

**Report of the Adults, Leisure
and Culture Select Committee**

**Review of Preston Hall
and Park and the
Museums Strategy**

October 2006



Final Report

Adults, Leisure and Culture Select Committee

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Foreword

This is the first scrutiny report to be completed by the Adults, Leisure and Culture Select Committee since it was formed earlier this year. A great deal of work was compressed into a period of about three months, during which both Members and Officers had to deal with large amounts of research and meetings.

I would therefore like to thank:

- The Members of the Committee, including the Vice-chairman, Councillor Mike Smith;
- The Officers of the Democracy team, especially Sarah Connolly, our Scrutiny Officer;
- The Link Officer for this scrutiny, Reuben Kench;
- Other Officers and Members of this Council and outside bodies who have given their time to provide the Committee with evidence;
- Other people who have taken the trouble to send us their comments and views.

In commending this report to the Council's Cabinet and wider readership, I would stress that it is not intended to be the final word on the subject, but rather an impetus to revival, improvement and change in Preston Hall and Park and the Museums Service, which should be a continuous process - as indeed is most of local government today.



Councillor John Fletcher
Chairman of Adults, Leisure & Culture Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council



Councillor Mike Smith
Vice-Chairman, Leisure & Culture Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

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Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to thank the following Stockton Borough Council Officers who contributed to the review:

- **Gina Balzi, Parks and Countryside Officer**
- **Richard Bradley, Care For Your Area**
- **Bob Brown, Assistant Ranger**
- **Bob Campbell, Head Ranger, Parks and Countryside**
- **Sue Daniels, Business Development Manager, Development and Neighbourhood Services**
- **Kate Dumain, Research and Consultation Manager**
- **Jenny Elstob, Resident's Panel Co-ordinator**
- **Jane Hubbard, Museums Manager**
- **Reuben Kench, Head of Arts and Culture**
- **David Lynch, Team Leader (Traffic Management)**
- **Gordon Mallory, Architectural Manager**
- **Andrea Metcalfe, Animal Keeper**
- **Chris Ridley, Assistant Ranger**
- **Pam Stewart, Animal Keeper**

The Council would also like to thank the following external witnesses who contributed to the review:

- **Simon Blenkinsop, Tees Forest**
- **Egglescliffe Parish Council**
- **Preston Parish Council**
- **Mike Aslin and the Model Railway Group**

The Committee would also wish to thank members of the public who took part in the focus groups held in July and all members of the public, Members of the Council and Employees who responded to requests for evidence.

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Select Committee Membership

Membership of the Adults, Leisure and Culture Select Committee was as follows

Councillor John Fletcher, Chair
Councillor Michael Smith, Vice-Chair

Councillor Cherrett
Councillor Dixon
Councillor Faulks
Councillor Frankland
Councillor Miss Inman
Councillor Laing
Councillor Lynch
Councillor Mrs Norton
Councillor Perry
Councillor Rix
Councillor Womphrey

Diocesan Representatives: -
(When considering education matters)
Mr T Maxwell
Vacancy

Parent Governor Representatives:-
(When considering education matters)
Mr P Beach
Ms S Moloney

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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The review undertaken by the Adults, Leisure and Culture Select Committee between April and September 2006 was instigated as a result of the need to examine services offered at the Hall and Park in light of the recently adopted Museum Strategy. Committee took evidence from a wide variety of witnesses – both internal and external, and also undertook consultation with residents of the Borough via a number of focus groups (including a youth focus group). Members concluded the process off with a site visit to the Dorman and Captain Cook Museums in Middlesbrough in order to undertake comparative work.
- 1.2 The whole of the review concerned discretionary services of the Council. There is no legal obligation to provide them in this manner or at all. Having considered this, the Committee agreed that the services and facilities should continue for the following reasons.
- The Museums Service was valued for enhancing the quality of the lives of the users, not only as part of Education but also in enhancing people's appreciation of the history of their own area and, more widely, how they came to be as they are today
 - The Park gives varied opportunities for healthy recreation, relaxation, entertainment and the appreciation of this part of the valley of the lower Tees.
 - Improved facilities for the people of the Borough are more likely to attract tourists from outside of the area, boosting the local economy.
- 1.3 It soon became apparent that Committee Members saw problems and opportunities on three levels:
- 1.3.1 The small things which could not be missed by anyone looking carefully for which Officers were expected to take remedial action out of existing resources without the need for Cabinet approval. A number of these appear in the written evidence in **Appendix 5** as having been remedied by the time this report was finalised. Officers gave assurances that they would deal promptly with any Health & Safety issues coming to their attention.
- 1.3.2 Improvements which needed more thought and investment but which could be started in the next year or two. An example of this would be to begin to make Preston Park an example of good practice in catering for people with disabilities, not merely complying with the Disability Discrimination Act.

- 1.3.2 The longer-term vision, the realisation of which might depend on an unpredictable timetable of availability of external resources, such as grants. In this the Committee were heartened and encouraged by the announcement during their work of the success of the Council's bid for £206,000 Heritage Lottery Funding to restore the Winter Garden of the Hall.
- 1.4 Considering the issues outlined above, Committee agreed that the formation of key recommendations, including a number of strands for consideration, was a suitable approach allowing Committee to distinguish between areas for consideration, without being too specific and prescriptive in terms of implementation.
- 1.5 Committee also identified two strategic issues in addition to the key recommendation to create a master plan created as the key recommendation. The first involved issues relating to future admission charging policies, and, after careful consideration of the evidence, Members agreed to retain an admission charge, for further review following implementation of the master plan
- 1.6 The second issue arose following consideration of the evidence as a whole, which highlighted the complex nature of the service that involves many distinct strands joined only by a single geographical location. The Committee therefore recommends a more holistic and joined-up method of working between the various departments in order to provide a complementary service that enhances the experiences of those who use the services, and all residents and visitors to the Borough.

2.0 Conclusions, Findings and Recommendations

- 2.1 Committee conclude that a number of alterations to the provision of services are required to ensure that the Hall and Park achieve their potential as a broadly based public amenity and facility of historical significance. The overall conclusion of the Committee, supported by many people's comments, was that the Park, Hall and Museums were Council facilities which had been allowed to 'drift along'. Although there had been no major decisions to withdraw anything, there had been few initiatives to improve the offer. The general impression of gradual neglect was often summed up during the review in the word 'tired'.
- 2.2 The Council must steer between, on the one hand, too much timidity in doing minor works for fear that they might not fit some future plans yet to be decided, and, on the other hand, spending too much without a clear idea of the direction of travel. However, the powerful effect of relatively trivial, operable matters on the visitor should not be

underestimated. The Committee concluded that **the total effect on a visitor of a number of minor negative experiences was greater than the simple sum of those irritations.** Conversely, an overall pleasant memory of a visit was likely to encourage repeat visits.

2.3 It rapidly became apparent that in a time-limited scrutiny the Committee could not cover all the ground in detail, and that there were many areas which might need a policy decision and then action only after the issue had been explored in depth by Officers, once it had been identified as meriting further work.

2.4 In all deliberations, the Committee believes that Council should bear in mind that:

- The Park, the Hall and the resources of the Museums Service belong to all the people of the Borough for the benefit of all the people of the Borough at the cost of all the Borough's council-taxpayers.
- We are all stewards of our heritage, both our historical records and artefacts and also the land, which we should set aside for conservation or else use appropriately.
- As owners and occupiers of Preston Park the Council has to be a good neighbour to local residents, balancing their reasonable amenity (which includes the benefit of the Park on their doorsteps) with the wider good of all the Borough.

2.5 The specific findings are outlined below:

2.5.1 Preston Hall

- Items from the Spence Bequest should be displayed properly or not at all. If the armoury is to be displayed, Committee would support the suggestion outlined in the Egeria study
- The location of items from the Clephan Bequest should be reviewed and opportunities for possible loaning/swapping with galleries/museums maximised
- Collections should be rationalised to focus on local history and stories of Stockton, in particular:
 - Railway
 - Shipping/Shipbuilding/River
 - Sheraton
 - Walker
 - ICI and the chemical industry
 - Stockton High Street

- Publicity for exhibitions & literature for museum and collections requires review
- The layout of collections and exhibitions needs improving to achieve a more coherent experience, and to provide space for temporary exhibitions and a dedicated Education Suite
- Committee note the £60,000 SBC uplift for display and outreach work.
- Committee consider that the £35,000 income from admission charges justifies retention of the charge. To encourage greater attendance, Committee would support provision of a better visitor 'offer' rather than abolition of admission charge.
- Access issues to be reviewed in line with Disability Discrimination Act
- Signage and interpretation throughout the museum needs improving
 - Stock-lines in the museum shop should be re-targeted at adults in order to maximise profit.
 - Review Wedding Strategy to explore possible income generation
 - Committee note the building repair requirements, and find that condition should be re-evaluated to ensure suitability for newly recommended storage requirements.

2.5.2 Parks and Countryside

- More coherent approach needed to the management of various services provided in the Park and Hall.
- Committee support the policy of housing animals at the Park for display and education purposes, but find that the current provision is inadequate and requires evaluation.
- Grounds Maintenance requirements to be reviewed including land usage and maintenance issues
- Publicity for events & literature to be reviewed
- Committee note problems relating to traffic management, particularly during events, and would support further exploration of the following issues:
 - Car parking
 - Possible use of traffic lights & mini roundabout to alleviate traffic problems
 - Park and Ride
 - Public transport
 - Cycle paths

- Disability Discrimination Act compliance throughout Park to be reviewed
- Improvement of signage throughout the park, to include information for disabled visitors and people whose first language is not English
- Anti-social behaviour (inappropriate mountain biking, vandalism) and park security and safety issues to be addressed
- Possible uses of the river to be examined, including a bridge from Ingleby Barwick
- Internal transport throughout the park to be explored
- Further explore how Stockton's history (e.g. railway) might be reflected and represented in the park.
- Committee notes that no information exists on the condition of a number of buildings and find that this needs to be addressed
- Future café / catering provision to be reviewed (in consultation with Park users)
- Committee notes the services provided and suggestions offered by Tees Forest and the Model Railway Group

2.5.3 Community Issues

2.5.3.1 The Committee find that collection pieces should be taken into the community, perhaps via the following:

- Loan boxes being created for use in schools/ community groups
- Temporary exhibitions to go into doctors' surgeries/libraries/council buildings/community centres/The Forum. Access issues exist for people trying to reach Preston from Billingham, for example.
- Pieces of civic significance to be placed in the Town Hall/ Municipal Buildings

2.5.3.2 Committee also find that:

- Events impact on residents on both sides of the river (e.g. noise) needs to be considered via regular engaging and information sharing with local homes. This needs to be balanced, though, with the recognition that the park is there to be enjoyed by all residents of the Borough and beyond.
- Park management group meets and communication is better than it was but not perfect.
- Committee support the events framework as a general guide rather than being overly prescriptive.

2.6 Recommendations

2.6.1 A Park and Museum Master plan to be produced, with consideration given to the inclusion of the issues outlined in the findings (see above)

2.6.2 Greater collaboration between the Museum Service, Events Team and various community settings (Community Centres, Libraries, Schools, etc)

2.6.3 Include neighbourhood representatives on Park Management Group to ensure:

- Greater engagement with local communities to produce a fair and flexible activities framework
- Improve communication between service managers and the local communities.

2.7 Following analysis of all of the issues outlined in the body of the report, Committee would also make the following recommendations:

2.7.1 To retain the current entrance fee until further review. Officers to explore innovative admission packages in connection with events and park-and-ride.

2.7.2 Request that CMT review Park and Hall management with the aim of providing a more coherent and 'joined-up' approach to working.

3.0 Introduction

- 3.1 This report presents Cabinet with the outcomes of the review of the Preston Hall and Park/Museums Strategy that was undertaken by the Authority's Adults, Leisure and Culture Select Committee. The review took place between April and October 2006
- 3.2 This topic was identified as an area meriting a scrutiny review at a meeting of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum held on 8 March 2006. The issue was subsequently referred to the Adults, Leisure and Culture Committee for approval, and passed to a meeting of the Executive Scrutiny Committee as part of the work programming procedure.
- 3.3 A scope and project plan for the review was created by the Chair, Vice-Chair, Cabinet Member, Link Officer and Scrutiny Officer at meetings held in March, and agreed by all Members of the Committee at a meeting held on 26th April 2006.
- 3.4 The objectives/aims developed by the Committee for the review were as follows: -
- To ensure that the facilities are appropriately developed as a public amenity and facility of historical significance, whilst ensuring there are no detrimental effects on residents adjacent to the Park
 - Re-orientation of the Museum Service in line with the Museum Strategy
 - Findings from the review to be reported to Cabinet/Council with recommendations
- 3.5 The Review excluded the Preston Lane Allotments (on the north side of the Park), owned by Stockton Council, and the allotments in the south-west corner of the Park (leased by Stockton Council to Preston Parish Council).
- 3.6 The review addresses the following strategic corporate objectives:
- Children and Young People: Enjoy and Achieve – Increase the range of accessible culture/leisure and sporting activities available for children and young people
 - Healthier Communities and Adults – Extend the range and quality of opportunities for people to experience culture and leisure
 - Healthier Communities and Adults – Improve libraries and museums

4.0 Background

4.1 National Context – Museums Service

4.1.1 In January 2005, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport published the consultation paper ‘Understanding the future: museums and 21st century life’, which was produced in order to stimulate debate on issues relating to museums and galleries.

4.1.2 The Consultation Paper outlined the importance of museums, both locally and nationally, as centres of knowledge and educators, as tools for regeneration and facilities to promote spiritual growth of visitors.

4.1.3 It also outlined the changing nature of the relationship between the public and museums, that has been transformed as a result of globalisation and its impact on cultural identity, altering definitions of citizenship and people’s changing (and possibly more demanding) expectations and needs. This has resulted in a need to re-evaluate the fundamental principals upon which services are delivered.

4.1.4 Some points for discussion that emerged from the paper included:

- Need to retain dynamic collections that reflect diversity and uniqueness of communities and their lives with an emphasis on innovative sharing of collections, use of the internet to create understanding of collections, access issues and redefining conventional questions of ownership.
- Using collections as learning tools to be taken into schools, prisons, residential homes and hospitals. Promoting a healthy research culture and enhanced links with Higher and Further Education sectors.
- Career development, training and diversity of staff within the workforce
- More common direction and purpose – less fragmentation and stronger, less disparate leadership
- Greater partnership working – locally, nationally and internationally

4.1.5 Responses to the consultation paper favoured the creation of a national strategy to embrace whole sector, and a strong desire that the sector should be more concerned that we enable the most talented people in the sector to flourish and to deliver on the ground the activities which will make the greatest difference to people’s quality of life.

4.1.6 The following recommendations resulted from the consultation paper:

- Establishing a collaborative working group with key stakeholders;
- Working towards a wider seminar for the sector early in 2006 to discuss proposals;
- Publish a national strategy framework in 2006, setting out long-term collaborative goals for DCMS and the sector.

4.2 National Context – Parks & Open Spaces

4.2.1 The Countryside Act 1968 gave the Countryside Commission powers to provide financial assistance to local authorities and private bodies to establish recognised Country Parks and to provide ranger services to manage the sites.

4.2.2 The Countryside Commission spent £16m on developing 206 country parks and 239 picnic sites between 1969 and 1993. Most are owned and run by local authorities. A Countryside Commission survey in 1997 (*Countryside Recreation sites Condition Survey* by David Haffey) revealed that 20% were in need of work to improve their standard. Many were also shown to fail to provide adequate interpretive information and only a minority of managers took adequate steps to make visitors feel welcome, in spite of a "Visitor Welcome" initiative launched by the Countryside Commission in 1996.

4.2.3 Two recent reports (*Town and Country Parks, 1999* by the House of Commons Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee and *Landscape Heritage Trust Report 1999* by Pricewaterhouse Coopers) have highlighted the serious decline in the condition of parks, gardens and designed landscapes due to local authority budget cuts, lack of grant funding and severe skill shortages and training opportunities.

4.2.4 The Government recognise, though, that good quality, well-designed parks and green spaces make a critical contribution to our neighbourhoods, towns and cities and to people's quality of life and play an important role in creating a sense of place.

4.2.5 Quality green spaces have been shown to:

- support the local economy, making neighbourhoods more desirable
- enhance physical and mental health
- benefit children and young people
- reduce crime and fear of crime

- support social cohesion
- aid movement between other spaces
- protect biodiversity and enhance the environment.

