

Environmental Services

Countryside Service Business Plan 2011/12

About the Service

Countryside Service Vision and Aims

To help make Worcestershire a place where:

- Citizens' health and well-being is improved through informal countryside recreation
- There are positive relationships between Gypsy and other communities through the provision of residential Gypsy sites and where support and advice is available to all parties regarding unauthorised encampments on the county council's land
- The local economy is supported, principally through countryside-related tourism
- People are connected with their natural environment through guided walks, talks, events, information and interpretation
- The county's landscape and biodiversity is protected through the careful management of county council countryside sites and support for communities who manage their own greenspaces
- A service is provided which is both sustainable and available to all.

CSA 1	To provide and maintain countryside sites to agreed standards
CSA 2	To provide advice and support to communities to create and manage their own greenspaces
CSA 3	To support and manage volunteers in the environment sector
CSA 4	To contribute to the management of the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership
CSA 5	To manage the public rights of way network and permissive routes to agreed standards
CSA 6	To manage residential Gypsy sites and respond to unauthorised encampments
CSA 7	To increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of the countryside, the Countryside Service and Worcestershire County Council
CSA 8	To work in an efficient and business-like manner

Achievements in 2010-11

The Countryside Service measures its performance using a set of metrics around four main themes of productivity, customer service, finance and quality standards. Progress towards meeting the objectives is monitored by the Countryside Service Business Improvement Team and areas requiring a particular focus are monitored by the Countryside Rapid Improvement Project Team (CRIPT). Notable achievements include:

- Attained Green Flag Awards for St Wulstan's Local Nature Reserve, Worcester Woods and Waseley Hills Country Parks
- Installed Natural Play facilities at Worcester Woods and Waseley Hills Country Parks.
- 100% of visitors surveyed at Worcester Woods and Waseley Hills Country Parks described their visit as 'good' or 'very good'
- Increased membership of the Worcestershire Wardens Partnership to 15 organisations supporting over 1,500 volunteers
- Supported 173 regular walk leaders, including 100 trained in 2010/2011. Supported 25 walking groups across Worcestershire providing walks for an average of 1000 walkers a month. 18 groups are accredited.
- Generated 6,219 offender hours through the 'Building Fences' partnership project with West Mercia Probation Trust and the Community Safety Partnership on countryside and urban greenspace sites
- Secured a partnership to deliver specialist rural skills training for Grow with Wyre project
- Completed refurbishment of Lower Heath and Pinvin residential Gypsy sites
- Transferred main Gypsy Service telephone number to the Hub
- Reviewed and streamlined Public Path Order (PPO) process, resulting in a significant reduction in backlog from 47 to 26
- Exceeded target for reducing Rights of Way high priority defects
- Published a best practice guide to highway "signing and lining" in the Malvern Hills AONB
- Published a best practice guide to keeping horses in the Malvern Hills AONB with minimal impact on the environment

- Awarded 15 community groups with Sustainable Development Fund grants to the value of £53,720
- Generated 84,000 volunteer hours, including Parish Path Wardens, Tree Wardens, site wardens and work with under-represented groups
- Delivered 36 training courses including 'Countryside with Confidence', 'Leadership for Volunteers', PPW and Tree Warden essentials, orchard management, coppicing, fruit trees and hedgelaying,
- Completed a major review and update of the Countryside Service website
- Sold 191 local variety fruit trees
- Facilitated the creation or improvement of a number of community greenspaces, including Avon Meadows, Fladbury Community Woodland, Bredon Playing Fields and Cookley community hedge planting and clearance.
- Installed 4,500 meters of fencing at Hartlebury Common for reinstating heathland by use of grazing
- Supported Tree Wardens in 104 parishes and Parish Paths Wardens in 171 parishes
- Completed the Hanbury circular walk and improvements to access along the Droitwich Canals
- During 2010/11 countryside services generated 176 favourable articles with a total EAV (Equivalent Advertising value) of £64,876. This is an extra £25,053 compared to 2009/10 with the same number of articles but much more of a prominence.
- Worcestershire County Council has won the prestigious 2010 Innovation and Best Practice (Local Government) Award for its three web-based Public Rights of Way sites. The award was open to all Geographic Information users in authorities that deliver local public services and was presented by the Association for Geographic Information at its annual awards dinner.

Service Priorities and Actions

Corporate Area of Focus	Directorate Objectives	Service Actions	Risks that could effect actions	Responsible	Accountable
Economy	Deliver services that provide the public with value for money and cater for their needs through increased information and self service through the internet. Learn lessons from further afield to enable the directorate to deliver value for money through shared and better use of assets and a commissioned based model with partners and the private sector.	<p>Continuous improvement of the website to maximise self-service directly and via the Hub</p> <p>Maximise use of volunteers and offenders</p>	<p>Reduced staff resource or technological failure</p> <p>Reduction on funding or staff resource</p>	<p>Becky Pell</p> <p>Rachel Datlen</p>	<p>Andy Maginnis</p> <p>Andy Maginnis</p>
Economy	Make Worcestershire a more dynamic and self confident county through efficient and timely processes and innovative ways of delivering services. Work cleverer and smarter to finance the gap in the revenue budget and use capital resources to pursue our aspirations.	<p>Meet income targets</p> <p>Introduce PROW hierarchy</p> <p>Provide a range of training opportunities for volunteers and community groups</p>	<p>Economic downturn</p> <p>Reduced staff resource</p> <p>Reduced staff resource</p>	<p>Rachel Datlen</p> <p>Kevin Oliver</p> <p>Rachel Datlen</p>	<p>Andy Maginnis</p> <p>Andy Maginnis</p> <p>Andy Maginnis</p>
Economy	Deliver transport for growing the economy through investment in infrastructure and innovative approach to	Deliver Public Rights of Way Capital Programme.	Reduction in funding or staff resource	Kevin Oliver	Andy Maginnis

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	transport planning.				
Environment	Develop plans facilitating adaptation to climate change, enabling the directorate to continue to drive forward the flooding programme and look at the feasibility of producing green energy whilst continuing to protect Worcestershire's unique environment.	Apply for Eco Centre status for Waseley Hills Country Park	Reduced staff resource	Matt Maginnis Rachel Datlen	Andy Maginnis Andy Maginnis

The Unit Balanced Scorecard is found at

The Unit Risk Register can be found at