

Draft Vale Corporate Plan 2020-24

Vision, Themes, Programmes and Projects

Vale of White Horse District Council

Scrutiny and Cabinet – PACK (post engagement)

September 2020

Vale of White Horse District Council **Vision**

*Vale of White Horse District Council aims to help **build and support thriving local communities**, where everyone can **enjoy the opportunity to live a happy and fulfilling life**. We will do all we can to contribute to making that a reality in the Vale, within the ecological constraints of our physical environment. We will ensure that our council and our district play their part in **tackling the Climate Emergency**.*



THEME ONE

Providing the homes people need

We will find ways to provide **more genuinely affordable housing**, including **housing for social rent**, to **better provide for the needs of Vale residents**. We will aim to provide a **mix of tenures** in each development to build sustainable homes in balanced and sustainable communities. We will use our influence on decision makers, where the responsibility lies outside of Vale.

Programmes
1.1 Explore and consider opportunities to bring forward the delivery of homes people can afford.
1.2 Adopt a policy framework that ensures those homes could be delivered in a way that supports the environment and people living healthy lives.

1.1 PROJECTS	How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...
Explore and consider opportunities to bring forward the delivery of homes people can afford.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of houses given planning permission

Explore a council-owned holding company/vehicle, to focus on delivering a wide range of regeneration and community benefits including housing, community facilities, land maintenance and health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of planning applications determined within timescale • Successful planning appeals • Homelessness and temporary accommodation – numbers and length of stay • Affordable homes delivered • Feedback through resident engagement
Explore how the council can provide low-cost sustainable housing. Include working with developers, registered providers, community trusts, as well as new partnerships. Include council owned housing. Include a definition of affordability relative to ability to pay, not to market value, and social rent definitions.	
Review our affordable housing planning policies and ensure they are providing what's needed in the Vale	
Review our strategy for spending s106 sums paid in lieu of onsite affordable housing and identify how earmarked funds, including retained S106 monies, can be best utilised to deliver affordable homes	
Explore how mobile homes might be better used as affordable homes, reviewing sites and policies to ensure good use of available space	
Use Garden Villages and Towns designation as a mechanism to introduce innovative housing to meet our needs for high quality, low energy, zero-carbon homes	

1.2 PROJECTS	How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...
Adopt a policy framework that ensures those homes could be delivered in a way that supports the environment and people living healthy lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIL collected and spent • Affordable homes delivered • Travel time to key services by car/cycle/walk • Carbon emissions baseline for the district/council and sources of emissions • Active travel and participation levels
Develop a s106 obligations strategy to inform negotiations between planners and developers	
Update the CIL spending strategy and associated procedures to accelerate the delivery of local infrastructural improvements for our communities both in line with our corporate objectives and, where appropriate, to support current spending on existing infrastructure	
Consider ways we can encourage lower-carbon construction in Vale	

<p>Develop an affordable housing SPD. Evidence of housing needs, housing mix, self-build, rural exception sites. Include definition of 'affordable'</p>	
<p>Develop a Land Use strategy to inform and guide OxPlan2050 and Vale Local Plan with proposed need for housing, retail, employment, leisure, open spaces</p>	
<p>Update the Local Development Plan to reflect the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) and connecting our strategic housing sites with employment land</p>	
<p>Update Vale's Local Plan and OxPlan2050 with modern environmental policies in support of government's and Vale's goals</p>	
<p>Develop a Housing Policy: that outlines the types of housing we are going to provide, in what mix of design and for what demographic and tenure, to inform our Local Plan and future work. Include affordable housing aspirations, consideration of an aging population, and environmental policies for housing</p>	
<p>Work with partners to produce an Active Travel Network map of current and required coverage across the Vale to include commercial and community buses, cycle paths and storage facilities, pavements and footpaths, green and blue infrastructure, and local taxi firms. Encourage systems that increase use of the Active Travel Network</p>	

THEME TWO

Tackling the Climate Emergency

We will do everything we can to help tackle the Climate Emergency. We will:

- reduce council emissions by 75% by 2025
- become a **carbon neutral council** by **2030**
- reduce all emissions across the Vale District by 75% by 2030
- aspire to be a **carbon neutral Vale district** by **2045**

Programmes

2.1 A climate emergency programme, focussed on what the council has control over, working towards our own targets for our own buildings, vehicles, leisure and arts centres.

2.2 A programme around exercising our influence with partners on wider policy, lobbying Government and identifying environmental policy gaps.

2.1 PROJECTS

How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...