4.2.6 In 2001 the Government therefore set up the *Urban Green Spaces Taskforce*, which published its final report “*Green Spaces, Better Places*” in 2002, which outlined 52 recommendations to improve provision, design, management and maintenance of urban parks and green spaces. The response to this work – “*Living Places - Cleaner, Safer, Greener*” (2002) set out proposals to improve the quality of the urban environment over a five year period. Living Places brought together a range of Government Departments to take forward joint action on liveability, and also commits to setting up a new dedicated champion for parks and public spaces - CABI Space - and develop 'enabling schemes' to help local authorities and the community to deliver better green spaces. The '*How to Create Quality Parks and Open Spaces*' guide was also published and launched on 22 July 2005 to provide a guide for all practitioners working to improve parks and green spaces, including heads of environmental services, planners, landscape architects, designers, park managers, rangers, community leaders and members of 'friends of' groups. The vision for the document involves a renaissance of England's green spaces, so that by 2008 the majority of local areas in England have at least one quality green space – with a Green Flag Award to prove it – and over 75% of people are satisfied with their green spaces. This guide is intended to support action on these goals, structured into four parts showing how existing guidance, powers and money are being used to accomplish more.

5.0 Local Context

- 5.1 Stockton Borough Council's museum service is currently undergoing a period of transition, particularly following the publication of two consultant-led studies of the museum services provided by the authority.
- 5.2 The first, a feasibility study undertaken by consultancy team Cassella-Stanger in 2002 proposed the development of an educational theme park incorporating both the museum and park with the aim of achieving a regional reach to attract around 400,000 paying visitors a year. The study forecast an indicative development cost of £19.265 million & fees (2005 prices). The findings from the study, though, were considered too ambitious in scope and have remained largely unimplemented.
- 5.3 In June 2005, Egeria developed a museum strategy for the authority based on the conclusion that "Stockton's museums are valued by its public, and represent a huge asset to the Borough", but that the service has suffered from a lack of direction and responsiveness to the public, a legacy of inappropriate collections, a preoccupation with operating sites, low standards, under-performance and diminishing resources. The strategy proposed a reconfiguration of the service to focus provision through a developed Preston Hall Museum, with the Green Dragon Museum and Billingham Art Gallery ceasing to operate as regular exhibition spaces. It also suggested the provision of a Borough-wide museum service in which the public and local communities are encouraged to participate, and better access to Stockton Borough's records and archives through the collation of such materials at a single location. The strategy has a life of five years, and proposed a cost of around £4.8 million for the re-development of the key site at Preston Hall.
- 5.4 The framework for improvement of the service involves:
- Cabinet endorsement of the museums strategy (undertaken on 11 August 2005)
 - Improvement of Preston Hall Museum
 - Improvement of collections
 - Additional core funding; draw down match funding

6.0 Preston Hall & Park

- 6.1 As outlined above, one of the key aspects of the strategy involves the re-development of Preston Hall as a focus for the delivery of the Borough's museum service.
- 6.2 The former home of local shipping magnate Sir Robert Ropner and a Grade II listed building, Preston Hall was built in 1825, remodelled and extended in the 1880's, and first opened as a museum in 1953.
- 6.3 Preston Hall stands in over 100 acres of landscaped park and woodland, with the line of the Stockton-Darlington Railway running along the west boundary, and the River Tees running along the East. The park is used mainly as recreation space for visitors, as a natural heritage site and for large-scale events organised via Stockton Borough Council's Events Team. Parts of the grounds are also used by Stockton Borough Council's Care For Your Area Department as storage space. The Committee agreed, as part of the scoping exercise that a study of the facilities provided at Preston Hall could not be undertaken without consideration of the impact of facilities provided in the surrounding park and woodlands. Scrutiny of both the Park and Hall together were therefore considered essential.
- 6.4 Some of the main features of the Park and Hall include:
- Anteroom exhibition space, currently housing a local photography club exhibition
 - A number of period rooms illustrating domestic interiors from the Victorians to the 1960's
 - A period street representing a typical urban setting of the 1890's
 - A ballroom, mainly hired out for functions and events, suitable to accommodate 100-150 people
 - A toy gallery situated in the old grain and hay store
 - An armoury situated in the former wine cellars, displaying collections of weapons bequeathed by Col. Spence
 - The Dice Players by Georges De La Tour and bequeathed by Miss Annie Clepham in 1934
 - 100 acres of grass and woodland, including Quarry Wood, picnic areas, and children's play areas, crazy golf and an outdoor aviary and pond.
 - Ancillary Catering, parking and toilet facilities
 - Franchise-operated Butterfly World – a tropical environment created to support butterflies, exotic plants and aquatic creatures.
 - Model Railway

6.5 The museum opens daily, year round as follows:

April – September 10.00 – 17.30
 October – March 10.00 – 16.30 (Sundays 14.00 – 16.30)

6.6 The Council has continued a policy of charging for entry to the museum, and admission is charged at £1.30 for adults and 60p for children and senior citizens. Payment guarantees admission to the museum for a year. There is a range of further concessions and family tickets are available for £1.80 - £3.00 depending on the size of the family. When the park is operating as a venue for chargeable events, no separate entry fee is made for the museum.

Staffing

6.7 The Hall and Park are currently staffed by 46 full time and 3 part time posts. 20 of the posts are staffed by the museum service within the Council's Children, Education and Social Care Directorate. 26 staff are also employed under the Development and Neighbourhood Services Directorate to manage the park, including rangers and animal wardens, and the events team employ 3 full time and casuals (also employed under DANS) to work separately on the organisation and administration of events in the park.

Budget – Additional Monies 2006/07

6.8 The table below outlines additional monies received for the service for 2006/07 via uplift from Stockton Borough Council's Revenue Budget and externally through the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (North East Hub)

INCOME

Description	2006/07
Additional SBC Uplift (Outreach & Preston improvements)	60,000
MLA North East: One-off uplift	10,000
Outreach (10,000); Displays (12,500 + 7,500) and Strategic Commissioning (10,000) 40k total	12,500 7,500 10,000
MLA North East/Hub (Displays)	10,000
GDM savings	10,000
Billingham Art Gallery (savings after 2008)	-
Total	120,000 (70k SBC)

Table 1

EXPENDITURE

Description	2006/07
<u>Capital:</u> Community outreach set up costs, 30k less 10k MLA	30,000 (20k SBC) (10k MLA NE)
<u>Capital:</u> Reception, signage, redisplay: 32k less 20k MLA	32,000 (12k SBC) (20k MLA NE)
<u>Armoury redisplay project</u>	10,000 (TV Hub)
<u>Education,Cultural Entitlement programme</u>	18,000 (8,000 SBC) (10,000 MLA NE)
<u>Recurrent:</u> Borough-wide)	15,000
<u>Recurrent PHM:</u>	15,000 Total
Exhibitions	10,000
Events	3,000
Marketing	2,000
	120,000 (70,000 SBC)

Table 2

Museums on the Move project costs, 2006-07

6.9 The tables below outline the details of the Museums on the Move project, created as a result of recommendations outlined in the Cabinet endorsed Egeria Museum Strategy

SETUP COSTS

Description	2006/07
Transport (van purchase)	9,000
Customising, packing materials & tools	1,000
Display & exhibition materials Cases Screens Frames	9,000
ICT production equipment	2,000
Community Loan/Discovery boxes (10 no)	2,500
Customised interactives, in house	1,500
Community materials bank (activities)	3,000
Publicity	2,000
Total	30,000

Table 3

REVENUE COSTS (excluding staff)

Description	2006/07
Transport running/maintenance costs	3,500
Exhibition materials	1,000
Marketing and promotion	2,000
Exhibitions	8,500
Total	15,000

Table 4

(NB non-costed Technical support: half time post £9250)

Performance

No	Description	Stockton	Change 03/02 %	Average	75 th Quartile	Median	25 th Quartile
<i>All councils/Unitary Councils</i>							
BVPI 170a	<i>The number of visits/usages to museums per 1,000 population</i>	534	+6.8	1,027 1,337	771 1,796	325 754	108 346
170b	<i>The number of those visits that were in person per 1,000 population</i>	468	-1.7	510 878	514 919	232 504	85 252
170c	<i>Number of visits in school groups</i>	11,548	-26	6,316 12,558	7,094 17,544	2,274 7,082	587 1,989

7.0 Methodology

7.1 Members of the Select Committee undertook an initial scoping exercise in June 2006. This exercise addressed issues relating to:

- The objectives of the review
- Key questions/evidence
- Identification of participants
- The extent of public involvement
- Information required to inform the review process
- Setting a time-scale for the review
- Officer Support

7.2 Following on from the scoping exercise, the Select Committee agreed a detailed Project Plan, which set out the key tasks to be undertaken by the Committee, time-scales for task completion and key milestones. The Project Plan established the key areas of the Committee's work. They were:

- To obtain written evidence, including background information and evidence from Officers of the Council
- To obtain oral evidence from Officers of the Council
- To undertake consultation with local communities, park users and residents of the Borough
- To undertake comparative work with other museums
- To obtain written and oral evidence from external witnesses
- To seek views of various users, residents and organisations via a press release, details of review published on Stockton Borough Council website, a ward leaflet and written initiations to Parish Councils

7.3 The scope and project plan for the review are attached at **Appendix 1**

7.4 An introductory session was held for Members of the Committee, at which Reuben Kench, Head of Arts, Leisure and Culture and Jane Hubbard, Museums Manager provided evidence relating to the museums service and the implementation of the recently endorsed Museums Strategy, particularly in the context of possible redevelopments of Preston Hall & Park.

7.5 The Committee were advised that, following endorsement of the strategy, issues for immediate attention included improvement of Preston Hall via improvement of the visitor offer and building improvements, resubmission of the Winter Garden bid (See **Appendix 2**) and general improvement of the collections through a framework for rationalisation and development and delivery of new displays.

7.6 Members were asked to consider the following five questions when undertaking the scrutiny review of the Hall & Park:

7.6.1 Do members agree with the collections rationalisation framework?

7.6.2 What key aspects of our heritage and history should we concentrate on?

7.6.3 What sort of Museums programme should we aim to develop in community settings across the Borough?

7.6.4 What is the vision for Preston Park and how should it be branded?

7.6.5 What should we try to add to the Park attractions?

7.7 Following the introductory session, Members agreed to structure evidence collection and analysis on the following basis:

7.7.1 Preston Hall Museum - Collections and exhibitions - what stories do the museum want to tell? How are collections stored and displayed? Possible future of the Museum shop? Accessibility?

7.7.2 Development of the surrounding Park and Countryside in a manner that is sympathetic to any related history and operates as a broadly based public amenity.

7.7.3 Community issues – how should the service be taken out to the community, and how are communities lying adjacent to the Park and Hall affected by any future developments

7.8 The report is concluded with details of a site visit undertaken by the Committee to the Dorman and Captain Cook Museums in Middlesbrough. Issues identified as a result of the site visit are outlined at the end of the section.

8.0 Summary of main background documents:

8.1 The following documents were also made available to Committee Members in order to inform the review:

- Manifesto for Museums (2003)
- Egeria Museum Strategy (2005)
- Casella-Stanger Report (2002) (Executive Summary)
- Stockton Borough Council's (SBC) Aquisition / Disposal Policy
- SBC Museum Service – Budgetary Information
- Description of Collections (SBC)
- Spence Bequest Terms & Conditions
- Tees Navigation Strategy – Preston Park Case Study
- Cultural Strategy for the North East of England
- Tees Valley Cultural Strategy
- SBC Events Leaflet 2006 – 2007

- SBC Planning Application: Supplementary Information (“The Creation Centre”) – Centre for International Street Art at Preston Park

Evidence and Findings

9.0 PRESTON HALL MUSEUM

The following witnesses provided information and evidence in relation to services and facilities provided in the Hall and Museum:

- **Reuben Kench, Head of Arts and Culture**
- **Jane Hubbard, Museums Manager** — **Museum Service**
- **Stockton Residents – Focus Groups**

Evidence provided by Stockton Borough Council's Museum Service

Collections/Exhibitions

- 9.1. The Museum's collections date from 1925 when the Spence Bequest (1775 items) was received into the Council's keeping. This covered a variety of subjects with an emphasis on weaponry and military material and *articles vertu* (silver & pewter objects). In 1934 the Clephan Bequest (89 items) was received, which comprised a collection of fine art, including J M W Turner's watercolour *Mustering of the Warrior Angels* and George de la Tour's *The Dice Players*.
- 9.2. The Spence Bequest is defined by a charitable trust of which the Borough Council is sole trustee, and governed under a High Court Scheme which places the collection in the hands of the local authority and requires the use of the Bequest's residuary estate for the provision of a public hall, with the income from the capital sum accrued in the meanwhile being used for public (charitable) purposes. Details are attached at **Appendix 3**
- 9.3. The Scheme requires and gives powers to the Council to:
 - display all or parts of the collection as it decides at Preston Hall Museum in a room or rooms of no less than 450 square feet to be named 'The Spence Memorial Room(s)';
 - erect near to the entrance of the rooms a plaque that acknowledges the gift as a memorial to the mother and father of G O Spence, and provide a copy of the Will and Scheme for inspection by persons viewing the collection;
 - enable persons to inspect those parts of the collections that are not on display;
 - use any income derived from admission to the rooms to offset the cost of the overheads, caring for and displaying the collections; and

-
- loan material from the collection to any other museum or charitable institution as the local authority shall think fit.
- 9.4. The public hall not having been built, the income from the bequest has been used periodically to fund conservation and care of the collection, and to fund purchases for the collections. The Bequest's capital value now stands at £173,000.
- 9.5. As the Egeria study outlines, it is unlikely that the 350-seat civic hall which was one of its primary purposes is likely to be realised, and resources available from the Bequest fall far short of what might be required to fulfil that purpose. Egeria therefore recommends applying for a Charity Commission Scheme to enable the capital to be applied to the Bequest's other primary purpose – the Spence collection. To meet the original conditions, the new extension might be named for the Spence family in the manner specified in the High Court Scheme. If the development was to be undertaken by the Council in its role as sole trustee of the Spence Bequest, then the charitable asset it created would also benefit from 80% mandatory relief from Business Rates, the loss to the Council being compensated by government.
- 9.6. Both these bequests predated the opening of the town's museum, and objects collected since this has centred mostly on social history. The two other venues that were later acquired, The Green Dragon Museum and Billingham Art Gallery, held the local history and fine art collections respectively.
- 9.7. The collections hold little material that predates the Victorian era, and comprise the following (number of items held indicated in brackets):
- **Archaeology** - The collection of archaeological material actually held in the Museum is very small and comprises stones from Stockton Castle – demolished after the English Civil War and a Roman bath house from Ingleby Barwick. A variety of material including Iron Age, Roman and Viking is held on behalf of Stockton Museums by Tees Archaeology. A small part of the Spence Bequest weapons collection consists of archaeological material (32)
 - **Art**
 - Decorative Art** (1000) from the Victorian period and twentieth century – mainly pottery with a collection of Parian Ware (unglazed pottery) sculpture; glass which includes collections of both pressed and carnival glass and pewter. Also included is part of the Spence Bequest (828) - metal items such as snuff boxes, nutmeg graters, tobacco rasps, locks & boxes and a chastity belt!
 - Fine Art** (500 items) – a wide ranging collection of paintings that needs expert reassessment to fully appreciate the contents. Of special note are the “Dice Players” by Georges de la Tour - a mid

seventeenth century old master oil painting and a watercolour “Mustering of the Warrior Angels” by J M W Turner. There is also a collection of World War I water colour paintings of life in the trenches by Col. Spence (134). Part of the collection is topographical art based on Stockton Borough and a series of local portraits some of which are of civic origin.

- **Costume** - The collection (15,500) covers from the Victorians to the present day but the strongest area is women’s fashion in the Victorian & Edwardian periods and the 1950s to 1970s. There are smaller collections of children’s and men’s wear with the latter containing uniforms - both military and civil. Also within the general subject area are collections from the same periods of shoes, hats and jewellery with a small collection of ladies fans. The collection has grown unevenly and with a large number of duplicates in some areas, especially whitewear, and also items that are beyond repair.
- **Commercial & Industrial** (11,000) – includes items that were used in the work place as well as tools, packaging and samples of the product. The collection of heavy items, mostly related to the iron industry and its associated engineering, is small and covers the late Victorian and early 20th century, but there is a large collection of hand tools used in a variety of trades many of which have been overtaken by technology
‘Stockton Made’ - the town and area covered by the Borough has a rich industrial heritage with a wide spectrum of industries and businesses represented. Some of these survive but others like shipbuilding and pottery are long gone although in some cases there may be physical remains. The main industrial areas were: Ships & Shipbuilding Iron & Engineering and Chemicals – these were the industrial backbone of the area and contributed to its greatness.
- **Ceramics** - There is a collection of locally made ceramics (300) from the six potteries that were once found within the Borough and also from Cappellmen’s of Brussels which was owned & operated by the Stafford Pottery of Thornaby. The work is mainly either domestic earthenware, some of good quality, or commercial wares including street name plates and grave markers once used in the local cemeteries. This local collection dates from the Victorian & Edwardian eras with the exception of Yarm that was in production during the 1930s. In addition there is a collection of general ceramics that are used in the period rooms and the china shop in the street but classified in the Domestic collection.
- **Toys and Games** - This collection (4725) ranges from a small collection of Victorian “educational “ toys to the modern plastic & electronic toys of today with tin plate, model railways, lead figures and boxed board games. Within this is a sizeable collection of dolls, dolls houses and accessories. There is also a collection of books (3000) that includes children’s annuals.

