

Appendix 1 - Baseline Report: Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development

Service Baseline / Initial Challenge	Guidance	Information
<p>Description of Current Service Baseline</p>	<p>Who provides the service? History how service was formed and why it exists</p> <p>How is the service provided</p>	<p>Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development Team (see structure on p14)</p> <p>The service was formed as part of a restructure of the Council’s Parks and Countryside Team in 2007. The new team’s remit is to provide a strategic framework for management/development of the Borough’s countryside and greenspace, and to deliver associated projects and programmes. The team also has responsibility for the management of Council-owned trees and woodlands.</p> <p><u>IMPORTANT: The team does not have responsibility for the day to day operational - management of parks and greenspaces (except for trees and woodlands). This is undertaken by Care For Your Area.</u></p> <p>The draft Green Infrastructure Strategy and Action Plan provides the overarching strategic framework for the work of the team, with a new Tree and Woodland Strategy also due to be prepared during 2010/11.</p> <p>The team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate development and delivery of the Borough’s Green Infrastructure Strategy, and other related plans and strategies • Take a lead role on the development and delivery of projects and programmes, securing significant external funding for capital projects • Project manage major schemes, including associated consultation work • Establish and contribute to project partnerships • Help to deliver improved green infrastructure through the planning and development process, e.g. by helping to secure S106 contributions • Liaise with developers, utilities and other third parties regarding open space issues; e.g. overseeing the title-transfer of open space to the council and advising on easements, wayleaves and licence agreements • Influence delivery by inputting to other plans and strategies, including the LDF and development briefs • Respond to requests from the public, elected members, community organisations

Appendix 1 - Baseline Report: Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development

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	<p>What influences impact on the service(political social economical, technological)</p>	<p>and other sections of the council, and provide specialist advice and information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use and countryside and greenspaces • Encourage and support community participation in greenspace development and management <p>In addition the Tree and Woodland staff have specific responsibilities for the management of all Council-owned trees and woodlands, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inspecting the health and condition of all tree stock • scheduling tree and woodland management works • responding to public requests and enquiries • providing consultation services to other sections of the council e.g. insurance, planning • preparing and implementing new planting schemes. • appointing external arboricultural contractors and managing contract performance <p>The team relies heavily on other services in the Council to support this work, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Design (landscape design, delivery of green infrastructure through the planning / regeneration process), • Spatial Planning (development of strategies and policies to deliver new and improved green infrastructure) • Care For Your Area (practical implementation and on-going management), • GIS (e.g. mapping services, data analysis) • Legal and Land and Property (e.g. open space management issues, development of S106 Agreements, title-transfer of public open space) • Children Education & Social Care (e.g. strategic planning for play through the Play Partnership, development of Play Strategy and involvement with grant-funded programmes such as Playbuilder and BIG Lottery Childrens Play Programme) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic priorities identified by the Council and through the LSP • Changes in Council and government policy / legislation • Views / priorities of elected members

Appendix 1 - Baseline Report: Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development

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Challenge	<p>How does the service perform</p> <p>What does inspection tell us about this service</p> <p>What resources are used</p> <p>What assets are used to deliver the current service</p> <p>Are there any limitations or barriers affecting the delivery of the service</p> <p>If the service is outsourced or provided by a third party, how are service standards monitored</p> <p>Could the service be provided through a different</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests, suggestions and project proposals from residents and community organisations • Opportunities and threats that emerge through the planning and development process • Environmental factors, such as weather conditions and habitat change <p>Service contributes to various National Indicators, e.g. NI197 (% of local wildlife sites in positive management) and NI199 (Children and young people’s satisfaction with parks and play areas).</p> <p>The Council uses a GreenSTAT survey to seek the public’s views on parks and greenspaces, and the corporate Place Survey also provides data on public satisfaction.</p> <p>No recent inspections undertaken</p> <p>See Financial / Resource Considerations below</p> <p>Greenspaces and trees. Office accommodation for staff</p> <p>The Borough has many high quality greenspaces, but significant improvements and developments could be carried out if additional resources were made available.</p> <p>Many projects are implemented by external contractors, partner agencies or by other sections of the Council. Most tree management works are implemented through the Council’s Arboricultural Contract - currently delivered by Tilhill. Performance / delivery are monitored against agreed project specifications or service standards.</p> <p>Many areas of work could be partially or entirely delivered through external organisations or partnerships. For example, third sector organisations such as</p>

