Executive Agenda

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<mark>Date:</mark> 23 August 2010

Website: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

A meeting of the

Executive

**will be held on Friday, 3RD SEPTEMBER, 2010 at 3.00 PM
Guildhall, ABINGDON**

Members of the Executive:

Councillors

Tony de Vere (Chair)	Jenny Hannaby
Richard Webber (Vice-Chair)	Angela Lawrence
Mary de Vere	Jerry Patterson
Richard Gibson	

A large print version of this agenda is available. In addition any background papers referred to may be inspected by prior arrangement.

Please note that this meeting will be held in a wheelchair accessible venue. If you would like to attend and have any special access requirements, please let the Democratic Services Officers know beforehand and they will do their very best to meet your requirements.

Margaret Reed
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Members are reminded of the provisions contained in the code of conduct adopted on 30 September 2007 and standing order 34 regarding the declaration of personal and prejudicial interests.

Agenda

Open to the Public including the Press

Map and vision
<mark>(Page 4)</mark>

A map showing the location of the venue for this meeting is attached. A link to information about nearby car parking is http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/transport/car_parking/default.asp

The council's vision is to build and safeguard a fair, open and compassionate community.

1. Apologies for absence

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Minutes

To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 2 July 2010 (previously published).

3. Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of personal or personal and prejudicial interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

4. Urgent business and chair's announcements

To receive notification of any matters which the chair determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the chair.

5. Statements, petitions and questions relating to matters affecting the executive.

Any statements, petitions and questions from the public under standing order 32 will be made or presented at the meeting.

6. Budget virement requests
<mark>(Pages 5 - 7)</mark>

<mark>Appended</mark> to the agenda is a schedule of requests for virements. Table 1 sets out virement requests for approval by the Executive. Table 2 sets out virements approved under delegated authority by the Strategic Director.

Recommendation

that the virements set out in table 1 of the agenda report be approved.

KEY DECISIONS

7. Faringdon and Wantage market towns strategy and action plan
(Pages 8 - 31)

To receive and consider report 41/10 of the Head of Economy, Leisure and Property.

8. IT strategy
(Pages 32 - 105)

To consider report 40/10 of the Head of HR, IT, and Customer Services.

OTHER MATTERS

9. Financial outturn 2009/10 - to monitor financial performance
(Pages 106 - 111)

To consider report 38/10 of the Head of Finance.

10.   Revenue Budget Monitoring - Q1
(Pages 112 - 115)

To receive and consider report 42/10 of the Head of Finance.

11.   Website review
(Pages 116 - 118)
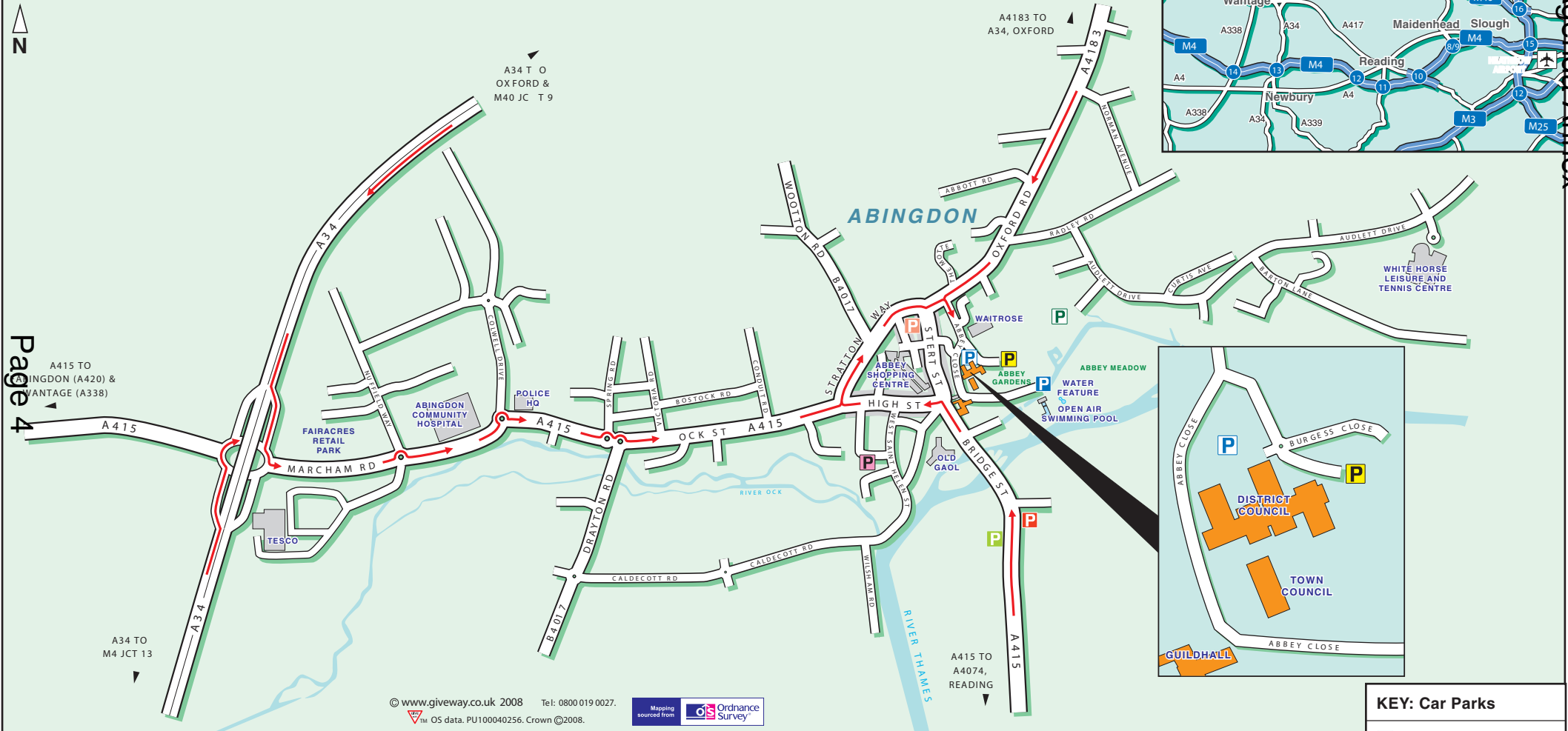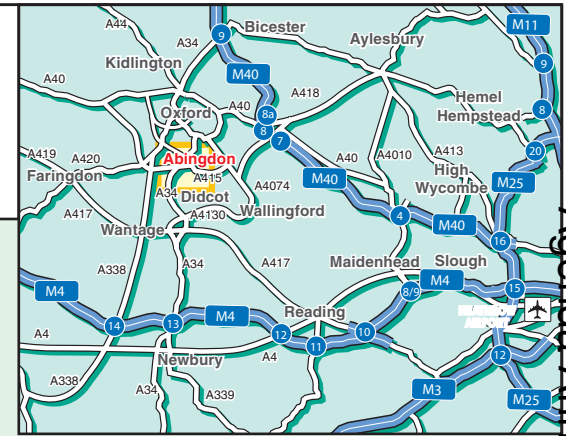
To consider report 39/10 of the Head of Corporate Strategy.

12.   Health and safety policy
(Pages 119 - 137)

To consider report 42/10 of the Head of HR, IT, and Customer Services.

Exempt information under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972

None

Vale of White Horse District Council

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By rail – the nearest main line railway stations to Abingdon are either Didcot Parkway (seven miles) or Oxford (eight miles). Radley railway station is located on the main line between Oxford and Didcot and is three miles from Abingdon town centre. For details of train times visit www.nationalrail.co.uk or call 08457 484950

By bus – there are a number of bus routes serving Abingdon town centre. For details of services and timetables, visit Oxfordshire County Council's website at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk. Contact details for bus operators can be found on the travel information pages on our website www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Parking – details of car parks charges can be found on our website

KEY: Car Parks

- P Abbey Close
- P Cattle Market
- P Charter Multi-storey
- P Civic
- P Rye Farm
- P Hales Meadow
- P Audlett Drive
- P West St Helen Street

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Mapping sourced from Ordnance Survey

Budget Virements requests received at 18 August 2010
for Executive Approval (or noting where approved under Delegated Powers)

Table 1 in this report identifies all budget virements that must be authorised by Executive and reported to Council.   Table 2 lists those budget virements which have been approved under delegated powers and which are reported to Executive for information only.

Budget virements do not increase the council's expenditure. The list includes a number of virements at a detailed level. This is to ensure that, wherever feasible, budget variances on day-to-day expenditure and income do not arise and that the real budget pressures and potential underspends can be correctly identified.

Key to Type
1 Within a subjective heading within a cost centre
2 Within a cost centre but across subjective headings
3 Within the cost centres of a service area
4 Across service areas
5 Over £10,000

Table 1 - Virements for Approval by Executive

Date	Account From	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Account To	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Virement Total £	Virement Percentage	Reason	Type
28/05/2010	2201	CT11	Committee Management	4400	CT11	Committee Management	2,500	17.0%	To provide a budget for the hire of investigators to undertake Code of Conduct complaints but using savings in the budget for room hire.	2
06/07/2010	1001/1003 /1005	CH11	IT Operations	1001/1003 /1005	CH41	Fit For The Future	59,010	14.3%	The salary budget for the Organisational Change Manager is currently sat in CH11 (IT Operations) cost centre but there is now a dedicated cost centre (CH41) so the budget needs to be moved.	5
20/07/2010	1001/1003 /1005	HE11	Housing Provision (Enabling)	1001/1003 /1005	HM11	Housing Register	11,230	51.4%	The budget for two Admin Assistant posts in Housing is split between Housing Enabling and Housing Register. It has now been established that both posts should come under the Housing Register cost centre so the budget in Housing Enabling needs to be moved.	5
20/07/2010	5006	CN31	Wantage LSP	3008	CN41	Abingdon LSP	2,880	59.2%	To provide a budget for contractual travel costs for a member of staff redeployed from Wantage LSP to Abingdon LSP	3
03/08/2010	4402	RS73	R & B Client Team	4402	RS71	Accountancy	7,800	56.3%	Bank charges for transactions processed via the Post Office or Paypoint have increased due to a significant increase in transactions. This has been mirrored by a fall in charges for council tax transactions paid via Girobank. This virement moves the projected saving Girobank charges to cover the increase in Co-op Bank charges.	3
05/08/2010	4302/4304		Various cost centres	9601	BS01	Business Support Unit	59,610	n/a	To write out an internal recharge budget in BS01 (Business Support Unit) in preparation for the new way of allocating printing and photocopying costs when multi-functional devices are introduced.	5

Date	Account From	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Account To	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Virement Total £	Virement Percentage	Reason	Type
06/08/2010	9102	SR61	White Horse Leisure Centre	4999	SB31	Contingency	60,000	n/a	The contract for managing the White Horse Leisure Centre has been extended until 2014 and this will generate £60,000 additional income each year. This is part of the £125,000 saving from the review of operational property and the budget is currently sat in Contingency.	5
06/08/2010	4400	SR11	ELP Support	4400	CC11	Wantage Civic Hall	2,000	8.7%	Virement to create a budget for the purchase of a 3 year wedding licence for the Civic Hall to be funded from the Vale Halls 'invest to save' budget. This will enable civil ceremonies to take place which will generate extra bookings and extra income.	3
10/08/2010	9027	CS21	Community Safety	4400	CS31	LAA1 Reward Grant	24,210	30.0%	A new cost centre has been created to separate the LAA1 reward grant from other community safety budgets. This virements moves the budget to the new cost centre.	3
16/08/2010	4400	SD02	Go Active	1001/1003/1005	SD02	Go Active	1,740	11.9%	The Go Active Co-ordinator has taken on additional responsibilities which results in a salary increase from July 2010. The increase will be met by a reduction in Fees & Hired Services.	2

Total Virements 230,980

Summary	
Total Type 1	0
Total Type 2	4,240
Total Type 3	36,890
Total Type 4	0
Total Type 5	189,850
Total	**230,980**

Date		Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Account To	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Virement Total £	Virement Percentage	Reason	Type

Table 2 - Virements approved under Delegated Powers for noting

Date	Account From	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Account To	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Virement Total £	Virement Percentage	Reason	Type
09/07/2010	1001/1003/1005	LC11	Licensing	1100	LC11	Licensing	9,000	n/a	The post of Principal Licensing Officer is being covered for 6 months by Nigel Haverson and his costs are charged to Agency Staff. The corresponding saving on the salary budget needs to be moved to Agency Staff to cover theses costs. This also applies to the Taxi Licensing budget (below).	1
09/07/2010	1001/1003/1005	LC31	Taxi Licensing	1100	LC31	Taxi Licensing	9,000	n/a	The post of Principal Licensing Officer is being covered for 6 months by Nigel Haverson and his costs are charged to Agency Staff. The corresponding saving on the salary budget needs to be moved to Agency Staff to cover theses costs.	1
28/07/2010	4508	RS71	Accountancy	4704	RS71	Accountancy	1,000	n/a	To provide budget to cover the cost of subscribing to SPARSE - the Sparsity Partnership for authorities delivering rural services - by using the projected underspend on computer consumables.	1
28/07/2010	4999	SB31	Contingency	4400	DP01	Development Policy	800	n/a	Use of Contingency to provide budget for work done by Spatial Planning & Infrastructure Partnership (agreed by Leader of the Council) for which no budget exists.	4
06/08/2010	4400	SR11	ELP Support	4400	CC11	Wantage Civic Hall	860	3.5%	Virement to provide budget for the installation of a telephone entry system at Wantage Civic Hall, to be funded from the Vale Halls 'invest to save' budget.	3
13/08/2010	4503/4307	Various	Various cost centres in Corp. Strategy	4503/4307	CS41	Corp. Strategy Admin	3,140	0.5%	A new cost centre has been created to amalgamate the postage and stationery budgets into one cost centre within Corporate Strategy. This virement moves the budgets from the existing cost centres.	3
						Total Virements	**23,800**			

Summary	
Total Type 1	19,000
Total Type 2	0
Total Type 3	4,000
Total Type 4	800
Total Type 5	0
Total	**23,800**

Executive Report

**Vale
of White Horse**
District Council

REPORT NO
41/10

Faringdon and Wantage strategy and action plan

> **Recommendations**
>
> That the executive:
>
> (a) approves the Faringdon and Wantage strategy and action plan included as an appendix to this report
>
> (b) authorises the head of economy, leisure and property in consultation with the strategic director and portfolio-holder to review and amend the strategy annually, and approve the annual action plan.

Purpose of report

1. This report sets out how a strategy and action plan for the Vale's market towns will help to sustain vibrant market towns and requests that the executive approves the strategy and action plan (included as an appendix to this report). In addition, the executive is asked to approve the processes for reviewing and amending the strategy annually and approving the annual action plan.

Strategic objectives

2. A market towns strategy and action plan will contribute to the council's strategic objective to "**support a vibrant local economy**" and to the corporate priority to

'**work in partnership to sustain vibrant market towns**' and also supports the Vale sustainable community strategy 2008/16 priority: '**maintaining and enhancing the health and vitality of the Vale's market town centres**'.

Background

3. Nationally, market towns have suffered in the last few decades from the growth of out-of-town retailers, internet shopping and increased car ownership, which allows people to travel further for shopping and leisure facilities. In addition to these longer-term structural trends, market towns have also been particularly affected during the 2008-10 recession, which was the worst downturn in the last fifty years with significant consequences for the retail sector.

4. Officers have developed the council's strategy and action plan ('the strategy') to improve town centre vitality in the market towns of Faringdon and Wantage. The vitality of the Vale's market towns is important because they provide both local shopping and employment opportunities and a range of services including libraries, post offices and health facilities for the majority of Vale residents. A separate strategy and action plan will be prepared for Abingdon.

5. Whilst the council has developed the strategy, its success is dependent on strong partnership working with a wide range of organisations, including the town councils, joint economic forums (JEFs), community organisations, chambers of commerce and various action groups.

6. The strategy proposes the following strategic aims:
    *   building for the future
    *   enhance the retail offering in the town centres
    *   improve the 'offer' and accessibility of the market places
    *   provision of high quality services
    *   Improving the accessibility of town centres
    *   attractive and clean environments
    *   enhancing the distinctiveness of our towns
    *   improving safety and security.

7. The overall responsibility for the delivery of the strategy will rest with the council. However, the strategy proposes that the JEFs will play a key role in the delivery of the action plan.

8. The shared economic development team will work with the JEFs to co-ordinate partnership activity, liaise with public sector colleagues and businesses, consult with residents, secure external funding, monitor progress and make recommendations to improve project delivery.

9. The action plan details specific projects for Faringdon and Wantage and identifies projects that have a Vale-wide focus but also impact upon the market towns.

10. There has been a period of consultation. A draft strategy and action plan was published on the council's website and a press release was issued. The council received over 60 responses in a six week period ending on 30 July 2010. Two thirds of these responses were from Wantage, just under a third from Faringdon and a small number from elsewhere in the Vale and Oxfordshire. Over 70 per cent of the respondents believed the strategy presented an accurate picture of the economic vitality/prosperity of the market towns. Where appropriate, the strategy and action plan has been amended to take account of consultation responses.

11. The council's Scrutiny committee commented on the strategy and action plan at its meeting on 19 August and where appropriate the strategy and action plan has been amended to take account of the committee's comments.

12. The consultation responses and the comments of the Scrutiny committee suggest that there is no need to make significant changes to the strategy and action plan. On this basis, officers recommend the executive to approve the Faringdon and Wantage strategy and action plan, which is included as an appendix to this report.

13. It is important that the strategy and action plan is monitored and reviewed on an annual basis to take account of any changes in economic circumstances and resources. In order to achieve this, officers recommend the executive to authorise the head of economy, leisure and property, in consultation with the strategic director and portfolio-holder, to review and amend the strategy annually, and approve the annual action plan.

Options

14. The council could decide not to have a strategy and action plan. However, it would then not be clear how it was using its resources to achieve a corporate priority.

Financial implications

15. There are no financial implications arising from this report, as any expenditure can be met from the existing economic development revenue budgets.

Legal implications

16. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risks

17. The main risk is that projects are not delivered in the timescales envisaged. However the action plan identifies projects where funding is secure or security is imminent and also identifies partners who are willing to manage the projects within the timescales and from existing budgets.

Other implications

18. The draft strategy recognises the diversity of our communities in terms of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, religion and spoken language.

19. Since the publication of the draft strategy the new government has announced the abolition of regional development agencies like the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). The government has invited council and business leaders to submit proposals for local enterprise partnerships (LEPs). LEPs will be able to take over many of the regional development agencies' responsibilities but they will cover smaller geographical areas and will not have dedicated central government funding. The council is supporting a proposal for an Oxfordshire LEP but the government's response to this proposal is not yet known.

20. SEEDA will cease to operate some time during the financial year 2011/12 but contracts have been entered into for the SEEDA funding for Faringdon and Wantage.

