Delivery of priority services and outcomes
Which Council Aim does this case study deliver?

The project contributed to both of the following Council aims:

i) To have a high quality, clean and sustainable environment

ii) To help all residents to achieve a healthy weight by encouraging an active life style, in communities where everyone feels welcome and safe

Background – Why?
The project was identified and instigated by the Derwent Riverside Project Group (DRP), following production of a ‘Healthcheck’ study for the Malton and Norton Area Partnership as part of the Market Towns Initiative, which was produced in 2002 and revised in 2003. The following summarises briefly the key points of that report, focusing on issues likely to be important for the proposed Castle Garden project.

- There are too few good community attractions. Hence, there is a need to create more to do in the towns for local residents and visitors alike
- Although the Derwentio 2000 project identified considerable support for improving the heritage provision of the area, the Orchard Field area of Malton (including the castle site, Roman fort/settlement and the adjacent walled garden) require improved interpretive information for those visiting the site
- There is too little promotion of wildlife and the environment
- There are too few environmental and heritage educational resources that might attract school parties to the towns and sites within the town
- Disabled access could be improved throughout the two towns

The aim of the project was to renovate the Castle Garden in Malton as part of a wider riverside regeneration initiative.

Ryedale District Council owns the Castle Garden but did not have the resources to make it safely accessible to the public. Prior to the project being completed, the site was unsuitable for recreational use and so was not accessible to the public. Apart from some recent work done to clear vegetation on the site by British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the garden has been unmanaged and unimproved for many years. The project involves the DRP Group securing funding and implementing improvements to the...
gardens and opening them up to public use, as well as taking over responsibility for managing and maintaining the garden in the future.

The successful completion of the walled garden restoration project means that this unused area of the Malton townscape is now available as an attractive, open-air amenity for residents of Malton and Norton and visitors of all ages, regardless of their level of mobility.

The Place Survey results for the district indicate a particularly low level of satisfaction with public open spaces when compared with the national statistics. Nationally the percentage of people either Fairly or Very Satisfied with Parks and Open Spaces was 69%, whereas in Ryedale this was only 41%. The combined results for Malton, Norton East and Norton West gave an even lower figure of only 30% (with 4% being Very Satisfied and 26% being Fairly Satisfied against 9% being Very Dissatisfied and 18% Fairly Dissatisfied). (Ryedale Space Survey 2008/09)

What was done?
The project involved a 5 acre site owned by RDC which was not in a condition to be made accessible to the public, and for which RDC lacked the resources for the proposed improvements. The project involved identifying funding sources, developing a business plan, securing funding, undertaking major improvements including site clearance, repairs to walls, creation of footpaths, new fencing and gate, new beech hedging, landscaping and bulb planting, tree surgery, benches, picnic / tables, cycle racks, Interpretive panels and directional signposts. In addition the project involved allocating future responsibility for managing and maintaining the site to a community organisation – the DRP Group

As a result of the project the site is now open to the public and provides a much needed resource for amenity and educational use which was previously lacking in Malton and Norton.

Strategic Objectives:

By delivering environmental improvements to an historic site and making the site accessible to the public, the project contributes to:

- Obj 7 – To maintain the quality of our local environment, increasing levels of satisfaction with cleanliness from 75% to 80% by 2013, managing our natural habitats to improve local levels of biodiversity and increasing levels of civic pride in the district.

By providing an additional area of public open space open and accessible to all, the project contributes to:

- Obj 9 – To Promote healthier and more active lifestyles in the Market Towns of Ryedale to reduce the prevalence of obesity and increase perceptions of safety and wellbeing in our communities.

In addition, by working with others to enable this Council owned site to be brought back into public use for amenity and educational purposes, the project contributes towards the following elements of the Councils Asset Management Strategy:

Statement of Purpose
“To effectively manage the Council’s property portfolio in order to meet the aims and objectives of the Council’s Corporate Plan.”

Aims

(a) To manage the Council’s miscellaneous properties portfolio in order to gain the maximum benefit to the Ryedale Community and deliver the Council’s Corporate Plan
(b) To manage effectively the Council’s property portfolio with a view to ensuring service delivery needs are met.
(c) To work in partnership with the County Council and other agencies to maximise asset use
Objective

- To work with other Council service providers to ensure the efficient and effective use of all the Council’s property assets.

RDC Officers worked closely with DRP Group to assist in project development including provision of general project management advice, identifying and securing external funding towards the proposed improvements, as well as securing RDC funding and the necessary approvals to enable the project to proceed.

Who was involved and how?
DRP Group
- responsible for overall implementation of the project

Trish Leach, Garden Designer
- Project management

Jane Johnson, Project Delivery Officer (RDC)
- support and assistance to DRP including:
  - General advice on project development, management and funding availability
  - Applying for external funding from Yorventure
  - Applying for RDC funding

John Clayton, Tree Officer (RDC)
- Provided advice and ongoing support on maintenance of numerous veteran and other trees on site and required tree surgery/permissions

Roger Barnsley, Asset Management Surveyor (RDC)
- input into lease arrangements

What was achieved?