- **Fishing** - Includes most aspects of freshwater fishing including a wide range of tackle and books including a stuffed pike (60).
- **Social & Domestic** - A extensive collection (15,500) of household appliances - cookers, fridges, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, radiators, sink units, toilet bowls, kitchenware, pottery & flatware, furniture and home entertainment – radio, television, and record players that covers the Victorian era to the 1960s and was formed to supply the period rooms and shops at Preston Hall especially in anticipation of a proposed large scale development.
- **Transport** – comprising road vehicles (70). A bicycle collection (20), hand carts (8), models of Stockton-built ships (12), Railways mostly held in the local collection),
- **Weaponry and Militaria** - Largely based on the Spence Bequest (500) but expanded in recent years. The collection includes swords, tsuba, daggers, pole arms, firearms and medals. Overall there is scope, due to the quality of this collection, to work in partnership with outside museums possibly including the Royal Armouries in Leeds. There is a collection of military medals (330) - The Spence Bequest (220) and additional collection (110).
- **Loans** - Other than short term loans for specific temporary exhibitions a small number of long term loans (150) are held of material that is important to the area but could not be acquired by other means. Examples of this are a collection of regimental silver from the Stockton battalion of the Durham Light Infantry and collections of church plate with pewter made by Edmund Harvey a pewter-smith based in Stockton.

9.8. **Local Studies Collection** - Items (50,000) relating to the history of Stockton Borough, which incorporates the areas of Thornaby, Billingham and Yarm as well as Stockton. For cataloguing purposes, the collections can be roughly divided into the following themes:

- **Shipbuilding** - Ships have been built in the area since the Middle Ages, the last yard to close being the Furness Yard at Haverton Hill which survived until the 1970s. The Museum Service holds shipbuilding records from the 19th century, photographs, maps, ship plans, yard books, business publications, indentures and shipbuilding ephemera.
- **The River Tees** - Photographs, development proposals, plans, maps.
- **Stockton and Darlington Railway** - Timetables, secondary histories, legal documents, maps, plans, photographs, tickets & weigh bills.
- **Industrial History** - Stafford Pottery (maps, plans, photographs, research notes, social history research notes). Other potteries (maps, plans, photographs, research notes, social history research notes). Heavy industry (photographs, some employment details, maps, plans).

- **Notable Stocktonians** - The personalities of the town including John Walker, Dr M'Gonigle, Ivy Close and Freddy Dixon also the activities of visitors to the town.
- **Social History** - Theatres/cinemas, religious themes, 20th century life, education – maps, plans of buildings, photographs
- **Maps** - Maps of the Borough area from 1856 to 1939; larger scale maps (1950s).
- **Plans** - Buildings – public, commercial and private houses also bridges.
- **Legal Documents** - Many relating to sales of property, and others giving an insight into lives of Stockton families.
- **Newspapers** - Dating back to 19th century, local; some national relating national events (Coronations etc).
- **In-House Journals** – Firms' in-house journals from Head Wrightson, Furness.
- **Imperial Chemical Industries** - Large collection of photographs, testimony, related documents from the 1920s to date.
- **Council** - Minutes, photographs, programmes and reports.

9.9. The collections outlined above fall into five groups:

- material of considerable interest and worth, but with little direct connection to Stockton Borough (mainly the Spence and Clephan bequests);
- objects that are unique and significance of to Stockton Borough;
- generic, mass-produced social history material that may have been used in Stockton, but was in general use throughout the country;
- Materials collected outside Stockton Borough for the specific purpose of illustrating the Victorian period street and
- Paper records and archives that contain specific information about Stockton Borough.

9.10. In oral evidence provided to the Committee, Reuben Kench and Jane Hubbard advised the Committee that the collection was in need of reviewing with the possibility of rationalisation. A framework for rationalisation was needed, that should consider some of the following issues

- Does it match the current collection policy or help tell Stockton's story?
- Is it poor quality or duplication?
- Can it be used and cared for by SBC?
- Would it be more appropriate elsewhere?

9.11 Committee were reminded that rationalisation does not necessarily mean disposal, but might include other options, such as sharing or swapping with other institutions

9.12 Members were also made aware of the Museum's Acquisition and Disposal Policy via written evidence, which follows MLA's guidelines for Museum Accreditation, and was revised in April 2006. Museum Accreditation is a CPA target, and has been achieved by SBC during 2006/07. The aims of the Acquisition and Disposal Policy are as follows:

- To restrict general collecting and concentrate on material with both relevance to and connections with the Borough of Stockton on Tees.
- To continue to develop the use and relevance of the general collections and rationalise the extent of these collections.
- To achieve the best care for the collections in our care and only accept items that we can adequately care for.

Budget/Income Generation

9.13 Additional monies for the service are set out in Tables 1 – 4 (p 13 – 14). Members were advised that the £60,000 uplift (Table 1) awarded from Stockton Borough Council's revenue budget would continue into future years, but that the £40,000 MLA North East uplift was a one-off award for outreach work, displays and strategic commissioning.

9.14 Around £35,000 of income is also received as a result of the admission fee (p.13) introduced in 1997. The Egeria Strategy refers to a possible drop in visitor numbers as a result of the introduction of the charge, but also advises that the recent viewpoint survey showed only that 5% of residents support a removal of the charge, and that current charges appear low in relation to regional and national tourist attractions. Removal of charges might also necessitate an increase in maintenance and security costs.

9.15 Evidence outlined in the Egeria Strategy highlights a need to pay attention to other commercial activities. The Museum shop runs at 24% gross profit (2003/04 figures), and is at the lower end of the range (35 – 50%) where there is greater emphasis on books and souvenirs. Egeria concludes that, taking into account overheads (building costs, staffing, admin, etc) it is unlikely that the shop does more than break even each year, and it may even operate at a loss.

9.16 The Committee were also advised that the Hall is becoming increasingly popular as a wedding / Civil Partnership venue, but the basis for establishment of the current fee, and whether it represents a commercial charge, is unclear. The Hall is currently suitable for ceremonies only, but not for post ceremony receptions.

Evidence provided by Stockton Borough Residents

- 9.17 It was agreed, as part of the initial scoping exercise, that residents of the Borough should be consulted on the issues to be considered by the Select Committee. A random selection of residents was subsequently invited to attend one of four focus groups (one of the groups was specifically aimed at young people). The focus groups were attended by 33 residents.
- 9.18 As part of the discussions in the focus groups, residents were asked to provide comments and opinions on a wide variety of issues relating to the Hall & Park. Results from discussions regarding collections and exhibitions are outlined below:

Focus Group – Summary of discussions

Preston Hall Museum

9.19 What do you think of the current collections on show, for example the Dice Players, Armoury, Period Rooms and Toys and Games?

- 9.19.1 Some thought that the collections were interesting, and the rooms were good and realistic, whilst regretting that only so many people can have a look in them at any one time. Others were not so impressed and thought that the displays were not interesting enough, lacked a professional finish and were need of better signage. Some called for a better use of the space that is available. One person was of the view that there was not a coherent theme to the museum, which tends to get overshadowed by the Victorian street.
- 9.19.2 Some of the youth panel felt that smaller children would have trouble seeing some of the shops and toy display.
- 9.19.3 It was suggested that interpretation in the armoury could be improved, along the lines of Warwick Castle for example.
- 9.19.4 Some people thought that more could be made of Stockton's local heritage, and that it was fine to have some material relating to outside of Stockton as long as it didn't dominate.
- 9.19.5 Opinion was split over the Dice Players. Some thought it was well displayed and an asset to be proud of, others didn't like it and suggested that it be sold off for auction!

9.20 Do you think it is Value for Money?

- 9.20.1 There was a consensus that the admission price was very cheap but that to increase the price there would have to be a commensurate

improvement in the facilities available. It was also pointed out that many museums, such as the Dorman, offered free entry. However there was general agreement that there was no major problem with having a charging policy, as long as there was not a huge difference between running costs and the ticket price.

9.20.2 The possibility of paying once to visit all year was floated by one group, whilst others suggested that guided tours could take place for an additional charge.

9.21 Do you think it is accessible?

9.21.1 Most people were of the opinion that the Hall would not be accessible to those who used a wheelchair, and that the installation of a lift should be a priority. There was also criticism from one group about the mounting of cases, and of the general level of lighting and uncertainty as to whether there was a hearing loop. It was suggested that staff awareness of access issues was not what it might be.

9.21.2 Participants also mentioned that there might be restrictions due to the listed nature of the building. Suggestions made to overcome this problem included the making of a film to show people what was on other floors. The groups were concerned that any changes should not alter the character of the buildings and street.

9.22 The current displays don't change very often, what do you think about this?

9.22.1 This question prompted various suggestions as to what should be actually in the displays. Some people felt that the current arrangements were fine while others preferred a 'change-around.' Could the objects in store be used more often? Some thought that the rooms looked bare.

9.22.2 One participant thought that the displays should be re-arranged, so as to have a designated space for permanent displays and then have a dedicated touring exhibition space.

9.22.3 Many were concerned that important aspects of Stockton's history were not being reflected in the displays currently in the Hall, for instance the shipbuilding heritage.

9.22.4 There was a concern that by not changing the displays, visitors would not return on a regular basis, especially local residents.

9.23 Would you like to see exhibitions that tour from other museums?

9.23.1 Although some felt there was a risk in detracting from the current collections and that perhaps more could be made of objects currently in store, this was generally seen as being a good idea.

9.23.2 It was highlighted that there was the possibility of curriculum links to travelling exhibitions to encourage younger visitors, but that any exhibition would have to be properly advertised to guarantee success.

9.23.3 Part of the appeal was that people 'would like to see a tour from other museums in order to have the opportunity to see exhibits from other areas which we would not usually see.'

9.24 The museum has a shop, do you think it has good quality items, reasonably priced. What would you like to see or buy?

9.24.1 The youth group were happy with the shop as it stands but also made suggestions for new products including Christmas decorations.

9.24.2 Conversely most of the other groups thought that too much of the stock was aimed at children ('kiddy tat') and that there needed to be an increase in the quality and variety of available items, similar to what you might find in a National Trust shop for example. One group wondered whether there would be increased opportunity to sell local crafts and other produce.

9.24.3 Generally people thought that a well presented shop was let down by the content. Prices were seen as reasonable but that there was still scope for a range of more expensive gifts, moving away from a concentration of pencils and rubbers etc, to more books, jewellery and other memorabilia.

9.25 What do you think of the Victorian Street? Do you think access could be improved, is it sufficient and what would you like to see?

9.25.1 Most people were very fond of the Street although some acknowledged that it was starting to look tired and in need of cleaning. Questions were raised as to the level of interpretation in the street. The possibility of using people in costume to bring the street alive and to actually sell/create authentic items in the shops was a popular suggestion, as was the idea of using the street as the centre for a wider range of events than happens at present. The idea of increasing the railway/transport element was also discussed.

9.25.2 Most people recognised that the access was not perfect but that any alterations would change the character of the street. One suggestion was to look at the possibility of using an entrance from the side of the wall adjoining the park.

9.26 Good example of the Hall?

9.26.1 It was felt that the house itself was impressive; the architecture, character, lecture room acoustics, ceiling decoration, chandeliers, the fact that it hadn't changed much and the impression of a 'comfortable rich man's house' all drew favourable comments.

9.26.2 The period rooms and Victorian street were popular as was the working blacksmith. The armoury and other exhibits were praised, including the more recent type ie. 'it's not just Victorian anymore'. Mystery object display was felt to be a good idea. The toys display and after school club were praised.

9.26.3 The use of touch screens was seen as a good way of improving interactivity and access to the collections for those with mobility problems. The staff at the Hall were praised for being enthusiastic and knowledgeable.

9.27 Bad example of the Hall?

9.27.1 Some people felt that actually the Hall exhibits weren't interactive enough, and that it was potentially boring for children.

9.27.2 Access to the Hall was felt to be lacking for both people in wheelchairs ('no lift') and for people who didn't speak English.

9.27.3 The Victorian Street could do with some signage and museum signage in general was thought to be an area that needed improvement, including such things as opening times. The labelling of exhibits throughout the museum was in need of some attention. It was suggested that there was scope for more fully developing the history of the Hall itself and more could be made of the Ropner family connection. Also, it was felt that more could be done with the existing space and exhibits such as the Dice Players.

9.27.4 The decoration was felt to be showing some signs of wear, and the maintenance of the Victorian street should be looked at. For some people, the overall impression was of a lack of 'curatorial will' and 'piecemeal spending'. There was felt to be a lack of emphasis on local history, and some were disappointed with the information on the Stockton-Darlington railway and transport.

9.27.5 Several people commented on the lack of interpretation of much of what was displayed in the street. Younger generations had no idea of £sd or of how prices displayed compared with wages at the time or even of what were some of the goods “on sale”.

Evidence provided by Stockton Borough Council's Property Development Department

9.28 Gordon Mallory, SBC Architectural Manager attended a meeting of the Select Committee to provide oral and written evidence relating to conditions of the Hall and surrounding buildings.

9.29 In written evidence, the Committee were advised that the condition survey information is based on Government criteria to assess the condition of buildings. It does not include for suitability and therefore figures indicated must be assessed in the light of any change to the building usage. Replacement is on the basis of 'like for like' with no improvement taken into account.

Preston Hall, Museum and Workshops

9.30 The original Hall was constructed in 1825 with additions of entrance and Winter Garden in 1910. Alterations to form the museum commenced in 1953 and extended up to 1980's with the completion of the period street and Blacksmith's Yard.

9.31 The buildings are considered to be in reasonable condition but some maintenance and repair issues are outstanding. The major item for immediate attention is the Winter Garden for which separate costs have been assessed at £250,000. Because the Hall is a listed building (Grade II), consent has just been obtained to proceed. Funding is now being sought to progress the scheme. (See **Appendix 2**).

9.32 In addition, there is currently £127,000 work categorised as priority 1 out of a total of £610,000 potential works noted. Given the size of the building this is not considered excessive and the general condition is considered reasonable.

9.33 The areas that require attention are as follows:


- Complete the recovering of the roof (part already undertaken)
- Re-point areas of brickwork
- Timber windows require repair prior to redecoration
- Doors to Hall require repair and redecoration
- Cladding to the workshop building is clad in asbestos sheeting that will require repair/replacement
- Timber clad store is in poor condition and will require replacement

Key Findings - Preston Hall

- Items from the Spence Bequest should be displayed properly or not at all. If the armoury is to be displayed, Committee would support the suggestion outlined in the Egeria strategy.
- The location of items from the Clephan Bequest should be reviewed and opportunities for possible loaning/swapping with galleries/museums maximised
- Collections should be rationalised to focus on local history and stories of Stockton, in particular:
 - Railway
 - Shipping/Shipbuilding/River
 - Sheraton
 - Walker
 - ICI and the chemical industry
 - Stockton High Street
- Publicity for exhibitions & literature for museum and collections require review
- The layout of collections and exhibitions need improving to achieve a more coherent experience, and to provide space for temporary exhibitions and a dedicated Education Suite
- Committee note the £60,000 SBC uplift for display and outreach work.
- Admission Charges - Committee could not identify an obvious replacement for the £35,000 income from admission charges, other than charging instead for car parking. Although this might encourage visitors to come by more environmentally-friendly means, it would also lead to obstructive parking in nearby residential areas (such as is already suffered when motorists avoid the queues inside the Park at big events). Officers be encouraged to try innovative admissions packages in connection with big events and park-and-ride. Committee would also support provision of a better visitor 'offer' in the museum rather than abolition of admission charge.
- Access issues to be reviewed in line with Disability Discrimination Act
- Signage and interpretation throughout the museum needs improving
- Stock-lines in the museum shop should be re-targeted at adults in order to maximise profit.
- Committee noted the current popularity of the Ballroom for civil weddings and the resultant income stream. In deciding future policy for the whole Hall, consideration needed to be given as to whether this was the best use of the accommodation and, if so, what improvements might be needed to preserve and develop it. For instance:
 - There are no catering facilities for a reception
 - Members and Officers gave evidence that the only toilets available within the hall (in the street) are not of the standard expected by those in wedding finery.
- Committee note the building repair requirements, and find that condition should be re-evaluated to ensure suitability for newly recommended storage requirements.