Conclusion

21. The strategy and action plan shows how the council will use its economic development resources to support the vitality of Faringdon and Wantage. During a time of change it is important that the council demonstrates its community leadership role and does all it can to make sure that projects which are important for Faringdon and Wantage are successfully delivered. Officers recommend that the executive approves the strategy and action plan and the process for review.

Background Papers

Analysis of consultation responses

Appendix

Faringdon and Wantage strategy and action plan

Faringdon and Wantage
Strategy and Action Plan
2010/11 to 2012/13

Introduction

This strategy and action plan for Faringdon and Wantage ('the strategy') has been developed to improve town centre vitality in the market towns of Faringdon and Wantage. This is an economic development strategy and should be read in conjunction with the council's Local Plan, draft core strategy, and preferred options for Faringdon and Wantage. The vitality of the Vale's market towns is important because they provide both local shopping and employment opportunities and a range of services including libraries, post offices and health facilities for the majority of Vale residents. A separate strategy and action plan will be prepared for Abingdon.

The strategy supports the council's strategic objective 'supporting a vibrant economy'and the corporate priority to 'work in partnership to sustain vibrant market towns'. The strategy and action plan also supports the Vale sustainable community strategy 2008/16 priority: 'maintaining and enhancing the health and vitality of the Vale's market town centres'. More details of supporting strategies and plans are included in the appendix.

The council recognises that action needs to be taken quickly to address some of the issues faced by the town centres of Faringdon and Wantage but short term actions need to be supported by a longer term strategy to make sure that these actions provide permanent rather than temporary improvements.

The strategy has been developed by the council but its success is dependent on strong partnership working with a wide range of organisations. Many problems cannot be tackled effectively by any single organisation and co-ordinated action is required.

The strategy focuses on new economic development actions as the driver of town centre vitality but it is important to note that the council already provides a number of services that influence town centre vitality including: development policy and management, community safety, street cleansing, public conveniences and car parking. The council understands that there is a strong relationship between economic development, physical development and social development and the strategy supports the vision of the Vale sustainable community strategy 2008/16:

A sustainable Vale;

- **with prosperous, inclusive and thriving communities that have good access to a range of housing, jobs and services**

- **where everyone can feel safe and enjoy life**
- **where our needs can be met without compromising the natural and built heritage or the ability of future generations to meet their needs**

Background

The national context

Government recognises the importance of vibrant town centres:

'Town centres that are attractive, well-designed, and well-managed, with a range of shops, arts and cultural uses, entertainment, good amenities, and good transport connections, are engines for economic growth, providing a focal point for business and social interactions. Vibrant town centres are good for business: they create jobs, attract investment and generate income. At their best, they create a local buzz and define the wider area, attracting people from near and far.' ('Looking after our town centres', Department of Communities and Local Government, 2009)

However a Commission for Rural Communities briefing note on market towns published in June 2009 included the following points:

- almost 11 million people live in approximately 1600 market towns and larger villages across rural England – over 20 per cent of the total population
- to May 2009, market towns have seen steeper rises in unemployment than the national average – 120 per cent compared to 90 per cent for England as a whole
- amongst the hardest hit are middle class and professional groups with greater links to urban economies, and towns with high levels of young families and those working in the administrative sector in middle England
- in the majority of market towns recently surveyed, the number of vacant shop units has increased over the last six months; around 60 per cent of existing vacant retail premises have remained empty during that time - this damages both the look and economic vitality of town centres.

The regional view

The new coalition government has announced that the regional development agencies like the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) will shortly be abolished. It is likely that SEEDA will cease operating during the 2011/12 financial and it should be noted that contracts have been entered into for the projects in the action plan that require SEEDA funding.

In place of regional development agencies the government has invited council and business leaders to submit proposals for local enterprise partnerships (LEPs). LEPs will be able to take over many of the regional development agencies' responsibilities but they will cover smaller geographical areas and will not have dedicated central government funding. The council is supporting a proposal for an Oxfordshire LEP but the government's response to this proposal is not yet known.

The local view

'Throughout the country the development of large retail centres and the increasing number of people buying goods through the internet is threatening the vitality of market towns and their traditional role as service centres. The challenge is to create attractive local shopping environments in the towns and secure new shops of a sufficient scale and quality that attract key retailers and retain expenditure in the area. In addition there are opportunities for the Vale's historic town centres with their small shops, to attract independent, specialist businesses that provide a distinctive and contrasting experience to shopping in the multiple chains in large modern centres.'(Draft Core Strategy, Vale of White Horse District Council, 2009)

Market towns have therefore suffered in the last few decades from the growth of out-of-town retailers, internet shopping and increased car ownership which allows people to travel further for shopping and leisure facilities. In addition to these longer-term structural trends, market towns have also been particularly affected by the 2008-10 recession which was the worst downturn in forty years with significant consequences for the retail sector.

Faringdon

Faringdon is the Vale's smallest market town. The population was 6,187 at the time of the 2001 Census and recent population estimates released by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) for Faringdon and the Coxwells are 7,252 in 2007. Its attractive landscape setting on the limestone ridge overlooking the Thames Valley, its period market hall and town houses give it the ambience of a quintessential English market town. From afar the town is dominated by Folly Hill and its iconic tower. The A420 bypasses the town.

Although it acts as the local service centre and has a reasonable range of local shops and services, many people look to Oxford and Swindon for work and their higher order goods and services. It has one infant and one junior school, a private prep school (Ferndale), a secondary school, a health centre, a swimming pool, a leisure centre, a library and three hotels. Faringdon town centre accommodates a range of mostly independent shops and enjoys low levels of retail vacancy. According to the council's retail vacancy survey, only three per cent of commercial units in Faringdon town centre were vacant in September 2009. However since the survey was completed two further shops have closed for various reasons and the vacancy rate has doubled to 6 per cent. This is still significantly below the national average (12 – 15 per cent).

The existing Local Plan has allocated land for some 400 houses and a new business centre between the town and the bypass. The housing development is now underway and outdoor leisure facilities at Jaspers Hill are soon to follow. As part of the draft core strategy there are proposals for an additional 400 homes, 4 ha of employment land and a primary school south of Park Road. A key challenge will be to continue to maintain the vitality and historic character of the town and its centre, and ensure that future development supports the social and economic well-being of the town and its residents. In drawing up its draft core strategy the council is

considering alternative proposals for improving the shopping offer in the town. The options include extending Budgens supermarket with additional spaces in Southampton Street car park and / or identifying land for an additional supermarket north west of Gloucester Street car park or east of Park Road. There are also opportunities to redevelop the shopping area in Faringdon that would provide shop units that more closely match what retailers want and an environment that shoppers expect. The intention is that Faringdon will continue as a small but important centre serving the western part of the Vale.

Wantage

Wantage is an historic market town, thought to be the birth place of King Alfred. It is the second largest settlement in the district and a shopping and service centre for the central part of the Vale. The population was 9,767 at the time of the 2001 Census and recent population estimates released by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) estimated the population of Wantage as 10,498[1] in 2007. Its attractive market place and downland setting are essential components of its character. Just to the north of the town is Grove, the Vale's third largest settlement with a population of 7,224 in 2007[2].

Wantage has three primary schools, the Fitzwaryn special school, King Alfred's Community and Sports College (a secondary school), a community hospital, a residential home, a library, the Wantage Civic Hall, the Wantage Leisure Centre and the Vale and Downland Museum. There are plans to rationalise King Alfred's school onto two sites (currently on three sites), which will provide an opportunity to consider the future of the land no longer needed by the school. A challenge will be to upgrade the town's leisure offer to meet the growing recreational requirements of Wantage and nearby Grove.

The former industrial area around Limborough Road has recently been redeveloped to provide a new Sainsbury supermarket and other retail and residential units, and the site of St Mary's School is being redeveloped for housing. One issue is the vacant and under used premises around the Waitrose supermarket in Wallingford Street, which offer an opportunity to improve the retail offer and appearance of the town. A key challenge will be to maintain the vibrancy of the whole town centre, and serious thought will need to be given to how to retain and improve the character of the historic Market Place. The council is also conscious that parts of Wantage town centre have been affected by the recession and by the expansion in retail floorspace that has occurred in Wantage over the last two or three years. According to the council's retail vacancy survey, there were 25 vacant business premises in September 2009 which is equivalent to a vacancy rate of 15 per cent (measured in terms of business units). However since then three of the larger empty premises on the Market Place have secured tenants, bringing the vacancy rate down to 12 per cent which is below the national average.

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[1] Source ONS Mid Year Population Estimates for 2007

[2] Source ONS Mid Year Population Estimates for 2007

The existing Local Plan has allocated land for 2,500 new houses on Grove airfield near Wantage. Developers have consulted on plans that include 40% affordable housing, a mixed use local centre, primary school, a secondary school, open spaces play areas and playing fields.

Health-checks

Faringdon and Wantage (together with Grove) have recently undertaken market town 'health-checks' - an action planning approach for communities originally designed by the Countryside Agency to assess the strengths and weaknesses of market towns. As a result of this, there are community action plans in place in these towns. These plans tend to be focused on specific activities which result in events and/or promotion of the town centres in order to attract more visitors.

Joined-up council services

The council's shared economic development team works closely with colleagues in the car parks, commercial services, community safety, environmental health, planning and development policy teams to maximise the social and economic prosperity of the Vale's market towns. Many council teams also work in partnership with other organisations to make best use of limited resources. For example, the community safety team works in partnership with Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust and other agencies to reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime.

Car parking

The council provides two car parks in Faringdon, on Southampton Street and Gloucester Street. In Wantage it provides three car parks, on Portway, Limborough Road and Mill Street. All these car parks give easy access to town centre shops and services. The council's car parking charges are designed to meet the council's objectives of covering the cost of the service, influencing usage patterns, and supporting town centre vitality.

A report on car parking in market towns, commissioned by Yorkshire Forward notes: 'It is the town's broader retail, commercial, leisure and/or tourism offer which is the primary factor affecting a town's competitiveness, not the provision of parking. So, if a town has a good retail offer, it will continue to attract customers, despite having poor parking facilities; in contrast, a town with very good parking facilities, but a limited retail offer, will struggle to attract customers. However, all other things being equal, parking will clearly have an effect.' (A detailed report on how parking can be managed in the region's market towns, Yorkshire Forward, 2007)

The council recognises that car parking charges do have an effect, along with a number of other factors, on town centre vitality. It welcomes evidence based proposals that meet the council's objectives for its car parking service and help to improve town centre vitality. For example, the council supports the Faringdon Retailers' Group's 'Buyback' scheme which allows shoppers to claim back the cost of car parking.

Public Transport

Public transport is very important in terms of improving access to jobs and services (particularly for those without a car); in breaking the cycle of deprivation and in combating climate change. Whilst transport is the responsibility of the county council partnership working is important and there have been significant improvements to public transport within the Vale in recent times including:-

- a new enhanced bus service serving Oxford-Faringdon-Swindon
- Faringdon – Wantage along the A417, serving rural communities between the two towns e.g. Stanford-in-the-Vale.
- Wantage local bus services

Public toilets

The council provides public toilets at the Southampton Street car park in Faringdon and the Portway car park in Wantage. These permanent toilet blocks are all cleaned regularly and have disabled access. They are closed overnight to reduce the risk of vandalism.

Joint economic forums (JEFs)

The Faringdon Joint Economic Forum is working to improve the vitality of the town centre. The forum is made up of representatives of the Vale of White Horse District Council, Faringdon Town Council, Faringdon Chamber of Commerce and a number of other community groups. Recent projects supported by the Joint Economic Forum include the establishment of the Faringdon Craft Fair, Faringdon in Bloom, a re-enactment of a Civil War battle in 2008 and an eco-week in 2010. Plans for a Heritage Day in 2011 are currently being developed.

The Wantage Joint Economic Forum is working to improve the vitality of the town centre. The forum is made up of representatives of the Vale of White Horse District Council, Wantage Town Council and Wantage Chamber of Commerce, Grove Pariish Council has 'observer' status. The Joint Economic Forum sponsored the market town healthcheck for Wantage, Grove and the surrounding area.

The JEFs have also identifed the projects underpinning the action plan and by working in partnership they create an opportunity to engage local stakeholders in discussion and collaboration; influencing organisational agendas to develop a shared strategic approach to town centre economic development and thus facilitating access to funding and resource opportunities.

Oxfordshire-wide economic partnerships

The council's shared economic development team is involved in a number of economic partnerships that operate across Oxfordshire. This partnership approach to economic development helps to maximise benefits for businesses and residents in

the Vale. Two partnerships are very relevant to the success of this strategy and action plan:

- the Oxfordshire Market Towns Network (OMTN) which works with small market towns to help them remain vibrant and sustainable communities that serve both their town and the communities in the neighbouring area. OMTN has been successful in setting up business networks, linking schools with local businesses and has information about other funding that is currently available. OMTN also has information and contact details for various other agencies that can offer help or specialist advice to market towns.

- the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council has been supporting local village life across the county since 1920. It provides advice and guidance for community transport schemes, village shops, village hall management committees, rural housing and support for community-led planning. Thecouncil works in partnership with ORCC to ensure that our smaller market towns and villages benefit from this wide range of support, funding and initiatives.

Other important initiatives include the Oxfordshire Tourism Group and the Digital Inclusion Group.

Strategy

The Joint Economic Forums already have aims related to the economic vitality of town centres and bring together a number of partners including the district council, town councils and chambers of commerce. Therefore, this strategy proposes that the role of the Joint Economic Forums should be strengthened. The forums should play a key role in preparing, co-ordinating, monitoring and reviewing economic development plans for Faringdon and Wantage.

In order to make a significant difference these plans need to take account of all the factors that influence the long term vitality of town centres. The plans should cover the following strategic aims:

- **SA1: Building for the future**: Support and help drive progress on key physical developments in the town centres. This will in include historic assets, community facilities, visitor attractions and environmental improvements which are designed to be accessible to all.
- **SA2: Great shops**: Encourage town centre and edge of town retailers, and other businesses to work together to promote their towns and to help meet the needs of all customers. Make shoppers, visitors and potential investors more aware of what the towns offer. Explore opportunities available including loyalty cards, late night opening, Sunday trading and develop the towns' evening economies and tourism/leisure offers.
- **SA3: Market place hub**: To improve the 'offer' and accessibility of the towns' market places to make them a real focal point for residents, visitors and businesses and meet the needs of all customers.
- **SA4: High quality services**: Give residents and visitors the opportunity to enjoy high quality, accessible services and facilities within the towns; achieve continual improvement and enhancement of those facilities and services in accordance with the wishes of the electors, taxpayers and visitors.
- **SA5: Easy to get to**: Ensure everyone has good information about how to get to, and get around the towns (including a focus on signage; information about traffic, buses, car parks, cycle ways and accessible pedestrian routes).
- **SA6: Attractive and clean**: Ensure that there is good quality street furniture (bins, benches etc) and public toilets, minimal litter and graffiti, clean toilets, welcoming staff in shops, pubs cafes and restaurants.
- **SA7: To enhance the distinctiveness of our towns**: To add to and improve the quality of attractions in our towns, to promote what's on in the towns, and to make sure that there is good and widely accessible information about attractions, events, activities and eating out.
- **SA8: Safe and secure**: To ensure that everyone who lives, works and visits feels safe both by day and in the evenings.

Key principles

<u>Consultation</u>

Working in partnership with other agencies, statutory bodies, voluntary groups and individuals to ensure that changes and improvements to services and facilities meet the needs and wishes of residents and others; working with elected members to consult the people of Faringdon and Wantage about partnership services and levels of performance.

<u>Breaking the cycle of deprivation</u>

Recognising that many residents of Faringdon and Wantage are economically and socially disadvantaged and fully supporting priorities in the Oxfordshire and Vale sustainable community strategies that tackle economic and social disadvantage; using best endeavours to make sure that projects are inclusive and encourage community cohesion.

Action plan

The action plan that follows draws together actions arising from market town health checks, through ongoing consultation with the towns and from the work of the JEFs. Overall responsibility for the delivery of the action plan will rest with the council's economic development officer. It is anticipated that projects will be delivered by community organisations (such as the Folly Tower Trust and the skateboard group SK8 in Faringdon). In Wantage, the shared economic development team will administer the shop-front improvement scheme. The economic development team will also co-ordinate partnership activity, liaise with public sector colleagues and businesses, consult with residents, monitor progress and make recommendations to improve project delivery in both towns.

Funding

The JEFs in Wantage and Faringdon have a small amount of grant funding available to them and, at the discretion of the members, can offer grants to assist with new projects that will help to maintain or improve the vitality of the town centre. However, public and private sector funding to maintain or improve the vitality of town centres is very limited. Partnership working and the support of the community can strengthen the case for access to limited funding.

The council also believe that by working in partnership and sharing information there is an opportunity to make better use of existing resources. For example, new highways signage could be designed within an existing budget to make a town more attractive; businesses that become aware of forthcoming events may be willing to sponsor an event using an existing advertising budget.

There are opportunities to unlock funding arising from new developments that may have a direct impact on the provision of existing community facilities. There maybe a requirement for the enhancement of existing facilities or the provision of entirely new facilities, funded by the developer (sometimes known as 'developers' contributions' or 's106 contributions').

It is not always possible to provide specific detail about the projects that are to be taken forward because this is dependent, to a large extent, on the external funding that becomes available. However, the council will continue to work with partners in Wantage and Faringdon to ensure that projects with the greatest public support are taken forward as and when funding becomes available.

SEEDA Small Rural Towns Programme

In October 2009, Faringdon's JEF discussed and approved a short-list of seven projects derived from the health-check, and submitted a bid for SEEDA Small Rural Towns Programme funding. Three projects were allocated £61,000 SEEDA funding: the Folly Tower, the Skate Park and Communications Infrastructure. These projects will provide important community facilities, create new jobs, and significantly improve the quality of the towns' visitor attractions while contributing to the historical integrity of the town. The council will continue to work with Faringdon JEF to deliver these

important projects, and to identify future projects as and when funding opportunities become available.

In November 2009, Wantage JEF discussed and approved a short-list of eight projects derived from the health-check, and submitted a bid for SEEDA Small Rural Towns Programme funding. Four projects were allocated £98,000 SEEDA funding including: a shop front improvement scheme, the Market Place and Gateway Improvement Scheme, Letcombe Brooke improvements and walking and cycling cards. These projects will significantly improve town centre vitality in Wantage, result in environmental improvements along Letcombe Brook, and contribute to the attractiveness of the area as a visitor / tourism destination. The council will continue to work with Wantage JEF to deliver these important projects, and to identify alternative funding opportunities for other projects that are deemed to be important for the social and economic well-being of Wantage and Grove.

The new coalition government has announced that the regional development agencies like the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) will shortly be abolished. It is likely that SEEDA will cease operating during the 2011/12 financial and it should be noted that contracts have been entered into for the projects in the action plan that require SEEDA funding.

