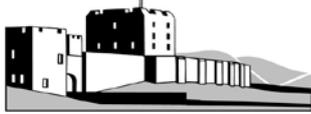


**CARLISLE
CITY COUNCIL**



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AUDIT COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 30 November 2010

Title: AUDIT SERVICES PROGRESS REPORT

Report of: Assistant Director (Resources)

Report reference: RD 58/10

Summary:

This report summarises the work carried out by Audit Services since the previous report to Committee on 24th September 2010, and monitors progress against the plan for the period 1st July to 30th September 2010.

Recommendations:

Members are requested to receive this report, and approve the revision of the 2010/11 audit plan.

Contact Officer: Interim Audit Manager
Nick Pearson

Ext:
7284

Audit Services Progress Report

1 Summary of Audit Work

As previously agreed by this Committee, members will be supplied, at each meeting, with the Management Summary and the Summary of Recommendations and Action Plan for each audit which has been completed since the previous meeting, and has been assigned a rating of either 'reasonable', 'restricted', or 'none'. Reports that have been assigned a rating of 'substantial' are supplied in a short report format as agreed at the Audit Committee meeting of 24th September 2010.

The following audit reports are attached -

Appendix A – Area Maintenance

Appendix B – Building Control (short report format)

Appendix C – Green Spaces

Appendix D – Improvement Grants (short report format)

2 Follow-up Reviews

- 2.1 Follow -up reviews were undertaken where appropriate during the period covered by this report. There are no new issues arising to which Members' attention needs to be drawn, with the exception of the IT Security report which is considered elsewhere on the agenda.

3 Ongoing 2010/11 Audit Work Programme.

- 3.1 Work on a number of other reviews commenced/progressed during the period – the reports will be presented to Members in due course.

4 2010/11 Audit Plan

- 4.1 The 2010-11 audit plan was presented to Audit Committee on 9th April 2010 – report RD4/10 refers.
- 4.2 To assist Members in monitoring progress against the plan, progress has been recorded for the period 1st July to 30th September 2010. This report is at **Appendix E**.
- 4.3 Members will note that 62% of days represent productive audit. Whilst this has fallen short of the target of 66.4%, it represents an improvement over the 60% productive audit days achieved in the previous quarter. As was the case previously, the difference is accounted for by staff annual leave.

- 4.4 The report at **Appendix E** demonstrates that some audits have taken longer than anticipated. This is due to three main reasons:
- This is the first year that time allocation budgets have been fully established at the start of the year at Carlisle City Council, with the result that some audits have taken longer than anticipated. This includes the audit of grants, which went over budget but resulted in some significant findings which should lead to a reduction in Audit Commission work, and Area Maintenance and Green Spaces which have provided recommendations which should help these areas as they transform into one service.
 - The transformation process at Carlisle City Council has resulted in changes to structures and reporting lines, which on occasions has resulted in more time to complete audits
 - Ongoing shared audit service deliberations have necessitated the utilisation of more time for discussion and consultation and have served to unsettle staff.
- 4.5 In this financial year there are resources to complete all of the material systems, which are agreed in advance with the Audit Commission and represent the highest risks to the Council. However, there will be a shortfall of around 53 days regarding the completion of non material systems audits. This represents around three audits, and it is recommended that the following audits are not completed in 2010/11, but be deferred to 2011/12.:

Audit	Planned days	Reason to remove from plan
Customer Contact Centre	20	This service is in the process of transformation, and is not stable.
Geographical Information System (GIS)	15	Low Risk
Pest Control	10	Low Risk

5 **Recommendations**

- 5.1 It is recommended that Members receive this report.
- 5.2 Members agree that the originally scheduled 2010/11 audit reviews for the Customer Contact Centre, Geographical Information System and pest control are carried forward into the 2011/12 audit plan.

P.Mason
 Assistant Director (Resources)
 30th November 2010

Final Report

20th October 2010

Audit Contact	Paula Norris	Extn No.	7014
Document Ref:	<u>Area Maintenance final audit report 2010-11.docx</u>		

Directorate / Service Area	Recipient(s) of Report	Action Required
Local Environment- Area Maintenance	Assistant Director (Local Environment) (For Action). Highways Services Manager (For Action). Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager (For Action) Area Maintenance Manager (For Action)	There are matters arising / recommendations arising from this audit review which require your attention. Please refer to the Action Plan which is attached as Appendix A.

Please note: The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and relevant Directors receive a copy of the full final report (management summary and appendices showing the matters arising, recommendations and agreed actions). The Audit Committee will also be presented with a full copy of this final report at the meeting to be held on 30th November 2010.

1. Reason for the Audit

- 1.1. As part of the audit planning process, Area Maintenance was identified as a high / medium risk service area and has therefore been selected for review as part of the agreed Audit Plan for 2010/11.

2. Background Information / Summary of the Audit Area

- 2.1. In 2000/01 an award winning pilot scheme was introduced in the Raffles area. From the success of this the scheme was rolled out, finally becoming operational throughout in 2005/06. Multifunctional teams were established to deliver street cleaning and routine aspects of highways maintenance. These teams moved away from focussed service provision to operate on a geographical/location basis thus:-

- Area 1 – West Team.
Inclusive of the wards to the west of the City – Morton, Yewdale, Belle Vue and the City Centre overlap of the Castle Ward.
- Area 2 – South Team.
Inclusive of the wards to the south of the City – Denton Holme, Currock, Upperby and the southern overlap of the Castle Ward. Southern rural areas are also included.
- Area 3 – North Team.
Inclusive of the wards to the north of the City – Belah, Stanwix Urban and northern rural areas such as Longtown to Stainton.
- Area 4 – East Team.
Inclusive of the wards to the east of the City – St.Aidans, Harraby and Botcherby along with the eastern rural area from the A6 to the A6071 outside Longtown.
- Area 5 – Central Team.
Inclusive of the wards that are central to the City – Castle and overlapping into St.Aidans. This area is mostly covered with street orderly's with no mobile teams. This area requires help from the other teams for the removal of fly tipping etc..

- 2.2. There are both National and Local Agendas driving the requirement for Councils to provide this service, namely:-

National

Living Spaces – Cleaner, Safer and Greener – National Priorities to improve outside living spaces are based on the government commitment to enhance the quality of life in our neighbourhoods, towns and cities.

Liveability Agenda – The Prime Minister in April 2001 set out his agenda for effective management of streets and open space in particular with regard to the effect of graffiti, vandalism, litter and dereliction on our living environment.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – enables a planning body to create sustainable communities with better streets and public spaces for people on foot.

Environmental Protection Act 1990 - Primary legislation which requires Principal Litter Authorities to collect refuse and litter free of charge from relevant land. The Act's Code of Practice for Refuse and Litter sets out clear standards of cleanliness which are to be achieved. Principal Litter Authorities have statutory powers to initiate prosecutions against litter and waste, (enviro-crime) offenders.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 – Extended powers for local authorities to deal with litter and fly tipping and introduces a range of offences for which fixed penalty notices can be issued, for example, for littering or fly-tipping,

Local

New Strategic theme. – Environment.

Aim-Ensuring the local area that the local environment, the environment that people care about the most, is of good and improving quality.

Objectives –To develop the area maintenance teams into responsive neighbourhood management teams. To narrow the gaps in satisfaction with the home as a place to live.

Outcomes – Stronger healthier communities less likely to suffer crime and disorder.

