as well as volunteering groups who have assisted with the construction. Individuals across the town have also given their time and expertise to the project, as well as providing plants and trees for the garden.

The key focus of the garden is the reuse of otherwise scrap or wasted materials, such as pallets, encouraging a circular economy. This even includes the plants themselves, as following the event they will be placed within the town's parks as Legacy Gardens.



### Herbicide Free Zones

Burn Valley Gardens is currently being tested as a pilot for 'no-spray' zones. Grass verges, tree bases and around furniture have been left to grow as a trial to test capability to eradicate the use of herbicides entirely across the parks. Although herbicides are an effective way to maintain the park for aesthetic purposes and weed removal, there are a number of negative effects associated with the use of them. This includes potential negative health effects, negative effect on the environment through destruction of wildlife habitats, soil and water pollution, and also contributing to 'herbicide resistance' whereby weeds have the ability to adapt and resist chemical use. Pilot no-spray zones and accompanying research into alternatives will eventually lead to the eradication of chemicals across all of the town's parks and open spaces, where possible.



# Looking Forward

## **Parks are futureproofed against uncertain economic and environmental scenarios**

- Ensure there is an appropriate monitoring process in place to evaluate the performance of management methods and developments.
- Use plans to prioritise future funding and resources, as and when they become available.

## **10.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Identify external funding opportunities to enable further developments to the site.
- Conduct repeat of baseline survey to establish any changes in public perception and site use.
- Conduct wildlife and biodiversity studies with increased planting efforts.

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# Appendices

- A    PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**
- B    YOUR SAY, OUR FUTURE CONSULTATION**
- C    ACTION LOG**
- D    RISK ASSESSMENTS**
- E    HORTICULTURAL CALENDAR**
- F    FLOWCHART OF ACTIONS**
- G    FLORA AND FAUNA**
- H    SEASONAL VOLUNTEERING  
OPPORTUNITIES**

# Appendix A—Parks and Open Spaces

Sites Managed under the Parks and Open Spaces team at Hartlepool Borough Council:

## Town Parks:

- Ward Jackson Park
- Burn Valley Gardens
- Rossmere Park
- Seaton Park

## Local Nature Reserves:

- Seaton Common and Dunes (SSSI)
- Hart to Haswell Walkway
- Hart Warren Dunes
- Greatham Beck
- Spion Kop Cemetery

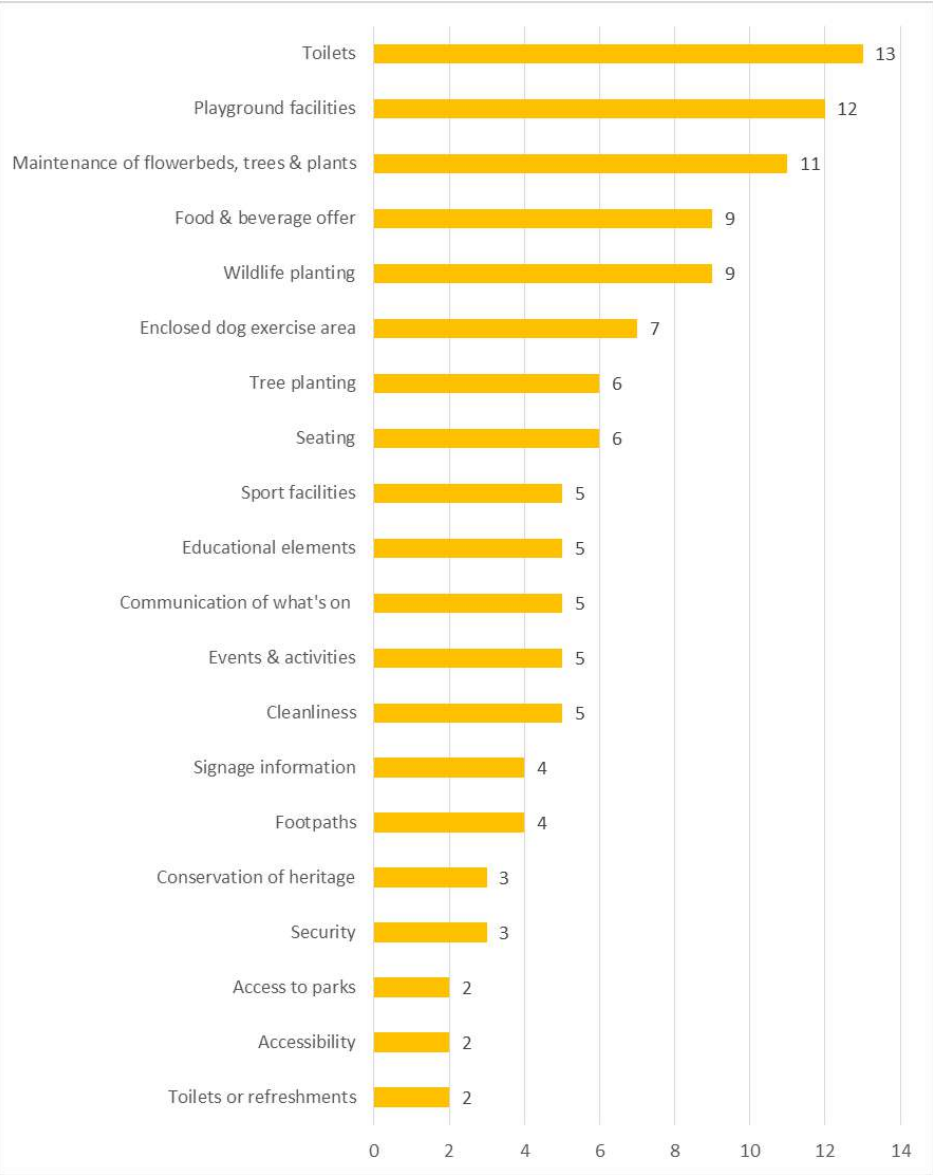
Sites Managed under Active Hartlepool at Hartlepool Borough Council:

- Summerhill Country Park (LNR)

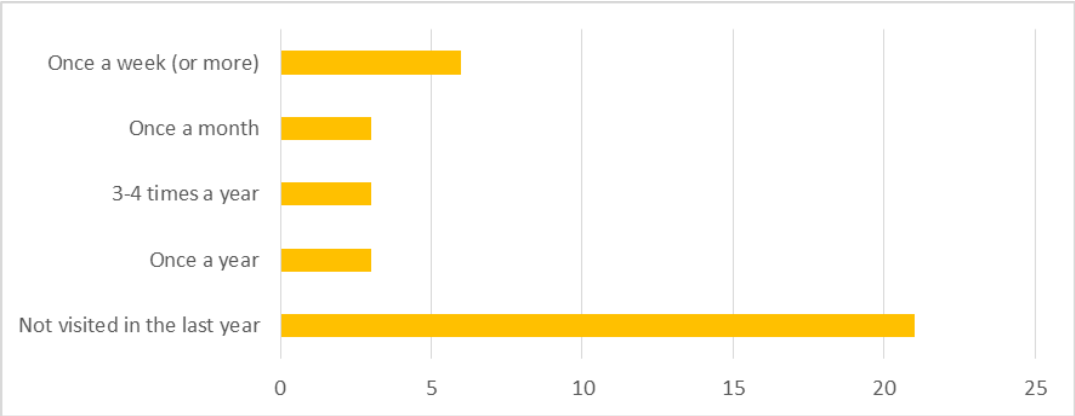


# Appendix B—Your Say, Our Future Consultation

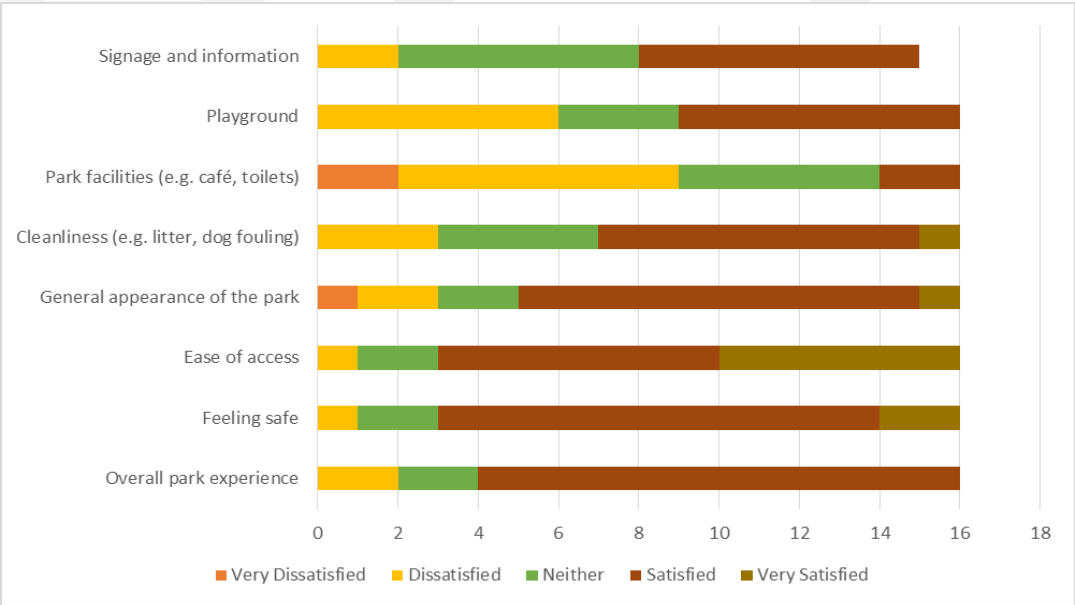
What features could be improved in Seaton Park?



How often do you visit Seaton Park?



How satisfied are you with the following features at Seaton Park?



## Appendix C—Action Log

Chapter	Issue	Action Required	Comments	Completed (Date)	Actioned By
Welcome and Access	Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update and replace safety signage around playground.</li> <li>Replace park signage with updated information and park logo.</li> </ul>	Funding dependent.	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
Healthy, Safe and Secure	Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace accessible equipment</li> </ul>	Funding dependent.	Awaiting funding bid decision	Parks and Open Spaces
Maintenance and Cleanliness	Graffiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove graffiti from wetland conservation area and playground</li> </ul>		Ongoing Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces Parks and Open Spaces
	Pathways and Surfacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill in potholes posing a risk to public.</li> </ul>	Funding dependent.	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces, Highways
	Buildings and Facilities Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all buildings are maintained to a higher standard.</li> </ul>	Bowling green pavilion survey arranged  Park audits scheduled to ensure checks are made.	Ongoing	Buildings Maintenance  Parks and Open Spaces
Environmental Management	Tree Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct tree health survey across the borough to identify necessary tree works.</li> <li>Begin tree works.</li> <li>Train staff to identify signs of disease and other threats.</li> </ul>	Lantra course undertaken by Parks staff.	Ongoing  February 2023	Arboricultural Officer  Parks and Open Spaces

## Appendix C—Action Log

	Chemical Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate pesticide alternatives to phase out use entirely, especially near pond</li> </ul>	Ongoing trials during summer	February 2023  Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces Horticulture
Biodiversity and Landscape	Surface flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research funding opportunities for SUDs Scheme/rain garden</li> </ul>	Funding dependent.	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Conservation of Sensory Garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue supporting FOHWGS to maintain garden</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Tree planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding research ongoing for tree planting in park with TVCA Trees on Tees officers</li> </ul>	Funding dependent.	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces, Tees Valley Combines Authority
Heritage and Conservation	Heritage assets				Parks and Open Spaces
Community Engagement	Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update and distribute volunteering handbook.</li> <li>Recruitment drive for new volunteers on varying scales (committed/micro-volunteering).</li> <li>Develop a volunteer opportunity plan for Seaton <u>park</u>.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces

## Appendix C—Action Log

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with health and safety department to develop a volunteer activity agreement document</li> </ul>			
	Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share information on social media and media outlets about events planned within the park</li> <li>• Community hubs and HAF use the parks in summer</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Provision for the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate alternative spaces for younger groups who are associated with vandalism and ASB within the park</li> </ul>	Review of current park assets ongoing. Funding dependent for any major changes.	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Memorial Benches and Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify appropriate locations for memorial benches and memorial trees within the park</li> </ul>			
Marketing and Communication	Park Logos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create park logo to be used on updated signage and website.</li> </ul>		Early 2023	Marketing and Communications
	Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh the parks and open spaces webpage with relevant and up to date information, photographs and resources.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Improved Communication Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise HBC information channels including Facebook to share advertisements for events, volunteer opportunities and park updates.</li> <li>• Create temporary signage for accessible information.</li> </ul>		Ongoing  Ongoing – Where Relevant	Parks and Open Spaces

# Appendix D—Risk Assessments

Risks assessments related to maintenance, inspections and activities that take place at the site, as well as their associated reference numbers are listed below.

Documents and further information can be provided on request.

Risk Assessments and Reference Numbers:

- General Playgrounds (including inspections): NSD OR414
- Various Park Duties: NSD OR422
- Grass Cutting: NSD OR532
- Exterior Plant Maintenance (spraying operations): NSD OR424
- Litter Picking: NSD OR415
- Tree Works: NSD OR533
- Vegetation Clearance: NSD OR459
- Vegetation Clearance and Drainage: NSD OR548
- Tools: NSD OR546
- Vehicles: NSD OR542
- General Parks and Countryside Events (including volunteer work, school groups, and guided walks): NSD OR54

# Appendix E—Horticultural Calendar

The horticultural maintenance works calendar is a basic breakdown of the seasonal maintenance required within the town's parks. This is to be viewed as a rough guide to the horticultural year, that is subject to change due to a number of circumstances such as climate, financial or staffing pressures.

## Winter Maintenance

- Cut back of rose-beds
- Removal of deep rooted weeds and grasses
- Pruning of shrub beds back from footpaths, reduction in height where appropriate
- Tree works including pruning and felling, where appropriate

## Spring Maintenance

- Rose-bed maintenance begins
- Continued shrub and rose-bed maintenance throughout the season
- Herbicide application on shrub beds, tree bases and around furniture

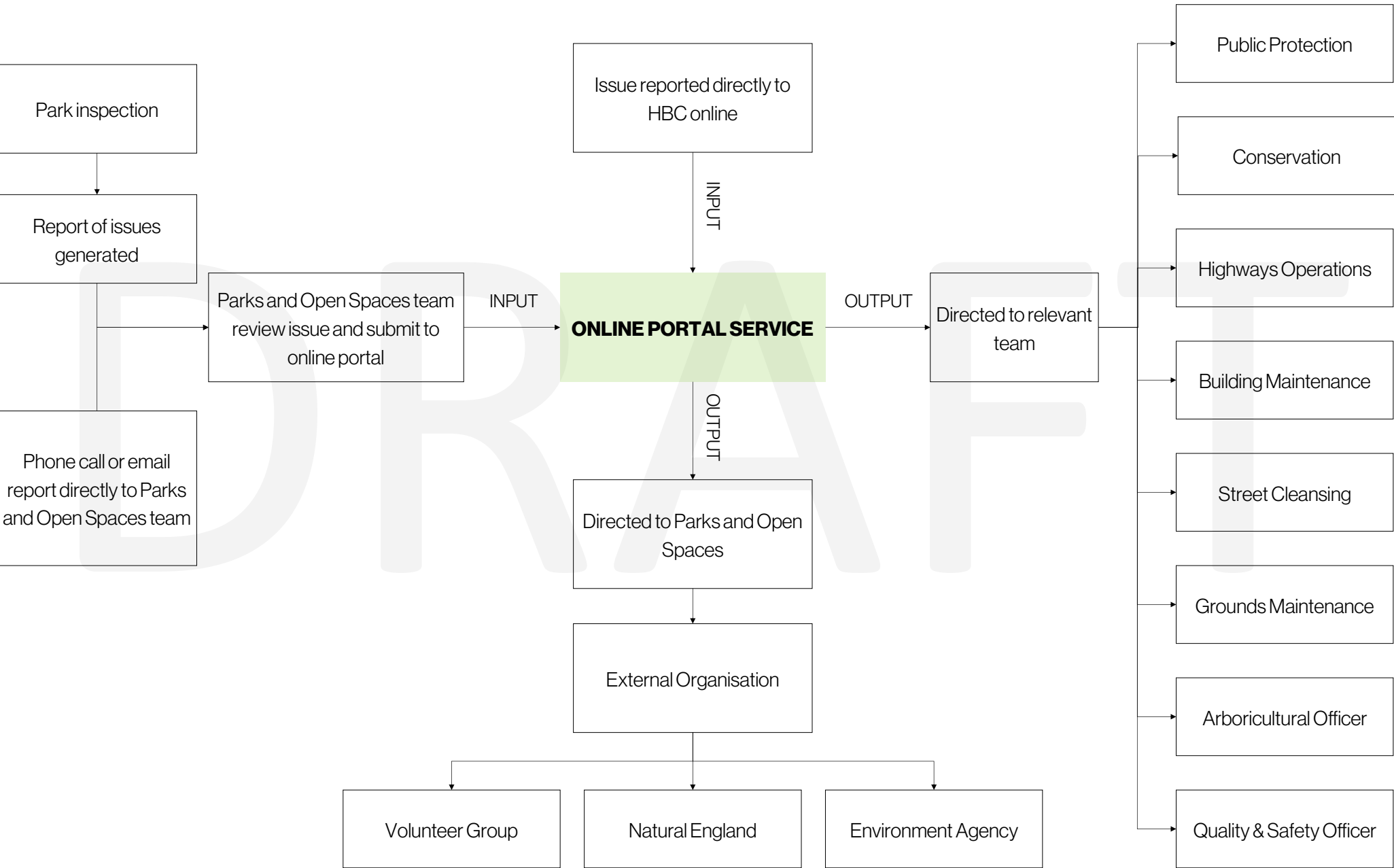
## Summer Maintenance

- Planting of summer bedding plants at the beginning of the season
- Continued maintenance throughout
- Shrub and rose-bed litter picking
- Shrub and rose-bed weed pulling and herbicide application