LEADER

In addition to the Small Rural Towns funding, South Oxfordshire District Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council have successfully secured £1.89 million of European Union 'LEADER' funding to help support rural communities in southern Oxfordshire. The funding will help to revitalise and support rural businesses and communities in southern Oxfordshire between now and 2013. The council will continue to work with rural businesses and communities to make sure that the Vale benefits from this funding. Faringdon is eligible for this funding and to date a number of businesses have benefited from LEADER funding. In Faringdon the Folly Tower Trust and Faringdon Community Bus have made successful applications for LEADER funding. Wantage and Grove, because of their size are not eligible for LEADER funding. However, as surrounding villages are eligible, both can benefit indirectly.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Appropriate measures will be developed for each action in order to measure the success of the strategy. Baseline information will be collected for each action and targets for improvement will be agreed in consultation with the JEFs. The progress in achieving the targets will be reported to the JEFs. If any of the actions are not progressing the JEFs will be told what is being done to improve performance.

The strategy and action plan will be reviewed annually to take account of any changes in resources, policy and economic circumstances. Any recommendations for amendments will be agreed in consultation with the JEFs.

ACTION PLAN[3]

1. FARINGDON ACTIONS

STRATEGIC AIMS	ACTIONS TO SUPPORT STRATEGIC AIMS	PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	ESTIMATE OF TOTAL INVESTMENT & KEY FUNDING SOURCES	TIMESCALE	INTENDED OUTCOMES
SA1 and SA7	Folly Tower renovation.	Folly Tower Trust / Focus on Faringdon / economic development team	£25,000 SEEDA £25,000 Leader £30,000 Country House Foundation £20,000 local fund-raising efforts	April 2010 – March 2012	To enable essential repairs to the roof and electrics and improvements to the outside space, taking into account access-for-all needs. This will improve its capability as a venue and allow it to continue to operate as a visitor attraction
SA1, SA4, SA7 and SA8)	Skate park build	economic development team/ SK8/ Focus on Faringdon/ County Youth Service	£21,000 (SEEDA) £35,000 Bloor Homes £8,000 Faringdon Town Council £7,500 SK8 £15,000 Lord Faringdon Trust	April 2010 – March 2012	To enable the provision of a youth and community resource by installing a Skate and BMX facility.
SA3 and SA7	Faringdon Arts Festival with a tint of Berners	Focus on Faringdon/ Faringdon Town Council	£5,000 (Oxon Thriving Economies Fund/ £2,000 Faringdon Town Council £3,000 Focus on Faringdon	July 2010 (and then annually)	To obtain funding to enable the development of a Festival programme. To work with partners to improve the promotion of this event to residents in Oxford and other areas.

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[3] Contracts have been entered into for the projects in the action plan that require SEEDA funding

2. WANTAGE ACTIONS

STRATEGIC AIMS	ACTIONS TO SUPPORT STRATEGIC AIMS	PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	ESTIMATE OF TOTAL INVESTMENT & KEY FUNDING SOURCES	TIMESCALE	INTENDED OUTCOMES
SA1, 2, 3, 6 7, and 8	Shop front improvement initiative	Wantage Rejuvenated/ economic development team	£37,500 SEEDA £37,500 retailers	April 2010 – March 2012	To support at least ten prospective new tenants and existing occupiers and encourage take-up of this scheme. This should reduce the number of vacant retail units in Wantage and deliver environmental improvements.
SA1, SA3, SA4, SA5 and SA6	Market Place improvement scheme and gateway treatments	Wantage Town Council/ economic development team	£38,000 SEEDA £38,000 Wantage Town Council	April 2010 – March 2012	To improve the functionality, accessibility and attractiveness of Market Place by investment in street furniture, notice boards and improvements to the central iconic space surrounding the statue of King Alfred.
SA2, SA4, SA5 and SA7	Letcombe Brooke trail and improvements	Letcombe Brook project officer	£15,000 SEEDA £15,000 Wantage Town Council	April 2010 – March 2012	To enable the introduction of a designated Letcombe Brooke trail with associated biodiversity and landscaping works.
SA4, SA5 and SA7	Walking and cycling route cards	HarBUG/ Grove Parish Council/ economic development team	£5,000 SEEDA £5,000 Thriving Economies Fund	April 2010 – March 2012	To enable the creation of walking, wheelchair-accessible and cycling cards that support local residents and business communities in Wantage and Grove. The information will support the visitor economy and raise awareness of the proximity of Wantage and Grove to the Ridgeway National Trail
SA1, SA3, SA4, SA5 and SA6	To provide support to the Wantage Betjeman Festival 2010 and 2011	economic development team	Time cost and external funding (where available)	End 2011	To support the Wantage Betjeman Festival through securing external funding and assistance with promotion.

3. VALE-WIDE ACTIONS THAT WILL BENEFIT FARINGDON AND WANTAGE

(All contributes towards the Vale council's corporate priorities 'work in partnership to sustain vibrant market towns and 'support rural business and communities')

STRATEGIC AIMS	ACTIONS TO SUPPORT STRATEGIC AIMS	PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	ESTIMATE OF TOTAL INVESTMENT & KEY FUNDING SOURCES	TIMESCALE	INTENDED OUTCOMES
SA2, SA3, SA4 and SA7	Write a Tourism Statement to promote tourism within the Vale	Choose Abingdon Partnership / Focus on Faringdon / Wantage Rejuvenated	Choose Abingdon Partnership (£2,500), Faringdon Chamber (£1,000), Wantage Chamber (£1,000)	March 2011	Production of a Tourism Statement for the Vale by December 2010. Production of a Tourism Publication that promotes the Vale as a destination for a week-long stay by June 2011.
SA2, SA4, SA5 and SA7	Manage and improve the Vale's tourism website: www.VisitVale.com	economic development team/ Tourism SE	£4,500 p.a. (Vale of White Horse District Council)	April 2010 – March 2013	To increase the number of website 'hits' by 5% p.a.
SA2, SA4, SA5 and SA7	Promote the Vale's tourism offering through events and exhibitions	economic development team/ Tourism SE/Oxfordshire County and District Councils	£5,500 p.a. (Oxfordshire County Council, Tourism SE)	April 2010 – March 2013	To promote the Vale as a visitor destination and help to increase the spend by visitors
SA2, SA4, SA5 and SA7	Support museums and attractions	economic development team	£32,000 p.a. (Vale of White Horse District Council)	April 2010 – March 2013	Enabling the provision of good quality visitor information and attractions.
SA1, 2, 3, 6 7, and 8	Work with Oxfordshire agencies to tackle skills and worklessness issues	economic development team/Oxfordshire County Council/Abingdon and Witney College/ Oxford Brookes University	To be identified	April 2010 – March 2013	Encourage businesses to offer placements to young people who are willing but lack the formal qualifications that help in securing employment .
SA2, SA3, SA4 and SA7	Support and develop the rural economy	EU LEADER manager/ economic development team	£100,000 p.a. (EU LEADER)	April 2010 – March 2013	To help at least 3 businesses develop Leader applications

STRATEGIC AIMS	ACTIONS TO SUPPORT STRATEGIC AIMS	PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	ESTIMATE OF TOTAL INVESTMENT & KEY FUNDING SOURCES	TIMESCALE	INTENDED OUTCOMES
SA4 and SA7	Undertake economic research to inform policy making and meet Funding Agency needs.	economic development team/chambers of commerce	Officer time only	April 2010 – March 2013	To undertake a retail vacancy survey, footfall survey & car park users' survey. To input to the Oxfordshire Skills Survey.
SA2, 3, 4 and 7	Support the Embrace partnership's engagement with ethnic minority business people in Faringdon and Wantage provide relevant articles for the newsletter.	equalities officer/economic development team/Embrace partnership	Officer time only	April 2010 – March 2013	To make sure that ethnic minority business people in Faringdon and Wantage have equal access to local government services so that they can compete successfully and provide good quality products and services
SA2, 3, 4, 5 and 7	Support a disabled access survey and 'shopability' awards scheme in Faringdon and Wantage	equalities officer/economic development team/Vale disability access group	Officer time only	April 2011 – March 2013	To encourage town centre businesses to provide good quality access and service to customers with disabilities
SA1, 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8	To provide ongoing technical economic support to the Science Vale UK (SVUK) Project Director	SVUK Project Director/ Oxfordshire County Council/economic development team	Officer time only	April 2010 – March 2011	To undertake economic analysis to define and quantify the economic significance of the SVUK area and encourage new investment and jobs

Other relevant strategies and plans

The Vale of White Horse District Council corporate plan 2009/12

In the introduction to the corporate plan Councillor Tony de Vere, the Leader of the Council, refers to the importance of the Vale's market towns:

'One of the key challenges we face is the current economic climate and addressing the many ways it will impact on residents. The plan strives to ensure that the Vale remains a sustainable and vibrant place to live and work during this period, by supporting people and the local economy where possible, and ensuring that we are ready to take advantage of the upturn when it occurs.

For the coming year we want to continue to tackle head-on some of the issues that people in the Vale feel are important, such as market town vitality and the problems of flooding and other issues associated with climate change. We want to make sure that there are more affordable homes, and that our towns and villages are cleaner, greener and safer communities.

One of the key challenges we face is delivering high quality and good value services with increasingly limited resources. We will continue to search for new ways of getting the best value for our Council Tax payers.

We are lucky that we live in a beautiful area with vibrant towns and villages and an economy that is relatively resilient in the face of economic stress. We want to continue to do what we can to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in the Vale.'

Relevant corporate strategic objective and priorities are:

Supporting a vibrant local economy:
- work in partnership to sustain vibrant market towns
- support rural business and communities
- promote "Science Vale UK " as a world leading area for science and technology

The Vale sustainable community strategy 2008/16

This strategy was prepared by the Vale Partnership. The Vale Partnership is a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which was set up by the Council to help it prepare the community strategy for the Vale. A Local Strategic Partnership is a way of bringing together the public, private and voluntary sectors of a local authority district to work jointly to tackle issues and plan for the future. The community strategy recognises the importance of the Vale's market towns and has the following priority:

Maintaining and enhancing the health and vitality of the Vale's market town centres:

The Vale Partnership is working to make sure that Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage town centres share in the economic prosperity of the rest of the Vale and provide residents with a good choice of shops and a wide range of cultural and leisure facilities.

What the Partnership will do:

> ➢ create better local awareness of the variety and quality of the shops and services that are available in the Vale's town centres
> ➢ prepare action plans designed to promote the retail offer in the town centres and consider the establishment of Business Improvement Districts for the Vale's main market town centres to help with the achievement of action plans, and
> ➢ continue to improve the character of the town centres through investment in environmental improvement works and by maintaining control over fly-posting, advertisement display and street cleanliness.

What the local development framework will do:

> ➢ resist retail and other commercial development where this would damage town centre health and vitality, and
> ➢ encourage retail and other commercial development in town centres that will support town centre health and vitality.

Oxfordshire 2030

Oxfordshire 2030 is the community strategy for Oxfordshire and it identifies how public, private and voluntary sector partners will respond to the challenges facing Oxfordshire over the next 20 plus years. The strategy includes the following pledge:

We pledge to:

- collaborate across public, business and voluntary sectors to build on Oxfordshire's economic success.
- create the conditions for everyone to have access to jobs.
- ensure that educational attainment and skill levels are amongst the very best in the country so we provide a well qualified, motivated workforce to meet the needs of business.
- grow the economy whilst achieving a sustainable balance between jobs, housing and the environment.
- tackle traffic congestion across Oxfordshire, particularly on trunk roads and around market towns, Oxford city and other hot spots.
- reduce the gap between the best and the worst off by targeting our work appropriately.

The draft Vale core strategy

The first policy document that the council is preparing as part of the local development framework is the core strategy. This will replace the local plan, and will set out the spatial vision, spatial objectives, policies and a monitoring and implementation framework for the Vale. The core strategy will be used to help determine future planning applications. A draft core strategy has been prepared and has been consulted on.

The draft core strategy refers to the sequential approach to locating shops and town centre uses, and makes provision for additional floorspace in the town and district centres. Without this it is unlikely that the council would be able to resist new shopping floorspace elsewhere, including on the edges of the towns. This would undermine the vitality of the existing centres and potentially lead to their decline.

The draft core strategy also notes that there are opportunities to redevelop the shopping areas built in the late 1960s/early 1970s in Wantage, and also achieve more limited improvements in Faringdon. This would provide shop units that more closely match what retailers want and an environment that shoppers expect. The council proposes that the core strategy should reinforce the roles of the town and district centres and identify areas for redevelopment.

The draft core strategy proposes that Wantage will continue as the second largest shopping area serving the town, Grove and the villages in the southern central part of the district.

The options for Faringdon include extending Budgens supermarket with additional spaces in Southampton Street car park and / or identifying land for an additional supermarket north west of Gloucester Street car park or east of Park Road. There are also opportunities to redevelop the shopping area in Faringdon that would provide shop units that more closely match what retailers want and an environment that shoppers expect. The intention is that Faringdon will continue as a small but important centre serving the western part of the Vale.

More information about these other strategies and plans can be found on the council's website www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

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Cabinet and Executive Report

South Oxfordshire
District Council
Listening Learning Leading

Vale
of White Horse
District Council

Report of Head of HR, IT & Customer Services

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Wards affected: All

AGENDA ITEM or REPORT NO 40/10

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To: CABINET

DATE: 9 September 2010

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To: EXECUTIVE

DATE: 3 September 2010

IT strategy and investment plan

Recommendation(s)

(a) That Cabinet / Executive adopt the proposed IT strategy, with the addition of a further principle that "the councils will take decisions to minimise energy consumption"

(b) That Cabinet / Executive approve the proposed IT investment plan, subject to the availability of funding in future years

(c) That Cabinet / Executive authorise the Head of HR, IT & Customer Services to commence the procurement of a system to replace Ocella and/or UNI-form for both councils, following the councils' procurement policy and procedures

(d) (South only) That Cabinet approve the transfer of £59,000 from the provisional capital programme to the approved capital programme in order to fund the replacement of PCs, laptops and firewall identified in the investment plan

Purpose of Report

1. This report presents the proposed IT strategy, already discussed at Joint Senior Management Board. Alongside the proposed strategy is an associated investment

plan and a proposal to begin the procurement process for a single system to replace Ocella at South and Uniform at Vale.

Strategic Objectives

2. The proposed IT strategy and investment plan contributes to the shared strategic objective of managing our business effectively. Careful investment in information technology, in line with the principles contained in the IT strategy, will bring savings through increased efficiency.

Background

3. As the two councils work more and more closely together it is clear that IT has the potential to enable more efficient ways of working and to realise cost savings. Conversely, poor IT will be an obstacle to success. Although we share a number of systems between the two councils, there are still many applications and aspects of the IT infrastructure which are very different, and we need to have a strategic framework which helps us to reach consistent and coherent answers to questions such as:

   - how do we get best value from our investments in IT?

   - how should we develop our IT infrastructure?

   - which elements of IT should be managed in-house and which externally?

4. We interviewed consultants and appointed NCC Group to work with us on the development of our IT strategy. The process has been led by Ant Harrison of NCC Group, who facilitated a series of four workshops attended by councillors, senior managers, technical staff and representative users of IT. The output from these workshops is summarised in the attached draft IT strategy and draft technical architecture strategy.

5. The draft strategy documents were presented to the Joint Senior Management Board (JSMB) on 28 June 2010. JSMB resolved to put forward the draft IT strategy to Cabinet and Executive with an accompanying action plan. It was also considered good practice to invite each council's Scrutiny Committee to review the documents and provide comments.

6. JSMB also asked that the draft strategy should be made available to all councillors and officers at both councils for comment. Following this consultation the climate change team has requested that we include an additional principle in the IT strategy to cover sustainability. I am therefore proposing an additional principle, to be added to the third group in the strategy document:

   "The councils will take decisions to minimise energy consumption."

Elements of the draft IT strategy

7. There are four main elements of the draft IT strategy, of which the first is a series of key strategic principles which will form the foundation of the decision making process. Application of these principles will ensure that IT investments are made in line with corporate priorities, in such a way as to improve the value obtained

from IT, and with a consistent approach to technology. Importantly, there is explicit recognition that the direction is to move the councils towards common applications and IT infrastructure.

8. Next is an analysis of the councils' IT applications. We made a start on this in one of the workshops, and since the workshops took place we have carried out a detailed survey of our employees. We received a total of 138 responses to this survey, in which we asked users of the various applications to rate them on a number of criteria to measure both the effectiveness and the importance of the applications.

9. In some cases there were insufficient responses to reach firm conclusions. Of those applications for which there are sufficient data, most were found to be both effective and important. These would not therefore be a high priority for further investment, except in cases where the councils are running separate systems and there is potential for efficiency improvements by adopting a common solution.

10. A few applications were found to be important but not effective. These will be high priorities for replacement or for remedial action.

11. A few applications were found to be effective but less important. These will not be high priority for further investment unless it is clear that efficiency improvements can be obtained by making changes.

12. None of our applications were found to be both ineffective and unimportant.

13. The third element of the strategy considers the technical architecture, including both the visible components such as desktop computers and the hidden parts of the network and computer room which provide the infrastructure on which the IT systems are built.

14. The technical architecture document is, as its name suggests, rather technical in nature. There is, however, a summary in the main strategy paper showing at a glance the current state of the main components of the IT infrastructure. In summary, much of the infrastructure has been in place for a long time and is now in need of attention. We will have to make investments in order to achieve a common operating environment which is fit for its purpose for the next few years.

15. Finally, the draft strategy discusses IT governance and proposes that the councils should establish a light touch governance forum for IT with responsibility for ensuring that all IT investments are evaluated according to the agreed strategic principles, and that the actions planned in relation to applications portfolio management and technical architecture investment are funded and executed.

Investment plan

16. Accompanying the proposed strategy is an investment plan which is divided into sections.

17. First, the major IT applications are identified, with timetable for harmonisation. Items proposed for the current year, 2010-11, are already in the service plan and can be met within existing budgets. Investments proposed for future years are estimated as follows:

	2011-12 South	2011-12 Vale	2012-13 South	2012-13 Vale
One off revenue costs	£27,500	£57,500	£25,000	£25,000
Recurring costs over and above current budgets	£0 to £11,000	-	-	-
Recurring savings	£0 to £30,000	£0 to £41,000	-	-

18. It is not possible at this stage to determine potential costs if, for example the councils wish to implement a new customer relationship management (CRM) system or electronic document and records management system (EDRMS). The requirements will be determined by the new customer contact strategy on which work is currently in progress, and by the circumstances of the councils once the more pressing harmonisation of major applications has been carried out. If there is a need for these applications then a business case will be made at the time, based on the principles of the IT strategy.

19. There are some direct savings that arise by virtue of harmonising systems. For example, based on indications already received from both suppliers I am confident that the total annual support and maintenance costs of Ocella or UNI-form when one system is in place at both councils will be less than the total paid at present.

20. There are indirect savings to be had from harmonisation. Some savings can be expected within the IT team: supporting one system rather than two will require less resource. In addition, all of the front line services have indicated that the potential efficiency savings available from joint working will not be realised until the systems are harmonised.