3. Associated Risks of Providing this Service/Function

3.1. Examination of the Risk Registers noted the following risks:

Risk Description and Control Strategy	Type of Risk <i>(strategic / operational)</i>	Risk Score <i>H/M/L</i>
<p><u>Risk</u> – Loss of staff or illness. <u>Risk Description</u> – Loss of key personnel and/or significant numbers of staff due to illness. <u>Control Strategy</u>. – Systems in place to allow business continuity in the event of a mass absence.</p>	Operational	Medium
<p><u>Risk</u> – Major incident. <u>Risk Description</u>. – Major incident (flood; fire) results in loss of plant, vehicles, computer records etc. <u>Control Strategy</u>. – Business Continuity Plan to cover emergency situations. Recovery would involve external service providers being brought in for the short term, Recovery Plan would cover the long term.</p>	Operational	Medium
<p><u>Risk</u> – Injury or death – claims. <u>Risk Description</u> – Third Party injury or death resulting from Area Maintenance activities or facility, and claims resulting from such incidents. <u>Control Strategy</u>. – Area Maintenance covers a number of front line services including street cleaning, highways maintenance and some grounds maintenance works. With most services being based on the public highway which could affect the highway users. Risk control measures include appropriate insurances, safety precautions and equipment, staff training, safety procedures etc.</p>	Operational	Medium
<p><u>Risk</u> – Minor injuries or damage – claims. <u>Risk Description</u> – Incidents involving Area Maintenance facilities or activities that result in minor injuries or damage to property, and claims resulting from such incidents.</p>	Operational	Medium

<p><u>Control Strategy.</u> – Minor incidents occur from time to time despite the best efforts of all staff. Risk control measures include appropriate insurances, safe working procedures , safety equipment and information.</p>		
<p><u>Risk</u> – Succession planning. <u>Risk Description</u> – Key Personnel/Succession Planning. <u>Control Strategy.</u> – Immediate action. Key knowledge spread between junior and senior staff. Key areas of knowledge to be documented for future reference. Staff to gain more experience in unfamiliar areas.</p>	Operational	High
<p><u>Risk</u> – Rechargeable work. <u>Risk Description</u> – Loss of elements of rechargeable work. <u>Control Strategy.</u> – Operational costs based on current custom and practice. Regular service reviews to ensure best practice is being followed and that value for money is being provided.</p>	Operational	Medium
<p><u>Risk</u> – New street adoptions. <u>Risk Description</u> – Additional service requirements as a result of new street adoptions. <u>Control Strategy.</u> – Additional new highway being adopted carries the risk that the Council will be left to cover additional revenue costs for street cleaning services.</p>	Operational	Medium

3.2. Other risks identified by Internal Audit as part of this audit are considered to be:

- That an annual workplan is not developed prior to the financial year. This could result in works being badly planned and not making optimum use of resources, duplication of work and inflated costings.
- That works are not allocated using the most effective or efficient methods.
- That all ad-hoc works are not correctly charged for. That works are not prioritised correctly.
- That operations are not focused to need.
- That the resources available are not being utilised in the most effective or efficient way.
- That service levels are not monitored resulting in poor performance and lack of potential improvement.

Please note that on conclusion of the audit, any critical risks outline at 3.2. should be assessed by the relevant Director for incorporation into the Directorate’s Risk Register or, if considered to be a strategic risk, for discussion at the Risk Management Group.

4. Scope of the Audit

- 4.1. Audit testing and verification have been carried out to form an opinion over the effectiveness of systems and controls in place relating to the risks identified. Key areas for review and a summary of the findings are outlined below.

	Area Examined
1.	Work Planning.
2.	Funding.
3.	Allocation of routine works.
4.	Ad-hoc/Emergency Works.
5.	Operations.
6.	Resources.
7.	Monitoring.

5. Overall Conclusion of the Audit Review

- 5.1. A number of opportunities to further enhance controls have been identified, these are shown in the appendix and have been brought to the attention of the relevant Heads of Service. In summary the key issues arising from this review are:
- 5.2. A lack of available management information and planning makes it difficult to compare performance each year and therefore identify and address weaknesses. Use should be made of planning tools already available in the Authority so that management information can be collected and used to enhance efficiency in the future.
- 5.3. For management to be able to apply true value to the costs of service, accurate job time allocations must be applied to all works, recorded and monitored.
- 5.4. All Highways Safety Works must be progressed as a matter of urgency.
- 5.5. Management should undertake a review of the Small Scale Community Projects scheme to ensure that the budget is being utilised in the most efficient manner.
- 5.6. Before a Ward Walk is arranged, it should be reviewed which member of staff should participate to ensure that Members receive a professional and informative service, yet results in minimal impact on back office service continuity.
- 5.7. The lack of management information available meant that actual time spent on non routine tasks could not be analysed.
- 5.8. Resources will be subject to review under transformation.
- 5.9. There was an issue regarding the performance monitoring arrangements whereby the Inspection evaluations have not been wholly independent, which could compromise monitoring arrangements, resulting in inflated results. This issue has now been addressed, with more staff trained to undertake inspections so the areas can be graded objectively. This will mean however, that performance indicators are more than likely to show a drop in service in the next financial year. Although the actual service provision will not reduce in practice, the indicators are likely to represent that

scenario. If this is the case, it should be emphasised that service has not reduced but the previous indicators may have been inflated.

6. Grading of Audit Recommendations

- 6.1. Each recommendation/agreed audit action in the appendices has been allocated a grade in line with the perceived level of risk. The grading system is outlined below:

Grade	Level of Risk
A	Lack of, or failure to comply with, a key control, leading to a *fundamental weakness.
B	Lack of, or failure to comply with, a key control, leading to a significant system weakness.
C	Lack of, or failure to comply with, any other control, leading to system weakness.
D	Action at manager's discretion.

* A *fundamental* weakness includes non-compliance to statutory requirements and/or unnecessary exposure of risk to the Authority as a whole (e.g. reputation, financial etc).

- 6.2. There are 14 recommendations arising from this review. 7 at grade B, 5 at grade C and 2 at grade D.

7. Statement of Assurance

- 7.1. Based on the audit approach, issues and the grading of the recommendations arising from this review, it is considered that a **REASONABLE**, level of assurance can be given in relation to the systems of control. The forthcoming changes to the section will also override a number of the issues highlighted in this report. (see definition below).

Level	Evaluation
1. Substantial	Very high level of assurance can be given on the system/s of control in operation, based on the audit findings.
2. Reasonable	Whilst there is a reasonable system of control in operation, there are weaknesses that may put the system objectives at risk.
3. Restricted	Significant weakness/es have been identified in the system of internal control, which put the system objectives at risk.
4. None	Based on the results of the audit undertaken, the controls in operation were found to be weak or non-existent, causing the system to be vulnerable to error and/or abuse.

Local Environment, Neighbourhood and Green Spaces

APPENDIX A

1. WORK PLANNING

Method of Review:

- Discussions with managers and staff.
- Examination of any operational working schedules.

Summary of Findings:

1.1. There is currently no 'Area Maintenance Strategy' in circulation. This document should be overarching and be a working document for all service users. i.e, members, public and staff alike. Appendix B attached outlines the preferred sections and required information it would be useful that this contains. Obviously, this is open to individual tailoring to Carlisle City Council individual Area Maintenance service delivery.

NB. Since this review was began it has come to light that Area Maintenance, Green Spaces and Highways are to be reviewed as part of the Transformation process. This will have a considerable effect on strategic aims and objectives.

– **Refer to recommendation A.1.**

1.2. There is a 'Members Information Pack' which was updated in Aug 2009, this outlines the services offered, contacts for the varying services etc.. Although this document is extremely useful, it is more directed at the member/constituent relationship and does not embrace the service strategically. This is slightly out of date, mostly due to recent change of management responsibility due to transformation and ideally should be updated to reflect this.

– **Refer to recommendation A.2.**

1.3. There is not an annual work plan as such in operation that can be used to effectively monitor and evaluate year on year performance compared to plan. With the service now being 'area based' it makes long term work planning extremely difficult, especially due to the reactive nature of highways and grounds works where one reactive job can take an operative almost a day in some instances. However, as stated in point 1.2 it could be possible to devise a plan on a strategic service level without having to involve too much operational detail.

There are efforts made to plan and operate on an annual basis by way of the production of the 'route planners'. This is where it is planned where each team will be operating, doing what work, on a daily, weekly and cyclical basis. This annual plan is then generally abided by (unless in cases of disaster where resources are required to be concentrated elsewhere).

The Area Maintenance Manager reviews the route plans annually and modifying through the year as needed if issues are highlighted as a result of either complaints, site inspections or ward walks. An example of this was in the beginning of this year where there were a lot of problems in Longtown with chipping coming off the road surface because of the bad winter. This resulted in the frequency of mechanical sweeping increasing from once per month to once every two weeks. This has the effect of reducing some cleaning in areas where there is less of a problem. As the queries and complaints are looked at the end of each month, hot spots can be identified and the routes modified accordingly.