## Autumn Maintenance

- Removal of summer bedding plants at the end of summer season into autumn maintenance
- Replanting of bedding areas
- Tree works including pruning and felling, where appropriate

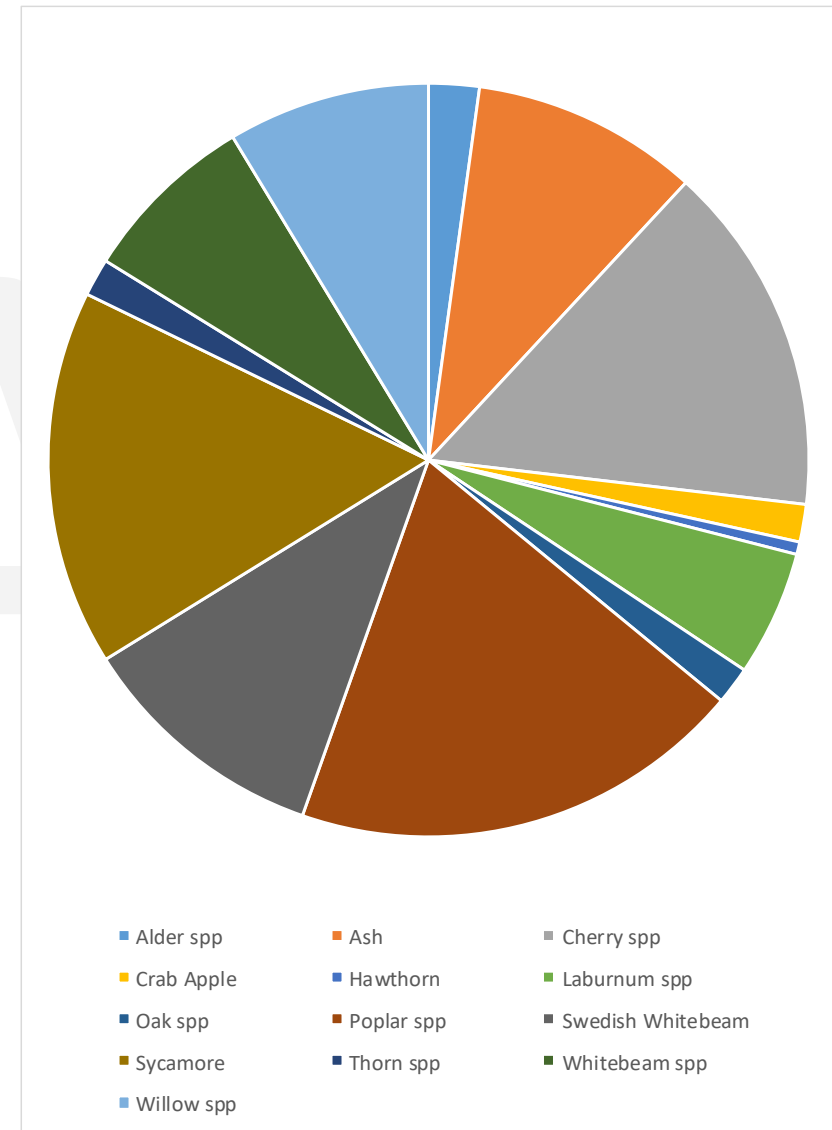
# Appendix F—Flowchart of Actions



## Appendix G—Flora and Fauna

### Distribution of tree species at Seaton Park:

Species	Age		
	Young	Semi-mature	Mature
Alder spp	4		
Ash	2	14	2
Cherry spp		2	26
Crab Apple			3
Hawthorn			1
Laburnum spp			10
Oak spp	1	2	
Poplar spp			36
Swedish White-beam		4	16
Sycamore	3	11	16
Thorn spp			3
Whitebeam spp		1	13
Willow spp		4	12
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>186</b>



# Appendix H—Seasonal Volunteering Opportunities

A selection of volunteering opportunities are listed below, split into maintenance seasons.

## Winter Maintenance

- Tree & Bulb Planting
- Wildlife Surveys
- Vegetation Clearance
- Litter Picking
- General Park Maintenance

## Spring Maintenance

- General Park Maintenance
- Wildflower Planting
- Wildlife Surveys
- Litter Picking

## Summer Maintenance

- Wildlife Surveys
- General Park Maintenance
- Litter Picking
- Events
- Flowerbed Maintenance

## Autumn Maintenance

- Wildlife Surveys
- Flowerbed Maintenance
- Bulb & Tree Planting
- Vegetation Clearance
- Litter Picking

## Get in Touch

Parks and Open Spaces  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Victoria Road  
Hartlepool  
TS25 8AY

[parksandcountryside@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:parksandcountryside@hartlepool.gov.uk)

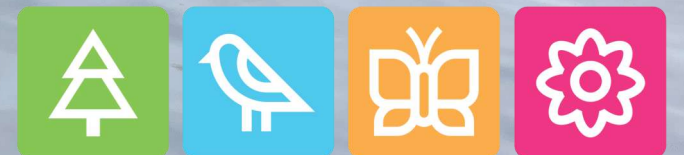
01429 266522

[Hartlepool Borough Council | Parks](#)



**HARTLEPOOL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

# Rossmere Park Management Plan 2023



**HARTLEPOOL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

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# 1

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# Introduction

- 1.1 THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PLACE-BASED PLANS
- 1.2 CONTEXT AND WIDER POLICY
- 1.3 SITE OVERVIEW
- 1.4 SITE MAP
- 1.5 ROAD MAP

# Introduction

## 1.1 THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PLACE-BASED PLANS

A place-based plan is a working management plan that aims to provide an overview of a specific site, detailing the sites features and the maintenance, management and conservation involved. It considers the unique characteristics of the site and the needs of all users.

Place-based plans can be viewed as a guide for the effective management and development of a site. An adaptive management process is required to effectively manage a site and appropriately plan for the future. Therefore, place-based plans should be considered a flexible tool, subject to frequent review and adjusted accordingly, in response to economic and environmental uncertainty. The primary goal for a place-based plan is to ensure a site is managed in a sustainable and responsible way, balancing the needs of its visitors and the environment with future budgets and capacity.

Plans enable users to understand why decisions are made with regards to a site, and how such decisions are reached. Through clearly communicated priorities, place-based plans will inform key stakeholders of the sites management from the day-to-day tasks to long term strategic planning.

The management of a park involves a number of factors from varying disciplines, that come together to ensure a site is well-maintained, attractive, functional and sustainable. Based on the Green Flag Assessment

Criteria, these factors include a welcoming atmosphere, maintenance and upkeep, safety and security, environmental considerations, conservation of landscape and heritage, recreation and events, and community involvement.

Through the following sections, this plan will provide details of the site in relation to the above factors, whilst identifying opportunities for development. Within the final section (Section 10 – Looking Forward), the future of the site will be discussed in terms of opportunities, budgets, capacity and assessment. Aims and objectives have been set at the close of each section detailing a clear road map to success, with success being a healthy, welcoming and safe park that serves its local community and allows nature to thrive.

### Development Phases

The development of place-based plans has taken place over five phases—initial consultation, developing written plans, formal consultation, implementation and review.

The first phase saw an initial public consultation and SWOT analysis, providing a baseline understanding of public perception and site usage. Following this, written plans were developed and reviewed internally within HBC by a number of services and the Parks Management Board. Phase three consisted of a formal public consultation, to ensure plans and priorities for the

town's parks were, and continue to be, in line with community needs. Following public consultation, phase four consists of the commencement and continuation of works discussed throughout the plans, undertaken by the Parks and Open Spaces team and led by the Parks Management Board.

The fifth and final phase will see plans formally reviewed and re-published on a five year cycle. In between re-publications, regular check-ins, surveys, and informal consultations will take place on an annual basis to provide updates to the plans. This will identify any changes in site usage and public perception, ensuring parks continue to provide appropriate facilities for the community. Plans will be regularly updated in line with any feedback, works progress, changes to plans and budgets, or with any national trends. This will be done on an ad-hoc basis.

# Introduction

## 1.2 CONTEXT AND WIDER POLICY

A series of place-based plans have been developed for Hartlepool's formal parks and local nature reserves. These have been produced by Hartlepool Borough Council's Parks and Open Spaces team within the Coast, Countryside and Heritage service, in collaboration with a number of other services including (but not limited to) Grounds Maintenance, Planning, and Net Zero. The Parks Management Board of Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) oversee the management and implementation of these plans. The management structure within HBC currently stands as:

Hartlepool Borough Council

Adults and Community Based Services

Preventative and Community Based Services

Coast, Countryside and Heritage

Parks and Open Spaces

There are a multitude of factors from varying social, environmental and economic standpoints that influence the management of parks and open spaces. Nature, public health, culture, community, tourism, sport, recreation – to name a few – all come together to influence the management of these sites. Parks do not exist in isolation from each factor, and so a wide range of strategies, policies, plans and partnerships have fed into

the development of this management plan, as shown in figure 1 on the following page.

First and foremost is the HBC Council Plan (2021/22 – 2023/24), which sets out the town's vision. Directly feeding in to the scope of park management, are the following points that have been carefully considered throughout the development of the plan.

*"Hartlepool will be a place...*

*...where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives:*

- *There is an increased participation in physical activity through access to fit for purpose leisure, sport and recreational facilities including parks and open spaces.*

*...of resilient and resourceful community with opportunities for all:*

- *People are involved in their local community rather than being socially isolated;*
- *Communities are well served with appropriate facilities;*
- *There is a cross sector and coordinated programme of volunteering.*

*...that has an inclusive and growing economy:*

- *We have a high quality visitor attractions and increased visitor numbers.*

*...that is sustainable, clean, safe and green:*

- *Initiatives are in place to tackle climate change;*
- *There is access to good quality, well maintained parks, streets and public spaces."*

**- Council Plan (2021/22—2023/24), Hartlepool Borough Council**

# Introduction

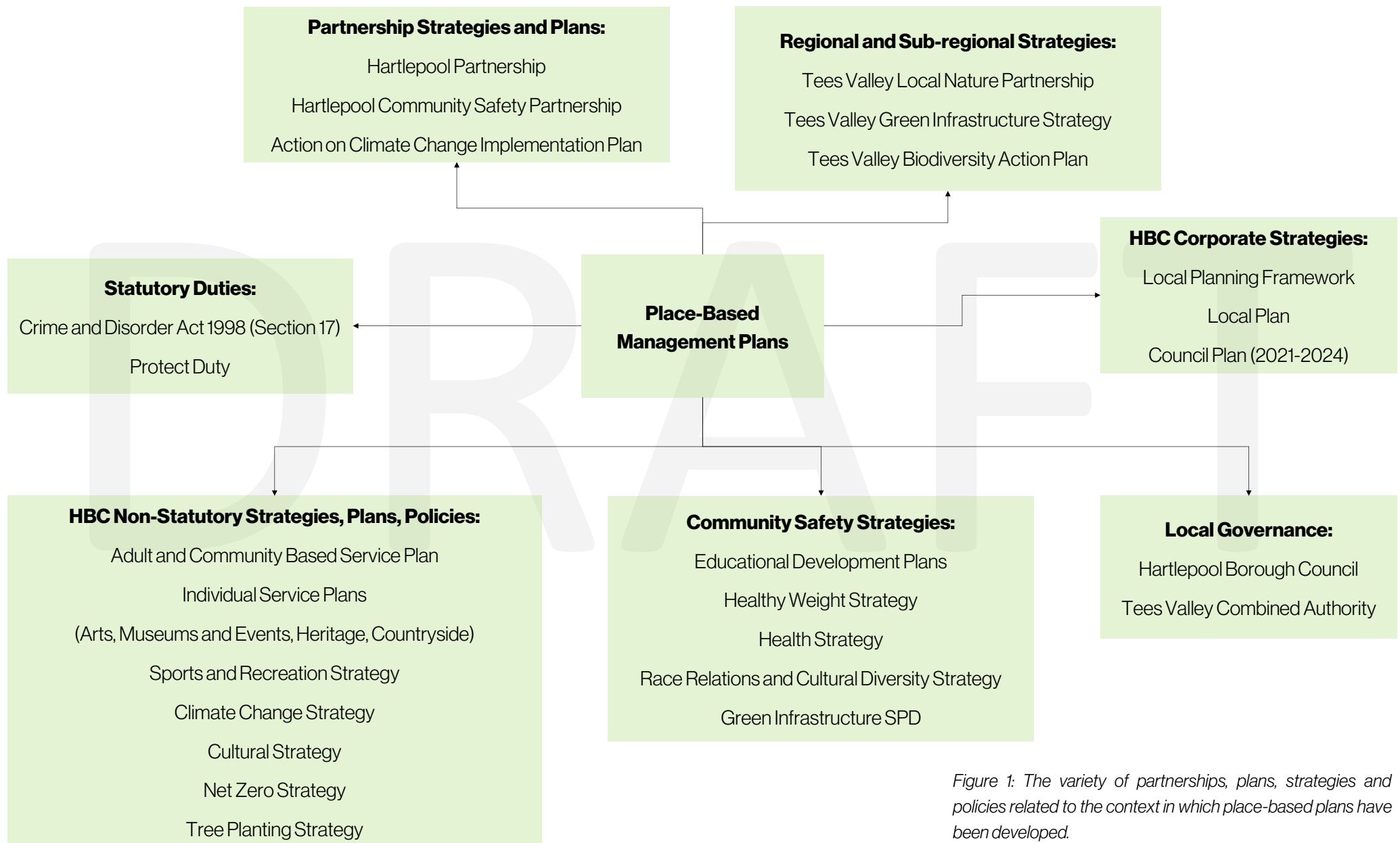


Figure 1: The variety of partnerships, plans, strategies and policies related to the context in which place-based plans have been developed.

# Introduction

## 1.3 SITE OVERVIEW

Rossmere Park is located toward the south of Hartlepool, as shown in figure 2. It provides the principle green spaces in the southern sub area, in particular serving Owton Manor, Fens and Rossmere. Covering 4 hectares, it is bordered by Stockton Road (A689) to the east, with Rossmere Way (north), Braemar Road (south) and Balmoral Road (west) bordering the rest of the park. The boundary is largely tree and shrub planting, with established tree planting providing a buffer along much of the northern, eastern and southern boundaries. Wrought iron fencing, approximately 1.6m high, bounds the park on all sides.

The park features the Rossmere Park Café, two children's play areas (one aimed at juniors and one with an interactive SUTU wall), as well as large areas of uninterrupted green space and pathways around the park. There is a pond with an island in the centre, that is home to a nesting population of Little Egrets among other interesting wildlife. The walkway around the pond has a number of dipping platforms, often used by local anglers.

## Demographics

Rossmere Park is located within the Fens and Rossmere ward of Hartlepool, which has a population of 8,383 (ONS, 2019). The population in the immediate catchment of the park is approximately 18,500, residing in the Manor House ward and the Fens and Rossmere ward.

According to the Hartlepool Ward Profiles, Rossmere ward has the highest percentage of residents who reported they were in bad or very bad health (10.8%), compared with just 4.3% in the Rural West ward. Additionally, the Rossmere ward has an IMD score higher than average for both the UK and for Hartlepool.