10.0 PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE

10.1 The following witnesses provided information and evidence in relation to services and facilities provided in Park:

- **Gina Balzi, Parks and Countryside Office**
 - **Bob Campbell, Assistant Ranger**
 - **Animal Keepers**
- 
- Parks & Countryside**
- **Gordon Mallory, Architectural Manage – Property Development**
 - **David Lynch, - Highways Department**
 - **Richard Bradley, - Grounds Maintenance**
 - **Sue Daniels, Business Manager (DANS) – Events**
 - **Simon Blenkinsop – Tees Forest**
 - **Mike Aslin – Preston Park Model Railway Group**
 - **Stockton Residents – Focus Groups**

Evidence provided by Stockton Borough Council's Parks and Countryside Department

10.2 The Role of the Countryside Service in Preston Park

10.2.1 The Preston Park and River Tees Ranger Service form part of the wider Parks and Countryside Section responsible for parks and countryside management across the Borough. The Ranger Service is based in the period street in the old boat maker's workshop. The team consists of Head Ranger (Bob Campbell), 2 Assistant Rangers (Bob Brown and Chris Ridley) and 2 part time Animal Keepers (Pam Stewart and Andrea Metcalfe).

10.2.2 Their role is to deliver a countryside management service in Preston Park and at nature reserves along the River Tees, including The Holmes and Bassleton Woods, and to manage the Teesdale Way long distance route through Stockton Borough and the park.

10.2.3 Within the park the team delivers an extensive programme of environmental education for visiting school and community groups. They manage and develop specific areas of the park for nature conservation and recreation;

- Quarry Wood Local Nature Reserve
- Hall Wood
- The ex-tree nursery (now a developing woodland site)
- The Butterfly Garden behind Butterfly World

10.2.4 The Rangers patrol the park to deter misuse and address maintenance issues (either directly or by contacting the relevant officer in another section), organise a programme of public events and activities, deliver illustrated talks to groups in and outside of the park, co-ordinate volunteers within the park, repair and replace countryside furniture, deliver practical conservation tasks and generally maintain a watching brief. The Ranger Service is a well established presence in Preston Park and a key point of contact for visitors to the site.

10.2.5 The Animal Keepers manage the animal facility for the benefit of public interest and to provide an educational service to schools and groups. The staff have coordinated several breeding and release schemes for native species in partnership with the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust and other wildlife bodies. They also deliver a programme of outreach work in the form talks and activities through a series of summer animal 'roadshow' to libraries and community buildings around Stockton each year. There are legislative requirements relating to the housing of animals within the park, which comprise:

- A zoo licence in order to display non-domesticated animals
- Compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act, particularly with reference to the control of giant hogweed.

10.3 Budgetary Information

10.3.1 The River Tees and Preston Park countryside management service is delivered with limited resources. Annual revenue budgets are supplemented by income generated through one or two additional activities in the park. For example, a bouncy castle sited near the play area during the summer - this generates around £1000. The income benefits the park directly and is fed back into the Ranger's Preston Park budget for improvements on site. Income is also generated through woodland grant and countryside stewardship schemes – there is currently only one agreement that is active on site at the moment. This generates several hundred pounds each year and is in its final year.

10.3.2 The Budget allocation for 2006/07:

Preston Park	£3,184
Animal Facility	£3,204
River Tees Project Area	£3,735
Total	£10,123

10.3.3 The majority of money generated through large-scale events is used to fund new events. Income generated through Museums Services is fed back into the Museum. Income generated through activities organised by the countryside team are fed back into countryside budgets for park improvements. A co-ordinated approach is required.

10.4 Services Offered

10.4.1 Aviary and Animal Pens

Current situation

The aviary is currently used to house rabbits, ducks, harvest mice, ferrets, rats and golden pheasants. The duck pond and animal pens provide accommodation for various species of waterbird including peafowl and ducks. Small interpretive panels are affixed to some of the pens and these, along with the animals, generate considerable interest from visitors. Close by, 2 sheds provide an external base for the Animal Keepers, accommodation for volunteers and a facility for preparing animal feed.

Issues

- Avian Influenza – the birds of prey have been housed temporarily in the events team sheds and the duck pond has been netted in accordance with advice from Defra and the Animal Welfare Unit.
- Lack of resources – Limited budget almost covers the cost of animal feed for the year.
- Strategy for the park – Plans to source external funding to develop the animal facility have been on hold for some years in anticipation of a Development Plan for the site.
- Zoo Licence – Staff are in the process of applying for a zoo licence. Without the licence, animals classed as 'non-domestic' cannot be displayed to the public. This includes the harvest mice and barn owls. The licence will enable us to provide a better visitor attraction and educational service.

10.4.2 Quarry Wood Local Nature Reserve and Hall Wood

Current situation

2 areas of ancient, semi-natural woodland dominated by a variety of deciduous species and a ground flora which includes ramsons, bluebells and giant bellflower.

Issues

- Quarry Wood was previously a Victorian quarry and has significant geological and archaeological interest.
- Both woodlands suffer from invasive, non-native snowberry and would benefit from a programme of removal. Giant hogweed has been almost eradicated in both woods but annual maintenance must be undertaken (spraying) to combat new growth.
- Mountain bike activity in Quarry Wood causes significant damage to the woodland floor preventing natural regeneration and underplanting.

10.4.3 Tree Nursery

Current situation

This ex-tree nursery is now an area of regenerating broadleaved woodland contiguous with a registered site of ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, which is a scarce and valuable resource. It is an important wildlife resource and its value is further enhanced by its location which means that disturbance from the general public and dogs is minimal.

Issues

- Thinning operations are required to promote the area to forest to maximise it's value for biodiversity
- The Forestry Commission has indicated that grants are available to undertake the necessary work.
- Any new developments within the park should take into consideration the management of existing natural resources, with particular attention to areas of greater wildlife value. The line of least environmental impact should always be adopted.
- The Cassella Report had identified this area as the site for a street arts workshop/centre. Parks & Countryside felt that it should be sited elsewhere in the Park. Negotiations were ongoing between them and Arts & Culture.

10.4.4 Butterfly Garden

Current situation

Well developed wildlife garden located behind Butterfly World for native species of butterfly for public interest and information.

Issues

- Requires interpretation and is a work in progress – Rangers to engage community involvement and source external small grants to progress.

10.4.5 Office Accommodation

Current situation

The Rangers have recently moved offices from inside the Museum to one of the workshops in the period street.

Issues

- Although this arrangement is an improvement on the previous location, the general public do not have open access to the staff for information and enquiries.

10.4.6 Riverside walks, fish haven and open parkland

Current situation

Attractive landscaped park with manicured grassland, wildlife meadows, woodland and water features.

Issues

- Maintenance and upkeep undertaken by ranger service and grounds maintenance.

10.4.7 Stockton – Darlington Railway

Current situation

The original track-bed of the railway runs through the front of the park and is of significant archaeological interest.

Issues

- Maintenance of the woodland in that area of the park to preserve the remains
- Interpretation (both on site and in Museum)
- Limits development in that area of the park

10.4.8 The River Tees Heritage Park Proposal

Current situation

The Countryside Service is developing a proposal for a River Tees Heritage park in partnership with the Council for the Protection of Rural England, The Tees Forest and The Tees Valley Wildlife Trust.

Issues

- Funding
- Responsibility for project delivery (The Tees Forest may take the lead role on this)
- Preston Park should be the main point of access and interpretation for the Heritage Park
- Access Improvements – the provision of a footbridge from the vicinity of the park to Ingleby Barwick

10.5 Evidence provided by Stockton Borough Council's Property Development Department

10.5.1 Gordon Malory, Architectural Manager, provided written and oral evidence relating to the following buildings:

- North Lodge
- South Lodge
- Gardeners Cottage

10.5.2 These three premises have recently been transferred from Parks and Cemeteries to Tristar Homes. They have all been surveyed with a view to improving the properties up to Decent Standard level during the current financial year to ensure continuing use of the properties as rented residential units.

10.5.3 The Committee were advised that no information is available for the following properties:

- Aviary – Erected in 1983 by SBC to house rare and unusual species. Appears to be no longer in use. Suffered from general lack of maintenance. Only phase 1 completed as part of a larger scheme for Aviary and Children's Zoo
- Café – Building leased to café operator. Café responsible for internal finishes, fittings and keeping the building clean. SBC responsible for maintenance and repair of main building elements. No condition survey undertaken. Built in 1980.
- Public toilets – Building constructed in 1980 at same time as café. No condition survey available at present time.
- Model Railway Workshops – The club lease a workshop building dating from the original park estate. This building has been added to by the club. The club is responsible for the maintenance and costs associated with the building.
- Model Railway Club Platform and Ticket Office – The building is owned and maintained by the club. SBC has no involvement in the facility
- Butterfly World – The structure was built and is maintained by the operators. A lease of the site in operation with payment to SBC. As this is a private facility has no involvement and therefore no record of its condition
- Golf Hut – The golf facility is leased to an operator. No information on condition available
- Bandstand in Walled Garden – Constructed for Stockton Leisure in 1990 by YTS Trainees and the Museum Service. No information available.

10.6 Evidence provided by Stockton Borough Council's Highways Department

10.6.1 David Lynch, Team Leader, Traffic Management, attended a meeting of the Select Committee to provide oral evidence on issues relating to parking and vehicular access to the Park.

10.6.2 The Committee were advised that the Transportation Department are aware of issues relating to parking in residential areas, particularly during large-scale events. The Department have considered various options a number of times, but have struggled to find a permanent solution to the problem. Police cones have been placed on Yarm Road

to ease congestion, but when placed in residential roads prevent residents parking outside their homes. David Lynch emphasised to the Committee that traffic problems occur rarely outside of event days.

- 10.6.3 One solution has been to provide a park and ride service, but this has had limited success with only around 400 people using the service during a recent event (only 1% of attendees took advantage of the park & ride service during the Stockton Vehicle Rally – 97% of users took their own vehicle). The Department are currently unaware of any Government funding available for the implementation of a permanent park & ride scheme.
- 10.6.4 It has previously been suggested that either a roundabout be placed at the main entrance to the Park, but Committee were advised that there is currently no budget available in Highways for such a scheme, which would cost in the region of £4 – 500,000. Traffic lights have also been considered as an option, but would also be unable to be met through the highways budget as it would involve widening of the road to accommodate the scheme.
- 10.6.5 The possibility of utilising the Preston Lane entrance more regularly, particularly for large scale events was suggested, but this solution would require more traffic to travel through residential areas, and may possibly create a further problem for residents in the surrounding areas. It is also no longer an option to provide police officers at the entrances to manage the flow of traffic, as management of traffic within the Park is now the duty of Enforcement Officers, who are not able to manage moving traffic on the highway.
- 10.6.6 The Department have been looking at options to improve cycle routes on Yarm Road, and a cycle route would be included in any future bridge provided for access between the Park and Ingleby Barwick
- 10.6.7 It was also suggested that the layout of car parking could be improved in order to provide a more suitable 'run-in' to the park, which would ease queues coming back out onto the road.
- 10.6.8 The possibility of imposing parking curfews or restrictions during events was discussed, but enforcement would be a problem, and it could be counter-productive in making it problematic for residents wishing to park outside their properties.
- 10.6.9 David Lynch also advised Committee that there had never been problems with emergency vehicles gaining access to the Park, even during busy event days
- 10.6.10 Issues relating to public transport provision to the park were also discussed, and Committee noted that the Park was served by buses passing it every 10 minutes between Stockton and Yarm up to about

6p.m. on weekdays. IN the evening and on Sundays the service was only one per hour in each direction. For people living outside walking distance, this was a major disincentive to travelling by environmentally-friendly means and, for those who could not afford a car, a measure of social exclusion. In the current climate of bus service cuts, there was no immediate answer. It was noted that Stockton and Hartlepool Council ran a *Badger Bus* two days per week in the school summer holidays between their various country parks and some residential areas.

10.7 Evidence provided by Stockton Borough Council's Grounds Maintenance Department

10.7.1 Preston Park is currently used as a small, though still a strategically located operational depot, that allows the Council to run operations at the southern end of the Borough, such as Ingleby Barwick, Yarm & Eaglescliffe. Other Council depots are located at Yarm Road, Cowpen Lane and Ropner park nursery, and outlined below are the reasons why the Council still need to use Preston Park in some capacity.

10.7.2 Since April 2004, Care For Your Area has been providing a kerbside green waste collection scheme. This service is run from the Yarm Road Depot. This service is now extended to around 36, 000 properties and the Council has provided a commitment in principle to roll this service out across the whole Borough. This will mean 5 refuse collection vehicles and car parking for staff at the depot will be required. Also, additional space for the extra Green Waste will be required as this service expands – meaning something will need to be located elsewhere to another Depot in order to accommodate this extra demand.

10.7.3 Since February 2004, Care For Your Area has been providing a kerbside recycling service across the whole Borough. This service is run from the Yarm Road Depot and separate storage facilities are required for the paper, 3 types of glass and cans that are collected as part of this service. 7 kerbside vehicles and car parking for staff is required.

10.7.4 The Council recycling performance during 2005/06 was only 16.35 %. In order that the Council meets the statutory 30% recycling targets by 2010 (currently under review by central Government and may increase to a 40% target), a huge increase in tonnage collected via the kerbside collection scheme will be required. This will in turn require considerable additional storage space at the Yarm Road Depot, meaning something will need to be located elsewhere to another Depot in order to accommodate this extra demand.

10.7.5 Cowpen Lane Depot is full to capacity. This is due to expanded Street Cleansing and Highway Maintenance provisions. In addition, the Billingham Horticultural Services team uses this depot, for obvious operational reasons.

10.7.6 Ropner park nursery is not being utilised to its full operational capacity. Primarily, this is because the nursery itself will require substantial capital investment before it can be fully utilised. To put this into context – the cost of installing the necessary concrete pad when the Yarm Road depot was re-constructed in 2003/04 was around £150, 000 and the Ropner Park Nursery will require substantial other works also. Whilst Officers are currently calculating estimates for bringing Ropner Park Nursery into full operational use, it would be reasonable to suggest significant capital investment would be needed to make Ropner Park Nursery into a viable working depot. There are at present no funds available within Care For Your Area to have such work undertaken. Planning permission will be required.

10.8 Evidence provided by Stockton Borough Council's Events Department

10.8.1 Sue Daniels, Business Manager for Development and Neighbourhood Services, provided written responses to the following questions:

- *How does the team plan and prioritise events to meet the needs and wants of the customer?*

“Events are generally prioritised with regards to budget availability, what works and is popular and previously tried and tested elsewhere. Our main objective is to provide an all inclusive events programme which allows access for all at nil or low cost.

Events are planned 12 – 18 months in advance in order to engage and reserve any new/ alternative features and entertainment. This lead-in is particularly relevant when new events are planned to ensure that full risk assessments are undertaken so that events continue to be safe.

The events team uses Viewpoint, Viewpoint Youth Panel, the Park Management Group and our own on-site survey during the events themselves to consult with the public and park users.”

- *What feedback systems exist for the local community to comment on events?*

“In addition to the above, the Council's Comments, Commendations and Complaints system is utilised to capture comments and feedback. We also receive feedback through Stockton's web site

We recently had a comment submitted through the 'First for Festivals' website on the fire engine and vintage car rally. This is a facility that provides visitors to the site the opportunity to write a review on any event attended."

- *Do you capture information relating to visitors? What do you know about visitors?*

"Whilst trying to keep as brief as possible, within our on-site surveys we capture information relating to gender, age group, favourite part, ticket price, if museum was visited, etc as well as general area they live.

We are introducing postcode information in the Summer Show survey."

- *How do you consider and select events proposed by external agencies?*

"We meet with agencies to fully discuss proposed event. We examine documentation relating to previous events they have undertaken and usually take up references."

Proposed events are then considered by the Park Management Group

- *Do you think that the Preston Park Activities Framework has altered the way you plan and run events? (See Draft Activities Framework on p.54)*

"Preston Park and Hall is a vital resource for the Borough, attracting many visitors from all areas. The framework provides a general outline to formalise how events are planned in the Park. However it should be viewed as a general guide and not be overly restrictive so that it prevents Stockton from putting on a major event in the future because the 'quota' has been reached. A major event held at the Park could be a significant regional attraction contributing to the local and regional economy."