Appendix 1 - Baseline Report: Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development

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	mechanism	<p>Groundwork and Tees Valley Wildlife Trust already help to develop and deliver environmental regeneration projects. Similarly, Parish/Town Councils and community organisations also play an important role in the development of many schemes and with an appropriate level of support could play a greater role in the future.</p> <p>The former Community Forest partnership provided another potential delivery model, with neighbouring local authorities and other agencies combining resources to 'outsource' development of environmental regeneration projects to an external project team.</p>
Customer Baseline	<p>Who are the customers what are their needs now</p> <p>How are service users</p>	<p>All residents, businesses and visitors to the Borough who actively use greenspaces. Also all those who benefit in other ways from having attractive, diverse and functional green infrastructure.</p> <p>Customers also include those community groups and other local partners who seek support for development and delivery of projects.</p> <p>The 2008 Sport Recreation and Leisure Survey revealed that about 70% of residents had used the Boroughs' parks, greenspaces or natural areas in the past year. Also 'Walking and/or enjoying outdoors/nature' was the favourite leisure activity amongst the sample overall, referred to by 60.9% of all respondents as one of the activities they most like to do in their leisure time.</p> <p>Detailed information is available on the needs and aspirations of both users and non-users.</p> <p>The service works in collaboration with numerous local community organisations' elected members and individual residents - responding to work requests, providing information and developing projects.</p> <p>A variety of methods are used, including: :</p>

Appendix 1 - Baseline Report: Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development

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	<p>consulted and how do their views shape delivery</p> <p>How satisfied are the customers</p> <p>How do you communicate with your users</p> <p>How are these services promoted / marketed</p> <p>What do Viewpoint</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GreenSTAT surveys • Project or topic-specific consultations (e.g. recent consultations on allotments, a Borough-wide survey into children’s play, and consultations on new play spaces and park regeneration proposals) • Viewpoint Surveys <p>Plus consultation via community groups, Area Partnership Boards and Park Friends/Supporters Groups</p> <p>Feedback helps to inform development of plans and strategies, identify local priorities for action, and shape the development of individual projects.</p> <p>No specific statistics on customer satisfaction with the work of the Countryside & Greenspace Strategy & Development Team, but feedback from elected members, community organisations and partners suggest the work of the team is valued, and the team has excellent working relations with many community organisations.</p> <p>The successful work of the team is also reflected to some extent in the high levels of satisfaction with actual greenspaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ipsos MORI Place Survey 2008: 60% satisfied with parks and open spaces • GreenSTAT surveys 2009/10: 77% of park or greenspace users satisfied <p>Letters / surveys delivered to households in the vicinity of proposed projects Drop-in sessions Website Annual newsletter Presentations to Area Partnership Boards, town/parish councils and community meetings</p> <p>As above</p> <p>Viewpoint survey on Trees (2008) revealed that:</p>

Appendix 1 - Baseline Report: Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development