## Profile

Site Name—Rossmere Park

Site Address—Rossmere Way

Town—Hartlepool

Region—North East England

Postcode—TS25 3DL

OS Grid Reference—NZ501299

Total Area—4 Hectares

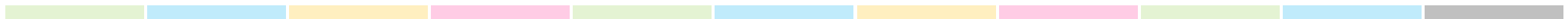
Plan Prepared By—Hartlepool Borough Council



Figure 2: Location of Rossmere Park within wider Hartlepool

Map credit: OpenStreetMap

## 1.4 SITE MAP



# Introduction

## 1.5 ROADMAP

### Where are we now?

An initial consultation took place in August 2022 to gain further understanding of public perception of Hartlepool's four town parks (Rossmere Park, Burn Valley Gardens, Ward Jackson Park and Seaton Park), and how they are used.

When asked how frequently the parks were visited, just under 50% of the respondents noted they had not visited Rossmere Park within the last year. Less than 10% reported they visited the park once a week or more, compared with over 25% of respondents who visit Ward Jackson Park once a week (or more). Of the respondents who were regular visitors, the majority reported they were satisfied with the ease of access to the park. Among the top features for improvement within Rossmere Park were cleanliness, security, horticultural maintenance (trees, shrubs, planting) and wildlife planting. Cleanliness was a regular issue for park users, with more reports of dissatisfaction with this feature than there were of satisfaction. This was also the case for facilities and playground, with around 50% of respondents noting they were dissatisfied with these features. Further information and survey charts for the consultation results relating to Rossmere Park are available in appendix B.

Using Feedback from the public consultation, along with local and anecdotal knowledge, a SWOT analysis has

been conducted (figure 3). The outcomes of these initial studies have provided a baseline on which the place-based plans have been developed.

Discussed throughout Sections 2-9 of the plan is a detailed overview of a number of the sites features, maintenance, conservation and community. These sections have been developed in line with the Green Flag Assessment Criteria as a guideline.

### Where do we want to be?

There is a clear vision for Hartlepool's parks and open spaces, with the following aims:

- Parks are welcoming, easily accessible sites that cater to all users.
- Parks provide an inclusive and safe space focused on health and wellbeing.
- Parks are kept to a high standard, through impactful maintenance and cleansing routines.
- Park management ensures nature is considered and not compromised, protecting and futureproofing the parks natural assets against an uncertain future climate.
- Parks provide a mosaic of biodiverse habitats that support a wide range of wildlife.
- Historical park features are preserved and the

site's heritage is celebrate, with educational resources readily available for visitors.

- Partnerships with local businesses, charities, community groups and residents are supported and encouraged throughout the parks and open spaces.
- Parks and open spaces updates are communicated across a variety of channels including digital information, physical signage and in person events.
- Parks are futureproofed against uncertain political, economic and environmental scenarios.

In order to achieve these, a series of objectives and actions have been identified in line with each section. Specific actions for these objectives can be seen in an action log, available in appendix C.

# Introduction

## How do we get there?

The objectives and associated action points have been identified in order to demonstrate the development priorities for the site. When funding, resource and capacity allow, action points will be implemented. It is important to note that the purpose of these plans are to provide strategic guides for the effective management and development of the sites, through identifying site priorities. It may not always be possible to commence works on each action, due to budgets and capacity. Outlining priority areas for development is essential in order to be prepared for when opportunities become feasible. The final section of this plan (Section 10 – Looking Forward) will discuss the future plans, monitoring, budgets and assessments anticipated for the site.

### Strengths

- Accessibility of the site
- Large areas of uninterrupted green space
- Variety of play equipment including the SUTU wall
- Café and toilet facilities
- Variation of wildlife supported at the site
- Activities such as fishing and park run
- Principle green space for the surrounding community

### Weaknesses

- Perceived lack of maintenance regime
- Continued damage to toilet facilities
- Limited budgets and capacity for maintenance routine and park development
- Continued antisocial behaviour including graffiti and destruction of play equipment

### Opportunities

- Improved educational signage
- Surveys to monitor wildlife
- Events in wide open space
- Improved consultation with surrounding community
- Sustainable drainage systems
- Pond conservation

### Threats

- Antisocial behaviour
- Damage to future park developments and installations
- Increased financial staffing pressures for maintenance and preservation of site
- Increase in extreme weather events such as flooding or droughts impacting on grassed areas and pond

Figure 3: SWOT Analysis for Rossmere Park

# 2

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# Welcome and Access

**2.1 A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE**

**2.2 ACCESS AND INCLUSIVITY**

**2.3 SIGNAGE**

**2.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Welcome and Access

## 2.1 A Welcoming Atmosphere

The main entrance point to the park is located at the south-west corner of the site, where the car park is positioned. The children's play area and Rossmere Park Café are within a short walk and are located along the western edge of the park. From this edge, you can see across to the pond and island across a large area of green space. Pathways throughout the park follow the boundary with a few sections that cut across the park and around the pond. These provide a number of clear sightlines across the park.

The Horticultural team at HBC, as well as groups of dedicated volunteers, work to ensure the park is well kept and continues to welcome a variety of visitors to enjoy the space. Work includes trimming of hedges and shrubs to reduce any potential hiding places that may shield unwanted behaviours, as well as litter picking and bulb planting to improve the aesthetic of the park. HBC staff and volunteer groups are easily identifiable with relevant logos visible on hi-vis jackets worn by individuals.

## 2.2 Access and Inclusivity

### Access

The main pedestrian entrance to the park is from Rossmere Way with secondary entrances found also on Rossmere Way, Balmoral Road and Braemar Road. On site car parking is provided off Braemar Road and is available for up to 16 vehicles. The nearest bus stops are at Argyll Road, Ardrosson Road, and Rossmere Centre with the No. 7 bus stopping every 30 minutes at each stop. The park is approximately 45 minutes' walk away from Hartlepool town centre and railway station.

### Inclusivity

There are three accessible car parking spaces within the park, as well as step-free access from nearby bus stops. The park provides level access throughout the site with a footpath running inside the tree lined boundary and around the central grassed area and pond. Play equipment includes accessible pieces such as the nest/basket swing. Works to the pond edge with the installation of level timber platforms has improved access for users with mobility issues by allowing them to be more actively involved in activities such as pond dipping.

## 2.3 Signage

Signage is provided outside the main entrance to the park on Rossmere Way with general information for visitors including park opening and closing times. The opening and closing times are also shown on smaller signs at other park entrances.

There is an opportunity to install further signage throughout the park including an information board in line with those present in other town parks. This would incorporate a site map, the parks history, features, and information about the pond and wildlife. There would also be an opportunity to incorporate further educational signage in the park, for example a 'pond etiquette' board (see section 6).



# Welcome and Access

## **Parks are welcoming, easily accessible sites, that cater to all users**

- Review signage and landscaping to create an inviting atmosphere to each place.
- Ensure the atmosphere of the park appropriately matches the functionality of the site.
- Review accessibility of site assets including footpaths, seating, play equipment and signage.

## **2.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Install site information board at the park entrance
- Ensure pathways are kept safe and accessible for all users
- Increase bulb and wildflower planting at park entrance points to welcome visitors to the site

# 3

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## Healthy, Safe and Secure

**3.1 FEATURES AND FACILITIES**

**3.2 HEALTH AND ACTIVITY**

**3.3 LEGAL**

**3.4 PERSONAL AND PARK SECURITY**

**3.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## 3.1 Features and Facilities

### Provision

Rossmere Park has a number of features for play, recreation and wildlife. There are two buildings within the site providing amenity facilities to those visiting the park. A small café, let to an independent company, can be found adjacent to the pedestrian entrance off Rossmere Way to the west of the park. Rossmere Park Café operates during the park opening hours providing refreshments on site and available for takeaway. To the east of the park is another building, located near the main access off Rossmere Way. This small brick building provides toilet facilities. Due to continued antisocial behaviour, the toilet facilities unfortunately remain closed. The play area has facilities for both infants and juniors. There are 15 pieces of equipment within the site including the interactive SUTU wall. The area is enclosed by a low fence and surrounding by low level planting.

### Safety

Health and safety checks occur regularly within the site. Playgrounds are routinely inspected by the Quality and Safety Officer, with inspections taking place multiple times a week. A full inspection of the playgrounds is carried out on a monthly basis, with an independent assessment made annually to ensure the site continues to be safe and meet all appropriate regulations. Around

the lake there are two lifebelt stations, inspected weekly as part of a town-wide inspection regime. Park staff report any damage to or missing lifebelts to the Quality and Safety Officer. The site as a whole undergoes a quarterly inspection audit carried out by the Parks and Open Spaces team, where any other dangerous equipment (such as broken park benches) is flagged. For more information see section 4 (Maintenance and Cleanliness). A list of relevant risk assessments related to park and playground inspections and maintenance can be viewed in appendix D.

## 3.2 Health and Activity

### Public Health

There are a number of procedures in place for the instance of a public health emergency such as the recent Covid-19 pandemic, as well as animal health such as avian influenza. HBC's Public Protection service are contacted in the event of an emergency, and external organisations such as Defra or the Environment Agency are contacted if required.

Parks can provide a positive impact on the overall health of the community, through both psychological and physical benefits. Time spent in parks and open spaces is seen to enhance a person's overall wellbeing by reducing stress and improving mental health, leading to potential positive impacts on their physical health.

### Air Quality

Vegetation such as trees, plants and grass help to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, whilst replenishing the oxygen levels, promoting a healthier environment. Through particulate matter filtration, vegetation in the parks also act as natural filters that trap and remove particulate matter from the air, thus improving the surrounding air quality. Additionally, parks will dense tree cover can have a cooling effect, reducing the ambient temperature and thus preventing higher temperatures exacerbating air pollution.

### Sports and Recreation

Parks serve as spaces that encourage physical activity. Unlike the other parks in Hartlepool there are no formal sports facilities based within this site, but there are a number of opportunities for activity.

The park is used for a Junior Park Run while the pond is frequently used by anglers for fishing. Within the playground is the interactive SUTU goal wall to encourage active play and sport. The wall comes with a range of games that can be played individually, in groups or in teams with each game focused on developing a particular skill or providing a particular type of challenge.

The areas of open space can be used for sports and recreation.

# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## 3.3 Legal

### Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO)

The Parks and Open Spaces PSPO 2021 (HBC) states that at any time, it will constitute an offence should any person:

- Use a skateboard, bicycle or scooter in a manner likely to cause annoyance, nuisance or damage;
- Camp or otherwise stay overnight;
- Fish in the areas when the park is closed to the public or;
- Use an unauthorised mechanically propelled vehicle (MPV) such as motorbikes, scooters, quad bikes and motor cars.

This Order came into force on 1st April 2021 and shall remain in force for a period of three years, from that date. HBC may extend, vary, or discharge it before the expiry of the Order.

Another PSPO is currently in place covering the control of dogs in relation to:

- Dog fouling and dog walkers carrying the means to pick up their dog's mess.
- Dogs must be on a lead where signposted.
- Dogs must not enter the children's play area.
- Dog walkers cannot take more than four dogs at a time to the park.

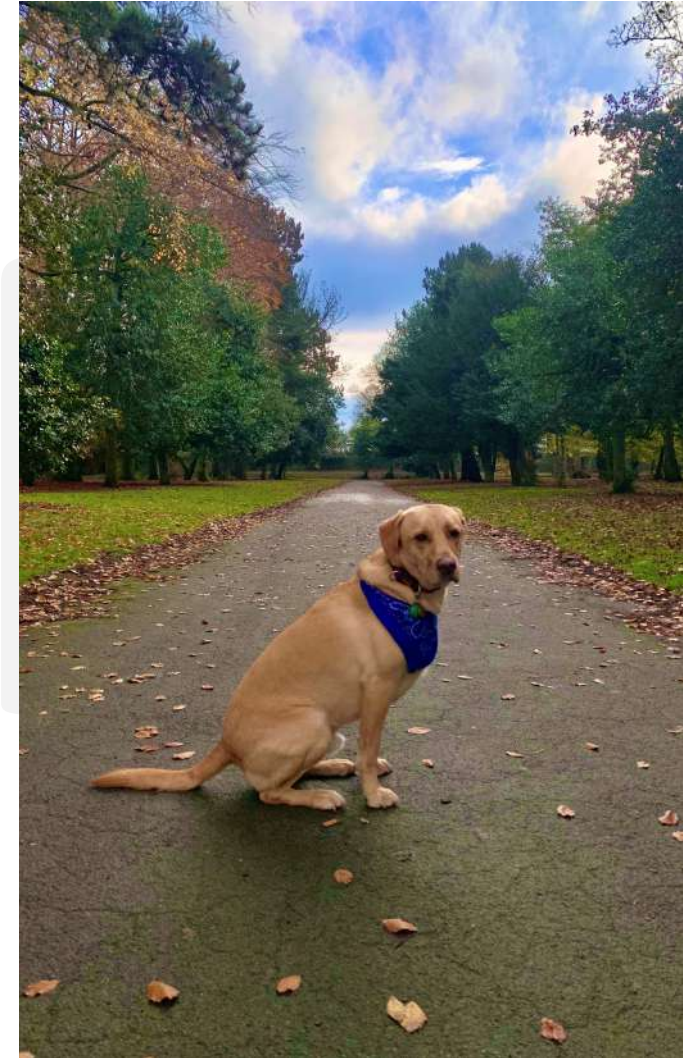
Site visits by HBC Enforcement Officers are made on request, should it be made apparent that the above are regularly being ignored, however there are a good number of dog waste bins provided on site and the majority of users respect the space.

### Byelaws

There are a number of byelaws made by HBC in effect at Seaton Park. These are in relation to the following:

- Entry outside of public opening times;
- MPV's and rights of way;
- Cycling;
- Overnight vehicle parking;
- Horse riding;
- Climbing of walls, fences, trees, barriers or railings;  
Removal or displacement of barriers, railings, posts, seats, or any structure/ornament;
- Erection of posts, and;
- Camping.

A full breakdown of the byelaws in place at the site can be made available on request.



# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## 3.4 Personal and Park Security

### Maintenance Techniques and Design Out Crime

For future developments and installations within the site, designing out crime principles must be considered. The aim of this is to reduce the vulnerability of both people and property to crime and antisocial behaviour by removing opportunities within the site through specific design techniques.

Rossmere Park has suffered from vandalism and antisocial behaviour on multiple occasions, resulting in the removal or closure of various facilities. When considering new installations and developments for the park, fire retardant and low scrap value materials are preferred as these have withstood ASB attempts at other sites. Additionally, horticultural maintenance techniques help to control areas where antisocial behaviour is prevalent (as noted in section 2.1).

### Protect Duty

In preparation for the Protect Legislative Duty, HBC has formed part of a network across the north east that has launched the North East Pilot. This includes 33 local authorities and 7 police forces, and aims to build capability for security considerations and mitigations. The Pilot focuses on Publicly Accessible Locations (PALs), including town parks. The formation of a PAL group involving public and private sector partners uses a

joined-up approach to identify risks and reduce vulnerabilities.

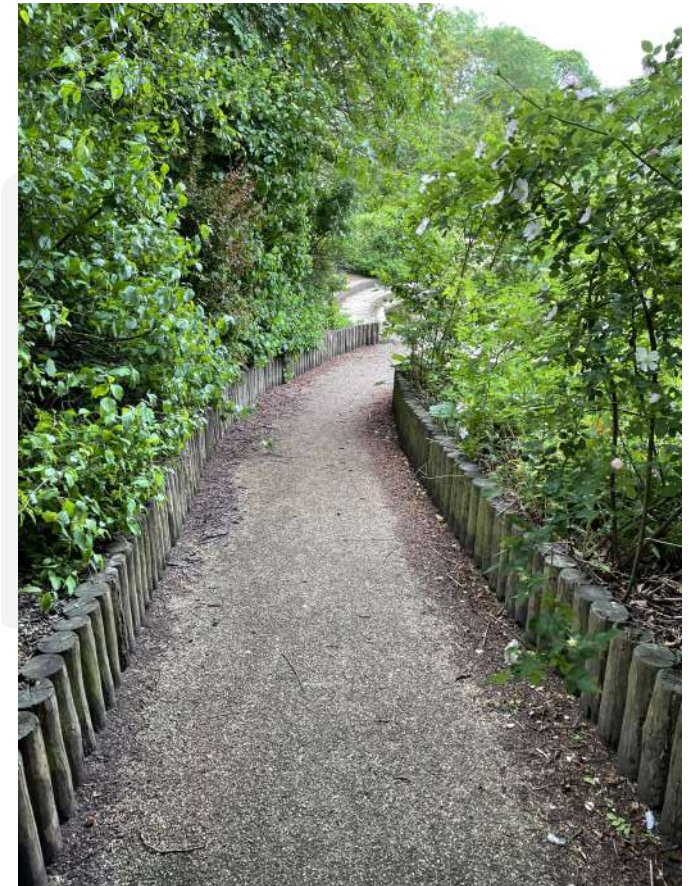
### Park Staff

The site is maintained by a core workforce of 14 staff across all parks and open spaces. Parks staff participate in a varied training programme to ensure up to date skills and knowledge, in order to maintain the site and provide support to those who need it. This has included counter terrorism training for open spaces and first aid training.