These inspections and follow ups, alongside the local knowledge and experience of the Area Maintenance Manager is sufficient to ensure that the routes should all be covered effectively.

It is the intention that as part of Transformation, specific teams will be set up to deal with reactive and planned works, leading to revised work practices. This will mirror how the County Council have set up their 'Better Highways' service.

Due to the limited amount of documented methodology available it was not possible to assess if these routes were indeed the most efficient routes based on past performance so this test could not be conducted. The route plans currently in operation could be examined and were compared to a recent street map of the district to ensure that all the necessary streets were included on this. It became apparent that the route planner only covers streets on 'frequency cleaning'. It does not cover the rest of the adopted streets and roads as these are only cleaned when the trigger point for cleaning is reached under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Code of Practice on litter and refuse. The teams themselves have local knowledge of the problem areas and will arrange cleaning when it is required. These jobs are 'ordered' via the completion of the Operational Support Unit Client/Customer Reporting Form. (will be discussed in more detail in section 4) - **Refer to recommendation A.3 & A.4.**

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Responsible Officers</u>	<u>Recommendation / Agreed Actions</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Suggested Timescale for Completion</u>
A.1	There is no current Strategy in circulation.	DMT	Once the Transformation process is complete and aims and objectives established, an over-arching departmental strategy should be developed that is suitable for all service users from members to staff to the general public.	B	April 2011
A.2	The Members Information Pack is out of date.	Area Maintenance Manager Highways Services Manager	That the Members Information Pack should be updated to reflect the revised structure of the service and relevant points of contact. That the Information Pack eventually be amalgamated with the County Councils and Parish Councils Highways Information Packs so that one explanatory document covers all responsibilities.	C	Oct 2010 Jan 2011
A.3	There is no annual work plan.	Assistant Director (Local Environment)	There is an operational need to devise a high level annual work plan so that year on year performance evaluations can be made. This will also highlight any areas of weakness where management would be able to concentrate available resources more effectively.	B	April 2011

			Again, it is not productive to produce this until Transformation is complete.		
A.4	The GIS system is not utilised when planning the routes.	Area Maintenance Manager	Consideration should be given on utilising the GIS system to plot route plans in a more methodical way. These route plans can then be amended and updated once more management information is made available.	D	When resources allow

2. FUNDING/INCOME GENERATION

Method of Review:

- Discussions with managers and staff.
- Examination of any existing external funding and also any potential for further funding.

Summary of Findings:

2.1. External Funding/Income Generation.

The scope for income generation is currently limited. The Council currently undertakes Mechanical Sweeping on behalf of Carnaud Metal Box and the County Council. These are individual projects which are chargeable and generate income.

The system is as follows:-

- Set up job number.
- Send purchase order.
- Allocate job.
- Staff Time sheet returned with booked highways time only. Grounds and Street Cleaning duties are allocated straight to budgeted cost.
- Time sheets input by Clerical Assistant (Garage) as no direct internal support.
- Invoice is produced from Contractor Plus.

The Clerical Assistant (Garage) was asked what measures were in place to ensure that all timesheets were submitted complete and in a timely manner. There were none, reliance was placed on the operatives and supervisors submitting them. As the Clerical Assistant is not involved in the Area Maintenance Operations, they have no way of knowing whether all timesheets have indeed been submitted.

It was explained that on occasion chargeable jobs can go 'over budget' i.e. billed Carnaud Metal Box for 2 hours work when it in fact took 3. Effective time allocation would enable more realistic quotes to be provided and potentially generate more income.

In 2009/10 there was a problem with the overhead rate in Contractorplus being too high to enable recovery of all the associated costs, this only affected the jobs relating to external works for which invoices are raised which requires a detailed breakdown of costs. This problem should be eliminated with the phasing out of Contractorplus during 2010/11 and being replaced with a much more suitable method of cost recording. – **Refer to recommendation A.5.**

2.2. Partnership Working.

The Area Maintenance Team at present work in partnership with three established organisations, The Probation Service, Environmental Community Teams and Riverside.

The arrangement with Probation is that firstly an assessment is carried out of the work that would be considered to pass to the Probation Service. No work which could potentially cause problems with residents or businesses would be considered. Only work that is not part of the every day work plan of the Area Maintenance Team is allocated. i.e clearing waste land, painting bus stops or strimming overgrowth on neglected land. Work is not arranged to be done on private land. i.e. someone's garden , except in the instance of graffiti removal from private property but this is covered by an indemnity form to cover any damage.

Once it is decided that a job is suitable for probation to undertake, it is placed on the work list and a work request is issued to probation. They in turn inform the Council when they can undertake the work.

Probation themselves decide who will cover the works. They would not inform the Council of any details of the offenders. Probation assess suitability for the job and keep records on who was assigned what duties where but at no point are responsibility for these individuals transferred to Carlisle City Council therefore no risk is transferred, they remain under the supervision of their assigned Probation Officer.

Once the job has been completed, probation return the completed form which states the number of offenders used and the total hours spent on each job. These records are not maintained as the Probation Service maintain their own spreadsheet.

In light of recent media reports (where it was reported that those performing Community Service were allegedly allowed to finish their service early) it is prudent that the Council ensures that suitable controls are in place to guarantee that public assets and the Councils reputation is protected, although liability for these offenders is not transferred, there is a reputational risk as they could be seen to be doing on behalf of the Council. For this reason, basic records, including times and dates of work activity should be retained. Currently a spreadsheet of all details is maintained by the section.

2.3. The Community Safety Team, liaise with the Area Maintenance Team with regard to general street cleaning/fly tipping requests that are identified as part of their remit. Where problems are identified by these, the police, local residents, fire service etc, the information is then passed on to the Area Maintenance Team to respond accordingly.

They also work in partnership with the Area Maintenance team on graffiti removal as part of the Crime and Reduction Partnership, whereby they will inform the team of any graffiti identified. Area Maintenance are responsible for cleaning offensive graffiti from private property within a specified timescale and also for removing graffiti from Council Property.

There is also the Alley Gate Project where the Community Safety Team identifies lanes that require cleaning and instruct the Area Maintenance Team to have the work completed.

Both of the above are non income producing, however, they work together to produce a much more efficient service.

- 2.4. 'Big Tidy Up' – Non revenue generating but raises profile in the community and encourages ownership of the individual areas. Recent media coverage of the initiative indicated a positive public attitude towards the scheme.
- 2.5. The Area Maintenance Teams also maintain a number of car parks, the majority of which are Carlisle City Council owned and are recharged internally. The regular works usually performed are mechanical sweeping, litter picking and emptying litter bins. Occasional highways maintenance, gully cleaning, strimming and shrub bed maintenance is performed as and when it is required.

The Teams also maintain County Council owned and other privately owned car parks in Brampton. After trying to establish if all external works have been recharged, it became evident that the control lists require updating.

. – **Refer to recommendation A.6.**

- 2.6. Legal Service were contacted as to the legal viability of being able to offer Area Maintenance Services to those that are not currently eligible to benefit from the service under the Environmental Protection legislation. As the emphasis for doing this lies in whether the roads/land is adopted or unadopted, and whether the Council has the authority to enforce the service must be established.

Two opportunities for potential income generation are possible. Obviously these are dependent on having the spare resource capacity to be able to perform the chargeable tasks without compromising the standard of the statutory duties. These are:-

- Charging homeowners that reside on unadopted roads for the cleaning of their land. This is limited however to land which is both open to the public but is not a highway. The Council has the power under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 to make arrangements with a house owner or occupier for the cleaning of their land in return for a charge, but this is generally enforcement. Management should consider promoting this as a general chargeable service.
- Charging developers for the maintenance of land prior to transfer to Local Authority. It is the developers responsibility to maintain open spaces owned by them until the deeds are transferred. This again, subject to resources, could be promoted as a chargeable service. – **Refer to recommendation A.7.**

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Responsible Officer</u>	<u>Recommendation / Agreed Actions</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Suggested Timescale for Completion</u>
A.5	Timesheets are not maintained.	Area Maintenance Manager	That management develop a simple time recording system that all operatives maintain on a regular basis. All operational time should be accounted, not just Highways jobs for both management information purposes and to enable accurate recharging.	B	October 2010
A.6	The Car Park Cleaning list is out of date.	Area Maintenance Manager.	The lists should be updated to reflect what actually is being cleaned.	C	November 2010
A.7	The Council does not promote Area Maintenance functions to non statutory customers.	Area Maintenance Manager	Management should explore the benefits of promoting area maintenance functions as a chargeable service to the non statutory customers.	D	When resources allow

3. ALLOCATION OF ROUTINE WORKS.

Method of Review:

- Discussions with managers and staff to identify methodology.
- Examine how jobs are allocated to each area.
- Examination of Inspections Due Reports.
- Sample test 20 Safety Work Instructions.