10.8.2 Committee were also provided with the following summary of a customer satisfaction survey undertaken at the Stockton Vehicle Rally on 24th & 25th June 2006:

Summary of Satisfaction Survey, Stockton Vehicle Rally 24 & 25 June 2006

Visitors

- 68% from Teesside
- 20% from Durham
- other visitors included people from Leeds, Sunderland and Edinburgh

Gender & Age Groups

- Roughly 50/50 split of male and female visitors
- largest proportion were amongst the 36 – 50 age group
- 64% attended with children in their party

Travel

- 97% travelled in their own vehicle
- only 1% took advantage of the park & ride service provided

Other Events attended

- 70% had been to this event previously
- 30% had visited SIRF
- 27% had attended Firework display
- 5% visited the Summer Show
- 2% had attended Christmas Lights switch-on

Satisfaction

- 97% of visitors rated the event as Excellent or Good
- 3% said it was Fair
- 100% of those surveyed said they would visit again

Price (£2.50 and £1.50)

- only 7% thought it was overpriced
- 43% said it was good value
- 50% said it was a fair price

Favourite Part

- 40% Exhibits
- 30% Arena
- 20% Stalls
- 10% Fair and sideshows

General Impressions

- 100% of respondents overall impression of the Park was Excellent to Good
- 50% visited the Museum and rated it Good

10.9 Evidence provided by Tees Forest

10.9.1 The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Select Committee formed a small task group to receive evidence from Simon Blenkinsop from Tees Forest. The meeting took place on 26 June 2006, and the evidence was distributed to the whole Committee shortly after.

10.9.2 The meeting involved a wide-ranging discussion of what could be done in woodlands and parks, with instances of Tees Forest's achievements, and other local activity.

10.9.3 Tees Forest held a festival annually, rotating over the 5 Tees Valley boroughs. In summer they had organised *Trailway* with 100 participants in summer. Tees Forest were keen also keen to pursue access to woodlands and greenways and issues relating to disabled access. 2 disabled scooters were being provided at Preston Hall. Simon Blenkinsop advised that Stewarts Park in Middlesbrough represented a good example of a successful museum in a park.

10.9.4 Some idea and suggestion from the meeting are outlined below:

- Camping in an area of Preston Park set aside
- More use of the river, river taxis, trips on the *Teesside Princess* between Stockton & Preston Park, with story-telling on board
- Skywalks – “Going Ape”
- Public art in Preston Park
- Use of felled wood – woodland crafts on site (as there is currently blacksmithing) – willow weaving – wood sculptures – educational activities
- Potential for conferences – need to get meeting space, toilets, etc. right. *Summerhill* at Hartlepool has activity rooms to let.
- Revive Friends of the Park (The Friends are no longer operating.)
- Green burial area [Tees Forest are also considering this at *Red House*, about half a mile away.].
- Willow coppicing feeding a palletised-wood boiler
- Possible music events/local radio involvement
- Fishing sites
- Conference facilities/weddings/marquee/catering/licence/antique fairs
- Vehicle access improvements/parking.

10.10 Evidence provided by Teesside Small Gauge Railway Group (TSGRG)

- 10.10.1. Cllrs Fletcher and Laing formed a small task group to receive evidence from the Model Railway group operating at Preston Hall. The meeting took place on 13 July 2006, and the evidence was distributed to Committee shortly after.
- 10.10.2. The Councillors were first shown round the railway tracks, carriage, engine sheds and workshop in Preston Park. There were two circular mixed-gauged tracks, one within the other, together with station, turntable, etc. These were connected by a mixed-gauge spur to the carriage and engine sheds and workshop via a gated level crossing over the public right of way. A new shed, under construction, would reduce shunting manoeuvres at the beginning and end of sessions when trains were run for the public.
- 10.10.3. The premises were occupied rent-free, courtesy of Stockton Borough Council. Some of the rolling stock, including the passenger carriages, was owned by TSGRG; some locomotives, by individual members. All work was unpaid.
- 10.10.4. One circuit, served by the station, was operated for rides by the public on Sundays and bank holidays in the season. The fare, unchanged for some years, was 50p for twice round the circuit, under 2 free. The fare covered only running costs.
- 10.10.5. Over the years there had been problems with vandalism – on one occasion most of the track had been uprooted. The Park was now patrolled by Park rangers and Community Wardens.
- 10.10.6. The TSGRG enjoyed friendly relations with Park officers – there was a bi-monthly liaison meeting. There was co-operation when schools visited and with Tees Archaeology, who were interested in the trackbed of the 1825 Stockton & Darlington railway in the Park. SBC had let TSGRG have surplus materials from which they had constructed toilets. When there were small amounts of surplus tarmac the track from Preston Lane had been patched. TSGRG did its own grass-cutting; SBC had lent a mini-digger.
- 10.10.7. Members were advised of Preston PC's problem with thefts from the allotments at the SW corner of the Park, TSGRG pointed out that trespassing vehicles were blocked from continuing along the track by locked bollards. However, they could drive around over grass owing to gaps in fencing. A gap in the fencing of the circuit, alongside the public right of way next to the level crossing, facilitated members' unloading their locomotives, but might be a safety issue when trains were running.

- 10.10.8. TSGRG served two purposes-
- Enjoyment of its enthusiast members
 - Train rides for public of all ages

10.11 Evidence provided by Stockton Residents

- 10.11.1 As part of the discussions held at the focus groups, residents were asked to provide comments and opinions on a wide variety of issues relating to the Hall & Park. Results from discussions regarding issues relating to facilities offered in the Park are outlined below:

Thinking about the specific attractions, what do you think about the following, regarding Value for Money, location/access/ and what improvements could be made?

Café

Mention of the café caused some difference of opinion. On one hand, some thought the cost was reasonable and comparable to other similar park cafes. It was considered to be value for money and to provide the 'right sort of refreshments.' These groups were generally happy but perhaps the opening hours could be extended and consideration could be given to having seating outside.

However, a consistent view from other groups was that the café was out of date and not an asset to the park. In one group, six participants said that they would not eat there. The main concerns were the quality of the facilities, the range of food and the condition of the nearby toilets. It was felt that the present café did not enhance the appeal of the park.

Crazy Golf

This was felt to be a good attraction for the park, with good location and access, and that it was especially good for children. The youth group thought the difficulty and size was just right.

There was some concern about the price for families and one member wanted to see the re-instatement of the pitch and putt.

Model Railway

Some people did not know the model railway existed, even after visiting the park for '20 years'. Those that did still thought that it could be better signposted within the park, because of its isolated location.

It was seen as a fun attraction with good value for money but there was frustration with the limited opening times. There were various suggestions

along the lines of better integration with existing park attractions, for example having a link with the river moorings.

The children's play areas

It was felt that generally speaking the play area was acceptable, not perfect, but not in such urgent need of attention as the rest of the park. However, play provision at Preston was unfavourably compared to other parks such as Albert and Ropner.

Comments from the youth group suggested that there was some concern over age limits on the equipment, and most people thought that the equipment was in need of an upgrade.

Events

The park is seen as being a good venue for events, but this needs to be balanced with the needs of the local residents as events had increased noise pollution, traffic problems and litter. Concern was also expressed at the condition of the ground when experiencing wet conditions.

People came up with a range of ideas for future events at the park. The youth group suggested a range of sporting events, whilst others mentioned increasing the amount of music events.

One sticking point was the need to pay to enter the park, especially when many of the attractions during events also charge a fee such as fun fairs. One group in particular was unhappy with the charging arrangements, regarding events as being 'too expensive'.

Butterfly World

This subject did not raise many opinions apart from one group who viewed it as being too expensive and off-putting if you were only 'half-interested' in the first place. A guide has been produced which has improved the experience.

Aviary

This was seen as being another tired and neglected area of the park. Some suggested re-ordering this area while another comment suggested knocking it down and starting again. Respondents mentioned the problems with weeds and the small area the animals had to live in.

Barriers to access

Are there any barriers to access to the Park, for example public transport?

Most people would travel by car to get to the Park, although concern was expressed about the signage on entering the site and the right-turn upon leaving the site. The amount of car parking was seen as adequate, however disabled parking was an issue for some as it was being abused.

Various people had used / visited the Teesside Princess although someone thought it was dirty and should be advertised more. The train station (Eaglescliffe) was mentioned as an option also.

There was a range of opinions on the bus service as some thought the provision was good but the connections and bus routes were unsuitable for others and were enough to put them off. A bridge from Ingleby Barwick was suggested as an alternative method of access.

Some thought the pathways generally around the site needed attention, with a call for extra seating. It was recognised that the topography of the site would always present problems for some people but the Hall itself was easily accessible from the entrance and car park. It was suggested that the opening hours for the park needed to be displayed at the entrance, and also on a leaflet.

Any improvements?

It was suggested that the right-turn problem could be solved by installation of traffic lights or a mini-roundabout.

It was suggested that a film of the site could be made in order to improve accessibility for all.

Anything else you would like to see?

There was concern about the use of the park by dog owners and that it should be more closely monitored.

People expressed a desire to see a more joined up approach to the park so that information on what is available, where the activities are, opening times etc can be made clear.

Other suggestions were:

- Bicycle racks
- Plant sales
- Keep fit circuits
- Make more use of the river

- Wildlife signage
- Closer access to the animals
- Nature trails
- More warden patrols – some participants have witnessed trouble with joyriders
- Improve landing stage for Teesside Princess

10.11 River Tees

10.11.1. The River Tees runs along the East of the Park, and currently provides a stopping point for the Teesside Princess River cruise and allows access to the water's edge for boating purposes.

10.11.2. As part of the Tees Navigation Strategy undertaken by British Waterways in 2002, Preston Park was considered as part of a case study being one of the gatehouse locations and a key recreational resource.

10.11.3. As the Committee have been asked to look in the non-too-distant future at the opportunities the River Tees provided for the Borough, examination of Preston Park's relationship with the river has been cursory so far. It was noted that, apart from Yarm (with its traffic and parking problems) Preston Park represents the last major opportunity (upstream of Stockton) to access the river (otherwise than on foot), yet it is navigable up to Newsham. Nothing should be planned for the Park without leaving open the possibilities for taking advantage of this.

10.12 The Green Flag Report

10.12.1. Committee saw but did not consider evidence relating to the recent Green Flag Award report relating to Preston Park, as the Committee's evidence was collated before the Green Flag results were received by the Council. Committee would like to note the failure of the service to reach standards required, and hope that the findings from the select Committee report will contribute to any improvements to future service. Committee understand that the "Management Plan" mentioned in that report (which they have not seen) is still in draft. The Green Flag report is attached at **Appendix 4**.

Key Findings - Parks and Countryside

- More coherent approach needed to the management of various services provided in the Park and Hall.
- Committee support the policy of housing animals at the Park for display and education purposes, but find that the current provision is inadequate and requires evaluation.
- Grounds Maintenance requirements to be reviewed including land usage and maintenance issues
- Publicity for events & literature to be reviewed
- Committee note problems relating to traffic management, particularly during events, and would support further exploration of the following issues:
 - Car parking
 - Possible use of traffic lights & mini roundabout to alleviate traffic problems
 - Park and Ride
 - Public transport
 - Cycle paths
- Disability Discrimination Act compliance throughout Park to be reviewed
- Improvement of signage throughout the park, to include information for disabled visitors and people whose first language is not English
- Anti-social behaviour (inappropriate mountain biking, vandalism) and park security and safety issues to be addressed
- Possible uses of the river to be examined, including a bridge from Ingleby Barwick
- Internal transport throughout the park to be explored
- Further explore how Stockton's history (e.g. railway) might be reflected and represented in the park.
- Committee notes that no information exists on the condition of a number of buildings and find that this needs to be addressed
- Future café / catering provision to be reviewed (in consultation with Park users)
- Committee notes the services provided and suggestions offered by Tees Forest and the Model Railway Group

11.0 COMMUNITY ISSUES

11.1 The following witnesses provided information and evidence in relation to community issues:

- **Representatives from Egglecliffe Parish Council**
- **Representatives from Preston Parish Council**

11.2 Evidence – Museums and the Borough

- 11.2.1. One of the key findings of the Egeria study was that the museum service was too preoccupied with the running of the three sites (Preston Park, Green Dragon Museum and Billingham Art Gallery), leaving little time to focus on taking the service out to the wider community.
- 11.2.2. It was suggested that Preston Park should operate as a central hub for all activities, with alternative operating arrangements sought for the Green Dragon Museum and Billingham Art Gallery
- 11.2.3. This should be accompanied by a team of community curators deployed to work outside of the site within communities.
- 11.2.4. Committee were advised that, following Cabinet endorsement of the Strategy in August 2005, work in this area is ongoing. Green Dragon Museum is now operating as Green Dragon Studios by the Tees Music Alliance and has been refurbished as part of the Cultural Quarter Initiative. The Museum Service has made a saving of £10,000 as a result of this reorganisation. Billingham Art Gallery is still in operation, and will be subject to review in 2008.
- 11.2.5. £30,000 has been awarded to the service via a Stockton Borough Council and Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (one-off) uplift for outreach work.

11.3 Evidence – Impact on the local community

- 11.3.1. It was agreed as part of the scoping exercise that members should undertake consultation with the communities adjacent to the park in order to ensure that, in the development of the park, neighbouring communities are not disadvantaged by issues such as increased noise and traffic.
- 11.3.2. Members were advised by Reuben Kench that initial consultation had already taken place with local residents at a meeting held on 7th September 2005 (See **Appendix 5**), which was organised to discuss issues relating particularly to traffic and noise. The out-of-hours contact telephone number for any problems with each major event (promised at the public meeting on 7th September 2005) had been published for 2006 in the SBC *Events* leaflet. For the future, the Events Team were considering an approach to SBC Surveillance Centre to provide such a number and pass on messages. The following draft activities framework was produced as a result of this meeting to cover the style, type, frequency and management of activities, and address key access and parking issues:
- 11.3.3. Please also see paragraph 35 (p.43) for further evidence relating to the work of the events team

11.4 Preston Park - Draft Activities Framework

Context

Preston Park is the largest and most visited urban park in the Borough of Stockton on Tees. The Park and Preston Hall attract visitors from the whole of the Borough and the wider Tees valley area. Preston Park is Stockton's primary visitor facility, the focus of the Museums Services, and a major outdoor events space.

Park and Hall were gifted to the people of the area by a man whose money was made in shipping and trading from the Tees, fuelled by the 'black gold' brought down by rail from the Durham coal fields. Appropriately, the Park is bounded by the original Stockton-Darlington Railway line on one side, and by the Tees on the other.

Although the Park serves the whole Borough, and wider catchments, it is also adjacent to a significant resident population. This framework for activities in the park is intended to ensure the range of activities in the Park, run by the Council or sanctioned by the Council and run by others, balances the needs and aspirations of all parties.

Key objectives for Preston Park and Hall

- To provide a range of leisure and cultural opportunities; accessible to as many people as possible and free or reasonably priced
- To provide educational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities, in particular relating to the historic and natural setting
- To contribute to local communities' sense of place and identity, for people to feel a sense of pride and ownership of the Park and Hall, and of the achievements and history of the area
- To contribute to the economy of the area through the attraction of visitors and through trading activities and local employment opportunities

Activities Characteristics - Type

Whilst there will inevitably be exceptions and unique circumstances, in general activities in Preston Park should fit the following criteria;

- Be sensitive to the natural and historic importance of the setting
- Be non commercial in character, though they may contain commercial elements
- Be suitable for general public and family visitors
- Not include the sale of alcohol except in carefully controlled situations and subject to appropriate licenses
- Be planned and staged to complement one-another and encourage appropriate use of the whole park and all facilities
- Take place during daylight hours or within defined spaces such as Marquees or buildings after dark, particular attention must be paid to noise attenuation for after dark events
- Adhere to published times
- Be staged in such a way as to minimise noise disturbance for neighbouring residential areas, including during set up and removal periods (noise levels will be monitored by Environmental Health Officers in line with statutory guidance)

Frequency

Small scale activities and events will occur frequently and at all times of the year, having minimal impact on either general users of the Park and Hall or people living in the surrounding area. However, in relation to the larger events which occupy a significant proportion of the Park and which attract in excess of 1000 people, the following frequency guide is proposed;

- No more than 12 per year
- No more than 6 during the June – August period
- Not occurring on consecutive weekends more than 2 times per year

Access

Some events will be subject to an entrance fee, and will necessitate a fence or compound within the Park. Where this is the case every effort will be made to clearly sign routes to free open spaces or other paid attractions such as Butterfly World and the Museum, and to make all relevant charges and restrictions clear in publicity material.

In all cases clear and effective traffic management and parking restrictions and enforcement procedures will be in place, to avoid unreasonable disturbance to local residents and passing traffic. Consideration will be given to park and ride schemes and additional bus services.

Consultation and Management

A number of Council departments are involved in designing and delivering activities in the Park and Hall. This work is coordinated by a Park Management Group, which includes representatives of other private and voluntary Park users, such as the Narrow Gauge Railway Group. Wider park user representation is welcomed.