### Park Security

The site has CCTV coverage as well as regular visits from outreach workers, to offer guidance, advice and engage with young people in the area.

Regular meetings regarding antisocial behaviour are held to update the police and partner organisations of any issues, including vandalism.



# Healthy, Safe and Secure

## **Parks provide an inclusive and safe space, focused on health and wellbeing**

- Develop walking routes and interactive trails between green spaces, to encourage active choices for all ages and abilities.
- Outreach workers to engage with groups exhibiting continued antisocial behaviour in order to reduce damage to park assets and to encourage a safer, more welcoming atmosphere.
- Reduce opportunity for trespassing and antisocial behaviour in current problem areas and future developments, through consideration of extra security measures, design techniques and natural surveillance.

### **3.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### Site Objectives

- Use targeted horticultural maintenance to improve sightlines to areas of repeated antisocial behaviour
- Consider designing out crime techniques and principles for future park developments
- Reduce antisocial behaviour incidents in the park

# 4

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## Maintenance and Cleanliness

- 4.1 LITTER AND WASTE MANAGEMENT
- 4.2 FACILITIES, BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
- 4.3 EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE
- 4.4 HORTICULTURAL MAINTENANCE
- 4.5 ARBORICULTURAL MAINTENANCE
- 4.6 MONITORING
- 4.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## 4.1 Litter and Waste Management

Waste bins are situated throughout the park and are emptied weekly, with a site-wide litter pick taking place five days a week. Excess litter found is removed on a reactionary basis. Regular litter picks are also organised by volunteering groups and the local community, on a reactive and more casual basis.

## 4.2 Facilities, Buildings and Infrastructure

Facilities at Rossmere Park include the café and toilet facilities. The café is leased to an external company who manage the building, while the toilet facilities are maintained by HBC. Continued antisocial behaviour has resulted in closure of the toilet facilities. Increased maintenance due to destruction adds further pressure on to council capacity and budgets.

Other park infrastructure such as footpaths, roads inside the site boundary, gates and signage are the responsibility of multiple services within HBC. This includes Highways, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance. Regular park inspections record issues such as graffiti, potholes, broken fencing or railings, and building issues, with the appropriate teams then notified to take action. The severity of the issue will determine the timescale in which it is dealt with. If the issue poses an immediate risk to park users then teams will be called out to deal with the issue as soon as possible (section 4.6).

## 4.3 Equipment Maintenance

### Tools and Vehicles

Park maintenance equipment used by HBC staff is maintained in line with relevant Health & Safety policies and legislation. Where required, staff undergo training and certification to operate equipment or machinery and are issued with PPE for use. Equipment is serviced on an annual basis by HBC Stores with records kept. Vehicles are kept in a central hub where they are serviced and maintained to standard. Regular checks are undertaken by drivers with a standard check taking place before the use of each vehicle. Any issues flagged during this check or during use of the vehicle are immediately passed to Fleet Services, who are responsible for resolving vehicle issues.

### Volunteers

Volunteering groups have access to hand tools for basic park maintenance. Trained and certified individuals may also use power tools under the supervision of the Parks and Open Spaces team. Further details are available in the Parks and Open Spaces Community Engagement and Volunteering Strategy that can be made available upon request. For all volunteering groups who wish to operate within the site, supervised or unsupervised, there is an Operating Agreement in place covering all health and safety information. This agreement must be signed

by both parties (volunteer group & HBC) before an activity is able to take place.

### Play Equipment

Play equipment on site is inspected multiple times a week and a full operational inspection is undertaken on a monthly basis. Inspections are completed in house by an RPII Operational Inspector. In addition to regular in house checks, an annual inspection is completed by an independent RPII Annual Inspector. This ensure the equipment is fit for use, adheres to all relevant legislation, and meets appropriate safety regulations.

# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## 4.4 Horticultural Maintenance

Maintenance of natural features including shrubs, planting and lawns is overseen by the Horticultural Operations Officer, and consists of:

- Maintenance of grassed areas within the park, carried out bi-weekly during the growing season (March to November).
- Weed control within the shrub beds and hard standing areas using approved herbicides, as and when required, during the growing season.
- Litter picking of shrub bed areas within the park, as and when required, throughout the year.
- Removal of litter, fly tipping and debris from the lake when deemed necessary.
- Planting bulbs, bedding plants and perennials during the planting season.

A full breakdown of the yearly horticultural maintenance schedules can be found in appendix E.

## Pond Maintenance

To control filamentous algae (blanket weed) within the pond, it is treated with barley straw. Algae can deprive the water of oxygen and is therefore detrimental to all aquatic life, especially fish species. The barley straw is a natural algaecide, releasing small quantities of hydrogen

peroxide as it decomposes. Despite the barley not having an effect on established algae within the pond, it prevents reoccurrence and spread by preventing the and growth of algal cells. Barley straw is added during spring/early summer, and one treatment can last up to four months. During periods of excessive filamentous growth, water pumps may have to be used on a temporary basis to move the water and increase oxygen levels within the pond.

## 4.5 Arboricultural Maintenance

The parks trees are visually inspected by on-site staff on a regular basis. Works are carried out during the winter period of November to March, by qualified internal Arborists under the direction of the Horticultural Operations Officer, in liaison with the Arboricultural Officer. A reactive call out service is provided outside of the core working months in the case of fallen trees or dangers that may be present to users of the park.

Trees situated adjacent to pathways, playgrounds and seating areas are within high usage zones, where it is more likely that park users are present in these areas. Sections of wider open spaces are considered lower usage zones, due to the frequency in which these spaces are used in comparison to the more congested areas listed above. Trees located in high usage zones are therefore prioritised for maintenance works when required, including pruning and felling of trees.

In some cases, it is possible and most favourable to remove hazardous limbs/branches in order to make the tree safe rather than felling the whole tree. This is both the more environmentally favourable and lower cost option. Larger and older trees have sequestered the most carbon from the atmosphere and are therefore valuable park assets, in terms of climate sustainability. Additionally, standing dead wood can provide excellent habitats for invertebrates and other wildlife. Further information about procedures for managing the tree canopy including tree pests and diseases can be found in section 5.6.



# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## 4.6 Monitoring

### Park Inspections

In addition to the maintenance schedules already in place for Rossmere Park, there are regular checks and inspections taking place to keep on top of any arising issues.

Park inspections are completed regularly by the Parks and Open Spaces team as well as informal checks by on-site staff, with an in-depth site audit taking place on a quarterly basis. Park audits include a review of all the parks features and facilities, including (but not limited to) pathways, buildings and infrastructure, tree health, bodies of water, graffiti, litter and sports facilities. A full breakdown of features reviewed can be provided on request. During an audit, features are logged as compliant, monitoring or non-compliant, in order to provide an overall park performance score. Non-compliant features are reported via an online portal service following each audit, directing the issue to the relevant team for action. A flowchart can be viewed in appendix F, detailing the process for reporting on any issues related to the park.

Reports are completed following each inspection with records kept including date, a list of the features, overall score and associated photographs of issues. Reports are reviewed throughout the year to identify any trends or continuously non-compliant features that may require further intervention.

### Online Portal

The online portal service is provided by HBC and is used both internally, and available to the public. The portal allows users to submit any issues, comments, or service requests (such as cleansing) and is sent directly to the relevant service within HBC. Internal access to the portal is used to effectively manage any arising issues across the town. The service is used for a wide range of issues across Hartlepool, and park specific forms should be submitted through the Parks and Recreational Areas Portal.

There are a number of teams involved in the resolution of park related issues, and in some extreme instances it may be necessary to involve external organisations for assistance or advice. Key teams are as follows:

- **Parks and Open Spaces**—responsible for the overall management and development of the site.
- **Quality and Safety Officer**—playgrounds, safety of equipment and water safety.
- **Horticulture**—horticultural maintenance across the borough, including tree works and a team of arborists.
- **Arboricultural Officer**—monitoring of tree health, development of tree strategy.
- **Street Cleansing/Grounds Maintenance**—general maintenance of park and wider areas, litter and waste management.
- **Highways Operations**—fixing path network. Building Maintenance: responsible for resolving issues with buildings and infrastructure.
- **Public Protection**—public and animal health.
- **Conservation** (within Heritage and Countryside)—heritage assets and features.
- **Volunteering Groups**—help with upkeep of any installations within the park they have developed, along with regular maintenance of the park.
- **Natural England**—event of an emergency related to their works.
- **Environment Agency**—as above.
- **Defra**—advice and action on animal health.

# Maintenance and Cleanliness

## **Parks are kept to a high standard, through impactful maintenance and cleansing routines**

- Conduct regular site audits to monitor the site, ensuring issues are resolved in a timely manner and contributing to the longevity of assets.
- In future developments, prioritise self-maintaining or low maintenance schemes.

## **4.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Increased park maintenance activities through mobilisation of volunteering groups
- Conduct regular park inspections to ensure issues are dealt with in a timely manner

# 5

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# Environmental Management

**5.1 WASTE MINIMISATION**

**5.2 CHEMICAL USE**

**5.3 PEAT USE**

**5.4 MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

**5.5 CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION**

**5.6 BIOSECURITY**

**5.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Environmental Management

## 5.1 Waste Minimisation

The park is supplied with ample waste bins (including dog waste) to encourage park users to dispose of waste responsibly. There are recycling options available across the site.

Where possible, natural waste from park maintenance is shredded on site and used as mulch. Larger pieces of timber from tree works are removed by an external company and repurposed. Excess materials to the needs of the park, and any other green waste, is removed to the council's transfer station for recycling.

## 5.2 Chemical Use

Pesticide use has been reduced to a minimum within the park, where possible. Glyphosate is present in the Round-Up 360 product used as weed control on a regular basis within shrub beds, around street furniture and along grass verges. Records are kept for the total amount of glyphosate used across the borough. An economically and environmentally sustainable alternative has not yet been identified.

## 5.3 Peat Use

There is currently no peat used within the site.

## 5.4 Managing Environmental Impact

There are a number of points to consider when addressing the environmental impact of a site – both positive and negative. Site buildings such as the Rossmere Park Café have an environmental impact on the park through the use of electricity, water and gas, which are required for the use of the facilities. Park maintenance has an environmental impact through its use of vehicles, power tools and equipment, herbicides, and waste disposal methods. These impacts are mitigated by keeping public vehicles out of the park beyond the parking spaces, using hand tools instead of power tools where possible, minimising herbicide use and using composting bins for organic waste disposal instead of landfill sites.

As well as the potential negative impacts of activities and buildings within the site, the park as a green space can have a number of positive environmental impacts extending beyond the boundaries of the site. Green spaces can serve as nature reserves within an urban setting, they act as 'lungs' for towns through green infrastructure such as tree cover, contributing toward improved air quality and natural carbon sequestration.

Not only must we consider the impact of the site on the wider environment, but also the impacts of a changing environment on the site. When managing green spaces it is important to consider how different interventions can be utilised in order to adapt to a changing climate, while

mitigating the impacts where possible. Possible environmental impacts to consider include rising temperatures, which may lead to increased heat stress in wildlife, drought periods which may affect water availability, and changes in seasonal growth of plants. The following section will discuss a number of climate change adaptation strategies relevant to Rossmere Park.



# Environmental Management

## 5.5 Climate Change Adaptation

A changing climate can pose many risks to a green space site, including increased risk of flooding, pressure on drainage systems, habitat and species loss, threats from extreme weather events such as storms or droughts, as well as changing temperatures and the impact that will have on native flora and fauna. Green spaces such as Rossmere Park provide a crucial opportunity to adapt, mitigate and reduce the impacts of climate change, through numerous interventions and strategies.

### Tree Cover

The current climate is altering how both native and non-native trees in the UK are now reacting. Hotter summers and milder winters can alter the phenology of trees, meaning that a different approach to planting may be required. The local environment must be carefully considered when selecting and implementing a diverse and lasting range of species. While prioritising native species is beneficial for promotion biodiversity, mitigating the risks of invasive non-native species (INNS) and diseases, and supporting the local ecosystem, it is also important to recognise the value of incorporating non-native species. Non-native tree species can provide additional ecological functions and contribute to the adaptability of green spaces in the face of a changing climate. Ensuring each species will be carefully matched

to an ideal planting location will be essential, taking into account the longevity and suitability of the site.

Retention and expansion of the current tree canopy will help to combat extreme heat, by providing more shade for a direct cooling effect. Tree establishment will focus more on ensuring that existing and new planting schemes are able to establish and flourish within their environment, in turn giving a higher percentage yield of successful planting whilst reducing the need and effects of having to replant failed saplings.

Unlocking funding and resource to increase planting efforts across the borough and within the town's parks is a priority going forward, and current regional schemes such as Trees on Tees and the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund will be utilised to assist with this. More information can be made on request.

### Rossmere Pond

Increasing temperatures, altered precipitation patterns such as intense rainfall or droughts, loss of biodiversity and changes to water quality are all potential impacts of climate change on the pond in Rossmere Park. In addition to this, higher temperatures and altered precipitation patterns can exacerbate the effects of pollutants thus making the pond more susceptible to contamination from urban runoff. Given the location of Rossmere Pond and its proximity to the nearby A689,

surface run-off is likely to impact on the water quality.

There are a number of methods that could help to mitigate the impacts of a changing climate on the pond, such as vegetation management and enhancing biodiversity through increased planting. Increased tree planting around the pond also helps to provide shade and regulate water temperature, reducing evaporation. Regular pond maintenance including ecological surveys, removal of excessive sediment, INNS management and ensuring a balanced nutrient level would also benefit the pond. There is also a clear opportunity to install sustainable drainage systems such as a rain garden or bioswales to improve water quality.

### Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Surface run off from the nearby A689 road gathers in Rossmere pond, putting the natural flora and fauna at risk. Installation of a sustainable drainage system (such as a rain garden) would help to manage excess water through the manipulation of surface run-off and the absorption or retention of water through planting schemes. The system would improve water quality, benefitting a range of wildlife.

# Environmental Management

## 5.6 Biosecurity

Biosecurity is the prevention of the introduction and spread of harmful organisms (Forestry Commission). These include non-native pests such as insects, and disease causing organisms (pathogens) such as some bacteria and fungi. Pests and diseases can be introduced through a number of ways, via:

- Live plants and trees;
- Timber and wood packaging;
- Dirty tools, kit, machinery and vehicles;
- Organic matter such as soil, and;
- Natural methods such as water and wind.

### Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Although not present in Rossmere Park, three species in particular pose a threat within the parks and open spaces in Hartlepool and across the wider Tees Valley. These are Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam, and are all classed as amber-list species. In line with the North East INNS Strategy Action Plan (2020), the aim for amber-list species is to reduce their impact through controlled measures, as they are already widespread within the region and so eradication is therefore not feasible.

### Control Measures

There are a number of control measures in place for HBC staff and teams to manage the spread of any INNS. These include:

- Staff are informally trained to identify INNS.
- Kit, clothing, boots, equipment and tools cleaned as part of routine maintenance before and after use, to prevent spread of seeds.
- Planting stock is sourced responsibly, using British grown plants where possible, to reduce the risk of accidental introduction of non-native pests and diseases.
- Accurate and up to date records are kept of all stock, in case an outbreak occurs.
- Regular inspections of all tree stock are completed to informally check for signs of ill health.

Any recordings of INNS by HBC staff are shared with the Environmental Records Information Centre (ERIC) North East, that works with a range of users to collate environmental data for nature conservation. Resources such as ERIC and iRecord (figure 3) are accessible to members of the public, allowing a wider range of people to be involved in reporting sightings of INNS or other threats. Resources are shared with volunteering and community groups, through signage on site, and available on the Parks and Open Spaces webpage.



Figure 3: ERIC North East method of reporting.

# Environmental Management

## Tree Pests and Diseases

Since the early 2000's, there has been a significant increase of tree pests and diseases that have been introduced into the UK due to a number of different factors including increasing global trade, evolution/cross breeding, climate change, air pollution and poor soil quality. A decrease in woodland management has also allowed pests and diseases to go unnoticed for a longer period. It is important to educate teams to be able to spot any signs of poor plant health.