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	Surveys/ internal audit reports tell us about the service?	<p>55% respondents were satisfied with how the Council looks after trees and only 11% were dissatisfied (remainder expressed no preference or didn't know)</p> <p>96% of people think trees are important in the urban environment</p> <p>88% people prefer to live in a street with trees</p> <p>88% of people think more trees should be planted</p> <p>94% people think trees should be protected during new development & regeneration</p> <p>81% people think trees cause no problems to them</p>
Customer Challenge	<p>Are there customers who could use the service but don't</p> <p>Are there customers using the service who shouldn't be</p> <p>Who are the customers of the future and what are their needs</p> <p>What is likely to impact on demand for these services in the future</p> <p>What do complaints/</p>	<p>The 2008 Sport Recreation and Leisure Survey suggests that around 30% of local residents do not use parks or greenspaces.</p> <p>In addition there are clearly large numbers of local residents not actively engaged in projects being developed and delivered by the Countryside & Greenspace Strategy & Development Team, and there is scope for increased community participation in this work, or for more projects to be genuinely led by local communities.</p> <p>No</p> <p>The service aims to deliver a highly functional, attractive and accessible green infrastructure network across the whole Borough. This extends well beyond meeting the recreational needs of customers. The team aims to improve overall environmental quality, contributing to economic regeneration & people's broader health & quality of life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in demand for outdoor recreation and play provision • Increased ambition or requirement to conserve and enhance biodiversity • Increased need for functional green infrastructure to help the Borough adapt to the impacts of climate change; e.g. trees and water to moderate urban temperatures and greenspaces/river corridors designed to reduce flood risk. <p>The section receives largely positive feedback, demonstrating that the services are very</p>

Appendix 1 - Baseline Report: Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development

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	compliments tell you about these services	well-received by the public, elected members and partner organisations. The section receives a small number of formal complaints (5 in 2009/10) and we give these and all other feedback very careful consideration, using this information to review our processes and procedures. It should also be noted that many complaints/comments stem from residents not being satisfied with the information given or the ultimate course of action, rather than dissatisfaction with the way the team undertake their duties.
<p>Aims & Objectives Baseline</p>	<p>Is the service required by statute</p> <p>Is there a statutory level of service</p> <p>Is the service responsive or proactive or a mixture</p>	<p>Occupiers Liability Act – places a duty of care on the Council as a landowner to ensure that trees and woodlands are managed in such a way as not to cause an unacceptable risk to persons on its land.</p> <p>Highways Act – covers certain aspects of tree management, e.g. powers to serve notices on landowners adjoining a public highway should their trees be considered hazardous to users of the highway.</p> <p>Town & Country Planning Act - includes provision for tree preservation orders and protection of trees in conservation areas to ensure enjoyment by the public.</p> <p>Legislation also covers some other areas of work: e.g. provision of allotments and under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 the Council must have regard for biodiversity in the delivery of all Council services and functions.</p> <p>No</p> <p>Generally proactive in relation to project delivery, although this can be responsive – e.g. in relation to requests from local communities and partners, or when opportunities arise through the planning/regeneration process or introduction of funded programmes. Trees are inspected on a cyclical programme and appropriate management/maintenance works prioritised and implemented. Tree work may also be carried out in response to public requests, where this represents appropriate management /maintenance.</p>

Appendix 1 - Baseline Report: Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development

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Challenge	<p>Is the service needed</p> <p>What would happen if the service was not provided either in whole or part</p> <p>How would the service react to new pressures what capacity would be required to deal with additional / new demands</p>	<p>Yes. Green infrastructure needs to be planned and managed effectively if it is to deliver the full range of social, economic and environmental benefits. On-going management of greenspaces, trees and woodlands requires the specialist knowledge of officers within this team and in other key services such as CFYA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer improvements or changes made to the Borough’s greenspaces • Reduced ability to deliver improvements through partnership working and by influencing other strategies and plans • Reduced ability to deliver improved green infrastructure through the planning and regeneration process • Less capacity to support community-led projects • A less strategic, less coordinated, less professional approach to countryside and greenspace management and development • Reduced ability to provide specialist advice/services – e.g. in relation to title-transfer of open space, tree & greenspace management, funding, project management and so on <p>Would need to consider in relation to specific pressures</p>
Aims & Objectives Challenge	Who provides a similar service to this using a different delivery mechanism e.g. external partnerships, shared services etc	Other local authorities structure these service areas in different ways. Some outsource project development / landscape design / project management functions to Groundwork, Wildlife Trusts or to other organisations/partnerships on a similar model to Community Forest Teams or other 'landscape-scale partnerships'. Potentially a greater role for community organisations and town/parish councils.
Relevance / Context Baseline / Challenge	How does the service fit with the overall aims of the	Service contributes to all 8 strands of Sustainable Community Strategy and many aspects of the Council Plan.