Consultation over activities in the Park and Hall will continue through Elected Members, Friends of the Park, the Stockton Council Residents Surveys and Viewpoint Panel, and on-site surveys during events.

Members consulted with Preston Parish Council via a small group visit to a meeting of the parish Council undertaken by Cllrs Fletcher, Cherret, Faulks and Laing. The visit was held on 4 July 2006. Notes taken by attending Members are outlined below:

“On its current boundaries, the Civil Parish of Preston-on-Tees adjoins Preston Park immediately to the South and West. When the agreed parish boundary changes come into effect, the whole of the Park will be once again in the Parish. The Parish Council’s (PC) allotment gardens at the South West corner of the Park are leased from Stockton Borough Council.

Preston PC looked for more friendly relations between themselves, the people they represented & the people running the Park.

There were gaps in the Park hedge alongside Yarm Road caused by lazy dog owners who pushed through the hedge rather than walking round by the official gates and gaps. The PC felt that the image of the Park from Yarm Road would be improved considerably if these gaps could be filled with hedge. Elder growing in the hedge was killing hawthorn.

Drunks and drug addicts came out of the Park at weekends. The Police could see into the Park, but chasing those who misbehaved was often fruitless because there were 14 pedestrian exits.

Trees were at risk of harm by being covered in ivy¹.

Good toilets were needed to encourage visits by school parties – the state of the toilets was often due to dirty adults.

Preston PC opposed the proposals for a bridge to Ingleby Barwick (IB) due to the possibility of IB gangs mixing with those from Hardwick. A resident had recently heard them at 0300.

Preston PC saw little or no advertising for the Park & Hall.

A local history theme for the museum was a good idea. Col. Spence (family of the Spence Bequest) had been killed on Leven Bank.

Dead trees were not replaced – could SBC seek donations for replacement trees?²

Complaints about dog dirt & the current state of the displays of animals & birds.

After the Park gates were closed, some thieves came in vehicles via the entrance from Preston Lane & internal Park roads to steal from the Preston PC allotments.

People took short cuts through Preston PC allotments and gaps in hedges (some of the culprits were Preston PC's allotment holders).

Preston PC wished to know how well the park-&-ride for the vintage fire engine rally went. The next big test would be the motor-cycle rally. Why was the grassed area round Park View taped off but not that at Chestnut Road, which suffered indiscriminate parking?

There were complaints that the attitude of some officers of SBC at the public meeting in Preston Hall towards the end of the 2005 events season was officious.

Some forms of development of the River would be opposed. The banks were washing away. Use of the River needed to be policed very well – there had been drownings and there was an eddy. Security would be a problem for any boats kept overnight.

¹ In evidence provided by Stockton Borough Council's Park & Countryside Ranger service, Committee was advised that Ivy is not responsible for harming trees

² Stockton Borough Council's Ranger service also advised Committee that dead trees were not replaced in areas where good management requires a lower density of tree coverage.

A fence where Quarry Wood fell steeply into the River was requested, in the interests of public safety”

Egglescliffe Parish Council was invited to attend a meeting of the Select Committee on 17th August to provide evidence on issues relating to the impact of Park and Hall usage of the local community. Some of the following were identified:

- Facilities for young people need improving
- Drainage in the field is poor and results in limited use of the parkland
- Cycle paths and access for people using wheelchairs needs to be addressed. It was suggested that cyclists visiting the Park from the south could avoid the length of cycle lane on the carriageway of Yarm Road if there were an advisory cycle route via the Quarry Road entrance. Wheelchair / electric scooter access to paths with appropriate gradients could be surfaced and signposted – this would also help pushers of pushchairs.
- Footbridge would make a difference to access. Pending the erection of any bridge from Ingleby Barwick, a shorter cycle route from the Jubilee Bridge to Preston Lane could be considered. Abolition of admission charge should be considered
- Anti social behaviour has been a problem and should be addressed

Key Findings Community Issues

The Committee find that collection pieces should be taken into the community, perhaps via the following:

- Loan boxes being created for use in schools/ community groups
- Temporary exhibitions to go into doctors' surgeries/libraries/council buildings/community centres/The Forum. Access issues exist for people trying to reach Preston from Billingham, for example.
- Pieces of civic significance to be placed in the Town Hall/ Municipal Buildings

Committee also find that:

- Events impact on residents on both sides of the river (e.g. noise) needs to be considered via regular engaging and information sharing with local homes. This needs to be balanced, though, with the recognition that the park is there to be enjoyed by all residents of the Borough and beyond.
- Park management group meets and communication is better than it was but not perfect.
- Committee support the events framework as a general guide rather than being overly prescriptive.

12.0 SITE VISIT – MIDDLESBROUGH MUSEUMS

- 12.1 Committee undertook a site visit to the Dorman and Captain Cook Museums on 30 August in order to undertake a comparative exercise. Captain Cook Museum was considered a useful comparator, being a museum set in a Park. Dorman Museum has recently been redeveloped. Costs for the re-development are set out below:

DORMAN MUSEUM DEVELOPMENTS

PHASE 1

Start date March 2000

Build completion date February 2001

Fit out completion July 2001

Funding regime:

- £764k Middlesbrough Council
- £400k Heritage Lottery Fund
- £200k ERDF
- £30k Northern Electric
- £20k British Steel

Total budget £1.85m

PHASE 2

Start date March 2001

Build completion September 2001

Fit out completion June 2002

Funding regime:

- £264k ONE
- £336k Middlesbrough Council
- £350k Heritage Lottery Fund

Total budget £950k

13.0 OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 13.1 During the course of the review, the Committee received a number of comments and complaints relating to operational issues concerning aspects of the Hall & Park.
- 13.2 Committee agreed to note the issues and forward them to the relevant department for action. A list of these issues is attached at **Appendix 5**

14.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

14.1 The review concerned a number of discretionary services of the Council, none of which the Council is legally obliged to provide. Having considered this, the Committee agree that the services and facilities provided should continue for the following reasons:

- The Museums Service enhances the quality of the lives of the users not only as an Educational facility, but also as a means of enhancing people's appreciation of the history of their own area and how they came to be as they are today
- The Park gives varied opportunities for healthy recreation, relaxation, entertainment and the appreciation of this part of the valley of the lower Tees.
- Improved facilities for the people of the Borough are more likely to attract tourists from outside of the area, boosting the local economy.

14.2 Committee conclude that a number of alterations to the provision of services are required to ensure that the Hall and Park achieve their potential as a broadly based public amenity and facility of historical significance. The overall conclusion of the Committee, supported by many people's comments, was that the Park, Hall and Museums were Council facilities which had been allowed to drift along. Although there had been no major decisions to withdraw anything, there had been few initiatives to improve the offer. The general impression of gradual neglect was often summed up during the review in the word "tired".

Recommendations

1. A Park and Museum Master plan to be produced, with consideration given to the inclusion of the following issues:

- Publicity & review of all literature for the all activities relating to the Park and Museum
- State and condition of all of the buildings
- DDA compliance throughout the Hall and Park
- Improvement of signage throughout the Park and Museum, to include information for disabled people and people whose first language is not English
- Improvement of the layout of collections and exhibitions, to achieve a more coherent experience, and to provide space for temporary exhibitions and a dedicated Education Suite

- Collections should be rationalised to focus on local history and stories of Stockton, in particular:
 - Railway
 - Shipping/Shipbuilding/River
 - Sheraton
 - Walker
 - ICI and the chemical industry
 - Stockton High Street
 - Issues relating to the Spence Bequest - the armoury should be displayed properly or not at all. If the armoury is to be displayed, suggestions outlined in the Egeria study to be considered
 - Issues relating to the Clephan Bequest – review of the location of the Dice Players and maximise opportunities from possible loaning/swapping with galleries/museums.
 - Museum Shop – re-target stock-lines at adults in order to maximise profit.
 - Review Wedding Strategy to explore possible income generation
 - Grounds Maintenance, including review of land usage and maintenance issues
 - Access issues (car parking, possible use of traffic lights & mini roundabout to alleviate traffic problems, park and ride, public transport, cycle paths)
 - Anti-social behaviour and park security and safety issues
 - Possible uses of the river, including a bridge from Ingleby Barwick
 - Internal transport throughout the park
 - How Stockton’s history (Railway) might be reflected and represented in the park.
 - The future of the café and catering arrangements (in consultation with Park users)
 - Aviary, menagerie and animal care and display issues
- 2. Greater collaboration between the Museum Service, Events Team and various community settings (Community Centres, Libraries, Schools, etc)**
- 3. Include neighbourhood representatives on Park Management Group to ensure:**
- Greater engagement with local communities to produce a fair and flexible activities framework
 - Improve communication between service managers and the local communities.

Further Strategic Issues

Following analysis of all of the issues outlined in the body of the report, Committee would also make the following recommendations:

- 4. To retain the current entrance fee until further review. Officers to explore innovative admission packages in connection with events and park-and-ride.**
- 5. Request that CMT review Park and Hall Management with the aim of providing a more coherent and ‘joined-up’ approach to working.**

Appendix 1

Scope and Project Plan

Scrutiny Chair/Project Director: Cllr J Fletcher	Contact details: 01642 787652 John.fletcher@stockton.gov.uk
Scrutiny Officer/Project Manager: Sarah Connolly	Contact details: 01642 528159 Sarah.connolly@stockton.gov.uk
Lead Service Officer: Reuben Kench, Head of Arts & Culture	Contact details: 01642 527039 Reuben.kench@stockton.gov.uk
1. Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?	
<p>Children and Young People: Enjoy and achieve: Increase the range of accessible culture/leisure and sporting activities available for children and young people.</p> <p>Healthier Communities and Adults: Extend the range and quality of opportunities for people to experience culture and leisure</p> <p>Healthier Communities and adults: Improve libraries and museums services</p>	
2. What are the main issues?	
<p>To inform Council policy on redevelopment of Preston Hall & Park Re-orientation of museum service in line with the Museum Strategy</p>	
3. The Thematic Select Committee's overall AIM in doing this work is:	
<p>Ensuring facilities are developed appropriately as a broadly based public amenity and facility of historical significance.</p>	
4. The main OBJECTIVES are:	
<p>Set the main items for consideration in strategy master plan & policy framework within which park is developed.</p>	
5. The possible OUTPUTS (changes in service delivery) are:	
<p>Policy steer on issues relating to : Competing demands for space; more joined up thinking and working; greater liaison with local community & park users</p>	
6. The desirable OUTCOMES (benefits to the community) are:	

Fullest range of people enjoying the park, with no detrimental impact on the residents adjacent to the park. Maximising opportunities for residents and visitors.

7. What specific value can scrutiny add to this topic?

Provides a cross disciplinary view , whilst appreciating the needs of ‘ordinary’ residents and park users. Can take a long term view for development, and appreciate the sense of history of the hall & park.

8. Whom will the panel be trying to influence as part of their work?

SBC, British Waterways, RDA, Tees Valley Partnership, HLF, English Heritage, CPRA, DCMS, NEMLAC

9. Duration of enquiry?

6 months

10. What category does the review fall into?

Policy Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
External Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
Holding Executive to Account	<input type="checkbox"/>		

11. Extra Resources needed? Who is the nominated Democratic Services Officer?

Tanya Harrison (DSO). Extra resources to be confirmed.

12. What secondary/existing information do we need? (include here background information, existing reports, updated reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.)

**Casella-Sanger Report, Upstream report, Local Plan, Tees Navigation Strategy, Legal info on restrictions, Spense Bequest, Building Conditions Report, Summary of Collections, Museum Strategy, Valuation on collection items, Regional Cultural Strategy, Tees Valley Cultural Strategy, Open Space/Parks Strategy, Marriages/Weddings Strategy, Transport Policy & Strategy, Hashagen-Reynolds Report
Framework of events in Preston Park, Events List, Financial Report**

13. What primary/new evidence/information do we need?

Best Practice (to be identified), Viewpoint survey results, Corporate Communications Strategy, User Profile, accessibility considerations

14. In what form do you want this evidence/information to be presented? (short presentation, executive summary, e-mail brief)

**Introductory presentation by Reuben Kench
Briefing notes on relevant parts of strategies**

15. Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member/portfolio holder, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)

Head of Arts & Culture, Parks & Countryside Officer, Events Manager/team, Rangers, Cabinet Member, Friends of the Park, Preston Parish Council, Ward Councillors, all Members of the Council

16. What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence? (for exact questioning framework, see form ?)

See 12 & 13

17. Where will evidence be taken and how?

See 14 & 19

18. Would the investigation benefit from the co-option of an 'expert' or service user, for the duration of the major review? If so, who?

Not Applicable

19. What other processes can we use to feed into the review? (site visits/observations, face-to-face questioning, telephones survey, written questionnaire, etc.)

Site visit, mystery shopping, questionnaires

20. In what ways can we involve the public and at what stages? (consider whole range of consultative mechanisms, local committees and local ward mechanisms)

Focus groups, Questionnaires, Small Group Visits

22. How will tasks be divided between Members/Officers? (Please give name of each member or officer or other stakeholder when detailing each task)

**Members – to question witnesses and agree report and recommendations
 Scrutiny Officer – to co-ordinate the review, provide independent research and develop briefing papers and final report.**

23. How will we monitor progress and measure the success of the review?

**Project planning
 Monitoring report
 Success of project development funding application to HLF**

Preston Hall & Park/Museum Strategy - Project Plan

Article I. <u>Scrutiny Chair/Project Director</u> Cllr John Fletcher		Article II. <u>Contact Details</u> 01642 787652 John.fletcher@stockton.gov.uk	
Article III. <u>Scrutiny Officer/ Project Manager</u> Sarah Connolly		Article IV. <u>Contact Details</u> 01642 528159 Sarah.connolly@stockton.gov.uk	
Article V. <u>Departmental Link Officer</u> Reuben Kench, Head of Arts & Culture		Article VI. <u>Contact Details</u> 01642 527039 Reuben.kench@stockton.gov.uk	
Article VII. <u>KEY TASK</u>	Article VIII. <u>DETAILS/ACTIVITIES</u>	Article IX. <u>TIMESCALES</u>	RESPONSIBILITY
Section 9.01 <i>Section 9.02 Scoping of Review</i>	Section 9.03 <i>Section 9.04 Undertake scoping meeting</i> Scope to be agreed by ESC & ALCS Section 9.05	2 weeks	Chair, Vice Chair, Head of Arts and Culture, Cabinet Member, Scrutiny Officer, all Members of ALCS
Agree Project Plan	Agree initial Project Plan	1 meeting	All Members of ALCS
Obtaining Evidence:			
Written evidence	➤ Reports outlined at section 12 of scope to be made available to all Members of the Committee	Available on the intranet from 24 April 2006 (hard copies available on request)	Scrutiny Officer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Receive written evidence from Head of Arts & Culture, Parks & Countryside Officer, Events Manager & Team, Finance Manager, Heritage Lottery Fund 	ALCS meetings June & July	All Members of ALCS
Oral Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To be received from the following: <p>Head of Arts and Culture</p> <p>Parks & Countryside Officer / Rangers</p> <p>Head of Property Development / Highways</p> <p>Ground Maintenance / Events / Egglecliffe parish Council</p> <p>Group work – Findings and Recommendations</p>	<p>ALCS Meeting – June 7th 2006</p> <p>ALCS Meeting – July 12th 2006</p> <p>ALCS Meeting – July 26th 2006</p> <p>ALCS Meeting - August 17th 2006</p> <p>ALCS Meeting – August 30th 2006</p>	<p>All Members of ALCS</p> <p>All Members of ALCS</p> <p>All Members of ALCS</p> <p>All Members of ALCS</p>

		ALCS Meetings – 14 th September 2006	
	Corporate Director/ Cabinet Member/ Finance Manager		
Other type of evidence (e.g. questionnaire, focus group, public meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Site Visit to Preston Park & Museum ➤ Small group visit to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model Railway Preston-on-Tees Parish Council Tees Forest ➤ Tees Barrage ➤ Tees Valley Wildlife Trust ➤ Focus Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Group 3 Adult Groups ➤ Site visit – other museums 	<p>ALCS Meeting – June 7th 2006</p> <p>12th July 2006 @ 7.30pm</p> <p>10th July 2006 @ 7.00pm</p> <p>26th June 2006 @ 2.30pm</p> <p>TBA</p> <p>10 July 2006 @ 4.00pm 11th & 12th July - a.m & p.m</p> <p>30th August 2006 – Middlesbrough Museums</p>	<p>All Members of ALCS</p> <p>Small Groups of the Committee (TBA – 7th June)</p> <p>Members of the Committee / Scrutiny Officer</p> <p>Members of the Committee and Democratic Services staff</p> <p>Members of the Committee</p>