According to the UK Plant Health Risk Register, there are 1,414 pests and diseases posing a potential risk to the UK.



## Ash Dieback

In particular Ash Dieback has been identified as a threat to trees, not only in Hartlepool but on a national scale. Multiple cases of Ash Dieback have been spotted within the town's parks. On-site staff have been informally trained to identify the signs and symptoms of Ash Dieback in order to report and monitor trees suspected to be infected with the disease. A borough-wide tree health survey is planned in order to effectively manage the situation before it worsens. As there is minimal knowledge surrounding the disease and its implications, the process currently stands to mark trees requiring immediate attention or ongoing surveillance. Tree works will then take place during the winter period or via the reactive call-out service, if required outside of winter maintenance.

Figure 4 shows examples of ash trees infected with different levels of Ash Dieback, categorised by four different classes according to the severity of the disease. Ash health class 4 is the worst level of Ash Dieback infection, whereby the majority of the tree has been infected with the disease and only 25-0% of the tree crown remains. Signs of possible Ash Dieback include spots on the leaves, wilted leaves, branches losing leaves and 'dying back', and dark patches (lesions) on the branches and/or trunk.

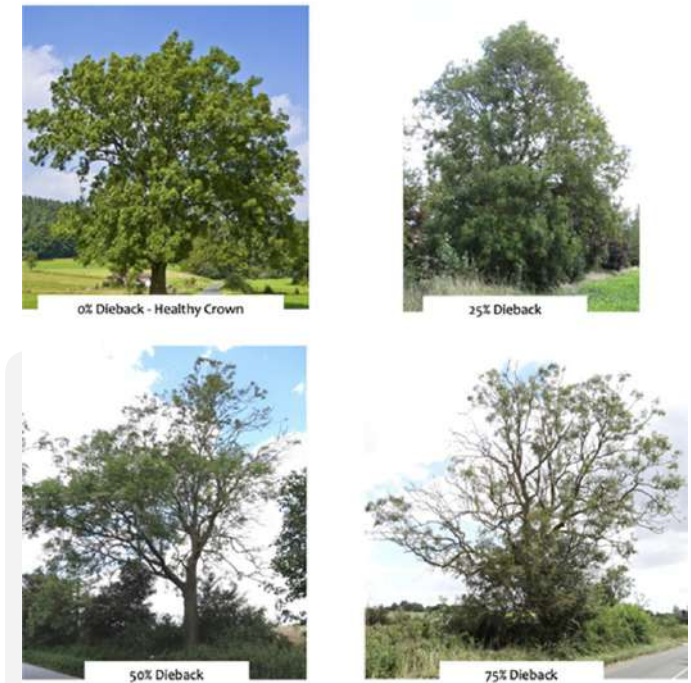


Figure 4: Ash Tree Health, Assessing the severity of ash trees suffering with Ash Dieback

- Ash Health Class 1: 100-75% of crown remains
- Ash Health Class 2: 75-50% of crown remains
- Ash Health Class 3: 50-25% of crown remains
- Ash Health Class 4: 25-0% of crown remains

# Environmental Management

## **Park management ensures nature is considered and not compromised, protecting and futureproofing the parks natural assets against an uncertain climate**

- Adopt best practice management methods including alternatives to pesticide use and a circular economy for natural waste.
- Investigate nature-based solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change, such as flood alleviation schemes and restoration of natural assets and habitats, to protect residential areas for the benefit of the community and future generations.

## **5.7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Install sustainable drainage system to treat surface run-off and protect the pond
- Protect current tree canopy and increase tree planting
- Phase out chemical use across the park
- Use natural waste from tree works and other horticultural works for reuse, such as mulch around tree bases, logs and forage

# 6

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# Biodiversity and Landscape

- 6.1 NATURAL FEATURES, WILD FLORA AND FAUNA
- 6.2 LANDSCAPE AND DESIGNED FEATURES
- 6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY
- 6.4 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN
- 6.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Biodiversity and Landscape

## 6.1 Natural Features, Wild Flora and Fauna

Rossmere Park forms an important element of the Owton Manor Green Wedge, running from the rural fringe at Owton Manor, through to Rossmere Park in the east. The park, with its range of habitats including mature trees and open water, is an important habitat for wildlife in the southern area of Hartlepool, with more or less continuous green links out to the western fringe of Hartlepool. As a result, the park supports a range of wildlife including species of bat and bird.



### Rossmere Pond and Island

The pond supports carp and perch, and eels have previously been recorded. There have also been reports of water vole within the pond. Birdlife includes Canada goose, Eurasian coot, Eurasian moorhen, mute swan, Indian spot-billed duck, greylag goose and mallard.

Of particular note is the population of little egrets that use the large wooded island within the pond. This species is a relatively recent arrival in Britain, having naturally expanded its range from the continent. Little egret were previously winter residents in the park, with the island providing the roost site for the whole of the wintering population of the Tees Valley. From 2015 little egret have been known to breed here, with at least 10 pairs breeding in 2018 and 46 young fledging. The site is the only known breeding site for little egret in Tees Valley and one of the most northerly colonies on the east coast. For this reason the site is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) by the Tees Valley Nature Partnership.

Within the pond are a number of smaller 'islands' that are areas of increased planting, beneficial for biodiversity and overall pond health.

### Tree Cover and Planted Areas

Tree species in Rossmere Park include Alder, Ash, Cherry, Hawthorn, Lime, Pear, Plum and Sycamore, among many others. A full list of the species present within the site can be found in appendix G.

There are also a number of planted areas across the park, including a large section of bulbs located centrally to the grass lawn appearing each spring. Bulbs are also planted around tree bases and along the edges of walkways. Located in the eastern edge of the park there is a small circle of wilder planting where bulbs, wildflowers and grasses are left to grow for biodiversity. There are a number of areas situated throughout the park where there is clear potential for further wildflower planting schemes.



# Biodiversity and Landscape

## 6.2 Landscape and Designed Features

The park is informally designed into three sections, with the café and playgrounds located to the west, and Rossmere pond and island to the east. Between these two sections sits a large area of uninterrupted green space that can be used for sports and recreation. Surfaced pathways within the park help to define the three sections whilst following the park's boundary.

Within the central section, previous investment into the park funded the installation of a small covered events area with associated hard standing underneath. Continued antisocial behaviour and destruction meant the cover was eventually removed, however the hard paving remains.

## 6.3 Environmental Conservation Strategy

### Wildlife Monitoring

There is opportunity to approach local groups and individuals to offer volunteering opportunities for wildlife surveys. This will help in understanding, monitoring and protection of birds and wildlife at Rossmere Park.

### Sustainable Drainage Systems

As discussed in section 5.5, the installation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) such as a rain garden or bioswales would be beneficial to protecting Rossmere

Park pond and island. The system would benefit water quality through the manipulation of surface run-off and the absorption or retention of excess water through planting. Excess run-off goes through a process of natural filtration, so the pond will be protected from storm-water pollutants. Installation of SuDS would require external funding to achieve an effective and impactful scheme at the site.

### Pond and Wildlife

The park has experienced continued issues with the removal of fish from other ponds across the town into Rossmere pond. Although this is often done by well-meaning individuals, it poses many risks to the delicate wildlife balance at Rossmere Park. One way to address this would be the installation of educational signage (i.e. a 'pond etiquette' sign) to inform users of the risks of such activity as well as providing contact details for organisations who are equipped with the appropriate tools and knowledge to do so. Similar information can be provided for blanket weed removal which has previously been completed by dedicated volunteers, to ensure correct processes are followed such as leaving the debris on the side for a period of time to allow invertebrates inhabiting the pond to return. Additional considerations can be included for feeding the ducks, litter into the pond, and any other potential issues experienced at the site.

## 6.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is an important concept for town parks. It is a measure of how much biodiversity a park has lost, and how much it has gained. The overall goal for any town park is to achieve a net gain in biodiversity. This can be achieved by planting native plants – which are more resistant to pests and diseases than non-native plants – and by taking care of the existing plants within the parks.

In order to monitor biodiversity within the park, plans are in place to conduct baseline ecological surveys with volunteers. Repeat surveys will take place seasonally and/or annually, dependent on capacity. This will continually evaluate and review the impacts of management practices on biodiversity, in response to climate change and anthropogenic impacts.



# Biodiversity and Landscape

## **Parks provide a mosaic of biodiverse habitats that supports a wide range of wildlife**

- Ensure biodiversity net gain and carbon sequestration is considered in future developments.
- Retain a diverse tree canopy including replacement of felled trees and strategic tree planting, as well as monitoring tree health.
- Provide a variety of suitable habitats for wildlife, allowing nature to thrive.

## **6.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Conduct ecological surveys to better understand and protect the wildlife and biodiversity present at Rossmere Park
- Increase planting schemes including bulbs and wildflowers for biodiversity net gain
- Install educational resources such as park signage to inform park users about wildlife considerations and pond etiquette

# 7

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# Heritage and Conservation

- 7.1 HISTORY OF ROSSMERE PARK
- 7.2 HERITAGE FEATURES
- 7.3 HERITAGE CONSERVATION STRATEGY
- 7.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Heritage and Conservation

## 7.1 History of Rossmere Park

Rossmere Park is recognised as a locally listed heritage asset, which is a building or place considered to have special architectural or historic interest to Hartlepool. The designation of this area recognises the historic development of the site and its significance in connection with surrounding communities.

Formerly the site of a brick factory and associated clay pit, the site was acquired by the local authority in the early 1950s to create a public park for the surrounding housing developments. The factory buildings were cleared and work began to create the park at a total cost of £14,000. Works included filling in of the brick and tile quarry that had been up to 9m deep in areas, in order to improve safety. Concrete edging was installed in order to create the ornamental pond, with additional facilities added to the site in the following decades.

The park was officially opened by the Mayor, Councillor Bratton and the Chairman of the Parks Committee (GPK Gallimore) in June 1958.

## 7.2 Heritage Features

There are currently no heritage assets within Rossmere Park.

## 7.3 Heritage Conservation Strategy

The park design aimed to give a similar Victorian feel to it as there is in Ward Jackson Park, despite being a relatively recent addition to the town. Conservation of the site as a whole will be essential in restoring the charm of the park.

Heritage conservation for this site will focus more on conserving the site as a whole, whilst taking care of new park assets to ensure their survival for future generations.

# Heritage and Conservation

**Historical park features are preserved and the site heritage is elaborated, with educational resources readily available for visitors**

- Restore park features and heritage assets.
- Research the history of each site for future heritage based educational resources, celebration events, and signage.
- Ensure recent park additions are responsibly looked after, as they will become future generations' heritage features.

## 7.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Site Objectives

- Conduct research into the site's history to gather information for educational resources and to inspire future park developments
- Protect the park from future damage to preserve for future generations

# 8

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# Community Engagement

- 8.1 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
- 8.2 VOLUNTEERING IN ROSSMERE PARK
- 8.3 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP
- 8.4 EVENTS
- 8.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

# Community Engagement

## 8.1 Community Consultation

The main way in which public consultations are held is via the online platform, Your Say, Our Future. This tool is public facing and allows people to comment on a variety of topics, making their views known and ultimately helping to shape decision making and the future of the site. As discussed in section 1.5 (Road Map), the platform has been used to conduct an initial baseline survey of the parks to gather basic information about public perception of the town's parks and features. The platform will continue to be used for future surveys and consultations.

There is also the opportunity to host drop-in sessions, which would allow park users to chat directly with the Parks and Open Spaces team at HBC as well as on site parks staff. This enables visitors to share their views in an informal setting, rather than a structured and directed survey response. In addition to informal drop-in sessions for the public, the creation of formal stakeholder and interest groups would also benefit the future planning of priorities for the site. This would ensure a variety of voices are heard and represented, providing HBC with a deeper insight. A group could consist of representatives from volunteering groups, residents associations, a youth spokesperson and any other interested parties. Consultation with the community, through surveys, drop-in sessions or formal group consultations, are crucial in order to involve a wider range of voices in the development and future management of the parks.

## 8.2 Community Engagement and Ownership

Ongoing pressures on budgets and capacity has impacted park maintenance and development. The input from active volunteering groups and individuals across the community is invaluable to the continued success of the parks and open spaces. Continuous engagement with local community groups and volunteers, as well as continuing the provision of opportunities to get involved with activities in the park, improves the sense of community ownership of the park. There are plenty of opportunities available within Rossmere Park and across the other parks and open spaces for volunteers to get involved at any level. A seasonal calendar of volunteering opportunities can be viewed within appendix H.

## 8.3 Volunteering in Rossmere Park Volunteering Strategy

To improve the offer for future volunteers, a volunteering strategy has been developed in order to support existing volunteer groups, whilst opening the offer to a wider group of potential volunteers, including corporate partnerships (see section 8.4). The strategy aims to incorporate the concept of 'micro-volunteering', which allows individuals to volunteer their time on their terms, for as little or long as they are able to. This type of volunteering offer does not require a specific level of commitment and can suit different groups and

individuals interested in getting involved, who may not be able to commit the time required by established groups. All volunteering contribution, whether big or small, has a positive impact and helps with the upkeep of green spaces. By widening the offer to incorporate casual and micro-volunteering, it aims to break down some of the barriers that can stop willing people from getting involved.

As well as activities such as weeding, litter picks and other physical works, volunteers can assist with the management of a site simply by paying attention to their surroundings. For example, dog walkers, families and other general park visitors can conduct wildlife surveys, check tree health and look for invasive species whilst going about their daily activities. With the correct knowledge and the tools to report findings, anyone can get involved with these types of activities. Information on how to get involved can be shared with the public via physical signage throughout the park, online, or through volunteer training days for those with more time to give.

# Community Engagement

## Volunteering Groups



The Friends of Hartlepool Wild Green Spaces (FOHWGS) group are a registered charity, who undertake a variety of works that maintain green spaces across Hartlepool, as well as raising funds to create additional features for the sites such as the planted area to the east of the park. As well as working on the additional park features, the group also contribute to the regular maintenance of the park through activities such as weeding, litter picking, repairs to boardwalks and developing other park features. The group are supported by the Parks and Open Spaces team at HBC,

meeting every Tuesday for works across the town's green spaces.

The Big Town Tidy Up are another established group that operate across Hartlepool, providing an invaluable contribution to keeping the town free of litter. They are supported by the Grounds Maintenance team at HBC, who assist with removing bags of litter following a litter pick. This is done on a more casual basis and run via an active Facebook page, which sees a wide variety of the town's residents involved. The group work with a local CIC and charity, HartlePower, who help to organise the responsible recycling of aluminium cans. This helps to raise funds for the ongoing activities of the group.

There is currently also a Friends of Rossmere Park group and associated Facebook page where members of the community can share comments, events and updates about the park. It will be necessary to engage further with the dedicated volunteering group to benefit the park.



# Community Engagement

## 8.4 Working in Partnership

### Corporate Partnerships

The wider volunteering strategy aims to involve corporate partners in volunteering activities. This can be mutually beneficial to the council and supporting businesses, as it provides valuable contributions to the management of a site and can also contribute to a business's corporate social responsibilities (CSR). In addition to corporate volunteering, there are aims to establish working relationships with businesses in Hartlepool. Involvement and contribution from local business allows projects to expand and have a bigger impact, with additional materials, people and input.

### Community Involvement

There are also opportunities to involve a wider range of groups, through activities such as social prescribing and restorative justice. Working with other organisations will provide valuable opportunities for members of the community who may not otherwise make use of these sites.

## Opportunities for Collaboration

A variety of opportunities for the park have been identified throughout this plan, some of which can only be achieved through collaboration with other businesses, groups and communities. These opportunities include:

- Creation of a mural on the wall of the toilet block facilities to discourage continued graffiti attempts.
- Water quality surveys for Rossmere Pond.
- Ecological surveys to monitor wildlife and biodiversity net gain.

## 8.5 Events

In the refurbishment of the park in 2019 a small covered events area was installed with associated hard standing and vehicle access gates. The installation of this provides the opportunity for the space to be used for a wide range of activities. The covered area has since been removed, however the hard paving and large open grassed area remains. Previous Friends of Rossmere Park group has supported a series of events within the park, including Halloween and Easter themed activities.

# Community Engagement

**Partnerships with local businesses, charities, community groups and residents are supported and encouraged throughout the parks and open spaces**

- Ensure active volunteering and community groups are supported in their activities.
- Enable local people to feel pride and establish a sense of ownership, through a number of volunteering and engagement opportunities.