Summary of Findings:

3.1. Daily Allocations.

All Area Maintenance operatives are assigned particular every day duties for the area they are working in (see section 5 for more detail). In addition to this they perform reactive and emergency works picked up either by monthly inspections, operatives observations or reports by the public. Types and methods of working in each area are decided on past experience and necessity. All cleansing is performed to a standard specified by the Environment Protection Act 1990, Code of Practice. These are:-

Grade A. – Free of litter.

Grade B. – Not much litter apart from a few small items.

Grade C. – Quite a lot of litter with small build-ups.

Grade D. – A lot of litter with large build ups.

The Area Maintenance Team are requested to cleanse all locations to a grade A standard. The Area Maintenance Manager regularly goes out and does spot checks.

3.2. Monthly Inspections.

The Technical Assistant that is responsible for details pertaining to Highways Insurance Claims maintains a database of inspections. A report is produced monthly that lists the inspections due. Team Leaders perform these inspections and note any works that are required on a Minor Highways Work Summary Sheet and Safety Work Instruction. These works are then allocated to the relevant area team and signed off.

3.3. Additional jobs.

Area Maintenance Team Leaders are supplied with order books therefore can order jobs alongside the Area Maintenance Manager and the Operational Support Assistant.

3.4. Testing

A sample of 20 Highways Safety Work Instructions were examined for completeness and accuracy and to determine whether the works had been performed within a reasonable timescale. The standard response target is to rectify the fault within 7 days. There was one instance where a kerb patching job took 6 weeks to progress. This is unsatisfactory as this could have resulted in an insurance claim that would have been extremely difficult to defend as the Council was aware of the problem but did not rectify it within an acceptable timescale. It became apparent that these work instructions do not actually reflect a neither realistic, nor compulsory timescale in the first instance. The Highways Safety Inspection Guidance Notes 2009 refers to the 'Categories of Defect and need for Urgent Remedial Action'. This document outlines the categories of defect and states a timescale for the rectification of the fault. The timescales range from within 24 hours to within 28 days dependant on the severity of the fault. This allows considerably more time for the less serious faults that is currently stated on the Highways Works Instruction.- **Refer to recommendation A8.**

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Responsible Officer</u>	<u>Recommendation / Agreed Actions</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Suggested Timescale for Completion</u>
A.8	The current Highways Safety Instructions state that all jobs should be progressed within the target deadline of 7 days. This deadline does not reflect the 'Category of Defect and need for Urgent Remedial Action' Criteria held in the Council, Highway Safety Inspection Guidance Notes.	Highways Services Manager.	The Highways Services Manager is to firstly define and agree categories of defect, keeping in line with the Highway Safety Inspection Guidance Notes. The Highways Safety Instructions should be amended to reflect the new criteria.	B	January 2011

4. AD-HOC WORKS

Method of Review:

- Discussions with managers and staff.
- Identify policies and procedures regarding ward walks.
- Examination of *Customer Relationship Management (CRM)* system to identify level of ad-hoc requests by the general public and the standard of service given.

Summary of Findings:

4.1. There is a small scale community projects annual budget set each year. This is for individual Members to spend on schemes that they think are beneficial within their ward and comply with the Greener, Cleaner, and Safer Council Priority. A request is made by the member to the designated officer who then evaluates if the suggested request complies to a basic criteria. If so, the request is then sent to the senior officer responsible for actioning the request. E.g, Grounds Maintenance, Highways, Street Lighting, Area Maintenance etc.. who then is able to additionally express their technical judgement, and can, and will, advise if they are aware of any more efficient or practical methods of supplying the need.

Testing highlighted that the majority of the requests were for services that the Council were obliged to do under standards defined by DEFRA. For example, there were a number of requests for provision of additional litter bins.

It is not suggested that the basic public requirements should not be met. It would be beneficial that any shortfall in service standard is identified in service planning.

Each year, the approximate budget allocation for these requests is £80,000 p.a. Monies were allowed however to be brought forward. The table overleaf depicts the spend on Area Maintenance functions during 2009/10 and 2010/11 to date:-

Budget b/fwd	Budget	Total budget (updated)	Description of scheme	Cost	Total cost
2009/10					
£49,026	£82,300	£131,326			
			Additional spend (not area maintenance related)	£40,142.55	
			Additional Litter bins	£ 4,420.11	
			Clearance of beck.	£ 506.00	
			Provision of skips.	£ 180.00	
Total cost for 2009/10					£45,248.66
2010/11 to period 05/10					
£39,500	£80,000	£119,500			
			Additional spend (not area maintenance related)	£45,915.00	
			Additional Litter Bins	£ 2,155.00	
			Additional Sweeping	£ 400.00	
Total cost for 2010/11 (pd 05)					£45,915.00

Members should not be prevented from highlighting any areas of improvement within their wards. It would be suggested however that the system is improved by introducing a firmer method of assessment. A scoring mechanism should be introduced that would ensure that budgets are being allocated as efficiently as possible. Any agreed projects should not carry a continued revenue cost after the original outlay. - **Refer to recommendation A9.**

4.2. The Area Maintenance Manager, the Operational Support Assistant and the Area Maintenance Team Leader arrange, and support Members on these 'Ward Walks'. The aim is to do two annually for each ward however inevitably, bad weather conditions earlier this year has delayed a number of these. The Police, Crime and Disorder Partnership representatives are invited to attend also. The purpose of these meetings is so that Members can observe their constituency first hand, with the necessary experts on call to answer any queries they may have. Outstanding issues are listed, logged, acted upon and monitored. **– Refer to recommendation A10.**

4.3. It was not possible to retrieve a report from the CRM system to establish the Area Maintenance customer requests due to timing issues. A discussion did take place however that highlighted a problem with the way the customer requests through the system are handled by the differing sections within Bousteads Grassing. The problems are partly due to the introduction of the relatively new CRM system and the adaptation of this intertwined with historic practice. Although problems were highlighted, it was understood that this issue is currently being addressed by the task group. This teamed with the administration restructure at Bousteads Grassings, should address any weaknesses. Internal Audit will revisit the matter as part of any other Local Environment audits in the future.

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Responsible Officer</u>	<u>Recommendation / Agreed Actions</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Suggested Timescale for Completion</u>
A.9	Under the present arrangement, the small scale community projects scheme requires more robust assessment and control.	Assistant Director (Local Environment)	The process for allocating the small scale community projects scheme should be reviewed. Controls should be introduced so that the projects are scored using agreed criteria. It should be noted that any agreed projects should not carry ongoing revenue costs.	B	April 2011
A.10	The staff resources utilised for the Member Ward Walks could be reduced.	Area Maintenance Manager.	To save resources, only one member of staff with the required expertise to answer technical queries in their field, and order jobs on spec should attend. Management should decide on the attendee dependent on other commitments, however, it would be recommended that Area Maintenance Team Leader level would be sufficient to represent the Area Maintenance operations. A multi-agency approach should be taken whereby members and the public could be trained and encouraged to take ownership. The results of these walks should be fed back to management to complete the monitoring process.	C	November 2010

5. OPERATIONS.

Method of Review:

- Discussions with managers and staff.
- Identify key duties and responsibilities covered by the Area Maintenance Teams.
- Establish all responsibilities and duties covered by the technical staff.
- Establish and test how time and duties are logged. Examine methods of job monitoring.
- Review any quality checking.