21. Next, our IT infrastructure requirements are detailed. Here the proposal is to complete those projects which are already in service plans for the current year, and then to explore opportunities for external provision of selected aspects of the infrastructure. The investment plan then sets out anticipated costs if we were to retain all the provision in-house, as this will provide a useful benchmark for comparison with external providers. The total investment requirements over the five years up to and including 2014/15 are estimated as:

- South - £450k

- Vale - £370k

22. Informed by each service team, we have also identified some quick wins, which are again split between applications and infrastructure. For applications, the proposed investment includes the employment of a software developer for 12 months, and is as follows (though it must be noted that it has not yet been possible to cost some items):

	2010-11 South	2010-11 Vale	2011-12 South	2011-12 Vale
One off capital costs	£5000	£12,000		
One off revenue costs	£9500	£9500	£9500	£9500
Recurring costs (to be absorbed)	-	£3000	-	-

23. Finally, the investment plan also includes proposed investment in some quick wins for the IT infrastructure. Much of the short term focus is on replacing older PCs at both councils, but particularly at Vale where many machines are more than six years old and are not adequate for the demands now placed upon them. The cost estimates for infrastructure quick wins are as follows:

	2010-11 South	2010-11 Vale	2011-12 South	2011-12 Vale
One off capital costs	£54,000	£59,000	£5050	£5050
One off revenue costs	£5000	£8500	£2250	£2250
Recurring costs (to be absorbed)	-	£500	£1500	£1500

24. I propose to meet the one-off costs for 2010-11 from a mixture of existing budgets and forecast underspends as described below.

25. At South the £59,000 capital costs can be met from the existing capital programme. I am proposing a transfer of £59,000 from the provisional capital programme to the approved capital programme, leaving £12,000 in the provisional programme for 2010-11.

26. The remaining £14,500 of one-off costs at South can be met from a forecast underspend on the HR recruitment budget.

27. At Vale there is an existing capital budget of £37,500 for replacement of PCs. There is a forecast underspend arising from the Wantage LSP, where expenditure in 2010-11 is lower than expected because of the early closure (budget was set on the basis of closing at the end of June), the redeployment of a member of staff (who therefore did not receive a redundancy payment), and the expected early disposal which reduces the maintenance costs. I am also soliciting contributions from other service teams from any forecast underspends of their own. If necessary I will reduce the number of PC replacements to match the available budget.

Property systems

28. Annex 1 describes the current set-up and likely procurement requirements for the Ocella / UNI-form replacement. We will almost certainly need to go through a full EU tender exercise, as we have not found a suitable OGC framework agreement.

29. We also need to take a decision on our approach to geographic information systems, and specifically whether to adopt the South method at Vale. This is covered in Annex 2.

Financial Implications

30. Financial implications are mostly covered in the body of the report.

31. For South only: the capital cost of this scheme is £59,000, which will be funded from the council's reserves. The council will lose interest of £295 a year (assuming an average rate of return of 0.5%) by spending this money rather than investing it as it does at the moment. If the authority wished to replenish the reserves over the estimated life of the scheme (5 years), then the revenue cost of this scheme will increase to £11,980 per annum.

Legal Implications

32. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The procurement of a replacement system for Ocella / UNI-form will follow the EU tendering process.

Risks

33. All IT projects contain some measure of risk. The proposed actions involve considerable IT change and each project has its own risk of failure or disruption. We will mitigate the risks by following our project management methodology and our usual processes for IT change.

34. In particular, the replacement of Ocella / UNI-form will be a major project which will require proper governance arrangements including its own project board. Important issues for this project will include communication, training and the engagement of employees in the change. Of technical importance will be the quality and accuracy of the migration of data, and ensuring that there is continuity of the provision of a system. The end result must be seen to be a step forward from our current position.

35. The risk of not proceeding with the harmonisation of applications is that it will be impossible for service teams to realise the full potential benefits and efficiency gains of joint working.

36. The IT infrastructure is already creaking. Desktop PCs at both councils are aging, though the situation is worse at Vale with large numbers of machines that are inadequate for current requirements. If we fail to invest in the infrastructure productivity of staff will fall and the effect will be demoralising.

Other Implications

37. Other implications are covered in the body of the report.

Conclusion

38. The proposed IT strategy provides a suitable framework for IT decision making for the two councils for the next five years, offering consistency of approach and convergence of systems.

39. The proposed IT investment plan provides a clear set of plans for the next two years which will see the bulk of the main IT harmonisation activity completed. It also sets out the infrastructure requirements over the full five year life of the strategy.

Background Papers

- Proposed IT strategy (attached, previously seen at JSMB)
- Proposed IT architecture strategy (attached, previously seen at JSMB)
- Proposed IT investment plan (attached)

Annex 1 – Ocella and Uniform

40. Both South and Vale make use of integrated software solutions, South using Ocella and Vale using IDOX UNI-form.

South

41. At South the following Ocella modules are in use, with the total annual software support and maintenance fee being £38,159:

- Planning

- Building Control

- Environmental Health

- Licensing

- Land Charges

42. Additionally, there is a gazetteer system, Acolaid supplied by Plantech, for which the annual maintenance fee is £2000.

43. The supplier, Ocella, is a comparatively small company. It sees this as a strength, making it more pro-active and receptive in delivering customer needs. It is competitively priced, uses no third party software, and is flexible in its approach to customisation of its systems. Although South does not currently utilise all of the modules, the system installed at South incorporates licenses for many of the modules currently required by Vale.

Vale

44. At Vale the following Uniform modules are in use, with the annual software support and maintenance fee being £41,382:

- Planning

- Building Control

- Environmental Health

- Renovation Grants

- Land Charges

- Estates

- Gazetteer

45. Additionally, there is a licensing system, LALPAC, for which the annual maintenance fee is £10,000.

46. Uniform is supplied through IDOX plc, a comparatively large company supplying people and property based systems to some 70% of UK local authorities. The company has returned over the last few years to a more customer focused approach. The Vale council does not currently employ formal GIS, but instead utilises the integrated mapping system incorporated into each of the Uniform modules.

Support arrangements

47. At South Ocella is supported by the IT Operations team. Additional functionality (new reports, etc) is provided by the IT development team. At Vale UNI-form is both supported and developed by the existing property data team.

48. Under the proposed IT Applications restructure, regardless of whether UNI-form or Ocella was the chosen software, support would be provided at both councils by the IT Operations team and new functionality provided by the IT development team, which would be shared by both councils.

Supplier discussions

49. Both existing suppliers have been approached to enquire about the costs in implementing the respective systems across both councils. Ocella have offered to extend their system to Vale at no additional annual maintenance cost, with a one-off data migration cost of £50,000. Vale would additionally have to purchase modules that Ocella do not supply to cover the gazetteer (Acolaid £15,000 one-off, £2000 annual maintenance). The total cost of Ocella and Acolaid for both councils over five years would therefore be £265,795.

50. IDOX have offered to extend their system to South under two different scenarios. For £75,000 maintenance per year the existing set up at Vale will be replicated at South (so both councils would then be paying £37,500 per year) with all current available updates applied at both sites. For £105,000 maintenance per year (£52,500 at both councils) the existing set up at Vale would be replicated at South with the understanding that any future developments to the system would be supplied free of charge, where they would ordinarily have been chargeable options. The data migration charge has been incorporated into the annual maintenance increases for IDOX. The indicative five year cost of the IDOX solution is therefore either £375,000 or £525,000.

51. Previous practice at the two councils has had more staff time at South devoted to enhancing the Ocella environment than has been the case with Uniform at Vale. The additional staff costs in the past suggest that the overall cost of Ocella may be closer to that of Uniform than the figures above would initially suggest.

Procurement

52. Should any life of contract cost exceed the EU threshold of £156,422, then an EU procurement must be undertaken. As the five year contract cost of either system exceeds this threshold, an EU procurement is likely to be unavoidable.

53. In certain circumstances the EU procurement process can be shortened by making use of an existing EU Framework agreement (a time-limited existing procurement agreement with a group of suppliers). We have not been able to find such

framework agreement which involves both IDOX UNI-form and Ocella, although there may be a possibility of using the SPRINT2 framework to procure a solution via an intermediary. We are checking whether this approach complies with EU regulations and our own procurement rules, but for the time being must assume that we will have to follow the EU tender route.

54. An EU wide procurement means we are likely to receive applications from suppliers other than Ocella and IDOX. The cost of implementing a third choice would likely be more expensive than that of implementing either of the incumbent suppliers due to two data migrations being required. The disruption to both councils from changing the system to a third option would also be greater, as both councils would be affected, rather than just one.

55. The entire procurement process is likely to last six months.

Annex 2 – Geographic Information Systems

South

56. South uses a combination of different ESRI technologies to provide both the internal corporate GIS and web-based GIS systems, as well as the data capture software. The annual maintenance charge for all ESRI software is approximately £19000.

Vale

57. IDOX UNI-form users make use of the integrated spatial mapping system. There are also limited additional GIS systems dotted around the council using differing software platforms and paid for by the service teams directly.

Support arrangements

58. At South the GIS systems are supported by IT Operations, and additional development work is undertaken by the IT Applications team. Data is captured into the GIS by a dedicated Data Capture team (also within the IT Applications team). The technologies on which the South GIS systems are built are approaching end of life, and there are plans to refresh the existing architecture (at no additional maintenance cost).

59. At Vale the UNI-form system is supported by the existing Property Data team. Only limited data is captured within individual service teams, no data (beyond point data for the gazetteer) is captured centrally.

60. Under the proposed IT Applications restructure, support would be provided at both councils by the IT Operations team, and development would be undertaken by a shared development team. The Vale property data team will take on responsibility for all data capture, increasing the volume of data that can be captured, and ensuring it is captured to an agreed (high) standard.

Supplier Discussions

61. We have undertaken discussions with ESRI regarding setting up a shared GIS system between both councils. We are entitled to move to new technologies under our existing maintenance contract at no extra cost, and ESRI are content that we could make use of the proposed GIS server architecture at South from Vale at no additional maintenance cost, thereby providing a browser based GIS system at Vale, supplied by a server from South.

Benefits of a shared GIS

62. There is benefit to Vale of the introduction of more spatial data. South have long been advocates of the use of spatial data, enabling easy graphical viewing of database entities (planning applications, listed buildings, land charge search areas, gazetteer properties, etc). Spatial data also makes searching much more reliable, enabling easy viewing of data entities which exist in the same spatial location (allowing automatic generation of planning history lists, the land charges con29 and llc1, etc), without having to rely on textual links. The introduction of more geographic data capture at Vale will allow for the creation of far more spatial data

than previously, making UNI-form spatial a far more useful tool, enabling the automating of currently time-consuming manual paper map searches.

63. Second, a shared GIS system across both councils would widen the benefit of GIS to those in shared services. This would allow a single application to show spatial data for both districts, enabling officers to more readily work from either site. For the public it would also the provide the GIS functionality which has been well-received at South, including 'My South Oxfordshire' as well as numerous live spatial data maps on the council's web site (planning application searching, for example). The IDOX UNI-form spatial environment, while providing some GIS functionality, is limited compared with the South GIS system. A shared GIS system would therefore greatly improve the effective use of spatial data at Vale.

Financial implications

64. There are no cost implications for introducing a shared GIS in terms of software maintenance. The main cost is the time for the IT Applications team to develop a server-based GIS architecture, and the time associated with attempting to undertake a GIS catch-up exercise at Vale.

65. The work in developing a new GIS system would be a large project for the IT Applications team, undertaken with existing resources.

66. As the Vale has only limited data in the UNI-form spatial system additional temporary resource (for one year) has been identified as important to enable priority spatial data is captured as quickly as possible.

Timeline

67. The decision on GIS can be made independently of the outcome of the Ocella / UNI-form procurement.

68. The strength of the existing South GIS is its ability to collate data from disparate data sources, and provide spatial access to that data from a user-friendly front-end. The South GIS is a system tailored to the requirements of the user base, which would not be the case with a GIS system delivered as part of an integrated software solution. Service Managers have been clear that their requirements for GIS at both councils are to be provided with a similar GIS setup to the South environment at both sites.

69. The Vale GIS, as it exists within UNI-form, is limited in functionality and in need of more adequate provision regardless.

70. The existing South GIS environment has been coded to be independent of the Ocella back-office system, with the graphics separated from the associated text records (linked by the appropriate reference). This means that it could be tailored to fit any back-office system.

The proposed server-based GIS environment would be structured in the same way (independent of the back-office), meaning that the process to begin its development need not wait for the procurement decision about Ocella / UNI-form.

IT Investment Plan

Applications

Ref	Item	Description	Council	Start year	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Recurring revenue	Revenue savings	Resource required
1.	South web site	Relaunch South web site with new design and navigation	South	2010-11	£57k already in approved programme	-	£5k estimated support £3k estimated hosting	£10k support for existing site	Within existing service plan
2.	Vale web site	Relaunch Vale web site with new design and navigation – decision not yet taken to proceed	Vale	2010-11	£35k (estimated) to be taken from existing budgets	-	£5k estimated support £3k estimated hosting	£22k support and hosting of existing site	2 weeks support time, unknown time for content migration
3.	Ocella / Uniform	Replacement of Ocella (South) and Uniform (Vale) with single system. This will also have an impact for local land and property gazetteers and GIS.	Joint	2010-11 for decision 2011-12 to implement	-	£50k estimated	£40k to £105k depending on option chosen (excludes staff costs)	Up to £60k depending on option chosen (excludes staff costs)	EU tender so several months to procure, several more to implement

Ref	Item	Description	Council	Start year	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Recurring revenue	Revenue savings	Resource required
4.	Geographic information system (GIS)	Early decision on approach to GIS, can be taken before the Ocella / Uniform decision. Adoption of South approach would lead to the following two items	Joint	2010-11	-	-	-	-	A few days' analysis to support the taking of the decision
5.	Implement shared GIS	Current South GIS is based on obsolescent technology and needs to be rebuilt	Joint	2010-11	-	-	-	Savings arise from common use of GIS but hard to quantify	6-12 months
6.	Populate Vale GIS	Choose priorities with care and then capture selected current and historic data to form GIS database	Vale	2011-12	-	£30k estimated for a data capture officer for one year	-	Savings arise from common use of GIS but hard to quantify	-
7.	Licensing system	Currently using Ocella at South, Lalpac at Vale. Linked to (and will follow) Ocella / Uniform decision. NB Lalpac may duplicate existing functionality so may not be required in the longer term	South	2011-12	TBC	TBC	£11k	-	Significant if data migration is required

Ref	Item	Description	Council	Start year	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Recurring revenue	Revenue savings	Resource required
8.	Cash receipting systems	South uses Icon, Vale uses Paris. Harmonisation desirable but not pressing unless lack of compliance with security standards (PCI DSS) becomes a high risk. We are committed to Paris until August 2011 and to Icon until February 2013.	Joint	2011-12	-	TBC	TBC	TBC	Depends on chosen solution
9.	HR Pro	HR systems – same system in use at both councils, but with different modules so that harmonisation is not a trivial undertaking	Joint	2011-12	-	£5000 estimated	-	-	Minimal
10.	Intranet	Separate intranets operating at present. Harmonisation desirable, not only for efficiency but culturally, though benefits are hard to quantify.	Joint	2010-11	-	-	-	-	Within comms team service plan

Ref	Item	Description	Council	Start year	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Recurring revenue	Revenue savings	Resource required
11.	Customer systems	Vale has a customer relationship management system (CRM) that is close to obsolescence. South has a system (PA Database) used for recording a number of customer transactions. Both are affected by changes to waste service. Decision needed based on new customer contact strategy.	Joint	2011-12	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
12.	Grounds maintenance	Request for GIS systems and data to be harmonised in preparation for single grounds maintenance contract Jan 2012	Joint	2011-12	-	-	-	-	Unclear
13.	Mobile working	Ability to work remotely and without taking paper on site, required by several teams. To follow Ocella / Uniform decision as solution will depend on this.	Joint	2012-13	£50k estimated for hardware	-	-	-	-

Ref	Item	Description	Council	Start year	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Recurring revenue	Revenue savings	Resource required
14.	Elections	Review and potentially replace current systems used for managing electoral register and elections. Feasibility study to be completed by December 2010.	Joint	Not before 2011-12	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
15.	Document management	There are different arrangements in place for document management in separate parts of both councils. It has previously been difficult to make a business case for a corporate system but we should come back to this after other harmonisation actions are completed.	Joint	Not before 2012-13	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
16.	Asset management	Financial asset management is a requirement of IFRS. Options include Agresso module or (more likely) an alternative system.	Joint	2010-11	Max £20k already budgeted	-	Max £4k already budgeted	-	Likely to be minimal

Infrastructure

The plan for infrastructure is in three phases:

- phase 1 – complete the projects identified for 2010-11 which produce immediate benefits

- phase 2 – explore the market for outsourced provision of elements of IT infrastructure

- phase 3 – implement an appropriate mixture of outsourced and in-house provision.

It will not be possible to define phase 3 until phase 2 has been completed. Over the five year life of the IT strategy we would expect to replace the whole of the IT infrastructure, whether in-house or provided by a third party. This document includes some indicative costs that will help to set the context during phase 2.

Infrastructure phase 1

Ref	Item	Description	Council	Start year	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Recurring revenue	Revenue savings	Resource required
17.	Server virtualisation	Implement virtualised servers at Vale to ease management, reduce hardware maintenance and energy use	Vale	2010-11	£40k already in budget	-	£4k estimated, to be offset by ceasing maintenance on older hardware	-	Within existing service plan
18.	Shared file storage	Implement shared file storage so that documents can be accessed readily from either site	Joint	2010-11	-	£40k already in budget	£4k estimated, to be offset by ceasing maintenance on older hardware	-	Within existing service plan
19.	Telephone systems	Link the two council telephone systems so that calls between sites are carried on the internal network	Joint	2010-11	-	Within existing budget	-	Small savings arising from carrying calls on private network	Within existing service plan

Infrastructure phase 2

Carry out market testing and then potential procurement of provision of IT infrastructure services. Elements which could be within scope would include:

- server hosting and support

- web site hosting and support

- PC hardware provision and support

- network support

- telephony support

- common operating environment including

  - desktop operating system

  - authentication and directory service

  - email service

  - personal productivity software (word processing, spreadsheets, presentations etc)

Infrastructure phase 3

The third phase for infrastructure can only be defined on completion of phase 2. We estimate that the total investment required if we were to maintain all services in house is as below. This provides a good starting point for comparison with costs of third party provision.

Item	2010-11 South (£'000)	Vale (£'000)	2011-12 South (£'000)	Vale (£'000)	2012-13 South (£'000)	Vale (£'000)	2013-14 South (£'000)	Vale (£'000)	2014-15 South (£'000)	Vale (£'000)	Total South (£'000)	Vale (£'000)
Core network switches			80								80	
Edge network switches									30	30	30	30
Virtualised servers							20	20			20	20
Database servers			5	5							5	5
Remaining servers	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	50	50
Desktops and laptops	40	40	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	100	100
Desktop Windows OS							25	25			25	25
Office software							60	60			60	60
Email e.g. GroupWise			15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	60	60
Directory service			25	25							25	25
Totals	**50**	**50**	**145**	**65**	**40**	**40**	**145**	**145**	**70**	**70**	**450**	**370**

Note – the list of quick wins later in this document includes some potential PC replacements. If these are carried out then the provision made here could be reduced.