A major new site of public open space has been made available for both amenity and educational purposes, including improvements to the site such as new footpaths, planting and landscaping, benches and tables, ensuring that it is accessible to all.

The Castle Garden is extensively used by individuals, families and community groups, including Norton Wildlife Watch Group, a junior branch of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust who have been involved in erecting bird & bat boxes on site, creating information boards and are currently making a video about the ecology of the Garden.

The site is also used regularly by a local nursery school and primary schools also visit to carry out project work.

Events organised during summer 2008 & 2009 attracted over 200 visitors and increased community engagement in the project through public involvement in designing signage, practical work such as path creation and willow weaving.

DRP Secretary Di Keal said:

“We are thrilled to bits that Yorventure has backed the garden with such a significant grant which is a testimony to the value of the project to our community. The new park is intended to fill the gap we have in provision of public open space in the town and to provide a magical place to walk in and take time out.”

Garden designer and project manager, Trish Leech said:

“The garden is a wonderful opportunity for the area and there will be plenty more opportunities for the public to get involved - especially with planting bulbs as there will be thousands!”
Councillor Lindsay Burr said:
the project had been on the drawing board for a decade. "This is a fantastic asset for Malton and Norton - a real hidden gem," she said.

Who benefited and how do we know?
Public involvement in the development of the site has been achieved via open workshops as detailed above. The project has allowed a large area of previously unused land to be converted into a useful and attractive public open space, open daily, that is extensively used for leisure purposes for people from across the community.

The Derwent Riverside Project ensured through the garden design that most areas of the site are accessible.

The Derwent Riverside Project also works with BTCV alongside people with learning difficulties from the Wilf Ward Trust, people with mental health issues from Next Steps, Norton and is currently beginning a new project that will allow ex-offenders to assist with maintenance of the site through the ‘Community Payback’ scheme.

The Castle Gardens project has created a new area of public open space for use by all residents of Malton and Norton as well as visitors to the area from further afield, within the District and beyond. The gardens are readily accessible to residents of both Malton and Norton via footpaths across Orchard Fields. The project has been publicised through press releases, website as well as specific events to raise people’s awareness of the existence of this new amenity. The project was specifically designed to maximise accessibility for all groups including wheelchair and pushchair users.

Delivery through partnership?
The project was led by the DRP group but involved close partnership working with officers at RDC. During the development of the Castle Garden DRP has also worked with:
- BTCV
- English Heritage
- Voluntary groups e.g. Norton Nature Watch
- Yorkshire Gardens Trust

Resources and value for money
Approx £150,000 (£90,000 from Yorventure and £60k from RDC). In addition a significant amount of volunteer time has been invested in the project - both local people and environment agency used their volunteer days to lay paths and 12 members of the Royal Dragoon Guards spent a day laying paths and moving large pieces of oak for the benches and tables. A local wildlife group (Norton Wildlife Watch) have also been involved in putting up bat and bird boxes.

Capital - £90k from Yorventure, £60k from RDC
Ongoing Revenue is the responsibility of DRP, who have Town Council support and sponsorship from local businesses. DRP also plan to hold their own fund raising events in the garden.

The project has converted a site which was previously a liability to the Council (both financial and potentially a health and safety liability) into a community asset. A site that was closed to the public is now publicly accessible, providing opportunities for amenity and educational uses.

By using an existing land asset (although it was effectively a liability for the Council) and strong community leadership it has been possible to lever in external funding of £90k from Yorventure. This made it possible to achieve a significantly greater degree of benefit than the £60k of RDC funding would have allowed. The project therefore represents very good value for money for the District Council and for residents.

Next Steps / Further Action
The initial Castle Gardens project is now completed, and the DRP group will continue to manage and maintain the gardens and hold events to raise funding to ensure a sustainable future for the gardens. DRP now plans further development of the site to enhance its amenity benefits and promote its rich ecology and historic worth. Further community events are planned through Summer 2010.

In addition the Council hopes to work closely with the Malton Museum Foundation and York Archaeological Trust to help deliver their proposals for a new museum and heritage centre in buildings adjacent to the Castle Gardens and Orchard Fields (the site of Malton’s Roman Fort).

The Benefits will be sustained through the on-going management and maintenance of the site by the DRP Group.

Author and Contact Details
Howard Wallis, Project Delivery Manager, howard.wallis@ryedale.gov.uk, 01653 600666 ext 274.

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Background documents/Links:
Links to publications – media coverage
http://www.maltonmercury.co.uk/news/Official-openingof-garden-park.4405524.jp
http://www.bbc.co.uk/northyorkshire/content/articles/2008/06/02/castle_garden_history_feature.shtml
http://www.bbc.co.uk/northyorkshire/content/articles/2008/05/18/breathing_places_swat_feature.shtml
http://www.ruralarts.org/communitylinks/castlegardens.html

Ryedale Place Survey 2008/09
Malton and Norton Area Partnership (2003) Malton and Norton Healthcheck Committee reports
See attached Report to CPWP
See attached Summary of Council Decisions

Partner websites
http://www.maltoncastlegarden.org.uk/