Summary of Findings:

5.1. The Area Maintenance Teams Key duties include:-

- Litter Picking and sweeping. (streets, cuts, rear lanes, some private lanes, car parks, industrial estates, recycling sites, play areas, community centres, rural villages, rural verges, and lay-byes etc)
- Emptying litter bins (both City sites and rural).
- Leaf fall removal at agreed locations.
- Fly tipping removal (both City sites and rural).
- Dead animal removal (both City sites and rural).
- Highways emergency works (paint, oil spillages etc..., highway damage repairs etc..)
- Highways and cleansing out of hours call outs (city maintained streets only)
- Winter maintenance – gritting, snow clearance (city maintained streets only)
- Weed spraying and removal, (City Council maintained roads in the City and rural areas)
- Strimming overgrowth – fence edges etc. (City Council maintained roads in the City and rural areas).
- Rural litter picking and fly tipping removal.
- Weeding and bed trimming at paths.
- Tree trimming at base.
- Fly poster removal (City only)
- Graffiti removal.
- Chewing gum removal (e.g from shop frontages etc.)
- Hand gully cleaning (integral gullies only on narrow parked up streets).
- Some rural refuse collection duties.
- Street sign and furniture washing (City Only) including illuminating ballards.
- Assist with the collection of refuse from problem rural locations (e.g. where there are access problems).
- Maintenance and Cleaning of Recycle sites.

- Maintenance outside area of Community Centres and Civic Buildings.
- Maintenance and cleaning of City Council Car Parks.
- Industrial Estate Maintenance.
- To work to high standards in order to meet the relevant specifications.
- Work safely and comply with all Health and Safety rules and instructions.
- Carry out required daily safety checks to all machinery used.
- Participate in training relevant to work and council activities.
- Street Washing.
- Special Events Cleaning. VIP visitors etc..

It became apparent that there is no clear distinction of the 'ownership' of some of the grounds related tasks. For example, the Area Maintenance team cannot plan their strimming tasks until the Grounds Maintenance Team plan their mowing tasks as they have to undertake this afterwards. It was not made clear why the Grounds Maintenance Teams did not undertake the strimming element themselves as part of their duties. It is thought that the practice may be historic, however, first impressions suggest it may be an unnecessary duplication of duties. Meetings do take place between the two teams but these are on an unofficial basis and minutes are not produced.

The creation of the Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces team in October 2010 will remove the duplications identified above. The new, combined team will work to a single programme under one manager. An operational work programme will identify priorities and monitor performance towards objectives with the overall goal of improving the quality of the local environment.

- 5.2. As general timesheets are not maintained, (only Highways Maintenance time is logged) it was not possible to analyse where and what the operatives time was spent on. Lack of this management information makes resource planning extremely difficult. Although chargeable time is logged, unchargeable time should still be accounted for to ensure that resources are being concentrated in the most efficient way. - **Refer to recommendation A5.**

6. RESOURCES

Method of Review:

- Discussions with managers and staff.
- Establish to staffing structure for the Area Maintenance team as at 01/04/10 to ensure that staff be concentrated according to the demands of the 2010/11 workplan.
- Identify if sufficient training programmes have been implemented for all employees to ensure that they are proficient in all elements of area working, including health and safety requirements.

Summary of Findings:

- 6.1. In 2005, a local area working theme of operations was developed whereby there was an amalgamation of all street cleaning staff and maintenance staff from Grounds and Highways services. The idea was to have locally based teams where possible, and the service would be proactive rather than reactive, link in with local priorities and have a link with local Councillors.
- 6.2. As stated in section 5 of this report, however, Area Maintenance is one of the elements of the Community Services Directorate currently under review as part of the transformation process and further merging of services to improve efficiencies and eliminate 'grey areas' of responsibility. The outcome of this process was not known at the time of this report, however a presentation was put before Management Briefing that stipulated that they were intending to:-
- Provide 'more for less',
 - Review ways of working,
 - Promote staff training,
 - Multi skill,
 - Modernise services, looking at new types of machinery and equipment,
- 6.3. The structure as it stands today consists of an Area Maintenance Manager; a part time Operational Support assistant, 5 Team leaders and 37 operatives, there are two vacancies at present, one part time at support level and one operative. The Customer Contact Centre is the main point of access for all enquiries, apart from ensuring that problems are logged and information is available, it should be the focal point of access so that the level of service is consistent.
- 6.4. Historically, direct telephone numbers had been given to the public and Members, who then understandably then call direct. This practice should be stopped immediately to enable an open and consistent service is provided for all. If all enquiries, complaints and comments are focussed through one central point then service levels can be monitored, management information retrieved and used in constructive and effective decision making. - **Refer to recommendation A11.**

6.5. All Area Maintenance staff are now on the Zeus system. The teams are on set hours averaging 7.5 hours per day and 7 hours on a Friday which gives an overall 37 hour working week. Working hours are adapted to cater for different jobs. An example is maintaining Swifts Car Park whereby a mechanical sweeper, a street cleaner and a groundsman all work at the same time to cover strimming the verges, litter pick and mechanically sweep the entire car park before Civic Centre based staff begin to park.

A test of from the Zeus system confirmed this working pattern.

6.6. An assessment of some areas of training undertaken by the Area Maintenance staff was performed. The results were (out of 41 staff):-

- Corporate Induction – 12.
- Appraisal Training – 32.
- Personal Protective Equipment – 5.
- Manual Handling – 28.
- Stress Handling – 15.
- 9 Pack Safety – 6.
- Danger from underground services – 4.
- Pesticides Handling – 3.
- Area Maintenance Customer Services – 17.
- Waste Management Ops and Cleaning NVQ Level 2 – 19.
- Driver Class 1 HGV – 2.
- Recruitment and Promoting Staff – 6.
- Basic General Safety – 2.
- Health & Safety – 2.
- Office Safety – 1.

It is evident that there are some areas where staff require additional training. Especially, due to the nature of the tasks involved, the Manual Handling and Personal Protective Equipment courses would be of particular benefit. – **Refer to recommendation A12.**

6.7. The job descriptions for all relevant posts were examined. These will obviously require updating due to the transformation process as duties will undeniably change.

Audit of Area Maintenance
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<u>Ref</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Responsible Officer</u>	<u>Recommendation / Agreed Actions</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Suggested Timescale for Completion</u>
A.11	All service requests and enquiries should be directed through one main point.	Area Maintenance Manager	All Area Maintenance enquiries should be directed through the customer contact centre. This area will be picked up as part of the new Performance Teams work.	B	April 2011.
A.12	It would be beneficial to establish a minimum standard of training that is applied throughout the section. Particular importance should be placed on the Health and Safety aspect of the operations. The main reason is that all training records are not held centrally at the moment, some are held in the units themselves.	Area Maintenance Manager	A review of training should be undertaken to ensure that all staff are fully conversant with all health and safety standards which will enable them to undertake the required duties safely. To begin this process, the records should be merged working in conjunction with the Skills Development Co-ordinator, results reviewed, then a relevant training plan put into place.	C	March 2011.

7. MONITORING.

Method of Review:

- Establish what monitoring and performance indicator arrangements are in place.

Summary of Findings:

- 7.1. Each month, the Financial Information System Reports (FIS) are circulated to all managers. These have been consistently circulated during 2009/10 and 2010 to date.
- 7.2. Carlisle City Council currently subscribe to the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) which collates statistical data and compares them with other members of their associated groups. The family groups compare 'like' authorities that operate under similar circumstances to ensure a fair comparison. Carlisle City Council regularly achieves accreditations and came second in the Street Cleaning category in the 2009 awards. The annual subscription for this is £2,161.00 p.a.