Quick wins – applications

Ref	Item	Description	Council	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Annual revenue	Support team resource	Development team resource
20.	Planning	List of development requests from Planning – ARD prioritising	Joint	-	-	-	1 week estimated	6 weeks estimated
21.	Planning	List of development requests from Planning – ARD prioritising	South	-	-	-	6 weeks estimated	24 weeks estimated
22.	Planning	List of development requests from Planning – ARD prioritising	Vale	-	-	-	7 weeks estimated	30 weeks estimated
23.	Uniform upgrade	Upgrade to version 8 will enable some new functions in particular facility to send email rather than letters to consultees – could be worthwhile even in the short term	Vale	-	£5k from existing budgets	-	Minimal	5 days Property Data team for installation and testing
24.	Modern.Gov	System for managing committee papers, currently used at Vale, required for both councils.	South	£20k to be funded by Legal from savings	-	£7k to be funded by Legal from savings	3 weeks estimated	Modern.Gov can replace current system for member / committee details. Still need to provide access to some history.

Ref	Item	Description	Council	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Annual revenue	Support team resource	Development team resource
25.	Idox	Document management system not felt to be working efficiently – after review this could lead to a larger scale project	Vale	-	-	-	2 weeks estimated to review current system and make recommendations	-
26.	Telephone message manager	Make widely available the system used in Planning at South for tracking telephone messages	Joint	-	-	-	Minimal – to put icon on desktop	Work already completed
27.	Directory of staff	Requested by South Scrutiny Committee for benefit of parish councils, a directory of staff organised by council service. Would also be useful for switchboard team. Needs more work on specification.	South (but potentially Vale as well)	-	-	-	Minimal – hope to use existing tools	TBC
28.	Mobile working in Environmental Health	EH team to start to use their (long planned) mobile working solution	South	-	-	-	One week to implement (currently being tested)	One week to add minor reporting functions.
29.	Rent deposit scheme	Replace current database and spreadsheet with more efficient system – FFTF team to look at this – needs specification.	South	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Ref	Item	Description	Council	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Annual revenue	Support team resource	Development team resource
30.	Online housing register applications	Enhance Abritas system to accept housing register applications by means of online form – FFTF team to look at this – needs specification.	Joint	£10k estimated	-	TBC	-	-
31.	Abritas	Streamline aspects of Abritas system and make minor enhancements – FFTF team to look at this – needs specification.	Joint	TBC	TBC	TBC	-	-
32.	Complaints database	Extend South database so that it can be used at Vale	Vale	£2000 for Oracle licence (which can then be used for other apps)	-	£500	One week for testing and one week for training	Two weeks assuming Vale and South follow same complaints process
33.	Change of circumstances	E-form required for change of circumstances – there is a high volume of notifications from council tax payers and process could be improved	Joint	-	-	-	Any in-house solution would require testing after development	One week estimated but need a proper spec to estimate timescales.
34.	Grants software	A system for administration of grants is needed at Vale	Vale	£5k estimated e.g. for Benefactor	-	£2k estimated	Minimal	-

Ref	Item	Description	Council	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Annual revenue	Support team resource	Development team resource
35.	Time recording (Legal)	Move Axxia database from South to Vale during 2010-11 Q4	Joint	-	-	-	Two days estimated	-
36.	Elections system	South's Halarose installation to be accessible at both sites from 1 December 2010 – either move server or provide access	Joint	-	-	-	Up to one week	-
37.	Time recording (Building Control)	Quick and simple method for surveyors and admin to record time spent on specific activities, needed by 1 October 2010	Joint	-	-	-	Both Ocella and Uniform have upgrades planned	-
38.	Finance systems interfaces	There is a range of interfaces between cash receipting systems, Academy and Agresso. The need is to reduce manual intervention and make them more efficient.	Joint	-	-	-	Two weeks estimated	-

The total development time estimated is around one person year. We would expect to pay a salary of around £30k, so with on-costs the total cost of a developer to implement these quick wins would be around £38k.

Quick wins - infrastructure

Ref	Item	Description	Council	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Annual revenue	Support team resource
39.	BlackBerries	Identify which staff need BlackBerries and procure the equipment	Joint	-	£125 per handset	£252 per connection	Within existing resources
40.	Laptops for shared managers	Identify which managers are mobile between sites and would benefit from having laptop computers and docking stations rather than desktops at each site	Joint	£1100 per user, estimated 20 users, each freeing two desktops for reuse	-	-	Two days build per machine
41.	Wantage Civic Hall	Check network link, upgrade if necessary. Provide additional PC or consider use of thin clients. Resolve issues with telephones.	Vale	£1000 for new switch	Up to £2500 for outside help if needed	-	Two weeks to analyse and resolve configuration issues
42.	Replace / upgrade old PCs	Replace 66 older PCs and upgrade memory in 101	South	£38k	Up to £5k for outside help if needed	-	Substantial – may need outside help
43.	Replace / upgrade old PCs	Replace 54 older PCs and upgrade memory in 130	Vale	£42k	Up to £5k for outside help if needed	-	Substantial – may need outside help
44.	Link phone systems	Link the two council telephone systems so that calls between sites are carried on the internal network	Joint	-	£500 engineer time to be met from existing budget	-	Within existing resources

Ref	Item	Description	Council	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Annual revenue	Support team resource
45.	Replace firewalls	Firewalls linking each council to Oxfordshire Community Network are six years old and no longer up to the job	Joint	£10k	-		Within existing resources
46.	Email archiving	Replace email archiving solution and extend GroupWise email archiving to Vale (but not until after decision is taken on future email system)	Joint	£8100 software £2000 hardware	£4500	£1600	3 weeks estimated
47.	Network health check	Thorough third party analysis of both council networks to identify reasons and solutions for poor performance	Joint	-	£10k estimate		Within existing resources
48.	Meeting rooms	Video conferencing facility between sites, with screens for computer display too	Joint	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
49.	Telephones	Direct dial in (DDI) numbers for all Vale employees	Vale	-	-	-	Within existing resources
50.	WiFi	Consider provision of WiFi facilities for customers at Wantage Civic Hall (and Guildhall if appropriate) – cost depends on desired level of security	Vale	-	£1000 per site	£500 per site	Within existing resources
51.	Agresso upgrade	Probable upgrade to Agresso 5.53 – will require changes to firewall rules and may also need client PCs to be upgraded	Joint	-	-	-	Within existing resources

Ref	Item	Description	Council	One-off capital	One-off revenue	Annual revenue	Support team resource
52.	Communication with members	Review processes and facilities for communication between officers and members in time for new councils from May 2011	Joint	TBC	TBC	TBC	Within existing resources

South Oxfordshire DC
Vale of White Horse DC

ICT Strategy (Draft)
17 June 2010

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Introduction

- This document presents the combined ICT strategy of South Oxfordshire DC and the Vale of White Horse DC

- The strategy was developed in the period February-May 2010 through facilitated workshops with officers and senior councillors

- The purpose of the strategy is to set out the key principles and investments which will enable both councils to deliver better performance through the effective use of ICT, to properly plan ICT investments and to make optimal decisions in relation to ICT

- The strategy also equips the councils with management frameworks which will be used to manage the applications portfolio and the technical infrastructure on an ongoing basis

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The strategy development process

The strategy workshops were based around a number of key considerations and techniques:

- **The establishment of a set of guiding principles which underpin the strategy and form the basis of future ICT-related decision making**

- **Evaluation of the councils' current applications portfolios and identification of where there are improvement needs**

- **Evaluation of the councils' technical infrastructures and identification of the key directions in which technology investments should be directed**

- **Consideration of the councils' governance arrangements for ICT**

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Key strategic principles

- **Key strategic principles were identified and were categorised as:**

  - **Fundamentally implicit with the strategy and are a pre-requisite before the explicit principles are considered**

  - **Explicit to the strategy and evaluated formally as part of the decision making process**

- **The explicit principles were then grouped in order of importance into three categories (high, medium, low) for the purposes of facilitating decision making, but all principles were deemed to be important and must be considered when making ICT-related decisions**

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The strategic principles

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Implicit fundamental principles

The two key fundamental implicit principles on which the strategy is based are:

▪There will be a consistent evaluation process for ICT business cases which must be adopted for all ICT-related investments, and the councils should apply the principles of the OGC's five-case business case model and its associated evaluation process

▪To prevent sub-optimal decisions being taken "common sense" will always apply as a final decision checking mechanism, however the councils were mindful that this could potentially be used as a reason for supporting irrational or illogical decision making as it provides a mechanism for over-riding the key explicit principles

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Explicit principles (1)

The following explicit principles were categorised as highly important when making ICT-related decisions:

- ICT investments must demonstrate an explicit linkage to the achievement of corporate priorities

- ICT investments must lead to improved productivity and deliver a positive return on investment

- All application-level investments must have the option of self-service for the end-user, but there may be circumstances in which the option is not enabled

- All applications must be presentable over the web OR the application vendor must demonstrate that web-enablement is on the application's roadmap

- Both councils must move to common applications and a common operating environment when new investments are being made

- Both councils must be able to demonstrate a year-on-year increase in the value derived from ICT

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Explicit principles (2)

The following explicit principles were categorised as important when making ICT-related decisions:

- **Where practical there will be a single source of master data, collected once, and shared by multiple applications**

- **Applications and data will be accessible from all locations and will support flexible, remote and mobile working**

- **Where practical dependence on paper records will be eliminated**

- **Training and awareness of facilities and support will be provided for all new investments**

- **Standards to prevent data loss will be enforced**

- **When making ICT investment decisions the councils will reduce, as much as possible, lock-in to a single vendor**

Explicit principles (3)

The following explicit principles were categorised as significant when making ICT-related decisions:

▪Where practical there should be a single or simplified sign-on mechanism for applications

▪The councils should be on a supported version of an application (this is a requirement of the government's code of connection)

▪Where practical applications are rationalised by making better use of embedded functionality rather than implementing additional applications

▪The councils will manage the applications portfolios and technical infrastructures using a formal framework

▪Where practical the councils will seek to secure efficiencies by working with external partners and stakeholders

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The councils' applications portfolios

Applications portfolio management

Applications portfolio analysis is a management technique which is used to help an organisation to determine when changes to the applications should be made:

▪It is based on evaluating applications in relation to importance to the business and effectiveness

▪Ideally applications are both important and effective, but in some instances this is not the case and it may be necessary to remove, replace or improve an application

▪The framework for applications portfolio management is shown opposite and was used in the workshops and subsequently with a user survey to determine where current applications are located

	Low ← Business Impact → High
High Operational effectiveness	Potentially over-investing?	The ideal location
Low	Targets for retirement	Targets for improvement or replacement

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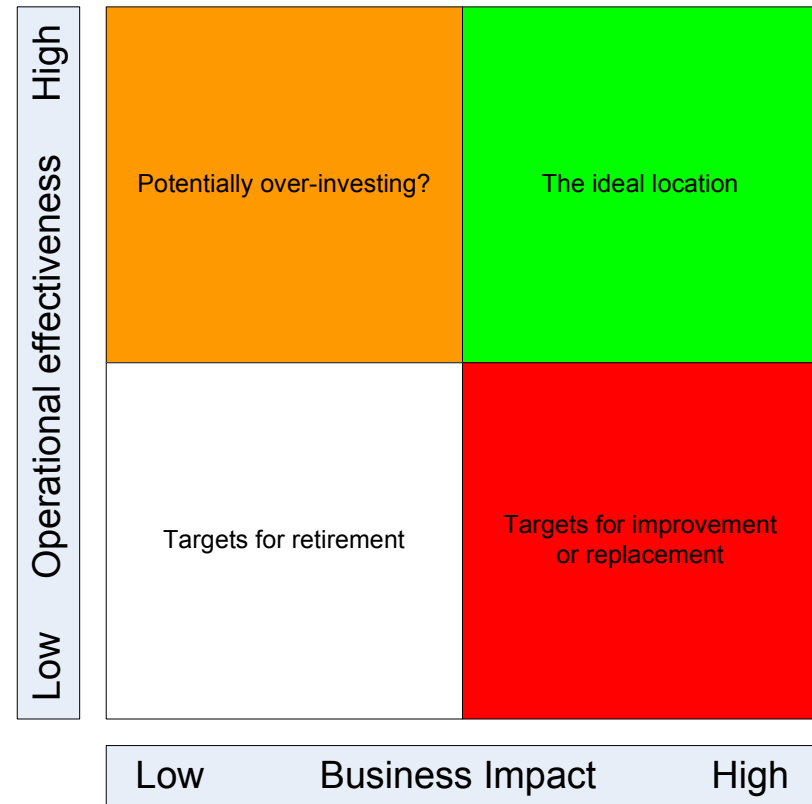
Applications portfolio analysis
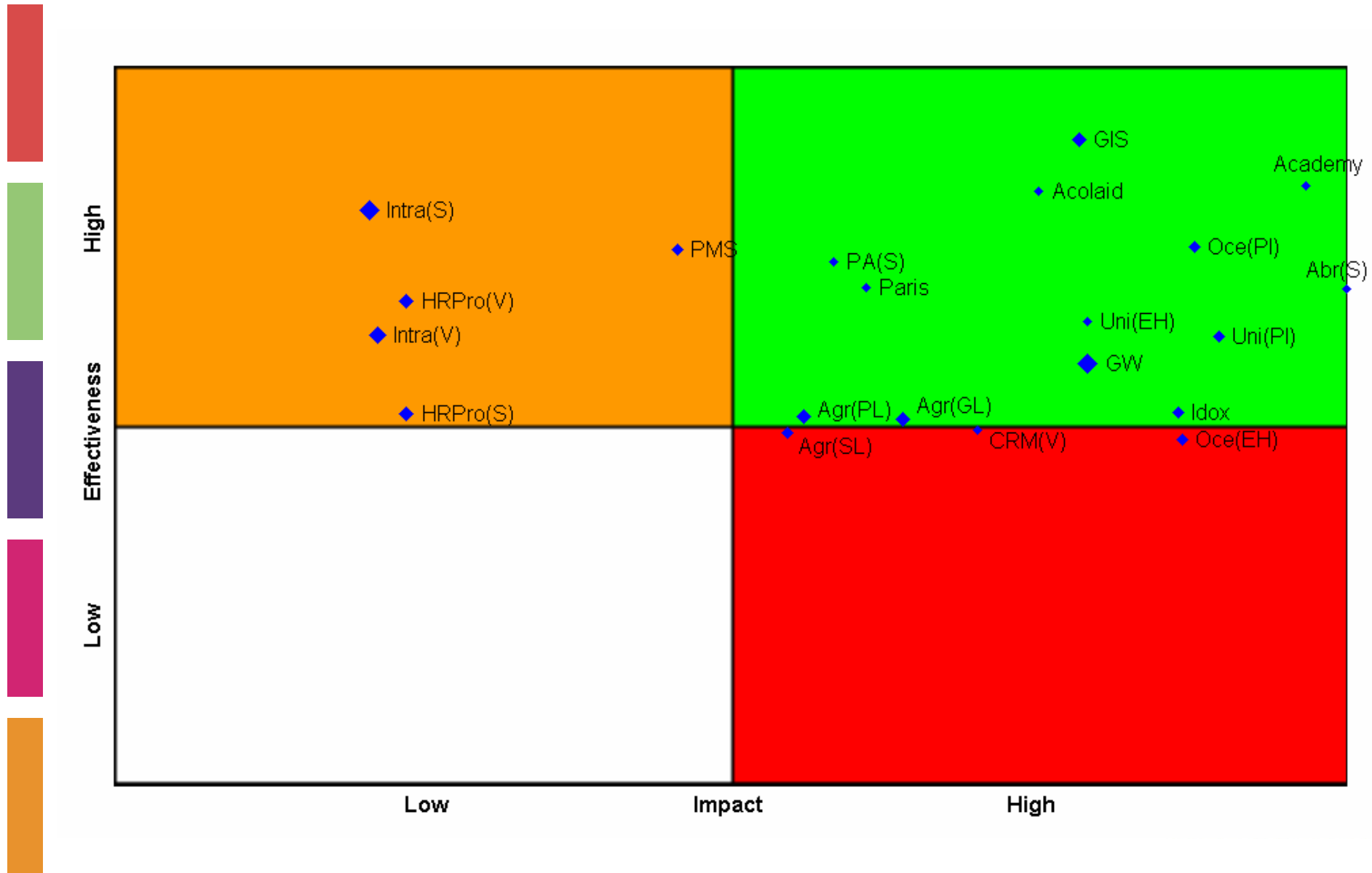
Important and effective applications

The following applications were found to be both important and effective:

- **South**
    - Geographic information system
    - Ocella (planning)
    - Acolaid (local land and property gazetteer)
    - Public amenities (PA) database
    - Abritas (housing)
- **Vale**
    - Uniform (planning)
    - Uniform (environmental health)
    - Idox (document management)
    - Paris (cash receipting)
- **Shared**
    - GroupWise (email)
    - Agresso (general ledger)
    - Agresso (purchase ledger)
    - Academy (council tax and business rates)

When considered on their own merits these applications should not require much immediate attention. However, we need to consider the case for harmonisation of each of these systems in order to achieve efficiency improvements from joint operations.

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Important but less effective

The following applications were found to be important but less effective:

- **South**
    - **Ocella (environmental health)**
- **Vale**
    - **Customer relationship management (CRM)**
- **Shared**
    - **Agresso (sales ledger)**

These applications should be high priority for action.

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Effective but less important

The following applications were found to be effective but less important:

- **South**
  - **HR Pro**
  - **Intranet**
- **Vale**
  - **HR Pro**
  - **Intranet**
- **Shared**
  - **Performance management system**

These applications should be low priority for action.