Develop a Climate Emergency Strategy for the Council, setting out how we will reach Zero Carbon for all Vale assets by 2030. Identify energy saving opportunities in council-owned buildings and fleets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon emissions baseline for the district/council and sources of emissions • Reduction in single use plastics in council • Residual waste to landfill • Recycling rate • A count on green spaces - % hectare of total green space • Distance of developments from open publicly accessible green space • EV charging points installed/expressed as a proportion of the number of homes delivered on a development
Complete the CEAC Year One Climate Action Plan and plan for future years	
Include in Councils Open Space Strategy opportunities to increase biodiversity, increase tree cover, and (other things we want to do on Council's open spaces)	

2.2 PROJECTS	How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...
Complete the CEAC Year One Action Plan and plan for future years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
Ensure our Local Plan contains policies to make new buildings carbon zero to build and to live/work in	
Define a waste reduction scheme: including ways to reduce bulky waste headed to landfill and reduce recycling contamination	
Develop a tree-planting strategy and work with partners to plant more trees across the district	
Develop a Biodiversity Net Gain Targeting Strategy and contribute to a Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire	
Provide electric charging points in Vale car parks and at our buildings and work with local partners to increase charging infrastructure across Oxfordshire	
Encouraging retro fitting houses with sustainable energy schemes; help residents take advantage of schemes that come along to help with costs	

THEME THREE

Building Healthy Communities

We will contribute to **making people's lives healthier** by encouraging the **switch to more active travel, improving air quality** where people work and live, and providing **active opportunities**.

Programmes
3.1 Building strong communities and connections, with a sense of place and strong community identity.
3.2 Promoting healthy place shaping and active communities, for everyone
3.3 Safeguarding and supporting our vulnerable residents.

3.1 PROJECTS	How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...
Review the use of Community buildings and other facilities owned or managed by the council to maximise usage, income for the council and ensure communities have spaces in which to come together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active travel • Participation in volunteering/community groups • Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board measures • Air quality in our AQMAs • Number of visits to leisure centres/classes attended • Number of visits to arts centres • Resident satisfaction with their area as a place to live
Establish a Public Arts policy	
Maintain and develop the council's Community Enablement function to respond to changing needs because of Covid-19	
Work with others to promote Active Travel and support the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans to help shape new developments that link homes to work, recreation and social spaces within communities	
Develop planning policies to ensure careful consideration of the effect of air pollution on the lives of people who will live there	
Update the Air Quality Management Action Plans for the Vale's air pollution hotspots; Work with Oxfordshire County Council to improve how we measure and report air pollution and how we will work with schools and community groups to raise awareness of our clean air campaigns	

3.2 PROJECTS	How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...
Produce an Active communities strategy; setting out how the council will work with our communities and partners and enable everyone to participate in physical activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of all Health Improvement Board measures and indicators.
Work with Active Oxfordshire to target get active projects in our most deprived communities	
Promote use of the Council's public green spaces for exercise and activity	

Identify councils owned land for community gardening and allotments projects	
Active engagement with the Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure the Vale has strong representation in countywide health forums	

3.3 PROJECTS	How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...
Work as part of the South and Vale Community Safety Partnership on the agreed priorities: tackling Domestic abuse; exploitation of vulnerable people and children (including modern slavery, county lines); and reducing knife crime, harm and vulnerability caused by drugs and alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety Partnership measures and direction of travel indicators • Equalities data • Covid-19 community hub referrals/shielded residents • Homelessness and temporary accommodation – numbers and length of stay
Develop a new framework on vulnerability, responding to changes in needs arising from the Covid-19 pandemic	
Refresh Taxi Licensing Policy	
Take a key role in countywide homelessness prevention and provision for young people, those with mental health conditions and review of adult homelessness pathway	

THEME FOUR

Building Stable Finances

We will **manage the council's resources responsibly** and make **effective use of the council's assets**. We will do our best to **build financial resilience** to protect the council against future uncertainties. We will work across the public sector to influence and maximise funding for local government, in order to continue to invest and provide the services residents and businesses need.

Programmes
4.1 We will explore and actively consider all avenues to deliver financial stability, including maximising income available to the council.
4.2 We will make effective use of the council's assets acting in a manner that ensures the long-term financial viability for the benefit of our residents and the environment.

4.1 PROJECTS	How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...
Introduce an Investment Strategy and associated Investment Policy which gives the Council greater ability to invest in a wider range of assets to maximise its return on capital and therefore improve its income	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of the Council's cost savings and income targets• Total income from service fees and charges
Commit resources to identify more third-party income, including government and other grants, to help pay for our services	

Identify opportunities to generate additional income from our services and assets and review these annually as part of the budget setting process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of external funding secured to support the delivery of projects and programmes
Review the schedule of existing contracts to identifying opportunities for rationalisation and savings	
Upgrade the council's finance IT systems to improve functionality and support in-year budget monitoring	
Lobby for the ability to set our Council Tax at a level that can sustain council services while seeking opportunities to reduce council tax for those on the lowest incomes	
Lobby for a fairer distribution of government funding and more devolution of funding to councils to sustain essential local services	

4.2 PROJECTS	How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...
Develop a comprehensive and ethical Procurement Policy that reflects our corporate goals and aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • Income from new sources • Net cost of arts facilities to council per year.
Conduct a Strategic Property Review to identify opportunities to enhance, redevelop, transfer the councils assets to maximise income and/or benefit to the district	
Complete an asset management plan to provide a comprehensive policy to inform how assets may be most efficiently maintained	
Undertake a full review of all leases and licences to ensure council income is collected when due and maximised	
Undertake a detailed review of the financial position of the Beacon in Wantage and determine what changes to its operations can be made to improve its viability	
Insource our grounds maintenance and public conveniences contracts to save funds and increase flexibility over how our public spaces are used and managed	

THEME FIVE

Working in Partnership

To help us achieve our aims and objectives effectively, efficiently and fairly, we will work in partnership with other councils, authorities and businesses, non-profit organisations, community and residents' groups. We will **provide support to** residents and organisations to effect and drive change **in the community** and we will provide all the support we can to **businesses in the Vale** to help them succeed.