## 8.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Site Objectives

- Engage with Friends of Rossmere Park community group
- Offer wider volunteering opportunities to corporate partners, social prescribing and restorative justice
- Engage with local community through the development of a dedicated stakeholder group
- Reach out to local businesses, communities and groups for collaboration opportunities

# 9

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# Marketing and Communication

**9.1 PARK BRANDING**

**9.2 DIGITAL RESOURCES**

**9.3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

**9.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Marketing and Communication

## 9.1 Park Branding



Figure 5: Parks and Open Spaces logo.

Working with the Marketing and Communications team at HBC, a collection of brand guidelines including a logo has been developed for the four town's parks—Seaton Park, Burn Valley Gardens, Ward Jackson Park and Rossmere Park. The creation of a recognisable park logo (as displayed in figure 5) and associated brand guidelines will be used for all future resources, including signage and online. A signage review is expected to take place when resource and capacity allows, with the creation of new park signage installed when funding

becomes available. The logo comprises of four icons, each representative of a different park. The butterfly represents the sensory planting in Seaton Park, the bird a symbol for Rossmere Park's little tern colony, the tree representative of Burn Valley Gardens and the flower a reference to Ward Jackson Park's formal bedding plants.

## 9.2 Digital Resources

The main channels of communication for information and updates about the park are as follows:

- Hartlepool Borough Council Website
- HBC | Parks and Open Spaces
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Explore Hartlepool | Parks and Countryside
- Active Hartlepool | Parks

### Website

The Parks and Open Spaces webpage has historically been somewhat limited in terms of the information provided, lacking in images, maps, history and updates. This is not reflective of the quality of the town's parks. A

website transformation will take place in 2023 in order to provide a more useful and interesting service for users. New information will reflect the content provided in this management plan, giving users a clear overview of the park and its features. The website will also provide information for those interesting in volunteering, joining an existing Friends group, and getting involved in surveys and research. There will also be opportunity for users to submit queries for things like holding an event in the park.

## 9.3 Communication Strategy

### Social Media

A social media strategy has been developed to ensure regular updates are shared with the public. Updates can include information about ongoing works in the parks, as well as photographs to showcase the parks through the seasons. Posts are shared via HBC social media channels, informing subscribers to what is going on within the parks and encouraging visitors.

### Signage

There is scope to add more information in a variety of formats such as QR codes, walking trail posts, and physical signage. Not all park visitors have access to a digital device and therefore there must also be provision throughout the parks to include these groups.

# Marketing and Communication

**Parks and open spaces updates are communicated across a variety of channels including digital information, physical signage, and in person events**

- Improve communication about park management, including information sharing and consultation processes to enhance user experience.
- Develop a brand identity for Hartlepool's parks and open spaces.

## 9.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Site Objectives

- Update the parks website with relevant information about the site, recent photographs, a site map and other useful resources.
- Ensure information about the park, events and volunteering opportunities are clearly communicated to a wider audience.

# 10

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# Looking Forward

**10.1 INCOME, BUDGETS AND FUNDRAISING**

**10.2 MONITORING AND ASSESSMENTS**

**10.3 PARK PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

**10.4 WIDER PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

**10.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

# Looking Forward

## 10.1 Income, Budgets and Fundraising

### Funding and Investment

Rossmere Park generates some revenue for HBC through the leasing of the café building to an external operator. Beyond this, there are no revenue generating activities that take place at the site. The main source of income for the park is through pre-allocated budgets within the council, or through external grants and fundraising.

An investment strategy will be developed in order to effectively plan for future maintenance, conservation and developments to the site. This will enable a targeted approach to funding opportunities.

### Previous Grants

The most recent significant investment into Rossmere Park saw a number of park improvements to the sum of c£549,000 from Mondegreen Environmental Body Ltd. The funding helped to fulfil some of the previous Rossmere Park Masterplan, and saw a new car park, covered events spaces, works to the pond and refurbishment of the play areas.

### Future Budgets

Future investment into Rossmere Park must consider ongoing maintenance costs. As discussed throughout

the plan, a number of park assets have been damaged or destroyed to the point of removal in previous years. Low maintenance and sustainable park assets are preferable due to limited budgets and capacity. Significant refurbishment or installation of new park assets will require external fundraising.

## 10.2 Monitoring and Assessments

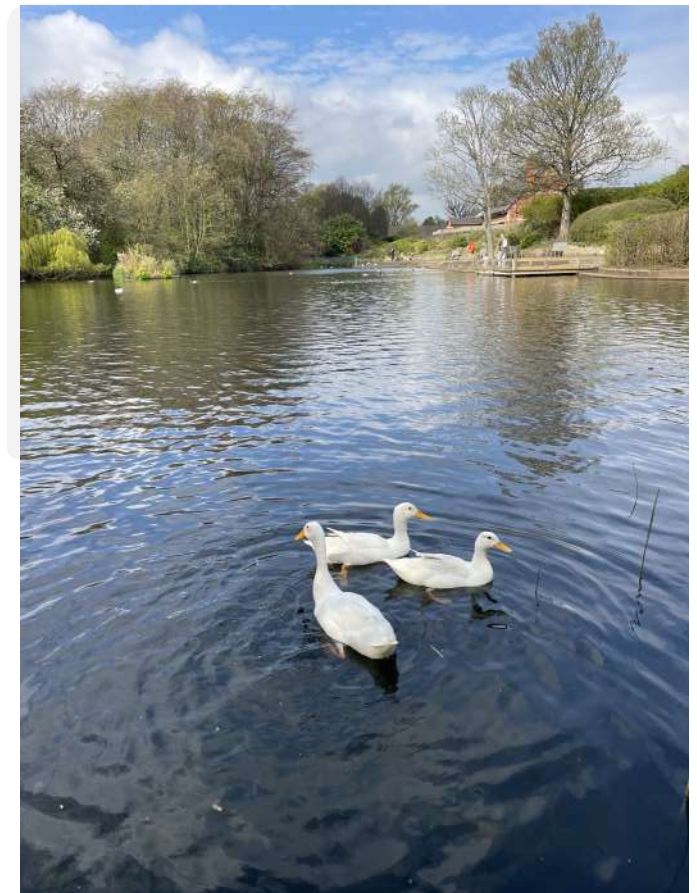
### Park Visitor Surveys

Following the initial baseline survey conducted in 2022, there are plans to repeat the survey to identify any changes in perception, use, and satisfaction of visit. Feedback from members of the public is crucial in helping to focus on public priorities for the future management and development of the park. With the creation of park management plans, there will be an in-depth consultation via Your Say, Our Future, as well as face to face drop-in sessions to be inclusive of those without access to the digital resource. This will help to ensure that the plans and initiatives propose are in line with the community's needs and wants for the parks.

### Wildlife Surveys

To ensure further understanding of the variety of wildlife supported at the site, ecological and biodiversity surveys are required. These will be essential in calculating biodiversity net gain, the impact of management

practices and other initiatives, and to monitor any other emerging trends. Volunteers and park visitors will be encouraged to conduct small surveys during their visits, with guides and key information shared via the HBC Parks and Open Spaces website. Formal ecological surveys will be conducted when funding and resource becomes available.



# Looking Forward

## 10.3 Park Plans and Strategies

### Signage Review

A full review of the signage in place at Ward Jackson Park is ongoing, with hopes to update and replace all of the parks signage. The installation of new signs will be funding dependent and therefore there is no timescale attached to this, at this stage. New information boards will include the park logo that is currently being created.

### Digital Resources

As with the physical information present in the park, the digital resources are also being reviewed. Updates to the parks website are ongoing in order to create a more useful and interactive digital resource, matching the quality of the park.

# Looking Forward

## 10.4 Wider Plans and Strategies

### Connecting Green Spaces

Rather than viewing the parks and open spaces as individual sites that exist in isolation from each other, a joined-up approach has been taken in order to effectively manage the sites as pieces of a larger area.

Part of this will be to look into connecting these sites through wildlife corridors such as grass verges, hedgerows, urban gardens and avenues of trees. These will provide a route of habitats that helps wildlife move around, and will boost biodiversity. Creating connections between the sites will be in line with the National Pollinator Strategy for England.



### Tall Ships Legacy Gardens

As part of the site dressing for the Tall Ships Race 2023 in Hartlepool, a pop-up pallet garden is being created by the Parks and Open Spaces team with input from a variety of businesses who have donated materials and plants, as well as volunteering groups who have assisted with the construction. Individuals across the town have also given their time and expertise to the project, as well as providing plants and trees for the garden.

The key focus of the garden is the reuse of otherwise scrap or wasted materials, such as pallets, encouraging a circular economy. This even includes the plants themselves, as following the event they will be placed within the town's parks as Legacy Gardens.



### Herbicide Free Zones

Burn Valley Gardens is currently being tested as a pilot for 'no-spray' zones. Grass verges, tree bases and around furniture have been left to grow as a trial to test capability to eradicate the use of herbicides entirely across the parks. Although herbicides are an effective way to maintain the park for aesthetic purposes and weed removal, there are a number of negative effects associated with the use of them. This includes potential negative health effects, negative effect on the environment through destruction of wildlife habitats, soil and water pollution, and also contributing to 'herbicide resistance' whereby weeds have the ability to adapt and resist chemical use. Pilot no-spray zones and accompanying research into alternatives will eventually lead to the eradication of chemicals across all of the town's parks and open spaces, where possible.



# Looking Forward

## **Parks are futureproofed against uncertain economic and environmental scenarios**

- Ensure there is an appropriate monitoring process in place to evaluate the performance of management methods and developments.
- Use plans to prioritise future funding and resources, as and when they become available.

## **10.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### Site Objectives

- Identify external funding opportunities to enable further developments to the site.
- Conduct repeat of baseline survey to establish any changes in public perception and site use.
- Conduct wildlife and biodiversity studies with increased planting efforts.

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# Appendices

- A    PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**
- B    YOUR SAY, OUR FUTURE CONSULTATION**
- C    ACTION LOG**
- D    RISK ASSESSMENTS**
- E    HORTICULTURAL CALENDAR**
- F    FLOWCHART OF ACTIONS**
- G    FLORA AND FAUNA**
- H    SEASONAL VOLUNTEERING  
OPPORTUNITIES**

# Appendix A—Parks and Open Spaces

Sites Managed under the Parks and Open Spaces team at Hartlepool Borough Council:

## Town Parks:

- Ward Jackson Park
- Burn Valley Gardens
- Rossmere Park
- Seaton Park

## Local Nature Reserves:

- Seaton Common and Dunes (SSSI)
- Hart to Haswell Walkway
- Hart Warren Dunes
- Greatham Beck
- Spion Kop Cemetery

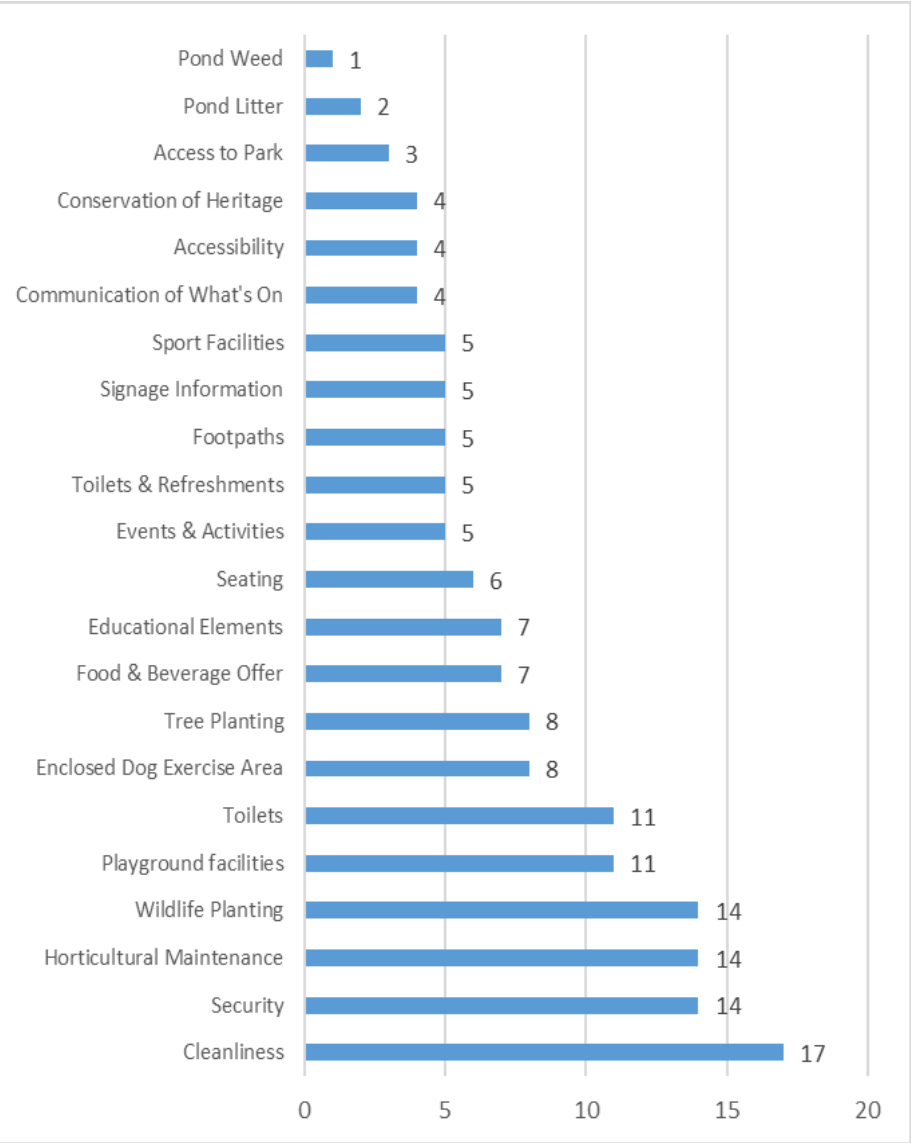
Sites Managed under Active Hartlepool at Hartlepool Borough Council:

- Summerhill Country Park (LNR)

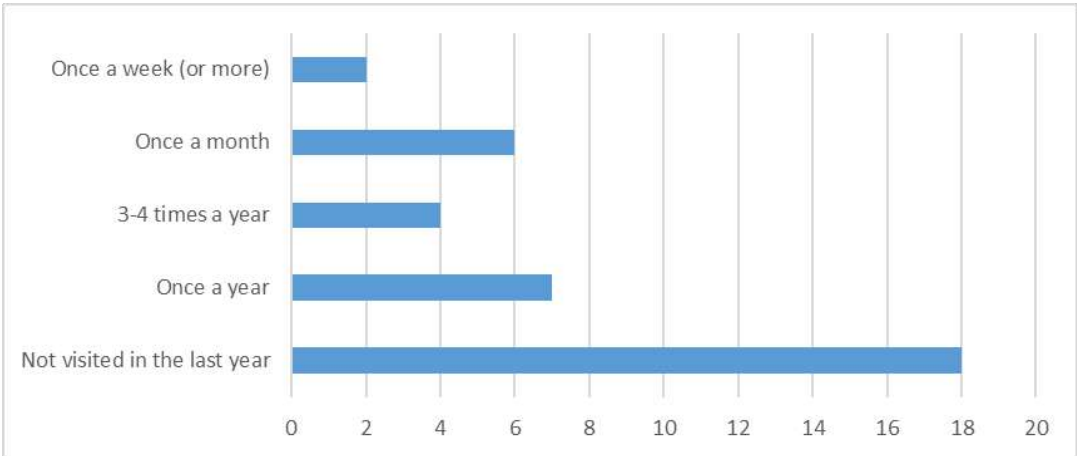


# Appendix B—Your Say, Our Future Consultation

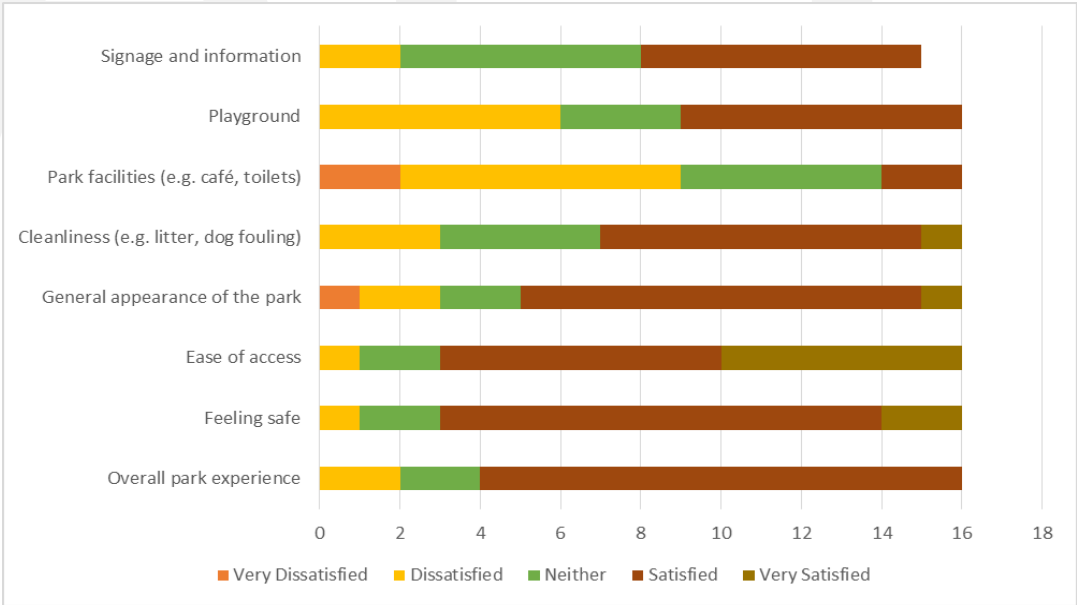
What features could be improved in Rossmere Park?