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Technical architecture strategy

Technical architecture management

- We examined the councils' technical architecture using our standard framework. As with applications this framework seeks to categorise components into portfolio categories so that investment planning can be facilitated

- The categories we use are:

    - Emerging – technologies are moving into the environment

    - Mainstream – the period of peak productivity from the investment

    - Containment – the technology is approaching the end of its life

    - Retirement – the technology should be removed from the environment

- The technical architecture framework should be reviewed every six months so that it is refreshed and can be used to determine if the key actions, such as retiring components, have been undertaken

- The model is shown in more detail overleaf

Architectural strategy

Architecture at a glance: South

```
IT Infrastructure
Framework
```

Computing Infrastructure

- Hardware platforms — 🟢
- Operating Systems — 🟢
- Middleware — N/A
- AD Technologies — 🟠
- Database Technologies — 🟢

Network Infrastructure

- Enterprise Network — 🟢
- Infrastructure Services — 🟢
- Infrastructure Management — 🟢
- Security Technologies — 🟠

Office Information Systems

- Personal Productivity — 🟠
- Messaging & Collaboration — 🟠
- Content Management & Workflow — 🟠

Key

🟢 **Component is satisfactory**

🟠 **Component requires attention**

🔴 **Component requires fundamental redesign**

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Architecture at a glance: Vale

IT Infrastructure Framework

Computing Infrastructure
- Hardware platforms
- Operating Systems
- Middleware — N/A
- AD Technologies
- Database Technologies

Network Infrastructure
- Enterprise Network
- Infrastructure Services
- Infrastructure Management
- Security Technologies

Office Information Systems
- Personal Productivity
- Messaging & Collaboration
- Content Management & Workflow

Key

- Component is satisfactory
- Component requires attention
- Component requires fundamental redesign

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Overall view on architecture

Both councils have reasonable architectures in place but plans should be put in place to:

▪Introduce further virtualisation at data centre and desktop level

▪Retire Windows XP and consolidate the number of images of its replacement

▪Retire Windows 2000 server at the Vale

▪Move to a common development environment across both Councils

▪Retire SQL 2000 at the Vale

▪Move to common security platforms and ensure all client devices are risk assessed and where appropriate encrypted

▪Develop a common strategy for voice services integrated with the customer services strategy

▪Retire current office suites (XP and 2000) and consider greater use of collaboration tools when these are refreshed

▪Explore the business case for council-wide content, document and workflow applications as part of the long-term unification of ICT across the Councils

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ICT Governance

Governance defined

- Good governance is about "Doing the right thing deliberately" and in relation to ICT it promotes strong alignment between the ICT service and the achievement of organisational goals

- Governance is concerned with:

    - Priority setting and business alignment

    - Funding sources and levels

    - Allocating resources

    - Standards, practices and guidelines

    - Agreeing the sourcing strategy for ICT

    - Incentives and compensation

    - Benefits realisation

    - Risk identification and management

- All stakeholders should be involved in governance processes, and some of these will be external to the Councils

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Appropriate governance

- Both councils expressed the view that they prefer light-touch governance in relation to ICT given the relatively small size of the organisations

- Neither council has an ICT steering group or any similar arrangements in place

- We agree that it is sensible to minimise the effort devoted to governance by making sure that any governance activities are focused and efficient

- As the councils merge their operations further we think that they should establish a light-touch governance forum for ICT which is responsible for ensuring that all ICT investments are evaluated according to the implicit and explicit strategic principles outlined in this document, and that the actions planned in relation to applications portfolio management and technical architecture investment are funded and executed

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Key actions

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Key actions

Both councils should:

- **Apply the implicit and explicit strategic principles set-out in this document when considering acquiring new ICT applications and infrastructure**

- **Undertake a comprehensive applications portfolio analysis to determine if all applications are fit-for-purpose**

- **On the basis of the applications portfolio analysis prepare to invest in removing, replacing or improving applications which have a high business impact but are deemed to be less effective than necessary**

- **Move towards a common technical architecture and plan to retire components such as desktop operating systems, databases and office systems**
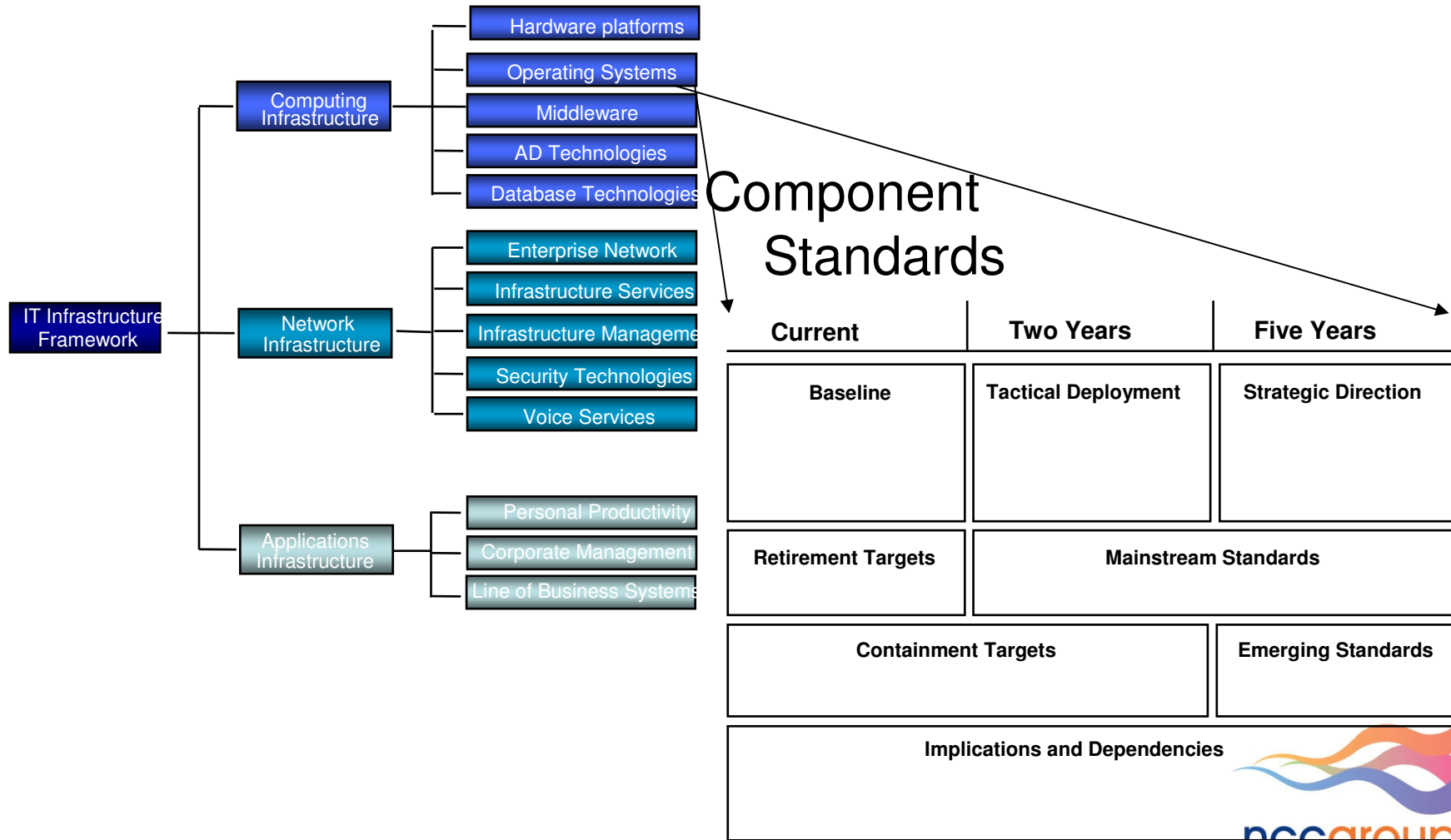
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South Oxfordshire DC
Vale of White Horse DC

Technical Architecture Strategy

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Introduction

- This technical architecture strategy (TAS) is used to help the Councils to manage their ICT infrastructure as a portfolio where individual components can be monitored over time and their retirement planned

- The TAS document should be reviewed every six months and updated as necessary

- Particular attention should be given to:

  - Determining if components targeted for tactical deployment within the next two years are being funded and acquired

  - Checking progress with components categorised as 'contain' or 'retire' to ensure that the actions necessary for these to be removed are taken

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Enterprise architecture planning

```
IT Infrastructure Framework
├── Computing Infrastructure
│   ├── Hardware platforms
│   ├── Operating Systems
│   ├── Middleware
│   ├── AD Technologies
│   └── Database Technologies
├── Network Infrastructure
│   ├── Enterprise Network
│   ├── Infrastructure Services
│   ├── Infrastructure Management
│   ├── Security Technologies
│   └── Voice Services
└── Applications Infrastructure
    ├── Personal Productivity
    ├── Corporate Management
    └── Line of Business Systems
```

Component Standards

Current	Two Years	Five Years
Baseline	**Tactical Deployment**	**Strategic Direction**
Retirement Targets	**Mainstream Standards**	
Containment Targets		**Emerging Standards**
Implications and Dependencies		

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Architecture model definitions

Each architecture component is composed of a set of specific elements. Each technology (and process element where appropriate) element is discussed based on industry status and outlook. The status is based on availability of standards (e.g., formal or de facto, vendors and products—both emerging and currently deployed).

Current	Two Years	Five Years
Baseline	**Tactical Deployment**	**Strategic Direction**
Retirement Targets	**Mainstream Standards**	
Containment Targets		**Emerging Standards**
Implications and Dependencies		

Baseline: The current technology or process element(s) in use by Southandvale.

Tactical: Technologies that Southandvale may use in the near term, tactical time frame, now to two years. Currently available products needed to meet existing business needs are identified here.

Strategic: Technologies that Southandvale envisions using in the future that provide strategic advantage. Usually anticipated marketplace products are identified here.

Retirement: Technology and/or process elements targeted for removal during the architecture planning horizon.

Containment: Technology and/or process elements targeted for limited (maintenance or current commitment) investment during the architecture planning horizon.

Mainstream: Technology and/or process elements targeted as the primary deployment/investment option for new systems or legacy system migration over the architecture planning horizon.

Emerging: Technology and/or process elements to be evaluated for future integration into the target architecture

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Computing Infrastructure – Hardware Server

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment South: HP, Dell, Sun Vale: Dell	**Tactical Deployment** South: Greater use of virtualisation (VMWare) Vale: Build on virtualisation pilot	**Strategic Direction** Need to see how cloud hosting develops over the next two years (to 2012) and then define server strategy

Retirement All out of support servers	**Mainstream** Keep to limited main Hardware suppliers – Tier 1

Containment Reduce growth of Novell servers	**Emerging** More blade style servers, further consolidation on HW suppliers Possible. Cloud hosting.

Implications and Dependencies
Not all applications suitable for virtualisation at present

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Computing Infrastructure – Desktops

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: Dell desktops South: Dell laptops South: Wyse terminals South: Panasonic rugged South: Blackberry Vale: Dell desktops Vale: Dell laptops Vale: Wyse terminals Vale: Sun ray (pilot)	**Tactical Deployment** South: Greater use of Citrix Vale: Greater use of Citrix	**Strategic Direction** Virtualised desktops wherever possible

Retirement Non standard /obsolete HW	**Mainstream** Major suppliers – keep to Tier-1 for ongoing support

Containment Non standard builds – move to standard images	**Emerging:** Virtualised desktops

Implications and Dependencies
Not all applications can be delivered via thin client

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Computing Infrastructure – Storage

Current	2 Years	5 Years

Baseline Environment:
 	
South: EMC Clariion SAN
    Fibre channel for
    Oracle databases
South NetVault
 	
Vale: Directly attached
    storage (no SAN)
Vale: CommVault:
	Tactical Deployment
	
	South: Storage
	virtualisation
	
	Vale: Currently procuring
	SAN
		Strategic Direction
		
		Solid state storage
		In-built replication

| **Retirement**
Directly attached storage | **Mainstream**
Major suppliers – keep to Tier-1 for ongoing support | |

| **Containment**
NetVault | | **Emerging:**
Solid state enterprise class |

Implications and Dependencies
Needs strong linkage to server strategy, virtualised desktops will need more capacity

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Computing Infrastructure – Desktop operating systems

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: Windows XP Many standard images Vale: Windows XP Many standard images	**Tactical Deployment** Windows 7 Move to standard images Desktop lockdown	**Strategic Direction** Move to browser based applications

Retirement Windows XP	**Mainstream** Major suppliers – keep to Tier-1 for ongoing support	
Containment		**Emerging:** Virtualised desktops
Implications and Dependencies Need to confirm driver availability before migrating from XP		

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Computing Infrastructure – Server operating systems

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: Netware South: SUSE Linux South: Windows 2003 South: Solaris 9 South: Red Hat Linux Vale: Windows 2000 Vale: Windows 2003	**Tactical Deployment** Windows 2008 Solaris Linux for appliances 64 bit	**Strategic Direction** Depends on what happens to cloud hosting over next two years (to 2012)

Retirement
Windows 2000

Mainstream
Windows 2008, Solaris

Containment
Windows 2003

Emerging:
Cloud hosting

Implications and Dependencies

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Computing Infrastructure – Applications development environment

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: Oracle 2000 South: Java South: eBase forms South: ESRI GIS tools Vale: negligible development	**Tactical Deployment** Minimise development activities .NET	**Strategic Direction** SOA

| **Retirement**
VB6 ASP.NET | **Mainstream**
Oracle, Java, .NET | |

Containment	**Emerging:** SOA

Implications and Dependencies

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Computing Infrastructure – DBMS

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: Oracle South: SQL 2005 South: Access Vale: SQL 2000 Vale: SQL 2005 Vale: Oracle Vale: Access	**Tactical Deployment** SQL 2008 Oracle	**Strategic Direction** Depends on what happens to cloud hosting over next two years (to 2012)
Retirement SQL 2000	**Mainstream** Oracle, SQL 2008	
Containment SQL 2005, Access		**Emerging:** DBMS as a service
Implications and Dependencies		

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Network Infrastructure – Enterprise

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: Cat5E South: Fibre backbone South: IP South: Extreme Vale: Cat5E Vale: Fibre backbone Vale: Cisco Vale: IP	**Tactical Deployment** Cat 6 Wireless MPLS for WAN	**Strategic Direction** Wireless Unified communications
Retirement Cat5E	**Mainstream** Wireless, Cat6	
Containment Netware		**Emerging:** FC over ethernet
Implications and Dependencies		

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Network Infrastructure – Infrastructure management

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: Novell Zen Configuration Mgr South: RMS Service South: ITIL v2 Vale: IP Monitor Vale: Heat 7 Vale: Dell server manager Vale: AS S/W distribution Vale: GFI LanGuard Vale: GFI EventManager	**Tactical Deployment** SMS ITIL v3	**Strategic Direction** Need to see how cloud hosting develops over the next two years (to 2012) and then define server strategy
Retirement	**Mainstream** ITILv2, Zen	
Containment All current IM tools		**Emerging:** Cloud hosting
Implications and Dependencies		

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Network Infrastructure – Security and AV

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: Sophos South: Kaspersky (edge) South: Websense South: Juniper SSG5 South: BorderManager South: Sophos encryption Vale: Sophos Vale: CISP/Kaspersky Vale: PGP Vale: TrueCrypt	**Tactical Deployment** Sophos BorderManager	**Strategic Direction** Need to see how cloud hosting develops over the next two years (to 2012) and then define security strategy

| **Retirement** | **Mainstream**
ITILv2, Zen | |

| **Containment**
All current AV | | **Emerging:**
Biometrics |

| **Implications and Dependencies** |

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Network Infrastructure – Voice

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: Mitel 3300 South: Teleworker South: Mobile (Vodafone) Vale: Mitel 3300 Vale: Mitel call centre Vale: Some analogue Vale: Teleworker Vale: Mobile (Vodafone)	**Tactical Deployment** Call centre (need CS strategy)	**Strategic Direction** Unified communications Videophony

Retirement Analogue	**Mainstream**

Containment Mitel 3300	**Emerging:** Unified communications

Implications and Dependencies

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OIS Infrastructure – Personal productivity

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: Office XP South: Office 2003 South: Open Project South: Office 2007 viewer Vale: Office XP Vale: Office 2007 viewer	**Tactical Deployment** Office 2010	**Strategic Direction** Cloud-based applications

Retirement Office XP, Office 2000	**Mainstream**

Containment	**Emerging:** Cloud PP apps

Implications and Dependencies
Security impact of cloud based PP apps

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OIS Infrastructure – Email

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: GroupWise Vale: GroupWise	**Tactical Deployment** GroupWise	**Strategic Direction** Exchange/Outlook Hosted email

Retirement	**Mainstream**

Containment GroupWise	**Emerging:** Cloud PP apps

Implications and Dependencies
Security impact of cloud based PP apps

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OIS Infrastructure – Collaboration tools

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: None Vale: None	**Tactical Deployment** OCS Sharepoint	**Strategic Direction**

Retirement	**Mainstream**

Containment Teaming	**Emerging:** Unified commnuications toolsets

Implications and Dependencies

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OIS Infrastructure – Browser

	Current	2 Years	5 Years

Baseline Environment: South: IE8 Vale: IE8	**Tactical Deployment** IE9 Firefox, Chrome, Safari for testing	**Strategic Direction**

Retirement	**Mainstream**

Containment IE8	**Emerging:**

Implications and Dependencies
Need to test public facing apps against Firefox, Chrome, Safari etc

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OIS Infrastructure – Enterprise content and document management

Current	2 Years	5 Years
Baseline Environment: South: Anite (Capita) South: Aplaws South: Joomla Vale: Anite (Capita) Vale: IDOX Vale: Tridion	**Tactical Deployment** Sharepoint	**Strategic Direction** Need to see how cloud hosting develops over the next two years (to 2012) and then define server strategy

Retirement	Mainstream

Containment IDOX, Anite	**Emerging:** SAAS content management

Implications and Dependencies

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Executive Report

Vale of White Horse
District Council

Report of Head of Finance

Author: Bob Watson

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Wards affected: All

Executive member responsible: Richard Webber

Tel: 01235 534001

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To: EXECUTIVE

DATE: 3 September 2010

REPORT NO
38/10

Revenue Budget Outturn 2009/10

Recommendation(s)

(a)   Note the overall outturn position of the Council as well as the outturn of individual service areas and cost centre: and,

(b)   Take into account the impact of the outturn position in the integrated service and financial planning process when setting the 2011/12 original budget.

Purpose of Report

1.   The report details the revenue expenditure position for 2009/10. The report is submitted to the Executive to assist it in fulfilling its service delivery and budget management roles. The report may also be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee to assist it to review Council performance.

Strategic Objectives

2.   The Council has a strategic objective to manage the business effectively, provide value for money services that meet the needs of our residents and service users and communicate the Council's activities and achievements. This report seeks to inform councillors, the community and officers as to what the Council received and spent in 2009/10, where there were budget pressures and under-spends and the reasons for these.

Financial performance 2009/10

3.   The original Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2011/12 provided for gradually increasing costs of service provision, against stable annual Council Tax increases, with the use of funds and balances to help smooth out the cycle. The MTFP

projected a strengthening of the Council's financial position. However, this is principally dependent upon achievement of the Council's ambitious programme of cost cutting measures.

When setting the 2009/10 budget the Council projected a shortfall in income due to the continuing effects of the economic downturn on the property market; record low interest rates reducing the return on our investments and a continued reduction in market town car park usage and income. These factors meant that, despite a cut-back on all non-essential expenditure, an additional £1.747 million (revised to £1.656 million in year) was initially budgeted as the contribution that would be required from balances to support the budget in 2009/10.

Revenue outturn 2009/10

4. The Council set a net budget requirement of £12.665 million and Executive approved carry forward of budgets and in-year adjustments amounting to £0.326 million. As a consequence the net budget requirement (the "working budget") was £12.991.

Net revenue spend for the year was **£1.168 million** underspent against working budget as shown in the table below, which is in a format consistent with the council's budget book. This meant that instead of the planned £1.747 million use of general fund balances, only £0.488 million was required.