- 7.3. In February this year a National Street Scene and Open Space benchmark was launched by the Waste Improvement Network (WIN) in partnership with APSE. This is a national service that is available free to all local authorities across England. Its aim is to allow Councils to identify areas for improvement through self assessment so it differs slightly from the current subscription. It is an online service that will cover all aspects of the Streetscene and Open Spaces sector within local authorities from strategic planning and performance indicators through to managing litter, graffiti and parks.
- 7.4. The national service from WIN is delivered by Improvement Efficiency South East, the regions improvement and efficiency partnership. **Refer to recommendation A13.**
- 7.5. There are two performance indicators associated with Area Maintenance. NI195-Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting), and NI196-Improved street and environmental cleanliness (fly tipping). The statistics for these are captured on the DEFRA Flycapture website which filters and logs the information and indicates the Councils performance on a matrix. Examples of these were given and there were no areas of concern regarding the collation of the statistics as the sample checked had been transposed correctly. There was however an issue with the objectivity of the data as the inspection gradings were only undertaken by one person. This has now been addressed with the introduction of a new regime. Supervisors have been trained to conduct these inspections and apply suitable gradings. There will be two supervisors grading each area so the end result can be deemed as objective.
- 7.6. Previously, Carlisle City has been in the top quartile for these performance indicators. Unfortunately, the figures may have been inadvertently inflated, which once corrected, may present a sizeable dip in performance, which will not be true in practice, but will appear so via the indicator results. This fact should be made clear to Members and the public if required. – **Refer to recommendation A14.**

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Responsible Officer</u>	<u>Recommendation / Agreed Actions</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Suggested Timescale for Completion</u>
A.13	There is a new free benchmarking service available. The benefits of which should be investigated.	Area Maintenance Manager.	Management should investigate the benefits of subscribing to the free WIN benchmarking service.	C	November 2010
A.14	There is a possibility that the 2010/11 performance indicators will show a reduction in service.	Assistant Director (Local Environment)	Management should pay particular attention to this years NI195 and NI196 performance indicators and ensure that a full explanation of any disparity is made available to interested parties.	B	March 2010

Local Environment Directorate, Neighbourhood and Green Spaces **APPENDIX B.**

RECOMMENDED FORMAT OF AREA MAINTENANCE STRATEGY.

1. Introduction.
 - 1.1. What is Area Maintenance.
 - 1.2. Purpose of the Strategy.
2. Contexts.
 - 2.1. Strategic Context. – Council's vision and purpose.
 - 2.2. National Context. – Legislative boundaries.
 - 2.3. Regional and County Context's (Local Area Agreements).
 - 2.4. Local Context.
 - 2.5. Links to other areas (i.e. Community Safety).
 - 2.6. Corporate Priorities.
 - 2.7. The 'link' within National and Local legislation.
 - 2.8. Strategy Aims and Objectives. (i.e. VFM, consultation, partnerships, service delivery).
3. Implementing the strategy.
 - 3.1. The wider service – Who else is involved.
 - 3.2. Annual Service Planning – Business Plans.
 - 3.3. Partnership Working. – i.e any, direct or indirect.
4. Service Arrangements between other services.
 - 4.1. Environmental Services.
 - 4.2. Economic Development.
 - 4.3. CHA.
 - 4.4. County Council.
 - 4.5. Sustainable Communities.
5. Education.
6. Enforcement. (Statutory and non statutory drivers)
 - 6.1. Environmental Protection Act 1990
 - 6.2. Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.
 - 6.3. Hazardous Waste Regulations 2005.
 - 6.4. Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003.
 - 6.5. Public Health Act 1936/1961.
 - 6.6. Control of Pollution Act 1974.
 - 6.7. Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.
 - 6.8. Clean Air Act 1993
 - 6.9. Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978.
 - 6.10 Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse.
 - 6.11 National Indicators (NI195 and NI196).
 - 6.12 Local Performance Indicators.
7. Equality & Diversity.
8. Performance Management.
 - 8.1. Have things improved?
 - 8.2. Are we more efficient?
 - 8.3. Have we achieved our objectives?
 - 8.4. Have we achieved our pre-determined aims?
 - 8.5. Ni's NI195 & NI196 and Local Indicators and how these will be monitored.
9. Consultation and Community Involvement.

RESOURCES – AUDIT SERVICES – BUILDING CONTROL

Executive Summary	
<p>Overall, good controls were found to be operating with the Building Control system. The Building Control section is extremely effective and working efficiently. All the required Policies and Procedures are in place and staff within the Authority adheres to the Quality Assurance ISO 9002 standards. Carlisle City Council also assists in co-ordinating applications with other Local Authority services such as planning, highways, main drainage, environmental health and the Fire Authority. This audit review was undertaken before the 1st October 2010 as new Building Control Regulations were introduced with regards to the Building Control charges and regulations. From the audit review there was only one Grade D recommendation made.</p>	
Recommendations	Impact of implementing recommendations
Acolaid passwords should be changed periodically to ensure system security. (Grade D)	Increased security with regards to data entry and amendments.
Level of assurance assigned to this audit: Substantial	

Final Report

11th November 2010

Audit Contact	Debbie O'Brien	Extn No.	7283
Document Ref:	K:\2006-07 onwards\Community Services\COM265 - Grounds Maintenance\Green Spaces 2010-11 audit Final Report.docx		

Directorate / Service Area	Recipient(s) of Report	Action Required
Community Services	Green Spaces Manager (for action) Assistant Director (Local Government) (for information)	There are matters arising / recommendations arising from this audit review which require your attention. Please refer to the Action Plan for Community Services, which is attached as Appendix A.

Please note: The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and relevant Directors receive a copy of the full final report (management summary and appendices showing the matters arising, recommendations and agreed actions). The Audit Committee will also be presented with a full copy of this final report at the meeting to be held on 20th November 2010

1. Reason for the Audit

- 1.1. As part of the audit planning process, Grounds Maintenance was identified as a high / medium risk service area and has therefore been selected for review as part of the agreed Audit Plan for 2010/11

2. Background Information / Summary of the Audit Area

- 2.1. Carlisle City Council manages and maintains:
199.5 hectares of Parks and Playgrounds
108.5 hectares of Nature Reserves
55.3 hectares of grass verges
28 Football pitches
66 different parks, children's play areas and nature reserves in and around the City
Carlisle, Upperby and Stanwix Cemeteries
Carlisle Cathedral and St Cuthberts Church grounds
- 2.2. Carlisle City Council owns and manages 550 hectares of parks, formal gardens, grass verges, street trees, and green spaces. Carlisle City Council undertakes routine grass cutting in urban areas, together with tree and hedge pruning, shrub and flower bed maintenance. Areas of grass which are maintained by the Council are cut on a periodic rota. Continued bad weather can delay grass cutting.

3. Associated Risks of Providing this Service/Function

3.1. Examination of the Risk Registers noted the following risks:

Risk Description and Control Strategy	Type of Risk (strategic / operational)	Risk Score H/M/L
Loss of Key personnel and/or significant numbers of staff <i>Systems in place to allow business continuity in the event of mass absence</i>	Operational	M
Loss of equipment <i>Business Continuity Plan to cover emergency situations. Recovery would involve external service providers being brought in for the short term, Recovery plan would cover the long term</i>	Operational	M
Third Party death or injury <i>Green Spaces team manages a number of potentially dangerous sites, for example Talkin Tarn and Hammond's Pond where there is an inherent risk to visitors. Risk control measures include appropriate insurance, safety precautions and equipment, staff training and provisions of appropriate information for visitors</i>	Operational	H
Third Party Property damage <i>Minor incidents occur from time to time despite the best efforts of all Green Spaces staff. Risk control measures include appropriate insurances, safe working procedures, safety equipment and information</i>	Operational	M
Succession Planning <i>Immediate action. Key knowledge spread between junior and senior staff. Key areas of knowledge to be documented for future reference. Staff to gain more experience in unfamiliar areas, however staff are already working at capacity and the potential for increase workloads is limited</i>	Operational	H
Loss of rechargeable work <i>Operational costs based on current custom and practice. Regular service reviews to ensure best practise is being followed and that value for money is being provided</i>	Operational	L
Additional Service requirements <i>Sectional 106 agreements to secure additional contributions from developers towards maintenance cost. This is currently set for a 10 year period and carries the risk that the council will be left to cover additional revenue costs from its own budgets on expiry of the 10 years</i>	Operational	M
Loss of external funding <i>Needs to be addressed during transformation project</i>	Operational	H

4. Scope of the Audit

- 4.1. Audit testing and verification have been carried out to form an opinion over the effectiveness of systems and controls in place relating to the risks identified. Key areas for review and a summary of the findings are outlined below.