How often do you visit Rossmere Park?



How satisfied are you with the following features in Rossmere Park?



# Appendix C—Action Log

Chapter	Issue	Action Required	Comments	Completed (Date)	Actioned By
Welcome and Access	Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update and replace safety signage at the lake and playground.</li> <li>Replace park signage with updated information and park logo.</li> </ul>	Funding dependent.	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
Healthy, Safe and Secure		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x</li> </ul>	Awaiting approval for funding allocation to support expansion of security fencing.	September 2022 Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
Maintenance and Cleanliness	Graffiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove graffiti from jetties</li> <li>Officers to continue to monitor the jetties to ensure they are safe</li> </ul>		Ongoing Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces Parks and Open Spaces
	Benches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benches in the park require painting.</li> </ul>	Liaising with probation service and youth justice service	Ongoing	
	Pathways and Surfacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill in potholes posing a risk to public.</li> </ul>	Funding dependent.	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces, Highways
	Rockery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers to continue to monitor the walls to ensure they are safe and stones have not been removed</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Buildings and Facilities Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate issues with toilet facilities and solutions to continuous vandalism and other external buildings, and complete any necessary works.</li> </ul>	Investigation ongoing.	Ongoing	Buildings Maintenance

## Appendix C—Action Log

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all buildings are maintained to a higher standard.</li> </ul>	Park audits scheduled to ensure checks are made.		Parks and Open Spaces
	Pond Cleansing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean areas of pond where litter aggregates</li> <li>Continue to cleanse pond of litter</li> </ul>	Completed	Spring 2023  Ongoing	Cleansing  Cleansing, Volunteers
Environmental Management	Tree Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct tree health survey across the borough to identify necessary tree works.</li> <li>Begin tree works.</li> <li>Train staff to identify signs of disease and other threats.</li> </ul>	<u>Lantra</u> course undertaken by Parks staff.	Ongoing  February 2023	Arboricultural Officer  Parks and Open Spaces
	Chemical Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate pesticide alternatives to phase out use entirely, especially near pond</li> </ul>	Ongoing trials during summer	February 2023  Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces Horticulture
Biodiversity and Landscape	Conservation of pond island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research funding opportunities for erosion prevention strategy.</li> </ul>	Funding dependent.	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Pond oxygenation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research methods to improve pond oxygenation</li> <li>Create rain garden adjacent to A689 to filter run off into pond to improve water quality</li> </ul>	Funding dependent.  Funding dependent.		
Heritage and Conservation	Heritage assets				Parks and Open Spaces

# Appendix C—Action Log

Community Engagement	Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update and distribute volunteering handbook.</li> <li>Recruitment drive for new volunteers on varying scales (committed/micro-volunteering).</li> <li>Engagement with FORP and Rossmere <u>park</u> angling community.</li> <li>Develop a volunteer opportunity plan for Rossmere <u>park</u>.</li> <li>Liaise with health and safety department to develop a volunteer activity agreement document</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share information on social media and media outlets about events planned within the park</li> <li>Community hubs and HAF use the parks in summer</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Provision for the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate alternative spaces for younger groups who are associated with vandalism and ASB within the park</li> </ul>	Review of current park assets ongoing. Funding dependent for any major changes.	Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Memorial Benches and Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify appropriate locations for memorial benches and memorial trees within the park</li> </ul>			
Marketing and Communication	Park Logos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create park logo to be used on updated signage and website.</li> </ul>		Early 2023	Marketing and Communications
	Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresh the parks and open spaces webpage with relevant and up to date information, photographs and resources.</li> </ul>		Ongoing	Parks and Open Spaces
	Improved Communication Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise HBC information channels including Facebook to share advertisements for events, volunteer opportunities and park updates.</li> <li>Create temporary signage for accessible information.</li> </ul>		Ongoing  Ongoing – Where Relevant	Parks and Open Spaces

# Appendix D—Risk Assessments

Risks assessments related to maintenance, inspections and activities that take place at the site, as well as their associated reference numbers are listed below.

Documents and further information can be provided on request.

Risk Assessments and Reference Numbers:

- General Playgrounds (including inspections): NSD OR414
- Various Park Duties: NSD OR422
- Grass Cutting: NSD OR532
- Exterior Plant Maintenance (spraying operations): NSD OR424
- Litter Picking: NSD OR415
- Tree Works: NSD OR533
- Vegetation Clearance: NSD OR459
- Vegetation Clearance and Drainage: NSD OR548
- Tools: NSD OR546
- Vehicles: NSD OR542
- General Parks and Countryside Events (including volunteer work, school groups, and guided walks): NSD OR54

# Appendix E—Horticultural Calendar

The horticultural maintenance works calendar is a basic breakdown of the seasonal maintenance required within the town's parks. This is to be viewed as a rough guide to the horticultural year, that is subject to change due to a number of circumstances such as climate, financial or staffing pressures.

## Winter Maintenance

- Cut back of rose-beds
- Removal of deep rooted weeds and grasses
- Pruning of shrub beds back from footpaths, reduction in height where appropriate
- Tree works including pruning and felling, where appropriate

## Spring Maintenance

- Rose-bed maintenance begins
- Continued shrub and rose-bed maintenance throughout the season
- Herbicide application on shrub beds, tree bases and around furniture

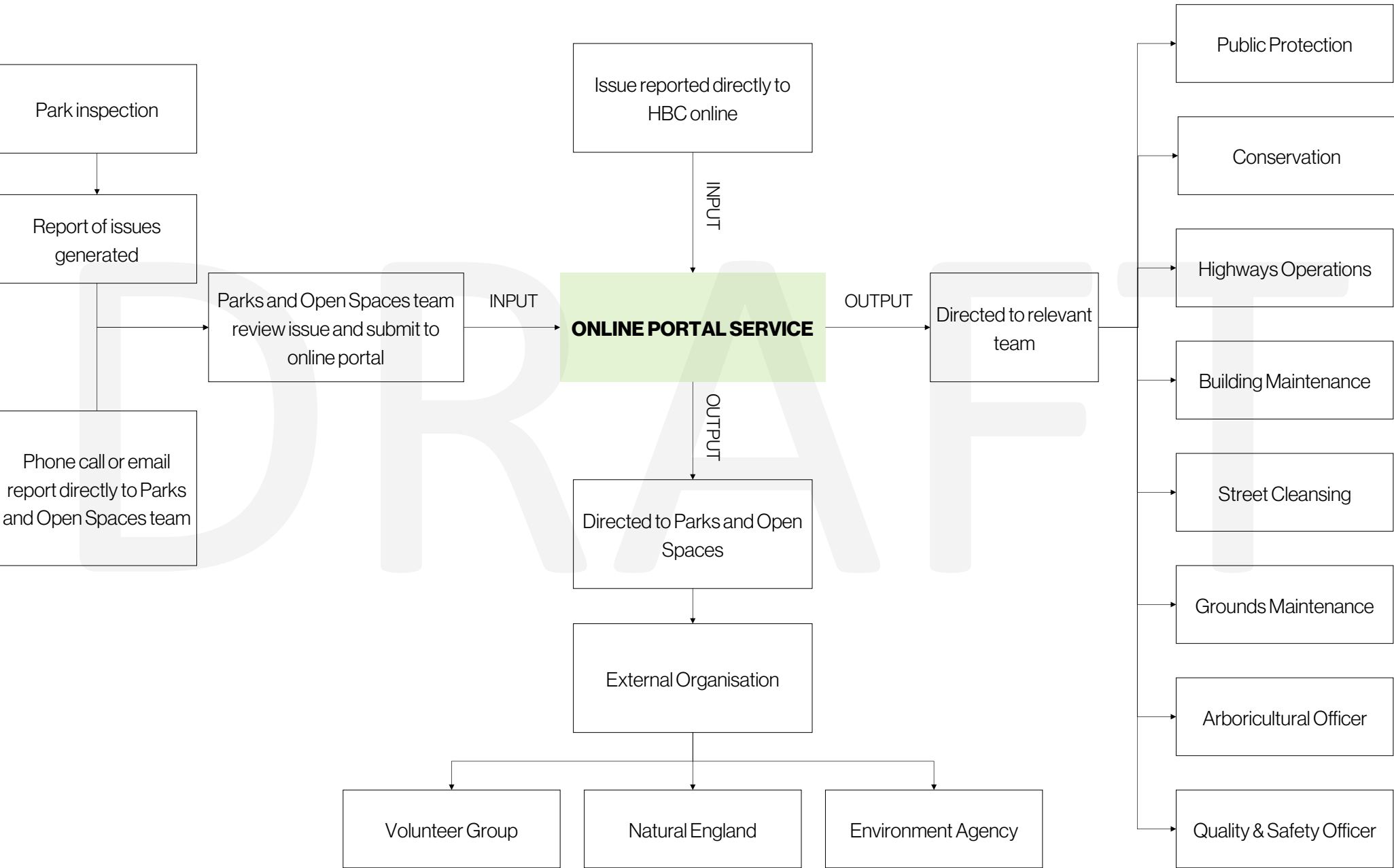
## Summer Maintenance

- Planting of summer bedding plants at the beginning of the season
- Continued maintenance throughout
- Shrub and rose-bed litter picking
- Shrub and rose-bed weed pulling and herbicide application

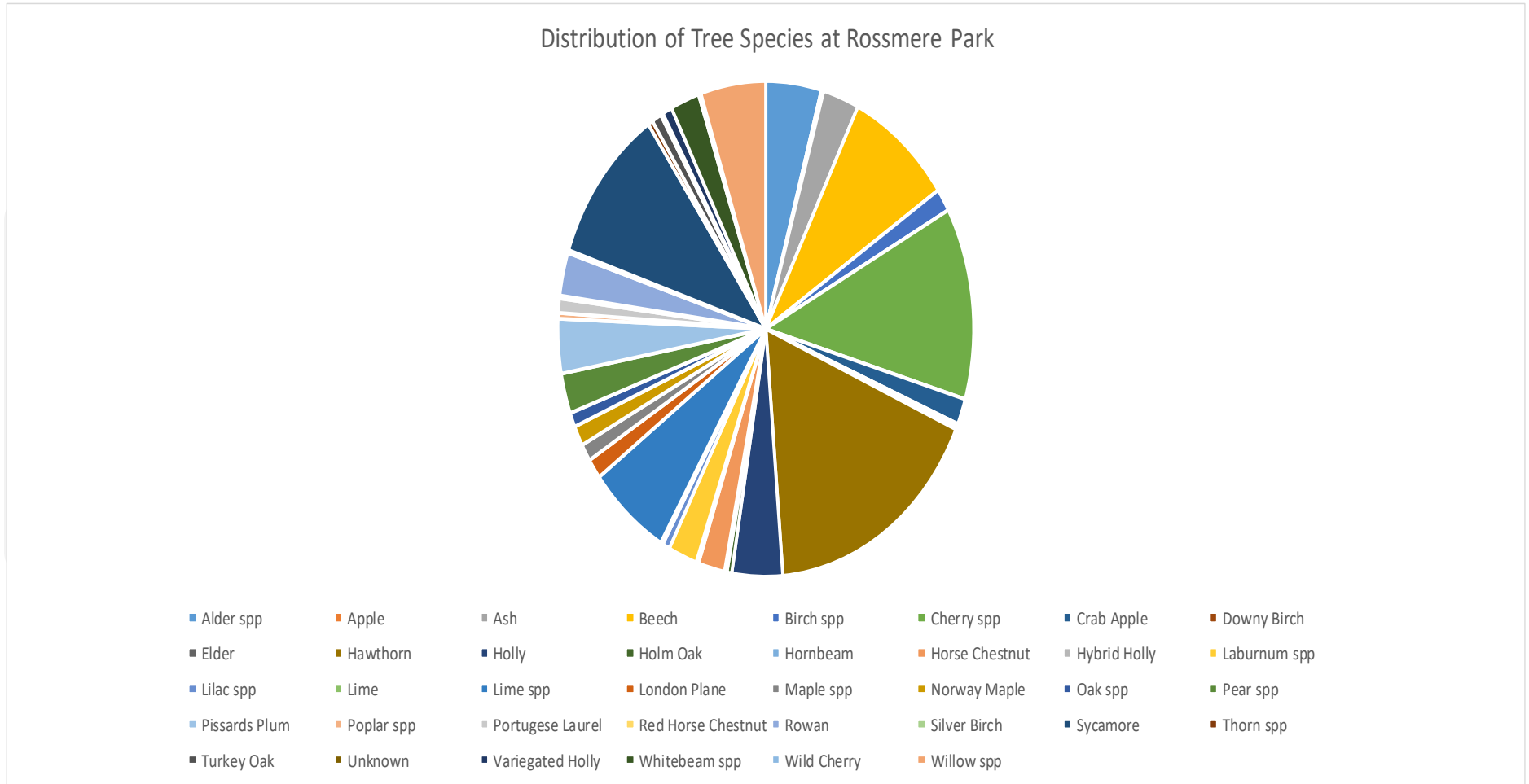
## Autumn Maintenance

- Removal of summer bedding plants at the end of summer season into autumn maintenance
- Replanting of bedding areas
- Tree works including pruning and felling, where appropriate

# Appendix F—Flowchart of Actions



## Appendix G—Flora and Fauna



# Appendix G—Flora and Fauna

Distribution of Tree Species in Rossmere Park:

Species	Number	Species	Number
Alder spp	23	London Plane	7
Apple	1	Maple spp	6
Ash	15	Norway Maple	7
Beech	44	Oak spp	5
Birch spp	8	Pear spp	14
Cherry spp	67	Pissards Plum	19
Crab Apple	9	Poplar spp	2
Downy Birch	1	Portugese Laurel	5
Elder	1	Red Horse Chestnut	1
Hawthorn	91	Rowan	15
Holly	21	Silver Birch	1
Holm Oak	2	Sycamore	55
Hornbeam	1	Thorn spp	2
Horse Chestnut	11	Turkey Oak	4
Hybrid Holly	1	Unknown	1
Laburnum spp	12	Variegated Holly	4
Lilac spp	3	Whitebeam spp	12
Lime	1	Wild Cherry	1
Lime spp	34	Willow spp	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>534</b>		

# Appendix H—Seasonal Volunteering Opportunities

A selection of volunteering opportunities are listed below, split into maintenance seasons.

## Winter Maintenance

- Tree & Bulb Planting
- Wildlife Surveys
- Vegetation Clearance
- Litter Picking
- General Park Maintenance

## Spring Maintenance

- General Park Maintenance
- Wildflower Planting
- Wildlife Surveys
- Litter Picking

## Summer Maintenance

- Wildlife Surveys
- General Park Maintenance
- Litter Picking
- Events
- Flowerbed Maintenance

## Autumn Maintenance

- Wildlife Surveys
- Flowerbed Maintenance
- Bulb & Tree Planting
- Vegetation Clearance
- Litter Picking

## Get in Touch

Parks and Open Spaces  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Victoria Road  
Hartlepool  
TS25 8AY

[parksandcountryside@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:parksandcountryside@hartlepool.gov.uk)

01429 266522

[Hartlepool Borough Council | Parks](#)



**HARTLEPOOL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

# ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE

15 June 2023



**Subject:** COMMUNITY HUBS UPDATE  
**Report of:** Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services  
**Decision Type:** For information

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## 1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

<b>Hartlepool will be a place:</b>
- where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives.
- of resilient and resourceful communities with opportunities for all.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the development of Community Hubs following approval of the Community Hubs Strategy 2023 – 2028 in January 2023.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Community Hub Strategy is based on an overarching vision whereby Community Hubs in Hartlepool, together with partners and the Voluntary and Community Sector, nurture opportunities through access to ideas, imagination and connection.
- 3.2 The 5 year strategy approved by the Adult and Community Based Services Committee in January 2023 articulates the next stage of the Community Hubs journey and monitoring of the strategy will include quantitative and qualitative measures so that the impact on local communities and individuals is captured.