	Working Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
Commercial Services	3,435	3,614	179
Corporate Strategy	1,279	1,037	(242)
Economy, Leisure & Property	2,868	2,657	(211)
Finance	3,239	2,278	(961)
HR, IT & Customer	2,177	1,782	(395)
Housing & Health	1,676	1,594	(82)
Legal & Democratic Services	1,152	1,088	(64)
Planning	922	1,067	145
Strategic Management	485	424	(61)
Net cost of services	**17,233**	**15,541**	**(1,692)**
Investment Income	(791)	(406)	385
Property Income	(1,802)	(1,663)	139
Net Expenditure	**14,640**	**13,472**	**(1,168)**
Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	10	10	0
Amount to be Financed	14,650	13,482	(1,168)
Write out Landsbanki impairment	321	321	0
Contribution from Balances	*(1,656)*	*(488)*	*1,168*
Capitalisation direction under statute	(324)	(324)	0
Budget Requirement	12,991	12,991	0
Parish Precepts	2,521	2,521	0
Total Funding Requirement	**15,512**	**15,512**	**0**
Funds from Council Tax	(8,022)	(8,022)	0
Revenue Support Grant	(1,317)	(1,317)	0
NNDR	(5,705)	(5,705)	0
Other Government Grants	(468)	(468)	0
Total Funding Streams	**(15,512)**	**(15,512)**	**0**

One of the main reasons for the reduced cost of services against initial budget estimates was the imposition of a strictly enforced moratorium on the supplies and services budgets of all services. This effectively put the brakes on non-essential spending in the latter half of the year as a result of the unfavourable outturn predictions in the first two quarters of budget monitoring. This was a very successful example of effective corrective action in response to financial management information.

As a result of a lower than expected use of reserves, it has been possible to write off the anticipated loss on the Landsbanki investment during 2009/10 rather than defer another year; during 2010/11 the Council would have had to make the write off by statute, and this would have added to future pressures.

This improves the Council's financial position going into what is predicted to be one of the most challenging budget setting exercises in recent years.

The chart below illustrates the split of the £15.5m net cost of services expenditure:

Actual Net Cost of Service Expenditure 2009/10

- Commercial Services - 23% £3.6m
- Corporate Strategy - 7% £1.0m
- Economy, Leisure & Property - 17% £2.6m
- Finance - 15% £2.3m
- HR, IT & Customer - 11% £1.8m
- Housing & Health - 10% £1.6m
- Legal & Democratic Services - 7% £1.1m
- Planning - 7% £1.1m
- Strategic Management - 3% £0.4m
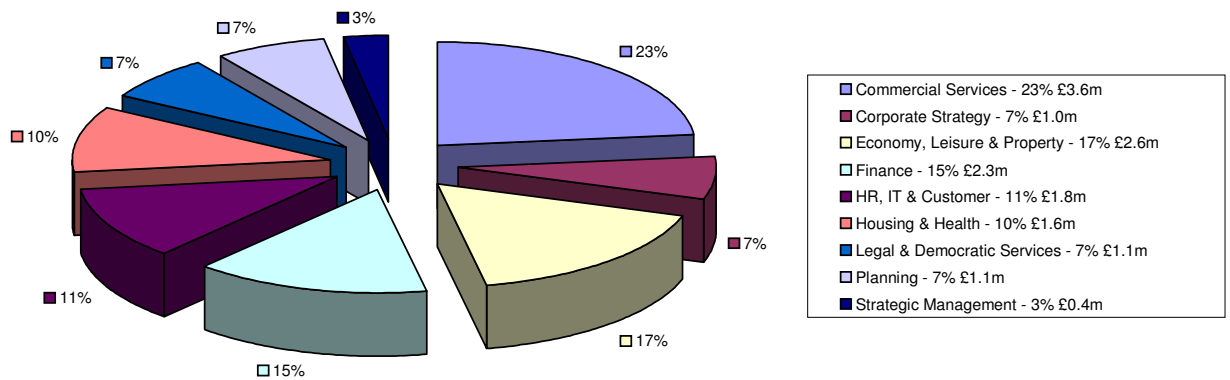
The total funding requirement is met by a number of funding streams. The split of total external funding is shown below:

External sources of finance

- Funds from Council Tax - 52% £8.0m
- Main Govt Grant - 45% £7.0m
- Other Govt Grants - 3% £0.5m
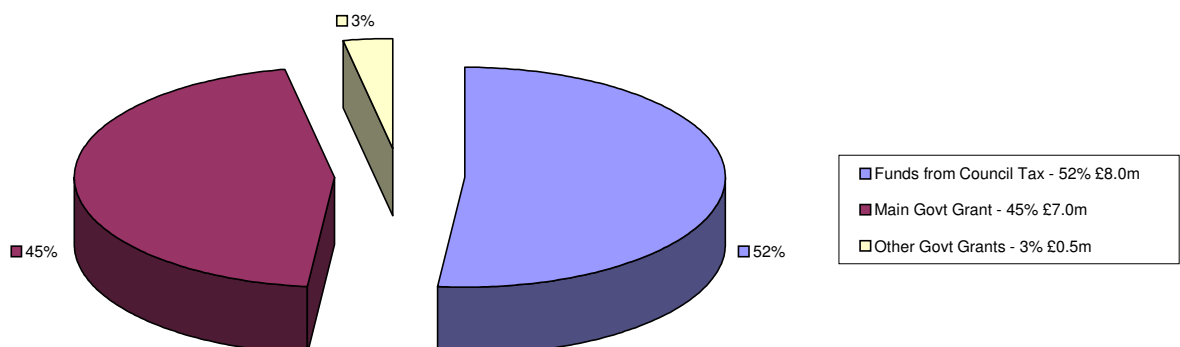
The variations between budgeted and actual income and expenditure are summarised as follows:

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	Gross income variance (over)/under £'000	Gross employee expenditure variance over/(under) £'000	Other gross expenditure variance over/(under) £'000	Total variance £'000
Commercial Services	475	(87)	(209)	179
Corporate Strategy	(8)	1	(235)	(242)
Economy, Leisure & Property	(34)	(39)	(138)	(211)
Finance	(3,540)	(84)	2,663	(961)
HR, IT & Customer	8	(127)	(276)	(395)
Housing & Health	232	(21)	(293)	(82)
Legal & Democratic Services	5	11	(80)	(64)
Planning	232	(18)	(69)	145
Strategic Management	(77)	3	13	(61)
Net cost of service before c/fwd	**(2,707)**	**(361)**	**1,376**	**(1,692)**
Investment Income	385	0	0	385
Property Income	(140)	0	279	139
Net expenditure	**(2,462)**	**(361)**	1,655	**(1,168)**

The major variations in respect of gross income and other gross expenditure variances are detailed in the table below:

Analysis of gross income variances in excess of £50,000   £'000

Income down against budget as a result of a downturn in the housing market
Building Control fees   109
Planning application fees   193

Other income variations
Housing and Council Tax Benefit subsidy (received from central govt) **Note 1**   (3,484)
Parking fees   53
DSO services wound down **Note 2**   62
Reduction in reprographics income as a result of outsourcing Printing & Stationery **Note 3**   127
Lower than budgeted temporary accommodation income, in part due to reduced demand   218
                                                                                                (2,722)
Net balance of gross income variances less than £50,000   15
Total gross income variance   **(2,707)**

Analysis of other gross expenditure variances in excess of £50,000
Contract costs less than budget
Waste contract - reduction in fees linked to RPI   (86)

Other expenditure variations
Contingency budget not used   (267)
Reduced demand for concessionary fares   (182)
Lower than budgeted rise in Housing Benefit bad debt **Note 4**   (171)
Reduced temporary accommodation costs due to increased focus on prevention   (163)
Centralisation of procurement **Note 5**   70
Housing and Council Tax Benefit payments made to claimants **Note 1**   3,335
                                                                                                  2,536
Net balance of gross expenditure variances less than £50,000   (627)
                                                                                                  1,909
Agreed carry forward to 2010/11 of underspent budgets   (533)
Total other gross expenditure variance   **1,376**

Explanatory Notes

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Note 1. There has been a greater amount of benefits paid out to claimants, which has been offset by a greater level of subsidy paid to the Council from central government (DWP).

Note 2. This was the in-year cost incurred by the closure of an expensive service – ongoing costs would far exceed the in-year cost, so its closure has achieved substantial savings.

Note 3. This income variance is due to the underachievement of income by the reprographics team following the disbandment of the Print Room. The original business case identified the cost savings, but omitted the corresponding reduction in the income budget. This was identified in budget monitoring during the year.

Note 4. This saving is a result of improved performance by Capita in the recovery of overpayments and debts relating to housing benefit and therefore a lower amount of bad debt was charged than expected.

Note 5. The predicted savings from the procurement hub did not materialise in-year due to delays in establishing the scheme. The savings targets have been removed from the budgets in 2010/11.

Financial, legal and any other implications

5. Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 S32 paragraph 2:

The authority must calculate the aggregate of

> (a) The expenditure the authority estimates it will incur in the year in performing its functions and will charge to a revenue account for the year;

> (b) Such allowance as the authority estimates will be appropriate for contingencies in relation to expenditure to be charged to a revenue account for the year;

> (c) The financial reserves which the authority estimates it will be appropriate to raise in the year for meeting its estimated future expenditure.

Under the Local Government Act 2003 Part 2 S28 – the authority must review these calculations from time to time during the year.

Conclusion

6. Despite the backdrop of the economic downturn and a significant drop in income, the Council has:

- reduced its anticipated call on reserves from £1.75 million to £0.49 million. Whilst this is a better position than budgeted, it still means a reduction in the General Fund of the Council. The current MTFP is set to replenish reserves over the next five years. An updated MTFP will be produced during the 2011/12 budget-setting process and approved by Council in February 2011.

- written off against the revenue account the anticipated loss on the Landsbanki investment (this is a year earlier than the statutory requirement in order to reduce pressure on the 2010/11 accounts).

This has been achieved primarily due to a strict moratorium on non-essential supplies and services expenditure introduced in September 2009 and maintained until the end of the Financial Year.

Background Papers

- Annual Statement of Accounts 2009/10 (currently being audited by the District Audit)

Executive Report

**Vale
of White Horse**
District Council

Report of Head of Finance

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To: EXECUTIVE

DATE: 3 September 2010

REPORT NO

42/10

Revenue Budget Monitoring – Quarter 1

Recommendation(s)

(a)   To note the current position and forecast of outturn by the services, and

(b)   To note any remedial action to be taken.

Purpose of Report

1. The report details the current revenue expenditure position for the first quarter of 2010/11. The report is submitted to the Executive to assist it in fulfilling its service delivery and budget management roles.

Strategic Objectives

2. The Council has a strategic objective to manage the business effectively, provide value for money services that meet the needs of our residents and service users and communicate the Council's activities and achievements. This report seeks to inform the committee of the current position of the council with regard to budget, expenditure to date, committed expenditure and the forecasted year-end outturn. The report also highlights where there are budget pressures and potential under-spends, with the reasons for these.

Budget Monitoring Report

3. Budget monitoring for the first quarter of 2010/11 (1 Apr – 30 Jun 10) indicates that the Council is predicting a pressure on the budgets of £12,535. It is fully expected that this will be managed down during the year as the final outturn estimates can be predicted with more certainty.

4. Service areas are reporting a net predicted outturn of £427,485 under budget but this is offset by a "Below the Line" pressure of £440,020 due to a predicted lower than budgeted income from investments and the withdrawal of the Housing and Planning Deliver Grant (HPDG) and Local Area Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) by central government in its recent cuts in grant funding.

Table 1 – Outturn forecast by Service Area
(all figures in £'000)

	Working Budget	Actuals & Commitments (30 Jun 10)	Year End Projection	Year End Variance
Commercial	3,709	333	3,699	(11)
Corporate Strategy	1,151	388	1,104	(46)
Economy, Leisure & Property	2,161	597	2,176	15
Finance	2,642	5,443	2,417	(225)
HR, IT & Customer	1,923	569	1,843	(80)
Housing & Health	1,802	452	1,733	(68)
Legal & Democratic	1,047	277	1,065	18
Planning	952	405	941	(12)
Strategic Mgmt	557	278	539	(18)
	15,943	**8,743**	**15,516**	**(427)**
Below the Line	(2,381)	982	(1,941)	440
	13,562	**9,725**	**13,574**	**13**

Table 2 – Detail by Service Area of main variances

	£000
Commercial services	
Expenditure	
The interim waste team and building control team are currently forecasting holding a post vacant in each service. This may be reviewed. Staff travel costs are consequently reduced. Drop in clinical waste users and bulky waste collections.	(76)
Income	
The first quarter car parking income is below target by £15k - this is projected forward. Reduced bulky waste income.	65
	(11)
Corporate strategy	
Expenditure	
The advertising budget is projected to be £20k underspent; there is a saving of £18k on CCTV relating to the new maintenance contract, telephones costs and staff pension costs. Community Safety partnership grants to TVP and Crimestoppers have stopped, generating a saving of £6k.	(45)
Income	(1)
-	
	(46)
Economy, Leisure and Property	
Expenditure	
There is pressure due to redundancy costs at the Civic Hall and increased energy costs at the Guildhall. The dilapidations for Challow Depot are expected to be £6k more than budgeted.	8
Income	
The will be additional income from Mobile Home Parks (£25k). This is, however offset by a reduction in rental income for the Guildhall, Civic Hall and Fitzharrys Common Room. A reduction in bar trading income is partially offset by a corresponding reduction in bar stock purchases for the Civic Hall bar.	7
	15

Finance

Expenditure

The overspend is virtually all due to increased housing and council tax benefit expenditure [£866k - although mitigated by increased subsidy income, below]. £10k overspend for the cost of Payroll function now the function is being accounted for as a true shared service. Underspends are expected in respect of Assisted Travel costs (£89k), and salaries due to maternity and part-year vacancies (£44k). The other main underspend currently projected concerns lower than anticipated past service pension costs payable (£20k).   719

Income

Due to increased subsidy in support of Housing and Council Tax Benefits (contra expenditure increase, above).   (944)

(225)

HT, IT & Customer

Expenditure

Underspends due to salary savings due to vacancy in Abingdon LSP and savings on closure of Wantage LSP (£103k). These savings are mitigated by the estimated cost of recharges from SODC in respect of FFTF work, which is presently unbudgeted at £49k.   (51)

Income

Unbudgeted recharge to SODC for Vale staff working on FFTF.   (29)

(80)

Housing & Health

Expenditure

Lower than anticipated cost of benefits payable to temporary accommodation (TA) clients, in addition to a number of smaller other variances.   (168)

Income

Lower than anticipated levels of temporary accommodation subsidy receivable due to reduced number of TA cases.   100

(68)

Legal & Democratic

Expenditure

-          (1)

Income

Reduction in income due to government prohibiting the charging of fees for personal searches. Fees stopped with effect from end of July.   19

18

Planning

Expenditure

Predicted underspend on salary costs in Landscape and Planning Delivery cost centres   (12)

Income

-          0

(12)

Strategic management

Expenditure

Work on the CAA has been put on hold   (18)

Income

-          0

(18)

Contingency

-          **0**

Below the line

Investment income interest – shortfall due to continuing record low rates   250

Housing and Planning Delivery Grant – cancelled by central government	150
Local Area Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) – cancelled by central government	40
	440

Current pressure predicted in year `13`

Financial Implications

5. Any variance in the outturn position from the budget will have an impact on the council's level of reserves.

Legal Implications

6. This is an information report and there are no legal implications.

Risks

7. Failure to manage budgets on a regular and adequate basis, and take appropriate action where necessary, could lead to a greater call on the council's reserve balances that originally anticipated in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Other implications

8. Any change in the planned reserve levels in the MTFP could affect future budgets.

Conclusion

9. Current outturn prediction is £12,565 overspend (0.1% of net budget). It is anticipated that will be absorbed during the current financial year.

Background Papers

- Executive Budget Proposal 2010/11 (Yellow Pages) approved by Council on 17 February 2010.

Executive Report

Vale of White Horse
District Council

Report of Head of Corporate Strategy

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To: EXECUTIVE

DATE: 3 September 2010

**REPORT NO
39/10**

Transforming Vale's website

Recommendation(s)

(a) That Executive agrees to join a project with South Oxfordshire District Council to transform their respective websites to be more customer focused

(b) That Executive agrees to an exemption to the contract procedure rules that will allow the Vale to appoint the same supplier as South, which will deliver a combined saving of £20,000.

Purpose of Report

1. Firstly to ask executive to join a project with South to transform their respective websites from service directories to sites that are much more customer focused. Secondly to agree an exemption to the contract procedure rules that will allow the Vale to appoint the same supplier as South, which will deliver a combined saving of £20,000.

Strategic Objectives

2. A more customer focused website that pushes existing online services, contributes to Strategic Objective: Managing our business effectively, specifically the following priorities:

    o provide value for money services that meet the needs of our residents and service users

    o optimise access to our services

     o improve communication about the council's activities and achievements.

Background

3. The council's website (like South's) is tired and has outgrown its original structure to the extent that it is difficult for visitors to navigate their way around and find online services. The content management system (CMS) is an off-the-shelf product called Tridion, which costs £5,825 a year in licenses. It requires external support for which there is a call off contract and a budget set aside of £20,000 a year.

4. South Oxfordshire District Council is delivering a project to transform its website from a directory of services to a site that is customer focused and pushes online services. Both of which should not only boost satisfaction with the website but the council as a whole, as residents will easily be able to navigate to the information they're after and can access services when it's convenient to them. South has recently been through a lengthy tender exercise to appoint a designer (Reading Room) and developer (Nameless) to transform its site. Both offered good value for money.

5. South will be moving to a new (CMS), called Drupal, which is a very popular and highly rated open source system that's free and has a large, free support network. Part of the specification was that the CMS needed to be capable of supporting another website in the future, i.e. the Vale's.

6. Given these circumstances now would be a good time to consider transforming the Vale's site given the potential efficiency savings that could be achieved through a joint project and the need for both sites to become more customer focused.

7. The capital budget approved for the project to transform South's website is £57,246. This includes a new design, new site architecture, installing and developing a new content management system, user testing and migrating the content from the old site.

8. We have received written confirmation of the costs of the Vale joining the project based on the council's having the same design structure but with their individual branding. The total cost for transforming both sites is just over £94,206, so £47,103 each and a combined saving of £20,286 compared with running separate transformation projects. These costs are based on the 'worst-case' from information we have so far. If we get approval to proceed, we will negotiate with the developer to further reduce the costs. The only ongoing cost would be if the Vale site continues to be hosted externally, though this will not be possible with the current provider. There may be some advantages in outsourcing the hosting of both sites, and we will explore this separately.

9. The £47,000 needed for the Vale's site can be funded from existing budgets. As the sites will be supported internally the £20,000 currently earmarked for external support could be used to fund part of the transformation costs. Andrew Down has identified £27,000 from a capital budget set aside for online service projects, which are unlikely to require the full budget this year.