	Area Examined
1.	General Issues
2.	Income
3.	Parks and Countryside
4.	Small Project Fund
5.	Section 106 Arrangements

5. Overall Conclusion of the Audit Review

- 5.1. A number of opportunities to further enhance controls have been identified, these are shown in the appendix and have been brought to the attention of the relevant Heads of Service. In summary the key issues arising from this review are:
- 5.2. There is no green spaces strategy. A strategy should be produced and made available. Not all staff have current job descriptions, these should be updated following job evaluation process.
- 5.3. The lack of time sheets being completed means it is not possible to ensure that income is at appropriate levels. In addition it is not possible to monitor performance levels
- 5.4. The parks are well run and are in excellent condition. There is some concern over the use of Agency staff as rangers and it is vital to ensure that they have undergone the necessary checks and are adequately qualified.

The green spaces pages on the Authorities website are out of date

- 5.5. The Small project funds allocated to the Councillors are well monitored. There are no formal procedure notes and they can cause work flow problems at year end.
- 5.6. At the end of a the ten year period, the Authority has to fund the upkeep of the play areas acquired under Section 106 agreements A review should be undertaken of the Section 106 agreements in order to ensure that the Authority is not taking on additional liabilities

6. Grading of Audit Recommendations

6.1. Each recommendation/agreed audit action in the appendices has been allocated a grade in line with the perceived level of risk. The grading system is outlined below:

Grade	Level of Risk
A	Lack of, or failure to comply with, a key control, leading to a *fundamental weakness.
B	Lack of, or failure to comply with, a key control, leading to a significant system weakness.
C	Lack of, or failure to comply with, any other control, leading to system weakness.
D	Action at manager's discretion.

* A *fundamental* weakness includes non-compliance to statutory requirements and/or unnecessary exposure of risk to the Authority as a whole (e.g. reputation, financial etc).

6.2. There are 12 recommendations arising from this review. 6 at grade B, 6 at grade C.

7. Statement of Assurance

7.1. Based on the audit approach, issues and the grading of the recommendations arising from this review (delete if no recommendations), it is considered that a **Reasonable** level of assurance can be given in relation to the systems of control (see definition below).

Level	Evaluation
1. Substantial	Very high level of assurance can be given on the system/s of control in operation, based on the audit findings.
2. Reasonable	Whilst there is a reasonable system of control in operation, there are weaknesses that may put the system objectives at risk.
3. Restricted	Significant weakness/es have been identified in the system of internal control, which put the system objectives at risk.
4. None	Based on the results of the audit undertaken, the controls in operation were found to be weak or non-existent, causing the system to be vulnerable to error and/or abuse.

Directorate, Service Area

APPENDIX A

1. General Issues

Method of Review:

Ensure that the green spaces strategy is complete and available

Ensure that Staff Job Descriptions have been updated since Job Evaluation

Ensure that there are clear responsibilities between Grounds Maintenance and Area Maintenance.

Summary of Findings:

At present there is no agreed green space strategy. A document should be produced and agreed. The strategy should be available for all staff, Members and the general public.

Testing was carried out to ensure that Job Descriptions for staff are up to date. Manual staff have only been receiving Job Descriptions in recent years so many staff do not have them. Staff changed job titles as part of the Job Evaluation Process and job descriptions have not been updated to reflect this.

There are no clear definitions of responsibilities of work between Grounds Maintenance Staff and Area Maintenance. Staff in both sections have worked together and generally the information work practices work well together. However responsibilities are not clearly defined and this could cause problems to the Authority if not addressed. *Since the Audit this has been addressed and the two sections have now been merged in the new Neighbourhood and Green Spaces team. The Corporate Plan highlight the need for improved service in the area - Develop and deliver an improved area based approach to maintaining and cleaning streets and open spaces, including education and enforcement activities.*

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Responsible Officer</u>	<u>Recommendation / Agreed Actions</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Suggested Timescale for Completion</u>
A.1	Currently there is no green spaces strategy	Green Spaces Manager	A green spaces strategy should be produced and should be agreed Green Spaces Manager's Comments <i>Agreed and underway. In addition extra work is being carried out with Planning Services on the Green Infrastructure Policy</i>	B	6 Months
A.2	Not all staff have Job Descriptions and none of them have been updated post job evaluation	Green Spaces Manager	All staff should have current job descriptions	C	6 Months

A.3	There was no clear demarcation between Grounds Maintenance and Area Maintenance. This has now been addressed as part of the Transformation programme in the new Neighbourhood and Green Spaces team. The Corporate plan highlights previous problems in the area and has set an objective to develop and deliver an improved area based approach to maintaining and cleaning streets and open spaces	Green Spaces Manager	Managers need to continue to draw up plans to coordinate the work for the new combined team	C	On going
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2. Income

Method of Review:

Review the income received

Summary of Findings:

The green spaces team carry out work for :-

Community Centres

The income generated from the work carried out for the community centres

Industrial Estates

The income received from industrial estates was costed in excess of five years ago. The cost is increased annually inline with inflation. Staff working on the industrial estates do not keep timesheets so it is no possible to gauge whether the figure is accurate or not.

Allotments

Staff working on the allotments do keep timesheets and job cards are issued, this allows charges to be calculated on an actual basis.

Tullie House

At present Tullie house are charged £3500 per annum for their grounds maintenance work. The Museum is currently under review for transferring to a trust in 2011/2012, if this takes place a contract will need to be in place between the Authority and the new trust. There is no recommendation arising from this but management need to be aware of the possibility of the need to produce a contract and tender

Arborist

At present the arborists do not carry out any external work. Their time is taken up maintaining the Authority's assets, the tress that the Authority own are on a year rolling work plan. A discussion was held with Green Spaces Operations Manager who advised that the two arborist do not carry out other work for green spaces other than in exceptional circumstances.

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Responsible Officer</u>	<u>Recommendation / Agreed Actions</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Suggested Timescale for Completion</u>
A.4	<p>Staff carrying out income generating work are not keeping timesheets, so it is not possible to assess whether the income is at appropriate levels</p> <p>Although currently no external work is carried out by the arborist, it would assist management to ascertain if there was any scope for external work to be undertaken.</p>	Green Spaces Manager	<p>Staff carrying out income generating work should keep timesheets to allow management to calculate the actual cost of carry out the work</p> <p>The Arborists should maintain timesheets to help management with the monitoring</p>	C	6 Months

3. Parks and Countryside

Method of Review:

Review an issues arising at Upperby Park

Review the internet information available to the general public

Summary of Findings:

Hammonds Pond Cafe

At present the cafe is only open 12.00 till 4.00pm weekends and school holidays. It is open for the galas and for any events being held at Hammonds Pond. Work should be undertaken to review the cost benefit of opening the cafe. Discussion should be held with the manager from Talkin Tarn Cafe to draw on her experience to see if the income could be improved.

Since the audit the procedures at the cafe have been reviewed and changed. The Cafe is now operated by casual staff and the opening times have been amended. The manager from Talkin Tarn is now organising the stock and the rotas at the cafe.

Staffing

Green Spaces currently use an agency, Link Recruitment, to supply park rangers. Some of these staff have been working for the Authority for a long period of time through the Agency. A discussion was held with the relevant Personnel Officer to discuss the implications of this. In October 2011 an Agency Worker Directive and Regulation 2010 will be implemented. This will give staff who have been working consistently at one place the same terms and conditions as employed staff. There was not time during this review to ensure that the agreement between Carlisle City Council and Link Recruitment addresses all the necessary areas, for example whose responsibility is it to ensure that staff are appropriately qualified and that evidence of qualification has been seen. It is not clear whether staff have been CRB checked.

A review should be carried out as to whether this is the most effective way to staff the Park Ranger roles, the option of a pool of casuals should be considered.

Internet

The information available on the Authority's website is through although some of the information is now out of date. For example on the Hammonds Pond page it states "2009 will see....." and on Heysham Park it states that "Scheduled for 2008/2009".