	<p>➤ Mystery shopping trips by public transport</p>	<p>June/July. Findings reported back to Committee in July.</p>	
<p>Publicity of Review</p>	<p>Issue a press release at beginning of review to inform public.</p> <p>information on internet & intranet/ staff newsletter</p> <p>Issues a press release at end of review to outlined findings and recommendations</p>	<p>Following initial ALCS meeting in May.</p> <p>2006</p>	<p>ALCS Chair/Scrutiny Officer</p> <p>Scrutiny Officer</p> <p>ALCS Chair/Scrutiny Officer</p>
<p>Analysis of evidence/information</p>	<p>Brief analysis at end of each ALCS meeting</p> <p>Focus Group/Small Group Visits Feedback</p> <p>Compile all of evidence collected during review for analysis – briefing paper</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout review</p> <p>ALCS Groupwork Meeting – 30th August 2006</p> <p>ALCS Meeting – 30th August 2006</p>	<p>All Members of ALCS</p> <p>All Members of ALCS</p> <p>Scrutiny Officer</p>
<p>Members decide recommendations and findings</p>	<p>Members of the Adults, Leisure and Culture Select Committee to decide findings and recommendations of review</p>	<p>ALCS Meeting – 30^h August 2006</p> <p>ALCS Meeting – 14th September 2006</p>	<p>All Members of ALCS</p>

Initial considerations of draft report.	Circulate draft report to Members for consideration. Consider draft report	Circulate 20 Sep 2006	All Members of ALCS
Final agreement of draft report	Deadline for all Committee Member comments	27th September 2006, via e-mail	All Members of ALCS
Circulate draft report to stakeholders & appropriate Cabinet Members	Circulate draft report for information and in order to identify any factual inaccuracies	27th September 2006	Scrutiny Officer
Final agreement	Endorsement by Adults, Leisure & Culture Select Committee of any factual amendments suggested	ALCS Meeting – 11 October 2006	All Members of ALCS
Report to Cabinet	Present final report with recommendations and findings	Cabinet Meeting – Thursday 2 November 2006	Select Committee Chair/Vice-Chair

Appendix 2

Preston Hall Winter Garden Project

Background: Preston Hall Park and Museum is a major visitor venue for the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees, the Tees Valley, and wider afield, which both provides an established service and also offers great development potential. The hall, built originally in 1825 and further altered in the 1880s, houses the Borough's main registered museum (with 72,697 visitors in 2005-6). The Winter Garden Conservatory, an intrinsic part of the grade II listed building, was added in the 1880s. However, due to structural problems, the Conservatory has been closed to visitors since 2000. It needs substantial structural work, refurbishment, re-glazing and interpretation, at a cost of nearly £309,000. A bid for £208,957 (68% of project costs) was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund in March 2006, considered at the September 2006 committee, and an award of £208,500 was made to the Project. Work will take place in Spring 2007, with anticipated completion in Autumn 2007.

The reinvigoration of Preston Park and Hall is the Council's highest priority heritage project. This larger project will be the subject of future, phased bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other grant bodies. The Winter Gardens Conservatory, an important part of the heritage asset, is the current development priority, for which funding has now been secured.

What the Winter Garden project is:

The project will comprise carrying out urgent and necessary work to the fabric of the Winter Garden, creating and maintaining a historical plant display, and a programme of interpretation – including public events, activities and displays – to help people understand, participate in, and enjoy this heritage.

The costs include materials and labour and will include stonework and metal repairs; repair, replacement, and redecoration of wood components; re-glazing as appropriate; repairs to door, windows, leading and pipework, and some electrical work (a full schedule of works has been produced).

Additionally, costs include creating and maintaining an appropriately researched plant display, as well as creating a programme of temporary themed plant exhibits (over five years) to provide constant interest, and a reason to re-visit. A programme of themed and targeted activities (over eighteen months after completion) is also planned, for all ages and across the community, to offer something for everyone to see and do in the Winter Garden. Access to the area will be free for all park users. (*Further detail is provided in the access & learning policy and plan and other supporting information*).

Project costs:

The costs of the project, including conservation, interpretation and activities are as follows: (*revised September 2006*)

CAPITAL:	214,728 Total
Works to Winter Garden (inc Underpinning 5K)	175,600
Professional fees	24,128
Materials (plants)	10,000
Non cash & volunteer labour	5,000
REVENUE (ACTIVITY):	75,050 Total
Staff costs (complete +18 months) (inc recruitment £750 & overheads @23% = 5,046)	27,735

Freelance fees/short term	4,440
Design/write/print promotional/ educational materials	7,640
Training (staff & volunteers)	995
Profess fees	900
Travel – staff & volunteers	890
Evaluation	320
Stationery	400
Non cash & volunteer labour	7,500
Other activity (project specific materials)	24,320
OTHER COSTS: Contingency	18,920 Total
Capital	
Repair & conservation @ 8%	14,050
Professional fees @ 6%	1,445
<i>Section 9.06 Activity</i>	
Staff costs @ 6%	1,310
Recruitment @ 10%	75
Project specific costs	535
Professional fees @ 6%	55
Other activity costs @ 6%	1,450
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS:	308,698

The bid, as submitted, March 2006:

The bid comprises:

- Application form
- Supporting information
- Conservation management statement
- Access & learning policy and plan
- Business Plan
- Planting details

carried into effect.

ORDER that it be referred to the Taxing Master to tax as between solicitor and client the costs of the Plaintiffs and of the Defendants from the foot of the last taxation down to and including this order including in the said costs any charges and expenses properly incurred by the Plaintiffs in the administration of the said estate and any costs incurred by the Plaintiffs or the Defendants in the preparation of the said scheme.

ORDER that the Plaintiffs do retain and pay costs when taxed out of the estate of the testator.

ORDER that the Plaintiffs do deliver the said collection of arms and antiques and articles of vertu to and do pay and transfer the residue of the estate of the testator to the Defendants the Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees as trustees of the said scheme.

LIBERTY to apply.

SCHEDULE

SCHEME for the administration of the Charity
founded by the Will of Gilbert Ormerod Spence who
died on the 28th November 1925.

- I. The bequest contained in the Will of Gilbert Thomas Ormerod Spence of his collection of arms and antiques and articles de vertu (which collection is hereinafter referred to as "the Spence collection") to the Corporation of Stockton-on-Tees and the charitable trust therein contained to apply his residuary estate in the purchase of land at Stockton-on-Tees and in or towards the erection thereon of a Public Hall to be presented to the said Corporation and to be used by the Corporation for such purposes as it may consider desirable shall be administered and managed subject to and in conformity with the provisions of this Scheme.
2. The trustees hereof shall be The Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees (hereinafter called "the Corporation")
3. The Corporation shall forthwith erect a building on a piece of land in Church Row in the said Borough of Stockton-on-Tees which said piece of land is now vested in the Corporation for an estate in fee simple. The said

building shall contain a public hall with seating accommodation for at least 1,500 persons suitable for concerts public meetings stage plays cinema performances and the like. The said building shall also contain such room or rooms as are hereinafter mentioned for the accommodation of the Spence collection. Subject as aforesaid the said building shall be constructed in such manner and shall contain such accessories rooms and offices as the Corporation may in their discretion think fit.

4. The whole of the residue of the estate of the said Gilbert Ormerod Spence paid or transferred to the Corporation shall be applied by the Corporation towards the cost of the erection of the said building.
5. The said building shall be known as "the Spence Memorial Hall".
6. The Corporation shall erect in a suitable and conspicuous place in the said building (so as to be plainly visible to all persons using the principal entrance thereof) a tablet recording that the erection of the Spence Memorial Hall was rendered possible through the munificent gift contained in the will of Gilbert Ormerod Spence who made such gift to perpetuate the

memory of his father Herbert Grant Spence and his mother Dorothea Spence and recording such other matters relating to the said Gilbert Ormerod Spence and his parents as may be considered by the Corporation to be suitable.

7. The said building shall contain one or more rooms suitable for and such rooms shall be permanently used for the exhibition and display of the Spence Collection. The Corporation shall properly furnish and equip such rooms for the purpose aforesaid. The said room or rooms shall be of sufficient size to accommodate any additions to the said collection which might reasonably be expected to be made from time to time. The Corporation shall erect in a proper and conspicuous position in each of such rooms a tablet recording in suitable terms that the said Collection was being exhibited in accordance with the bequest contained in the will of the said Gilbert Ormerod Spence. The Corporation shall preserve any available information as to the life of the said Gilbert Ormerod Spence and his parents which would serve to perpetuate their memory and such information together with a copy of the will of the said Gilbert Ormerod Spence and of this scheme shall always be open for the inspection of any persons viewing the

Spence collection. The said Spence collection shall be open to the inspection of the public subject to such reasonable restrictions and regulations as may be imposed by the Corporation.

8. The income from the said building after defraying the costs of repairs, insurance and all other charges payable in respect thereof shall be applied in insuring the spence collection against loss or damages by fire and in the cost of displaying it for the inspection of the public and subject thereto the said building and the income thereof shall be used and applied by the Corporation for such public purposes in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees as the Corporation shall from time to time determine.

9. Provided always that any regulations made or any use declared by the Corporation for the use of the said building or as regards the public inspection of the Spence collection shall be made and declared in such terms that if any specified provision or exemption be made in favour of the residents in Stockton-on-Tees the same shall also be expressly extended to and in favour of and shall also include the residents in Thornaby-on-Tees.

I936 S. 3988

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CHANCERY DIVISION

MR. JUSTICE SIMONDS.

RE G.O. SPENCE Deceased.

BARCLAYS BANK LIMITED

- v -

THE MAYOR ALDERMEN & BURGESSES
OF THE BOROUGH OF STOCKTON-ON-
TEES and OTHERS.

MINUTES of ORDER

fos.22.

Bell, Brodrick & Gray,

63, Queen Victoria Street,

LONDON E.C.4.

- 1 -

A SCHEME FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHARITY
FOUNDED BY THE WILL OF GILBERT ORMEROD SPENCE
WHO DIED ON THE 28TH NOVEMBER, 1925.

1. The bequest contained in the Will of Gilbert Ormerod Spence of his collection of arms and antiques and articles de vertu (which collection is hereinafter referred to as "the Spence Collection") to the Corporation of Stockton-on-Tees and the charitable trust therein contained to apply his residuary estate in the purchase of land at Stockton-on-Tees and in or towards the erection thereon of a Public Hall to be presented to the said Corporation and to be used by the Corporation for such purposes as it may consider desirable shall be administered and managed subject to and in conformity with the provisions of this Scheme.
2. Barclays Bank Limited (the trustee of the said Will) shall as soon as may conveniently be possible (a) transfer or deliver the Spence Collection to the Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees (hereinafter called "the Corporation"); and (b) pay or transfer the whole of the balance of the residue of the estate of the said Gilbert Ormerod Spence together with all interest accrued thereon after payment thereof of the costs ordered to be paid by the order approving this scheme (which balance of residue and accrued interest is hereinafter referred to as "the Spence Fund"). to the Official Custodian for Charities.
3. The Spence Collection or such part or parts thereof as the Corporation shall from time to time think fit shall be displayed in a room or rooms in the Preston Hall Museum and Art Gallery owned by the Corporation (in which said museum and art gallery the said collection has been displayed continuously since June 1953). The said room or rooms shall have a total area of not less than 450 square feet and shall be known as "the Spence Memorial Rooms" and the Corporation shall erect in a suitable and conspicuous place in or near to the entrance to the said room or rooms so as to be plainly visible to all persons using the entrance thereto a tablet recording the munificent gift contained in the Will of Gilbert Ormerod Spence who made such gift to perpetuate the memory of his father Herbert Grant Spence and his mother

Dorothea Spence and recording such other matters relating to the said Gilbert Ormerod Spence and his parents as may be considered by the Corporation to be suitable and that the said collection was being exhibited in accordance with the bequest contained in the said Will. The said room or rooms shall be used permanently for the exhibition and display of the Spence Collection and the Corporation shall ensure that the said room or rooms are properly furnished and equipped for that purpose. Any part or parts of the Spence Collection not displayed in the said room or rooms or loaned by the Corporation in exercise of the power hereinafter contained shall at the request of any person or persons desiring to inspect the same be made available for the inspection of such person or persons. A copy of the Will of the said Gilbert Ormerod Spence and of this scheme shall always be available for the inspection of any persons viewing the Spence Collection.

4. The Spence Collection shall be open to the inspection of the public subject to such reasonable charges for admission and such other restrictions and regulations as the Corporation may deem it desirable to impose. The income from the said charges for admission (if any) after defraying the costs of repairs, insurance and all other charges payable in respect of the said room shall be applied in insuring the Spence Collection against loss or damage by fire and in the cost of displaying it for the inspection of the public and subject thereto the income thereof shall be used and applied by the Corporation for such public purposes (being charitable purposes) in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees as the Corporation shall from time to time determine

5. The Corporation shall have power from time to time in its absolute discretion to loan any part or parts of the Spence Collection which shall not be required by it for display in the Preston Hall Museum and Art Gallery as aforesaid to any museum or other charitable institution or society upon such terms and for such period or periods as the Corporation shall think fit

6. (1) Until the Corporation shall erect or secure the erection of the public hall hereinafter mentioned the income of the Spence Fund shall be paid to the Corporation and shall be applied by it for such public purposes (being charitable purposes) in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees as the Corporation shall from time to time determine

(2) As and when the Corporation shall erect or secure the erection of the said public hall the capital of the Spence Fund shall be paid to the Corporation and shall be applied by it in or towards defraying the cost of the acquisition (if necessary) of a suitable piece of land in the said Borough of Stockton-on-Tees and of the erection and completion of the said public hall thereon

7. The said public hall shall have seating accommodation for at least 1000 persons suitable for concerts public meetings stage plays cinema performances and the like. The Corporation will erect in a suitable and conspicuous place either at the entrance to or within the said public hall a tablet recording the fact that the said Gilbert Ormerod Spence contributed part of the cost of the said public hall. Subject as aforesaid the said public hall shall be constructed in such manner and shall contain such accessories rooms and offices as the Corporation may in their discretion think fit

8. Provided always that any regulations made or any use declared by the Corporation for the use of the said public hall or as regards the public inspection of the Spence Collection shall be made and declared in such terms that if any specified provisions or exemption be made in favour of the residents in Stockton-on-Tees the same shall also be expressly extended to and in favour of and shall also include the residents in Thornaby-on-Tees.