Appendix 1 - Baseline Report: Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development

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	<p>Council</p> <p>How does the service contribute to key policy areas</p> <p>What policies, plans and strategies impact on the service e.g. statutory, policy, function , other services</p> <p>Are there any political judgements / decisions involved in determining the level of service</p>	<p>Contributes to several policy areas, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regenerate the Borough through the delivery of major local and sub-regional projects • Improve and promote a sustainable transport network • Make the Borough a cleaner, greener and more attractive environment • Tackle climate change through carbon reduction and resilience to extreme weather events • Highlight and celebrate our heritage • Increase participation in sport and active leisure • Reduce health inequalities by adding ‘life to years and years to life’ • Reduce levels of obesity in children, young people and adults • Further develop Community Engagement infrastructure and activity <p>Several, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy • Draft Stockton-on-Tees Green Infrastructure Strategy • Local Development Framework • Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan • Stockton on Tees Play and Play Area Strategies • Sport & Active Leisure Strategy • Proposed Heritage Strategy • Draft Tourism & Visitor Strategy • Stockton Climate Change Action Plan <p>Yes - levels of revenue and capital funding are determined by Cabinet and decisions on Council policy have an impact on the nature of service provision</p>

Appendix 1 - Baseline Report: Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development

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Financial / Resource Considerations Baseline	What are the costs of the service / Capital and revenue costs	<table border="1" data-bbox="900 331 1966 667"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Revenue Expenditure 2010/11</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Employees</td> <td>296,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Premises</td> <td>25,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transport</td> <td>11,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supplies & services</td> <td>283,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Support services</td> <td>11,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>626,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less Income</td> <td>- 60,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Net expenditure</td> <td>566,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="900 703 1984 799">Supplies and services includes: tree/woodland management & maintenance works, project costs, research, consultation and contributions to partnership initiatives (see below)</p> <p data-bbox="900 839 1496 871">Support services includes technical recharges</p> <p data-bbox="900 906 1644 938">Sources of income set out below under ‘charging policies’</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="900 970 1966 1270"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4">Capital Expenditure 2007/8 to 2010/11</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Total Spend</th> <th>SBC Funding (see note)</th> <th>External Funding</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2007/08</td> <td>66,000</td> <td>-14,000</td> <td>-52,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2008/09</td> <td>748,000</td> <td>-31,000</td> <td>-717,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2009/10</td> <td>1,222,000</td> <td>-309,000</td> <td>-913,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2010/11 & Future Years</td> <td>1,526,000</td> <td>-257,000</td> <td>-1,269,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>3,562,000</td> <td>-611,000</td> <td>-2,951,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="900 1305 1984 1337">Note: SBC funding includes Capital Programme & Community Participation Budget</p>	Revenue Expenditure 2010/11		Employees	296,000	Premises	25,000	Transport	11,000	Supplies & services	283,000	Support services	11,000	TOTAL	626,000	Less Income	- 60,000	Net expenditure	566,000	Capital Expenditure 2007/8 to 2010/11					Total Spend	SBC Funding (see note)	External Funding	2007/08	66,000	-14,000	-52,000	2008/09	748,000	-31,000	-717,000	2009/10	1,222,000	-309,000	-913,000	2010/11 & Future Years	1,526,000	-257,000	-1,269,000	Total	3,562,000	-611,000	-2,951,000
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	<p>What is the level of 3rd party expenditure</p> <p>What contracts or other arrangements are in place (spend analysis)</p> <p>What is the Councils commitment to contracts / other arrangements</p> <p>Do you have any charging policies</p> <p>How have Gershon efficiency savings impacted on the service and how were the service planning</p>	<p>Capital funds are used to deliver a wide range of green infrastructure projects, currently with a particular focus on park regeneration projects and development of outdoor play spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree management and maintenance works through external contractor - up to value of approx £150K per annum. Existing contract with Tilhill Forestry to March 2011 with option to extend for one further year. • Stockton River Corridors Project - partnership agreement with Groundwork, British Waterways and Environment Agency with financial contribution currently approx £13,656 per year. SBC also provides in-kind support by providing office accommodation for officer (initially for 2 years and currently reviewed on annual basis). • River Routes in Stockton – £335,862 partnership project with SBC contribution of £7,872 in year only with 3-year programme • Tees Heritage Park – approx £600K partnership project with SBC contribution of approximately £150K LTP funding and approx £10K for access works (2 year project) • Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership – MoU in place for provision of services, in relation to the Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan and work relating to National Indicator 197. SBC and other Tees Valley local authorities contribute £5,300 per year (3-year agreement) <p>Yes – provision of arboricultural services. This includes Service Level Agreements with education centres (e.g. schools, sure start etc); direct recharges for services to Tri-Star, and Planning Section; plus incomes from Highways, Housing Open Space. Additional charges are made to all departments where applicable in response to arboricultural service requests.</p> <p>Savings identified and delivered in 2009/10 by cutting back tree planting programme, and further savings made by reduced need for tree watering due to wet weather. Carried out initial VFM exercise to anticipate possible impacts of 2%, 4% and 6% budget cuts.</p>