#### 4. UPDATE

- 4.1 Since the approval of the Community Hubs Strategy, the delivery of Community Led Support through Community Hubs has been shortlisted for a Local Government Chronicle Award in the Health and Social Care category. There are nine Councils shortlisted for this award and it is a fantastic achievement to be short-listed from the hundreds of entries received. The winners will be announced on 8 June 2023. The nomination for the award is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 4.2 As highlighted in the nomination, there has been excellent feedback for the Community Hubs from external sources with the recent Corporate Peer Challenge highlighting the Community Hubs as an example of successful co-production and a good example of transformational thinking that could be built upon. Feedback from a former DASS commissioned to work with NE ADASS in preparation for CQC assurance was also very positive identifying Community Hubs as providers of 'exemplar preventative services'.
- 4.3 In February 2023 it was confirmed that the Council's application to the Arts Council England Libraries Improvement Fund had been successful, and £200,000 has been allocated to modernise Seaton Branch Library and relaunch as Seaton Community Hub.
- 4.4 In May 2023 officers gave a presentation on 'Partnership and prevention in action at Hartlepool's Community Hubs' as part of the National Development Team for Inclusion Community Led Support Spring Festival. The session was attended by over 50 Local Authority representatives from across the UK and examples of feedback received include:
- Wonderful place, looks so beneficial for communities.
  - Connection, purpose, meaning and love are what we all need – the community hubs are brilliant and making a real difference – well done!
  - It's wonderful that you're listening and helping to change so many lives.
  - Great work that's making the world a better place – well done.
- 4.5 The North East branch of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (NEADASS) has developed a Learning and Development Programme to share best practice across the region and officers will be delivering a webinar in June 2023 on the role of Community Hubs in adult social care.
- 4.6 Officers will give a presentation sharing the information has been used to promote Community Hubs nationally and regionally.

**5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS**

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	No risk implications identified associated with this report.
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	The Community Hubs Strategy is being delivered within existing budgets.
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	The Community Hubs incorporate the Council's library offer which meets the statutory duty of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 requiring Councils "to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons" for all those who live, work or study in the area (section 7).
<b>CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY</b>	There are no child and family poverty considerations specifically associated with this report. The Community Hubs offer incorporates services that aim to support people living in poverty such as the sustainable food solution provided by The Bread and Butter Thing and access to welfare and benefits advice.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	Access and inclusion is a key consideration of the Community Hubs Strategy ensuring that the Community Hub offer is available for all who wish to take part.
<b>STAFF CONSIDERATIONS</b>	No staffing implications associated with this report.
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<p>No asset management considerations associated with this report.</p> <p>The Council owns Community Hub Central, Community Hub South, the branch libraries at Seaton and the Headland and the mobile Community Hub. There are a range of asset management considerations linked to the Community Hubs Strategy which were reported to Committee in January 2023.</p>
<b>ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	None identified.
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	A 12 week public consultation was carried out to inform the development of the Community Hubs Strategy. An online and hard copy questionnaire was completed by over 150 people and drop-in sessions were held at the Community Hubs, branch libraries and in Middleton Grange shopping centre.

	The outcomes of the consultation were very positive and confirmed that the Strategic Priorities of the Community Hubs Strategy are the right ones.
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## 6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Committee note further developments since the Community Hubs Strategy was approved.

## 7. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 The Community Hubs Strategy clearly identifies the direction of travel for the next 5 years. This update to Adult and Community Based Services Committee further demonstrates the impact of the service and the difference it is making to the people and communities of Hartlepool.

## 8. CONTACT OFFICERS

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## **Delivering Community Led Support through Community Hubs**

Supported by the National Development Team for Inclusion, Adult and Community Based Services within Hartlepool Borough Council has worked with a range of partners to develop Community Led Support, creating a strengths-based approach delivered through Community Hubs that maximises community resources and supports people to live well.

The aims and outcomes for this work were co-produced with voluntary sector partners, frontline staff and community groups:

- People know when and where to go to have a good conversation about support options.
- People know what is available and are more engaged in their community, taking up a range of opportunities and stabilising demand for statutory services.
- Wherever people are in their journeys, conversations will be strengths based, solution focused, concentrating on maximising people's opportunities to live the life they want to lead.
- People are supported to shape, inform and develop activities, events and solutions to meet their own needs.
- Partners feel that they are actively collaborating in shaping and delivering support to people; they are trusted and engaged to provide opportunities that help people live well.
- Staff are confident in their decision making; they are trusted and able to empower people. With less paperwork and processes, staff have more time to have conversations with people.
- A digitally enabled environment will exist, accessible for the community, partners and staff to develop creative solutions for people.

During covid lockdowns the Central Hub became the Support Hub for Hartlepool and delivered food parcels and prescriptions, proactively contacted people who were clinically vulnerable or socially isolated, provided people with books and access to online activities, provided Christmas hampers and lunches and acted as the point of contact for anyone in the community who needed support. The learning from the covid response informed how the model has developed further and has been invaluable. The development of Community Led Support and the Community Hubs has gone from strength to strength as we've moved through covid recovery.

The front door to adult social care is now provided through the Hubs alongside welfare and benefits advice, carers support, mental health support, the Fab Lab that enables people to try out new technologies and develop skills and a library offer that has evolved to meet the changing needs of the community. The Bread and Butter Thing provides access to affordable food, complementing the community kitchen and chatty café and a wide range of activities are provided free of charge to engage people of all ages. The Hubs also provide support to people with long term conditions and are home to the Learning and Skills Service which supports adults to access education, training and employment. A virtual hub (All Together Now) has

been developed and, along with bespoke support for people who are digitally excluded, this enables people who are unable to access building-based activities to participate in a range of opportunities that reduce social isolation and support health and wellbeing.

Over the last 12 months, the Community Hubs have played a fundamental role in Community Transformation of mental health services. A new approach was piloted in Hartlepool, building on the success of the Community Hubs and Community Led Support principles. A virtual huddle takes place every week facilitating good conversations amongst organisations aiming to enable people to access the right support at the right time, whilst removing unnecessary bureaucracy and gatekeeping.

The Community Led Support approach has also been used to support two social care teams that support adults with disabilities through transitions that came together. A 3 day programme was developed by NDTi that brought the teams together and developed a shared commitment to working differently. One output was an engagement event that brought together 30 young adults with disabilities at one of our community buildings (CECA: Centre for Excellence in Creative Arts) giving them taster sessions around film making, dance, arts, music and media. The purpose was to develop opportunities and bring together people not engaged in employment education or training who may have shared interests. The team valued the opportunity and has an increased understanding of Community Led Support and how community based services can effectively support people. The team now regularly attend Community Hubs and actively use community based resources rather than defaulting to formal care and support.

This model is embedded within Adult and Community Based Services and forms the basis of the Council's vision and values for adult social care. There is a commitment to develop the approach further with priorities for the next 12-24 months including piloting use of the CLS model when undertaking annual reviews for people who have existing support in place, exploring how CLS principles can be used within hospital discharge pathways and ensuring CLS informs commissioning strategies and market development.

Our Community Hubs Strategy 2023-2028 was developed following consultation with the public and partners. The strategy sets out design principles that will guide further developments:

- Designed with residents and partners.
- Make best use of available resources and community assets.
- Promote partnership working, innovation and enterprise.
- Maximise funding to ensure best value for money.
- Is sustainable.
- Target those residents whose needs are greatest and reflects local priorities

The strategy summarises plans under six strategic priorities:

### Health and Wellbeing

Community Hubs are accessible and trusted places where people can find information and connections in a friendly and welcoming environment – they are a gateway to other services and will:

- Provide a safe, welcoming space where people can have a person-centred, strength-based good conversation.
- Involve partners in shaping and delivering support to people.
- Provide opportunities for people to socialise, create and learn together, connect - physically and virtually - and take part in events and activities to improve their health and mental wellbeing and reduce social isolation.
- Promote healthy lifestyles.
- Provide a financial support and guidance service to promote financial wellbeing.

### Community

Community Hubs are safe, trusted and comfortable community spaces used to inspire, broaden horizons and celebrate diversity that will:

- Provide space and support to develop activities, events etc. reflecting community needs.
- Attract diverse groups to the buildings and raise awareness amongst the wider community of cultural difference to foster greater understanding and community cohesion.
- Provide lively, vibrant space for local artists and photographic clubs to display and promote their work.
- Nurture a flourishing Local and Family History Centre as a place for connecting and celebrating language, culture and generations.
- Celebrate Hartlepool past and present.
- Promote, provide and develop volunteering opportunities to give people purpose.

### Digital Innovation

The Community Hubs will help bridge the digital divide by providing connections, services and information through technology, and will:

- Provide access to technology and the Internet.
- Strive to be on the precipice of digital innovation to provide a fully inclusive service.
- Have digitally skilled and included people and communities making use of technology to learn new skills and who feel safe online.
- Connect people to activities, events and each other using digital technology.
- Use Social media to reach people.

### Reading

To support learning, literacy, economic opportunity, imagination and inspiration, the Hubs will:

- Encourage a lifelong love of reading and promote the advantages of reading for the health and wellbeing of people of all ages.

- Offer parents and carers a space where children can learn and play together to ensure children have the best start to their lives.
- Promote reading as ‘cool enough’ for teenagers and young adults to borrow books and e-books.
- Explore ways to make sure our resources are accessible to all residents.

### Diversity, Disability and Difference

Our values are underpinned by the social model of disability and the belief that ideas of disability are created by barriers and attitudes in society not by “impairments of individuals”. The Community Hubs are safe, accessible inclusive community spaces providing access to friendship and support for everyone and will:

- Provide a range of resources to meet needs regardless of diversity or disability.
- Respect diversity and difference.
- Ensure our information, guidance and advice is clear and accessible.
- Provide space and services that are agile and responsive to changing needs

### Jobs and Skills

Community Hubs promote personal growth by providing bespoke, high quality learning and opportunities that respond to the whole community and meet the demands of employers and will:

- Promote a lifelong love of learning.
- Provide people with opportunities and support to develop the skills that are important to them.
- Provide access to a range of courses and opportunities, both within the Hubs and from external partners.
- Work closely with other providers to develop a holistic offer across the town, accessible to all.

Recently compiled case studies provide evidence of the real difference that this approach is making to individuals. Staff report increased job satisfaction working in this way and the approach has delivered financial savings for the Council through management of demand. A recent LGA Corporate Peer Challenge highlighted the Community Hubs as an example of successful co-production and also referenced the development as a good example of transformational thinking that could be built upon. Feedback from a former DASS commissioned to work with NE ADASS in preparation for CQC assurance was also very positive identifying Community Hubs as providers of ‘exemplar preventative services’.

### Case Study 1

K (72) had struggled with his mobility for years and was feeling isolated following his wife’s death. He was unable to walk and came to the Hub to seek support to lose weight and ease his pain. A Community Navigator introduced K to the MOTOMed leg and arm trainer, which K initially used weekly and then daily. He has lost over 3 stone which has reduced his pain significantly, is now able to walk a few steps using sticks and after a chat with an Occupational Therapist in the Assessment Suite has a piece of equipment that helps him put his own socks on, a little thing that has helped

him to feel more independent. K now takes part in a range of activities in the Hub including social groups and chair aerobics. K said “I like coming into the Community Hub. It’s great getting to know people and the staff are brilliant very friendly and helpful. My daily visits mean so much, oh and my legs feel brilliant”.

### Case Study 2

S has a mild learning disability and her mum, who was very poorly, wanted to be assured that S was settled in her own home and had access to support. The Community Navigator in the Hub helped S to apply for a property in an area where she felt safe and advocated on her behalf so that her needs were prioritised. Within 2 weeks S had the keys to her new home, close to family and friends. Soon after this S’s mum sadly died. Her Community Navigator helped her to access bereavement support and helped her to secure a part time job in a local care home. S is settled and happy in her home, enjoys her job and continues to access bereavement support. She knows she can visit the Hub any time and recently called in to thank the team for their support saying ‘I’m not sure what I would have done without you guys’.

### Case Study 3

P is 80 and originally from India although Hartlepool has been home for many years. P’s husband died two years ago and P was feeling lonely and depressed. P rang the Community Hub for some help and, after a conversation about her interests, was introduced to the Volunteer Co-ordinator an introduction that P reports changed her life. P now volunteers in the Hubs supporting social groups has made new friends and has a purpose in life. Her family describe P as ‘full of energy’ with a new lease of life and P said that ‘volunteering has kept me alive and gave me hope when life was difficult’.

The success of Community Led Support and Community Hubs is a credit to the vision and commitment of key Council officers, but also reflects true partnership working and collaboration with a wide range of partners, with an ever-increasing number of services wanting to be involved in delivering services in this way.

# ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE

15 June 2023



**Subject:** TALL SHIPS UPDATE  
**Report of:** Executive Director of Adult & Community Based Services  
**Decision Type:** For information

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## 1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

<b>Hartlepool will be a place:</b>
- of resilient and resourceful communities with opportunities for all.
- that has an inclusive and growing economy.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To update members regarding plans for the Tall Ships Races, which will be hosted in Hartlepool from 6 – 9 July 2023.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Hartlepool was a host port for the Tall Ships Races in 2010 and will do so again in July 2023.

## 4. UPDATE

- 4.1 The Assistant Director for Preventative and Community Based Services will give a presentation outlining plans for the event including an update on registered ships, sail trainees, the entertainment programme and the engagement of volunteers.

**5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS**

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	There are significant risks associated with hosting an event of this scale and a risk register has maintained and regularly updated throughout the planning process. There is a governance structure in place with clear escalation routes and a Tall Ships Safety Advisory Group which is attended by representatives from all relevant agencies.
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are significant financial considerations associated with hosting this event and a Finance Workstream has operated throughout the planning process.
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are a range of legal considerations associated with hosting this event, including land licenses and contractual arrangements for a range of services. All of the necessary work to plan the event has been undertaken with input from the Council's legal team and in line with Council policies and procedures.
<b>CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY</b>	<p>There are no child and family poverty considerations specifically identified as part of this update. The event is free and un-ticketed so will hopefully be accessible for local children and families.</p> <p>The 80+ sail trainees recruited to be part of the event are from diverse backgrounds and financial support (including full sponsorship) has been made available to those who needed it in order to participate.</p> <p>An educational programme linked to the Tall Ships Races has been developed and shared with all schools to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from the event being hosted in Hartlepool. A number of primary schools have committed to sponsoring one of the Tall Ships which will encourage them to visit and engage with the event.</p>
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	Equality and diversity has been considered throughout the planning process. The Community Led Inclusion Partnership has advised regarding accessibility resulting in (amongst other things) an accessible map being produced, quiet spaces being provided across the site and wheelchairs and mobility scooters being available on site.
<b>STAFF CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are significant staff considerations associated with hosting this event with staff across all departments involved to varying degrees. A small dedicated Tall Ships team is in

	<p>place but there has been a huge contribution to the planning process from across Preventative &amp; Community Based Services with officers leading on volunteering, entertainment and programming and overall event management. There have also been implications across all departments with work streams covering traffic management, car parking, finance, IT, communications, workforce, health and safety, safeguarding and sponsorship.</p> <p>The contribution from partner agencies including Police, NHS partners, Fire Service, PD Ports, HM Coastguard and Hartlepool College of Further Education has also been significant and there have been examples of excellent partnership working.</p>
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	None identified.
<b>ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	Sustainability has been considered throughout the planning process with plans in place to encourage recycling on site and to minimise use of single use plastic.
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	Throughout the planning process for the event there has been consultation and engagement with a wide range of partners including local businesses, schools, community groups and the Community Led Inclusion Partnership (which has advised regarding accessibility). There have also been briefings for staff and members and engagement sessions for volunteers.

## 6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Adult and Community Based Services Committee note the update regarding the Tall Ships Races 2023 which will be hosted in Hartlepool from 6 to 9 July 2023.

## 7. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 To ensure that Members are aware of the arrangements in place for the event.

**8. CONTACT OFFICER**

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