Re-settled as amended in red
(Sgd) F.M. Ferris

Appendix 4

Preston Park Stockton on Tees Borough Council Green Flag Award 2006/2007

Status - Fail

Overall band score 45-54

1) Desk Assessment Feedback

Band score 10-14

Assessment Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
Presentation of management plan	<p>The stated proposal to revise and update the plan annually will help to ensure that this becomes a valuable working document.</p> <p>Collaborative approach to development of the plan.</p>	<p>Consider the timing of annual updates – May update (P11) seems late to allow consideration, planning and inclusion of updates and proposals which would be effected within the ‘growing year’ (for example marketing information) and may make submission of the ‘current version’ difficult.</p> <p>Although the collaborative approach is a strength in ensuring involvement of various stakeholders, this may result in apparent discrepancies within the resulting document. For example P13 suggests visitor numbers estimated at ½ million whilst P29 suggests 1 million – 100% variation.</p> <p>It is sometimes not very clear what the relationships of organizations and people are to Stockton BC and whether areas of the park are under Authority management, volunteer and club management or being run by private individuals and companies.</p>
Health, safety and security	<p>A wide range of activities are provided within the park.</p> <p>Insurance and other documentation of events organisers are checked by the Countryside Section before events take place.</p> <p>Playground inspections are carried out daily (Monday to Friday) and a playground inspection sheet is included within the appendices.</p> <p>Some staff are trained in water rescue and first aid however there is no information provided to visitors on how to access these staff.</p>	<p>Although a range of activities are available, there is little detail provided on how safety issues are managed.</p> <p>There are currently no bye-laws relating to alcohol use in the park though police still have confiscation rights.</p> <p>There is a security patrol contract with ENSec Ltd providing two guards to patrol the park from 7pm to midnight however there is no detail on how security is provided at all other times. It may be assumed that this is covered by the Ranger Service however as little detail is given regarding this provision, this may</p>

Assessment Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
		<p>not be the case.</p> <p>Land drainage is identified as a major problem on this site however there is no suggestion that solutions have been considered. P51 6.5</p> <p>There is no mention of risk assessments within the management plan – this should be addressed urgently.</p> <p>The policy of not providing rescue belts by the riverside in case these encourage swimming is questionable. The judges felt that this policy should be reviewed with advice sought from the HSE.</p>
Maintenance of equipment, buildings and landscape	<p>Review of park signage is to be undertaken as part of Development Plan however this is not yet complete.</p> <p>Specifications provided for some aspects of works, for example P 46 Landscape 6.1 are appropriate for the site.</p> <p>There is a Woodland Management Plan for this site.</p>	<p>Management responsibilities for aspects and areas of the park are provided however little detail is given on how the management works are actually identified, programmed, delivered and monitored – e.g. P49 6.2.5 Highway and Path Maintenance.</p>
Litter, cleanliness, and vandalism	<p>On site litter picker from end March to end October.</p> <p>All bins emptied daily.</p> <p>Animal enforcement team patrol park and can issue fines.</p>	<p>Extend information to address issues covered by Green Flag Award criteria.</p>
Environmental sustainability	<p>Clear policy statements on pesticide and peat usage. P47 6.1.12</p> <p>Recycling collection point situated in the car park.</p> <p>Green Waste is recycled via Yarm Road depot.</p>	<p>Consider opportunities to recycle green waste on-site.</p>
Conservation of heritage and nature	<p>The Butterfly Garden appears to have considerable potential to educate and stimulate interest in habitat development for invertebrates.</p> <p>There is a Woodland Management Plan for this site.</p>	<p>The significance of the Railway Bed is noted and the management requirements stated. However there is no ‘plan’ to show the programming for the works or for the renewal of the old interpretation and signage.</p> <p>The loss of mature Beech trees in the Quarry wood area through unreasonable mountain bike usage does not appear to have been effectively addressed. P68 9.5</p> <p>Extend information to address all aspects within Green Flag Award criteria and include information setting the historical context of the park and features.</p>
Community involvement	<p>Friends of Preston Hall Museum and Park.</p> <p>Friends of Local Nature Reserves – including consultation on Quarry Wood Management Plan.</p> <p>Involvement of volunteers and work</p>	<p>(On the Field Visit, the judges were told that this group are now disbanded)</p> <p>Consider including further information on this work – indication numbers involved and benefit to park and to people.</p>

Assessment Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
	<p>placements and of NACRO and probation service clients is indicated.</p> <p>Students of local college do work placements on animal management. Educational visits and activities can be booked with a number of services through the park.</p>	<p>As services offering activities run autonomously, consider whether a central system of booking might make accessing these services more straightforward.</p> <p>No information provided on customer use and non-use surveys, usage by minority groups, satisfaction surveys etc.</p>
<p>Marketing Strategy</p>	<p>Evidence of some market research – including a 2004 Viewpoint Survey seeking opinions of youths on the park.</p> <p>Leaflet promoting park has been designed by Museums Service and Countryside Services (this should be included with the Management Plan).</p> <p>Park is included within a variety of promotional materials and these are available both within the park and at centres throughout the North East – and via Internet.</p> <p>Events and activities are arranged within the walled garden by Stockton Arts Service in partnership with Stockton Museum Service and other events are organized within the park by various stakeholder groups. The Countryside Section manages a bookings system for all park events and checks insurances and necessary documentation.</p>	<p>Provide information on the results of consultation and surveys and indicate where this information has been used towards the positive development of the park.</p> <p>P 21 3.3.4 Seek ways to carry out park user surveys to collect accurate user data – possibly involve Friends in an initial project?</p> <p>Consider developing more accurate figures of park usage and calculating the economic value that the park adds as this can be valuable data in supporting development proposals and obtaining resources.</p> <p>If the need for road signs in neighbouring highways authority areas is considered to be of high importance (P24 4.1.7) seek support within the Borough to promote the proposal and identify possible reciprocating arrangements which might allow the signs to be installed.</p> <p>4.3.1.1 & 4.4 Consider how best to ensure ‘corporate image’ and co-ordination in media coverage when each service is tasked with developing their own articles to promote their services. Although the PR section has content control, the current arrangements could lead to contradictions and lack of cohesion which may damage the image of the venue. Consider whether submitting releases through a co-ordinator may help.</p>
<p>Overall management</p>	<p>Bi Monthly Park Management Steering Group meeting made up of large number of members and chaired by Countryside Recreation Officer may allow wide range of issues to be discussed and address many operational matters.</p>	<p>P 11. Given that a decision was made in 1998 to write a Development Plan for Preston Park, why was it only started in 2005 (P 16) and why has this not yet been completed, after almost 8 years – surely this omission hampers management of this park?</p> <p>The lack of an over-arching manager may result in weaknesses in co-ordination and focus.</p> <p>Not clear how the revenue budget is allocated to ensure effective spend and prioritisation of works – This does not</p>

Assessment Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
		<p>appear to be within the remit of the Park Management Steering Group.</p> <p>Some evidence of monitoring quality standards is indicated, P 21 3.3.5 however the primary use of complaints and visitor feedback seems limited and provides information mainly from those users who feel strongly enough to make 'formal active feedback'. Consider the possibility that this approach emphasises the complainers rather than the satisfied users (due to the tendency of people to complain but less so to complement).</p> <p>Café lease (5 years) has been extended under old terms as renewal, due in April 2005, has not yet been agreed. A decision on the future of this provision should be made within the development planning process and included within the management plan.</p> <p>No single contact point is provided regarding the plan or the park.</p>

2) Field Assessment Feedback

Band score 30-39

Assessment Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
A welcoming place	<p>Park is generally well signed from key roads around Stockton.</p> <p>The main entrance is signed from the road and the main parking is to the right inside the entrance. A basic layout sign is provided.</p> <p>There are signs displayed at the car parks indicating opening and closing times and providing contact numbers for when the park is closed.</p> <p>Once inside the park, many 'features' are clearly visible (Museum, Animal Pens, Café, Butterfly World) and the open nature of the landscape means that sightlines in this area are good.</p> <p>Electric scooters are available for rental by arrangement and it is proposed that scooters will shortly be permanently situated in the park.</p> <p>The park caters for a wide range of users having features such as a museum (small entry fee), animal enclosures, butterfly garden, wooded areas, crazy golf and miniature railway as well as large expanses of amenity grass on which events may be held.</p>	<p>Check signs on A66 towards Middlesbrough as no sign was seen at this exit (though one is present on the exit in the opposite direction).</p> <p>Vegetation around the park entrance screens much of the park from the road – consider development of appropriate sightlines into the park.</p> <p>Direction marking and traffic control within the site and car park seemed unclear and vehicle parking was not being managed, with cars in coach spaces and cars using the overflow car park when the main park was still not full. At some points pedestrians and public vehicles are not adequately segregated.</p> <p>Signage within the park is limited and signs are positioned atop high posts, with small font sizes and pictograms making reading difficult. Signs are not appropriate for wheelchair users.</p> <p>Paths around the park are appropriately located however signage is limited and sometimes ineffective and some paths are unsuitable for wheelchair users. For example within the Crazy Golf area, the paving surface and design is not wheelchair</p>

Assessment Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
		<p>accessible.</p> <p>The Café has a wheelchair ramp into the front, but none out from the back (into the toddler play area). Likewise the density of seating and tables in the Café would make wheelchair movement very difficult.</p> <p>Although the Café is leased to a private caterer, DDA requirements should be fully addressed.</p> <p>P24 4.1.5 Consider how to ensure uniformity of interpretation and ‘corporate image’ within park when each service is tasked with developing their own interpretation independently.</p>
<p>Healthy, safe and secure</p>	<p>A range of play equipment is available within three play areas however some of the equipment appears dated and maintenance of the play-bark beneath some equipment seems inadequate.</p> <p>The park provides a good facility for a wide range of self-managed activities, including walking, jogging and cycling. An orientation trail is provided, though the judges felt that more could have been done to encourage activities.</p>	<p>There are currently no bye-laws relating to alcohol use in the park though police still have confiscation rights.</p> <p>The single toilet block on site was inadequate. Stainless Steel units are appropriate however these were in a dirty condition. Toilet paper was available. Consideration should be given to the management and to the monitoring of the facilities.</p> <p>In the early evening the central toilet facilities had been locked yet the park was still busy with users and it was well before the car-park closing time.</p> <p>It was not possible to access the accessible toilet facilities as they are on a key-system to which the judges were not given access however judges were informed that these facilities were better maintained than the open toilets as they did not get as much usage!</p> <p>First Aid facilities are available within the museum however museum staff reported that park users often go to the Café in the event of an accident. As the Café is privately run, consider whether this arrangement is appropriate and effective.</p> <p>Also review signage to ensure clarity of arrangements and adequate cover throughout the day.</p> <p>The park covers a large area with varied local environments. Around the main cluster of activities personal security appeared satisfactory however further from this area, for example along the riverside walks, shrub and undergrowth are overgrown and security could be a concern.</p> <p>The level of full time ‘site specific’ staff seems low and insufficient to provide the cover for security, first aid and general public interaction/assistance which would be valuable during the day whilst still doing</p>

Assessment Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
		<p>the work for which the job titles suggest they were employed. Consider extending staffing levels on site and/or improving communication arrangements between site staff and others.</p> <p>Security Guards patrol the site on Friday and Saturday nights.</p> <p>The management of dogs and their owners on the site should be reassessed as despite the presence of a dog-waste bin at the entrance to the old Stockton Line wooded area, there was a considerable amount of waste along the path. Likewise dogs were observed off-lead in other areas, including Quarry Wood.</p> <p>Most facilities have a ‘run-down’ appearance and are in need of updating or replacement. This includes the play areas, crazy golf, butterfly garden, Winter Garden (for which a funding bid has been submitted) and paths, benches etc around the park.</p>
<p>Clean and well maintained</p>	<p>Litter picker on site permanently from end March to end October. Litter in woodlands is responsibility of the Park Ranger and cleared by ranger and voluntary rangers.</p> <p>Events organizers are required to clear litter associated with their events.</p> <p>On the day of judging there was little litter seen on the site except within the bandstand gardens area where a bin has not been emptied and rubbish was scattered around the bin.</p> <p>Grass-cutting standards high.</p>	<p>Is one person sufficient to cover the site?</p> <p>Grounds maintenance standards varied across the site. The grass-cutting was of a high standard, however other horticultural standards were lower. Within the bandstand gardens there were gaps within beds which required filling and weed control was poor.</p> <p>The wooded areas and along the riverside walks seemed only partly managed, with thinning and pruning required in many areas.</p> <p>The outside butterfly garden was untidy and no interpretation was provided for visitors, indeed no signage to this garden was observed. At a point overhung by trees, the path was littered with various debris, indicating that the area had not been cleaned for a number of days, possibly weeks.</p> <p>At one section judges were told of sculptures which had been created from lopped trees, however epicormic growths (water shoots) had been allowed to cover the ‘art-works’ again indicating low levels of maintenance.</p> <p>Paths and tracks were of variable condition. Building maintenance standards did not seem high as, with the exception of the museum, buildings such as the toilet block, the café and the animal enclosures seemed dated and in need of updating. Also maintenance around enclosures and beside the Butterfly House was poor with many large weeds present. Fencing was broken along the crazy golf area.</p>

Assessment Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
		<p>As with buildings, park equipment – benches bins etc are generally in need of improvement.</p> <p>Close to the animal enclosures is a large aviary building which is a prominent feature within the park, however judges were informed that this building was started in the 1980s but never completed and that when used for birds it proved unsatisfactory and that no other suitable use has been found. It seems surprising and rather disappointing that this construction has not been put to some good use – Perhaps consider adapting to some alternative use such as a climbing wall?</p>
Sustainability	<p>Good recycling collection point of paper, cans, bottles, situated in the car park.</p> <p>Green Waste is recycled via Yarm Road depot.</p>	<p>Consider collecting other items for recycling such as batteries and mobile phones etc and identify educational opportunities in relation to recycling and sustainability.</p> <p>Tree management on the site appeared satisfactory however as aforementioned, general thinning of some areas may be beneficial for user security and sightlines. Within Quarry Woods however the issue of damage caused by bikers to both trees and undergrowth does not appear to be being adequately addressed.</p> <p>There appears to have been very little new tree planting around the site despite a number of trees having been lost.</p>
Conservation and heritage	<p>The Butterfly Garden appears to have considerable potential to educate and stimulate interest in habitat development for invertebrates.</p> <p>Bird and Animal enclosures house a range of native species with the stated intention of increasing understanding and knowledge amongst visitors.</p> <p>The Quarry Wood Local Nature reserve, managed through the Countryside Ranger service provides established woodland habitat for a number of rare species.</p> <p>Fish havens beside the river provide an interesting wildlife habitat.</p>	<p>Interpretation and improved access arrangements should be provided to this area.</p> <p>The visiting judges asked about the woodland management plan however although it was assumed that such a plan ‘must exist’, site staff did not appear to know of its whereabouts or contents.</p>
Community involvement	<p>The Tees Small Gauge Railway group is an active group of enthusiasts involved in the running of the on-site small gauge railway.</p> <p>There appears to be strong community involvement within the museum.</p> <p>There are community volunteering opportunities within the park.</p>	<p>Stockton BC should consider the level of support provided to the group and ensure that this is adequately balanced with the workload that the group is expected to undertake.</p> <p>Also, how are insurance and health and safety risk management arrangements checked by Stockton Borough Council?</p> <p>Judges were informed that the Friends of</p>

Assessment Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
		<p>Preston Hall Museum and Park were no longer meeting. Efforts should be made to reform the group or encouraging the formation of alternative groups to support the development of the park.</p>
<p>Marketing</p>	<p>Preston Park and Museum leaflet is a concise summary of park features, how to get there and how to contact. The park and organized 'nature' events are included within the Countryside events programme. The park is included within the Stockton Events programme and a number of events are organized for the park. The Countryside volunteering leaflet gives contact details for volunteering in the park.</p>	<p>Consider developing educational and informational leaflets for use within the park. There seems little understanding of visitor usage and patterns of use of the park or the events taking place within it. User and non-user surveys are recommended. Consider developing a series of co-ordinated events to make use of the bandstand in the formal garden area.</p>
<p>Management</p>		<p>The judges had concerns over the management of this park and consider that a development plan is urgently required. It was also considered that the lack of a 'park manager' with responsibility for managing and co-ordinating throughout the park results in lack of focus and cohesion. With direction and resources, this already popular park could be rejuvenated into an impressive facility with appeal for all ages and backgrounds.</p>
<p>Additional comments</p>	<p>The stated role of the plan (P11 paragraph 3) appears to contradict paragraph 2 – how can this be an effective tool for development and strategic direction unless it includes an indication, albeit in draft form, of future intentions?</p> <p>Given the range of activities and services within the park the role of a park manager may be to coordinate the 'business of the park', with support from others to manage the development and delivery of clubs and associations, externalised services, publicity, marketing, events and fund-raising, animals and environment, horticultural services, customer services etc. Should the Council decide to employ a single manager the challenge will be to give the authority necessary to make important strategic decisions whilst retaining the support and enthusiasm of those currently managing and decision-making for their own areas of responsibility.</p> <p>Although the Museum Action Plan 2005/6 and Museum Strategy documents within the Appendices appear to be highly informative (with the exception of P129 450 – 455) it is difficult to see their relevance to the Park Management Plan. It would be advisable to seek to condense the contents to include only those elements of documents which are directly relevant to the park and especially that which has significance in relation to the Green Flag Award criteria.</p> <p>The Management Plan is the basis of the Desk Assessment and the applicant's opportunity to describe to the Judges how the park is to be developed and managed both now and in the future. The Green Flag Award criteria for assessment are available for submitting organisations to consider and it is important to make sure that the management plan submitted addresses the criteria as fully and clearly as</p>	

Assessment Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
		<p>possible. Although judges can ask for additional materials prior to or on the day of the main judging visit, it should be bourn in mind that there is often little time to consider such material and that if adequate information is not supplied in the management plan, then the opportunity may be lost. Where documents, such as Woodland Management Plan are referred to but not included, it is highly recommended that the authors of the management plan consider which elements of these documents are relevant to the park and have significance in relation to the assessment criteria and extract the relevant information to include within the management plan. This is important not simply for the 'Green Flag judging' but also to ensure that the management plan contains adequate information in relation to all the aspects of the management of the park.</p>

Appendix 5

Operational Issues

- Facilities for skateboarding would be useful
- Tracing the whereabouts and making display arrangements for the 17th Century plate once displayed in Egglecliffe Parish Church
- Both sets of toilets urgently need attention, in terms of decoration and repairs and maintenance
- Issues relating to fencing backing onto Tees Bank Avenue (currently being examined by Parks & Countryside Officer)
- Litter on the riverbank
- Graffiti on trees
- Cycling in areas where notification shows that it is prohibited
- Camping and bathing in fish havens
- Emergency contact number for traffic/noise problems (resolved by Events Team)
- Inadequate signage to the Northfield car park from Preston Lane at large scale events
- Use of radio-controlled cars in the Park (being handled by Parks & Countryside Department)