Appendix 1 - Baseline Report: Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development

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	<p>to meet future Gershon efficiency targets?</p> <p>How will the current financial climate affect the service?</p>	<p>Reduced ability to deliver capital projects and programmes, due to limited SBC and external funding, e.g. park regeneration projects, play area improvements, and various green infrastructure projects. Also reduced ability to undertake revenue-funded activity, including tree management and maintenance, survey and consultation work and research, and to fund design and feasibility work (e.g. as undertaken by Urban Design Team).</p> <p>Potential impact on partnership activity - both in terms of any financial contributions and any reduction in staff resources would limit our capacity to build and influence partner activity</p>
Financial / Resource Considerations Challenge	<p>How can you demonstrate that the service is cost effective overall?</p> <p>Do external contracts offer value for money?</p>	<p>For projects over the past 4 years the service has secured in excess of £6 external funding for every £1 of SBC capital expenditure.</p> <p>Many partnership projects have also delivered excellent value for money, especially the Stockton River Corridors Project which has secured around £800,000 of external funding in 2 years, with SBC contributing less than one-tenth of this in revenue funding.</p> <p>Contracts are awarded on the basis of price and quality, and in accordance with the corporate procurement policy. Smaller items purchased on basis of demonstrating value for money or quotations.</p>
Service Drivers	<p>What do we need to change and why?</p>	<p>We need to continually review the nature of work undertaken and the processes and approaches used - to ensure service responds to local needs and delivers high quality and value for money services.</p> <p>The new Green Infrastructure Strategy and proposed Tree and Woodland Strategy will provide the overarching frameworks for the work of the team over future years, and the</p>

Appendix 1 - Baseline Report: Countryside & Greenspace – Strategy & Development

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	What are the main drivers of change?	<p>new Stockton-on-Tees Green Infrastructure Steering Group will play a key role in reviewing and revising the Action Plan which this team will play a key role in delivering.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in local, sub-regional and national policies and priorities • Need to deliver value for money • Need to adapt to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances (e.g. adaptation to climate change, changing public and community expectations, factors relating to local economy and so on)

Team Structure