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Responsible Officer</u>	<u>Recommendation / Agreed Actions</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Suggested Timescale for Completion</u>
A.5	The Contract between Carlisle City Council and Link Recruitment has not been reviewed.	Green Spaces Manager	Ensure that the contract between Carlisle City Council and Link Recruitment is adequate and arrange for a copy to be forwarded to the Personnel Officer Green Spaces Manager's Comments <i>The question of the link recruitment contract is one for Procurement.</i> Internal Audits Comments <i>There is currently on going work within Procurement on the issue and it is understood that there is no contract in place. The Green Spaces manager should liaise with Procurement to ensure that all parties are aware of each others needs.</i>	B	6 Months
A.6	It is not clear that this is the most effective way to staff the Park Rangers roles	Green Spaces Manager	The current arrangements of staffing the park rangers roles should be reviewed. Green Spaces Manager's Comments <i>This will be looked at as part of the Transformation programme</i>	C	6 Months
A.7	Agency Staff employed by Carlisle City should undergo the same checks as Authority staff. It is essential for agencies to carry out CRB checks for Park Rangers It isn't clear what qualification checks are carried out	Green Spaces Manager	Ensure that all agency staff are adequately qualified and have undergone the necessary checks. The Agency should carry out the CRB checks and should formally inform the Authority of the outcome, which should be recorded on the spreadsheet maintained by Personnel.	B	6 Months
A.8	Some information available on the internet is out of date	Green Spaces Manager	The Green spaces pages on the internet should be updated Green Spaces Manager's Comments Agreed and work is already underway updating the internet	C	6 Months

4. Small Project Fund

Method of Review:

Discuss procedures with key officers for dealing with the Councillors Small Project Funds

Summary of Findings:

The Small Project Fund is a scheme which involves making funds available for small projects that bring real benefits to local communities in each of the Authority's wards.

The Green Spaces Manager monitors spending within his service and ensures that work is completed to agreed timescales whenever possible.

There are no documented guidance notes for the spending of the fund. Guidance could include a spending criteria, and highlight that timetable and ongoing revenue implications need to be considered.

At present there is a tendency for Councillors to hold on to the money until the final quarter, this can cause additional work pressures for the Green Spaces team.

Work is undertaken on behalf of County Councillors. Currently we calculated the cost and any direct labour cost, but, do not charge for any management time.

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Responsible Officer</u>	<u>Recommendation / Agreed Actions</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Suggested Timescale for Completion</u>
A.9	There are no documented guidance notes for members	Green Spaces Manager	Guidance notes should be documented and circulated to all Members Green Spaces Manager's Comments <i>The Assistant Director (Resources) should write the guidance.</i> Internal Audits Comments <i>Discussions undertaken following this comment imply that there were some guidance notes written by the previous Director of Community Services. Therefore it is considered appropriate that the guidance is up-dated and issued to Members by a member of Local Environment Directorate.</i>	B	6 Months
A.10	Work is undertaken on behalf of County Councillors but the Authority does not charge for any management time	Green Spaces Manager	Work undertaken on behalf of third parties needs to be monitored and costed. Any time spent by managers should be costed in Green Spaces Manager's Comments <i>Agreed – Managers will maintain timesheets to help with the costings.</i>	C	Immediate (with any new projects)

5. Section 106 Agreements

Method of Review:

Discuss with the Green Spaces Manager and review current procedures

Summary of Findings:

Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority (LPA) to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission. The obligation is termed a Section 106 Agreement. These agreements are a way of delivering or addressing matters that are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. They are increasingly used to support the provision of services and infrastructure, such as highways, recreational facilities, education, health and affordable housing. The scope of such agreements is laid out in the government's Circular 05/2005. Matters agreed as part of a S106 must be:

- relevant to planning
- necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms
- directly related to the proposed development
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development
- reasonable in all other respects.

A council's approach to securing benefits through the S106 process should be grounded in evidence-based policy.

Generally the S106 will result in the Authority acquiring play areas and green spaces from the developers. The developers will make a payment to the Authority which will equate to approximately 10 years maintenance after which the Authority will have to meet any costs.

There are no documented procedures on how to deal with the Section 106 agreements and how the various services interact with one another

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Responsible Officer</u>	<u>Recommendation / Agreed Actions</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Suggested Timescale for Completion</u>
A.11	At the end of a the ten year period, the Authority has to fund the upkeep of the play areas acquired under Section 106 agreements	Green Spaces Manager	A review should be undertaken of the Section 106 agreements in order to ensure that the Authority is not taking on additional liabilities Green Spaces Manager's Comments <i>This is being looked at and options to the Authority will be considered</i>	B	6 Months
A.12	There are no documented procedures, there is currently no consistent approach applied	Green Spaces Manager	A meeting should be arranged for all involved parties and formal procedures should be written and agreed by all involved in the Section 106 agreements	B	6 Month

RESOURCES – AUDIT SERVICES – IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Executive Summary	
<p>Overall, good controls were found to be operating with the administration of Improvement Grants. Areas examined during the review covered:</p> <p>Policies and Procedures, Applications for Assistance, Eligibility, Approval of Applications, Estimates, Works, Conditions, Payments, Repayments, Government Grants, Performance Monitoring and Security of Data.</p> <p>All areas were found to be in order with only one area identified for improvement, as stated below.</p>	
Recommendations	Impact of implementing recommendations
<p>Commencement of work notices or pre-commencement meetings should take place to agree the commencement date of the minor works to be undertaken. Evidence of commencement date should be retained on the relevant minor works file. (Grade B).</p>	<p>Evidence to ensure that works have not been commenced before approval – to meet legislative and procedural requirements.</p>
<p>Level of assurance assigned to this audit: Substantial</p>	

Performance for the quarter 1st July to 30th September 2010

Audit	Scheduled days (this quarter)	Actual days (this quarter)	Percentage complete	If audit is completed, Scheduled vs actual days	Notes
Creditors (material systems review)	5	1			
Payroll (material systems review)	9	1			
Main Accounting (material systems review)	14.5	0			
Housing Benefit	15	1			
Follow Ups	0	2.5	100%		
Building Control	2	4.5	100%	5 / 4.5	'Substantial' rating
Recycling	6.5	3	50%		
Area Maintenance	5.5	16.5	100%	15 / 31	The audit was rated 'reasonable'. Some significant findings were raised in this report. The rating was not downgraded, however, as steps are being taken to address issues, and during the audit Green Spaces and Neighbourhoods (Area Maintenance) merged. This process hampered audit progress, which added to the time taken to complete the work.

Audit	Scheduled days (this quarter)	Actual days (this quarter)	Percentage complete	If audit is completed, Scheduled vs actual days	Notes
Improvement grants	9.5	1	Not completed as at 30/9/10	100%	Report to 30 th November Committee. Completed within budget
Fraud Investigations	0	3			
Insurance	6	1	40%		
Procurement	2	6	100%	8 / 14	Final report presented to the Audit Committee 24/9/10
Rents from Properties	6	0	25%		
Pest Control	10	0			
Health and Safety	3	1	66%		
Food Standards	10	15	50%		<p>Additional time has been spent preparing for this audit as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audit has not been completed for some time • Changes have occurred in legislation.

Audit	Scheduled days (this quarter)	Actual days (this quarter)	Percentage complete	If audit is completed, Scheduled vs actual days	Notes
Green Spaces	2	15	100%	17 / 27	This area has not been reviewed for some time, so budget has been increased. As was the case with Area Maintenance, this audit was hampered by the merger of Green Spaces and Neighbourhoods (Area Maintenance). The audit was rated as 'reasonable'.
Facilities Management	7	1	10%		Some work initiated in 2009/10
Grants	8.5	25	100%	25 / 41	Final report presented to the Audit Committee 24/9/10. Some material findings have resulted from this audit, so budget was expanded. Internal Audit work performed in this area should have the beneficial impact of a reduction in District Auditor fees.
Partnerships	10	11	90%		This audit combines 'partnerships' and 'Carlisle Tourism Partnerships' and has been completed in an estimated time of 16 days against a budget of 30. The report has been issued in draft.
Audit Shared Services	0	12			This refers to ongoing time spent in shared service implementation.
Total Productive	131.5	120.5	62%		

Audit	Scheduled days (this quarter)	Actual days (this quarter)	Percentage complete	If audit is completed, Scheduled vs actual days	Notes
Holidays / Sick / Elections	22	38.5			The differential is mostly accounted for by a higher than anticipated level of annual leave during the period. This will even itself out throughout the remainder of the financial year.
Management & Administration	28	24.5			
Training	9.5	11			
Total Non Productive	59.5	74	38%		
Grand Total	191	194.5			