Programmes
5.1 We will work in partnership to influence and shape regional and national agendas to maximise opportunities for our communities and businesses.
5.2 We will work with and support our residents, businesses and communities to effect and enable change

5.1 PROJECTS	How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...
Create a partnerships protocol. Map our current partnerships and assess the effectiveness of each. clarify which local, regional, and national partnerships Vale needs to have an active presence in and focus resource accordingly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vacant commercial/office premises in district• Newly incorporated businesses• Unemployment rate

Develop an enhanced consultations strategy and process to ensure we respond to consultations and proactively lobby national government and other bodies on matters that impact our corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of working age population in employment • Number of businesses supported by ED • Number of active partnerships and annual report on effectiveness • Number of consultations we respond to and impact narrative • £ in community grants and impact narrative
Create a framework that sets out how we will engage with developers, other councils, and members to maximise opportunities for our priorities to shape development	
Work with businesses to undertake economic development review to ensure that council is providing support to SMEs, homebased businesses, supporting skills development, and ensuring that businesses are playing a role in place making	
Input into countywide and Arc-wide economic recovery plans to maximise understanding of the local impact of Covid-19 and to help shape the support available to our local economy	
Strengthen any existing network of local business groups to increase awareness of the council's ED programmes and communication throughout the district	
Work with Oxfordshire County Council to introduce civil parking enforcement for the Vale	

5.2 PROJECTS	How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...
Support new business start-ups and support schemes for businesses and residents through post Covid-19 economic recovery initiatives, by implementing the “Opening Up High Streets Safely Fund” and associated schemes	As above
Find ways to elevate the understanding of and promote Neighbourhood Plans in planning decisions with a review of development appraisal and communications with all parties prior to an application coming to committee	
Review the planning committee process to identify ways to maximise public understanding, engagement and participation as well as supporting member input into the committee meetings with opportunities for training and development.	
Review developer contribution collection and spend policy and improve ward member and parish council involvement with a clear timetable that is triggered by officers, with improved communication from the council	
Refresh our community grants scheme and introduce a Community Lottery to raise funds for groups to develop in line with our corporate objectives	

THEME SIX

Working in an Open and Inclusive Way

We will work openly and transparently, promoting a world in which all can participate equally. We will listen to feedback from local residents, communities, businesses, partners and our own officers. Our work will particularly aim to include those groups that have historically been marginalised or those that have been hard to reach. We will ensure we are accountable and that our decisions are open to appropriate scrutiny, and we will admit when we get things wrong.

Programmes
6.1 We will improve our use of technology to increase understanding and access to what we do, how we work and the decisions we make.
6.2 We will increase meaningful engagement and communication with everyone.
6.3 We will strengthen our governance framework and address our policy gaps, improving transparency.

6.1 PROJECTS	How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...
Provide and maintain a new Vale website with increased accessibility to services and information, on multiple devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of access to online and digital services • Number of transactions carried out online/digitally • Overall residents satisfaction
Develop our use of social media platforms to reach and engage with more residents and local businesses	

Introduce live streaming and recordings of public meetings to increase accessibility and understanding of the democratic process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls to contact centre resolved first time • Average call time/number received • Equalities data • FOI queries answered in timescale • Complaints answered in timescale • Number of streams of live meetings/viewing analytics • Number and value of opportunities for public engagement • Staff satisfaction/turnover
Review the current use of online surveys assessing their take up over time, and by subject, as well as reviewing survey design	

6.2 PROJECTS	How we plan to measure what we are achieving on this theme...
Seek to ensure the creation of community liaison groups form part of all early stages of development planning, to understand local infrastructure needs and support community cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
Refresh Town and Parish Forums so they are more interactive and useful for communities and develop the Connecting Communities Policy	
Work with communities, schools and other local organisations on shared campaigns and initiatives that help further our corporate objectives	
Reinstating residents surveys in a refreshed form - deliver effective ways for the public to have their say, to reach more people, mechanisms for feedback, more timely dialogue, educate and provide subject matter information to facilitate opinions being more informed	
Explore initiatives to increase voter registration and turnout levels at elections, especially amongst young people.	
Ensure council's consultations engage specifically with young people and other under-represented groups	

6.3 PROJECTS	How we will measure what we are achieving on this theme...
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Work to adopt new CIPFA financial management code to enhance our financial governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of postings published in FOI response area, code of conduct complaints, etc • Progress of CIPFA financial management code implementation
Council reporting and decision-making templates to include impact on the climate emergency	
Review the councils constitution and scheme of delegation annually	
Increase and improve publicly available information – e.g.- code of conduct complaints (decision noted) FOIs (responses), corporate complaints (data)Improve accessibility of corporate information through publishing on our website.	