10. It's important to point out, however, that whilst the council would end up with a website that is more customer focused, up-to-date, more accessible and easy to navigate, it would not be more interactive as the budget previously set aside to facilitate the transactional side of the site would be needed to create the new site. Following the site's launch, the council could use the 2011/12 budget of £20,000 set aside for external support on increasing/improving the online services to make the website more transactional. Thereafter it is anticipated that this budget would be offered as a saving.

11. As the project involves using one CMS to drive two websites and South is ready to start building this, Vale's site could go live before the end of the financial year.

Options

12. The option of doing nothing was considered, however, the council will need to update the website and if this is done at a later date the cost would be at least an additional £10,000 assuming the design structures for the two sites are identical but with separate branding.

13. The option of transforming the council's website in isolation was also considered, however, this does not make good business or financial sense for the same reason as is stated above.

Financial Implications

14. A spend of £50,000 requires three quotations, however in this case the recommendation is that the companies already delivering on the South transformation also deliver on Vale's. As a result a formal Executive decision is needed to approve an exception under paragraph 77 of the contracts procedure rules to allow the Vale to appoint the same supplier as South.

Legal Implications

15. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risks

16. The main risk of <u>not</u> following the recommendation would be the lost opportunity to revamp the website at the most cost effective time.

Other implications

17. None

Conclusion

18. Through a joint project with South, the Vale can deliver a much needed more customer focused website and achieve combined savings of £20,000.

Background Papers

None

Cabinet and Executive Report

South Oxfordshire
District Council

Listening Learning Leading

Vale
of White Horse
District Council

Report of Head of IT, HR and Customer Services

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**REPORT NO
42/10**

Cabinet member responsible:	Executive member responsible:
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To: CABINET	To: EXECUTIVE
DATE: 9 September 2010	DATE: 3 September 2010

Health and Safety Policy

Recommendation(s)

That Executive agrees the health and safety policy (a copy of which is attached).

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to obtain Executive's approval of the updated shared health and safety policy.

Strategic Objectives

2. The implementation and development of effective health and safety management will contribute to the council's strategic objective to manage our business effectively.

Background

3. The delivery of public services will always involve a degree of potential risk. It is important, however, that the councils wherever possible eliminates such risks, or minimises them by being proactive in the management of risk. An effective health and safety management system is a method by which issues can be placed in an agreed framework to identify, analyse control and monitor risks.

4. Having a policy that sets a clear direction for the organisation to follow is one of the key elements of health and safety management. The health and safety policies of the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils have now been harmonised into one policy for both councils.

5. The chief executive and management team have approved the attached health and safety policy and consultation has taken place with unison and all staff.

6. An effective health and safety management system will contribute towards

   - providing a high quality service
   - achievement of the Council's strategic and operational objectives
   - providing a safe and healthy working environment
   - protection of the council's assets
   - ensuring compliance with statutory requirements
   - minimising financial losses which arise from unplanned events
   - ensuring a systematic approach to the identification of risks and the allocation of resources to control them
   - supporting quality initiatives aimed at continuous improvement

7. Councillors are not responsible for managing health and safety services on a day-to-day basis, but must understand the strategic way in which they can affect health and safety management in their authority. Councillors will have both individual and collective governance responsibilities.

8. The cabinet (South) and executive (Vale) must ensure that the shared chief executive has in place an effective health and safety management system and that their decision making systems allow for health and safety implications to be given appropriate and proper consideration.

9. The chief executive has overall responsibility for health and safety and must have an effective management structure and arrangements in place to deliver the policy. The strategic directors and heads of service will be responsible for providing leadership and implementing the policy within their portfolio responsibilities.

10. Once the health and safety policy is approved an action plan will be developed to ensure the implementation of the policy. A major part of this will be the development of a comprehensive training programme to ensure that all staff are trained to perform their jobs effectively and safely, and discharge their responsibilities under the policy.

11. Once the policy has been implemented then it will be important to measure, audit and review performance.

Options

12. None.

Financial Implications

13. All staff to a greater or lesser degree have health and safety responsibilities and require suitable information and training to meet these. There are likely to be financial implications associated with the training of staff, in particular managers. A

training need analysis will be carried out so that methods of delivery and costs can be established. Costs will be met from within currently available budgets.

Legal Implications

14. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 requires organisations with more than five employees to have an up to date health and safety policy.

15. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 impose further responsibilities on organisations to have in place effective arrangements for the management of health and safety.

Risks

16. Without an up to date health and safety policy and associated management system the councils could be at risk of an increase in accidents/ill health and/or property damage and the associated financial and legal implications.

Other Implications

Human Resource Implications

17. The head of HR, IT and customer services will ensure the development of a health and safety advisory service. This facilitates compliance with health and safety legislation by promoting safety risk management through senior management and service teams. In practical terms, this will involve:

    - co-ordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of safety arrangements within the councils
    - ensuring that arrangements exist for the development and review of appropriate policies, procedures and guidance on health, safety and welfare issues
    - ensuring that all appropriate staff training needs are identified, and that effective arrangements exist for the training delivery, and
    - ensuring arrangements are put in place to make sure that staff are competent to carry out the responsibilities and duties assigned to them

18. Formally, the management team, personnel committee and Unison will assess and approve this policy at least every three years, to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness. Councillors will be advised of any changes resulting from this via the Weekly Information Sheet (WIS) and Councillors information sheet.

Sustainability Implications

19. Where applicable, health and safety arrangements will take account of sustainability, for example, having policies available in electronic format and choosing health and safety solutions that also take account of energy efficiency.

Equality and Diversity Implications

20. Any health and safety arrangements must take into account any individual needs that may be applicable, e.g. disabilities, language difficulties, etc. These will be

addressed as part of detailed risk assessments. An equalities impact check has been carried out on the health and safety policy.

Communications

21. The chief executive and management team approved the health and safety policy and consultation has taken place with unison, staff, the personnel committee and cabinet/executive portfolio holders.

22. Once approved the general statement of intent will be included in the induction pack for new employees and displayed on the notice board in reception. The health and safety policy will be posted on both intranets. An article will go out in the weekly information sheet (WIS) (South) and councillors' information sheet (Vale). The contents of the health and safety policy are also included in our corporate training programme.

Conclusion

23. The updated health and safety policy will enable the councils to comply with its legal obligations.

Background Papers

24. N/A

Health and Safety Policy

General Statement of Intent

1. It is the policy of the Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council (the councils) to comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work (etc.) Act 1974 and such other health and safety legislation that may from time to time be introduced and be relevant.

2. The councils recognise that high standards of health, safety and welfare are integral to efficient management objectives and contribute to its overall operational success. The councils are committed to continuous improvement in occupational health and safety and environmental matters that may affect employees, councillors, volunteers, contractors and members of the public.

3. For such standards to be achieved, adequate financial and physical resources shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, be made available thereby ensuring continuing development of the competence of employees and the provision of any necessary expert advice.

4. Health and safety is a management responsibility of equal importance to all other objectives, thus management team and all managers shall continuously improve health and safety performance by establishing and maintaining control, communicating the necessary information, encouraging co-operation between individuals and groups, thereby ensuring that a positive health and safety culture is promoted and developed.

5. Equally, it is recognised that all employees have a duty of care to themselves and others by avoiding hazards, preventing accidents and co-operating with the councils by complying with all instructions and recommendations on health and safety.

6. So far as is reasonably practicable, the councils will provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from its work activities and by ensuring that:

   - safe and healthy work methods and conditions are provided and adopted
   - safe plant and equipment is provided and maintained
   - substances are safely handled and used
   - statutory requirements are complied with and accepted as the minimum standards in all work areas and activities
   - employees are consulted on matters affecting their health and safety
   - employees are actively encouraged to participate in health and safety arrangements and submit ideas and suggestions for improving standards
   - employees are made aware of potential hazards and the precautions to be adopted, by providing information, instruction, training, supervision and appropriate safety equipment

v1

1

- other people (councillors, the public, contractors, volunteers) that may be affected by our activities are informed of any risks and the action that has been taken to reduce them
- accidents and cases of work-related ill health are prevented as far as possible
- steps are taken to identify the immediate and underlying causes of work related injuries and implement any preventative action necessary

7. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or when procedural, legislative or best practice changes occur to ensure it remains effective, and any necessary amendments communicated to all employees.

8. Employees who wilfully disregard the councils health and safety policies and procedures may be subject to councils performance and conduct procedures, which may include summary dismissal.

David Buckle

Shared Chief Executive
August 2010

Organisation - Roles and Responsibilities

The Cabinet/Executive

9. Councillors are not responsible for managing health and safety services on a day-to-day basis, but must understand the strategic way in which they can affect health and safety management in their authority. Councillors will have both individual and collective governance responsibilities.

10. In particular the cabinet (South) and executive (Vale) will ensure that:

   - the shared chief executive has in place an effective health and safety policy and they actively support their officers, including making provision within available resources, to ensure the successful implementation of this policy

   - their decision making systems allow for health and safety implications to be given appropriate and proper consideration and are in line with the council's policies and procedures

   - a senior elected member is nominated to be responsible for health and safety and lead in this area (e.g. the portfolio holder for human resources) and sit as a member on the health and safety review board

   - they receive copies on the health and safety annual report, minutes of the councils health and safety review board, details of major incidents or accidents and where necessary ensure that any recommendations made have been acted upon

Shared Chief Executive

11. The overall responsibility for effective health and safety management in the councils lies with the shared chief executive, who will ensure that:

   - an up to date statement of the council's policy for health and safety is prepared and brought to the attention of all employees and councillors

   - an effective management system is in place to implement the health and safety policy, by which risks will be assessed, priorities decided and objectives set for eliminating hazards and reducing risks

   - they chair the health and safety reviews board meetings

   - management team regularly reviews the risk register

   - agreed programmes of investment in health and safety risk control measures are properly accounted for in the council's corporate plan

   - annually, corporate health and safety objectives are agreed by the strategic management team, with key measures and success criteria established to monitor performance, and that shared strategic directors are held accountable for ensuring these are met by their respective services

   - management team and councillors commit to the health and safety management system and actively foster health and safety awareness

   - health and safety responsibilities of shared strategic directors are clearly understood

   - councillors understand and receive adequate information, instruction and training to enable them to discharge their responsibilities under the health and safety policy

   - arrangements are put into place to measure, monitor and review health and safety performance

v1   3

Shared Strategic Directors

12. The shared strategic directors are responsible for strategic leadership and direction. They will implement this policy within their portfolios by promoting a safety culture and ensuring adequate communication, training and the assessment and monitoring of risks. In particular, they will ensure that:

- annually, corporate health and safety objectives are defined via service and/or work plans, with key measures and success criteria established to monitor performance

- adequate resources and facilities are identified and made available through annual budget settings to ensure achievement of these objectives

- they sit as members of the health and safety review board

- health and safety responsibilities of managers and portfolio holders are clearly understood

- managers and portfolio holders receive adequate information, instruction and training to enable them to discharge their responsibilities under the health and safety policy

- shared heads of service are held accountable through the performance review process for their health and safety performance

- due regard to health and safety considerations is given in any specification, tender or contract, prepared or let or managed by their service

- ensure that there is an effective system for consultation, and for communicating health and safety information throughout the service

- managers within their service co-operate with Unison and staff representative in carrying out their functions

- all incidents, hazards and near misses, whether injury is sustained or not, are reported and investigated in accordance with councils procedures. Any action to prevent recurrence is implemented as soon as is reasonably practicable

- arrangements are put into place to measure, monitor and review health and safety performance

Shared Head of Human Resources, Information Technology and Customer Services

13. To support the chief executive, the shared head of human resources (HR), information technology (IT) and customer services is nominated as the manager responsible for overseeing the health and safety management system. In practical terms, this means that they will:

- develop health and safety objectives for approval, key measures and associated success criteria to monitor performance

- consult with the shared chief executive as part of the annual budget setting process, to ensure adequate resources and facilities are made available to achieve agreed objectives

- attend the safety action group and health and safety review board

- ensure that there is an effective system for consultation and communicating health and safety information throughout the organisation

- advise the shared chief executive, shared strategic directors, the other shared heads of service, Unison and the management and staff committee, of all serious adverse incidents and unacceptable risks

- review and present an annual health and safety report to the shared chief executive, shared strategic directors, the other shared heads of service, Unison and the management and staff committee, that details incident trends, levels of performance and matters of concern, plus an action plan containing objectives and prioritised risk reduction programmes, and
- ensure the development of a health and safety advisory service, which facilitates compliance with health and safety legislation by promoting safety risk management through senior management and service teams. In practical terms, this will involve:
    i.   co-ordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of safety arrangements within the councils
    ii. ensuring that arrangements exist for the development and review of appropriate policies, procedures and guidance on health, safety and welfare issues
    iii. ensuring that all appropriate training needs are identified, effective arrangements exist for the training delivery and records are kept, and
    iv. ensuring arrangements are put in place to ensure that staff are competent to carry out the responsibilities and duties assigned to them.

Shared Heads of Service

14. Shared heads of service are responsible for implementing this policy within their service teams by operating a safety culture and ensuring adequate communication, training and the assessment and monitoring of risks. In particular, they will ensure that:

- employees at all levels within their service are held accountable through the performance review process for their health and safety performance
- health and safety responsibilities of employees are clearly understood
- they sit as members of the safety action group
- their service management team takes full account of health, safety and welfare considerations when planning, developing or introducing new working methods, systems, equipment or premises
- risk assessments are undertaken in their service areas, prioritised, control measures introduced and continually monitored and reviewed to ensure that these measures are effective. Outstanding risks are put on the risk register
- risk assessments of work activities take into consideration all those who may be affected (employees, councillors, volunteers, contractors and the public), and that they are informed of any risks they may be exposed to and the action taken to reduce or eliminate them
- risk assessments and risk registers are reviewed at least annually or when a change of circumstances dictates
- copies of risk assessments and risk registers are sent to the health and safety adviser for review and retention
- all employees working within their service receive adequate information, instruction, training and supervision and are competent to carry out their work safely and discharge their responsibilities under the health and safety policy
- due regard to health and safety considerations, including arrangements for monitoring performance, is given in any specification, tender or contract, prepared or let or managed by their service

- that there is an effective system for consultation and communicating health and safety information throughout the service (that includes staff, portfolio holders, councillors, volunteers, contractors and the public as appropriate)

- managers within their service co-operate with Unison representatives in carrying out their functions

- all incidents, hazards and near misses, whether injury is sustained or not, are reported and investigated in accordance with councils procedures. Any action to prevent recurrence must be implemented as soon as is reasonably practicable, and

- arrangements are put into place to measure, monitor and review health and safety performance.

All Managers and Supervisors

15. Managers and supervisors are responsible for implementing this policy by operating a safety culture and ensuring adequate communication, training and the assessment and monitoring of risks. In particular, managers and supervisors will ensure that:

- they assist senior management in developing health and safety objectives, key measures and success criteria to monitor performance, and advising them of all serious adverse incidents and unacceptable risks

- they familiarise themselves with the requirements of health and safety legislation governing the work activities for which they have a supervisory responsibility

- employees at all levels within their service are held accountable through the performance review procedures for their health and safety performance

- health and safety responsibilities of employees are clearly understood

- risk assessments of work activities are undertaken in accordance with councils procedures. Risks identified are prioritised and action plans developed to eliminate or minimise exposure

- risk assessments of work activities take into consideration all those who may be affected (staff, councillors, volunteers, contractors and the public), and that they are informed of any risks they may be exposed to and the action taken to reduce or eliminate them

- people that actually carry out the work activity are involved to ensure that control measures introduced are effective. These measures must be continually monitored and reviewed to ensure that they remain effective

- where risks cannot be eliminated, written safe systems of work are developed and staff are made aware of them through training and supervision. A risk register is maintained to record assessment outcomes

- all incidents, hazards and near misses, whether injury is sustained or not, are reported and investigated in accordance with councils procedures. Any action to prevent recurrence must be implemented as soon as is reasonably practicable

- where relevant, competent contractors are used and their work is, as far as reasonably practicable, monitored to ensure compliance with the method statement and/or contract, to ensure that the work is carried out safely and that the quality of work/service is satisfactory

- to ensure DSE assessments for employees are undertaken

- all machinery and equipment is maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair and that, where applicable safety devices are fitted and

maintained, safety rules observed and where appropriate protective clothing and equipment is provided

- arrangements are made for all portable electrical appliances used by their section, (both on and off site) to be inspected and tested at appropriate intervals
- the need for personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing for persons working under their supervision is assessed. Where it is provided, it must be suitable, correctly used, stored, maintained and replaced as required
- ensure that there is an effective system for consultation and communicating health and safety information throughout their teams
- they co-operate with any Unison representative carrying out their functions
- the council's health and safety policy, as well as any procedures, codes of practice, etc. are communicated to their staff and that these are followed where applicable
- employees have suitable and sufficient supervision, instruction, information and training to undertake their work safely. Induction and refresher training on health and safety issues is provided to all employees, covering policies/procedures, safe systems of work and safe operation of equipment
- regular audits and inspections are undertaken to ensure that procedures/safe systems of work are being followed and that any shortcomings are identified and dealt with. Maintain written records of all audits/inspections and actions for improvement.

Health and Safety Adviser

16. The health and safety adviser will be responsible for the delivery of a health and safety advisory service that is available to all levels of management and staff. This service will assist compliance with health and safety legislation, through the promotion of a positive health and safety culture along with senior management.

17. The health and safety adviser will support the shared head of HR, IT and customer services in carrying out his responsibilities under the health and safety policy.

18. The health and safety adviser will be responsible for:

- the development of a suitable health and safety training programme based on the outcome of training needs analysis, and consultation with the management team, shared heads of service and corporate learning and development officer.
- the development of compliance testing on a regular basis to ensure that the councils are achieving compliance with legislative requirements and the implementation of agreed programmes.
- monitoring and evaluating safety data, providing reports that identify incident trends, levels of performance, matters of concern requiring attention and, where appropriate the setting of targets for use as performance indicators.
- reporting notifiable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive, and acting as the councils' liaison officer when dealing with external statutory bodies.
- the provision of reports to the management and staff committee and Unison, advising on the implications of new legislation, incident trends, areas of concern and overall levels of performance.
- the development of appropriate policies and procedures that will provide the councils with necessary guidance for achieving compliance with legislative requirements and the provision of a safe, secure and healthy environment. This will

include the review of policies, etc. and revisions to take account of changes in legislation, standards and working practices.

- developing, implementing and monitoring a system to ensure that managers investigate all incidents, near misses and hazards and that appropriate action follows.

- assist the shared head of HR, IT and customer services in the preparation of a corporate health and safety report for the management team, cabinet, executive, shared heads of service and the management and staff committee that details incident trends, levels of performance and matters of concern, plus an action plan containing objectives and prioritised risk reduction programmes.

All Employees

19. All employees have a duty to themselves, colleagues, and any person who might be affected by their actions, to work in a safe manner. In particular, this will include:

- taking reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and any other person who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

- co-operating with managers and supervisors to ensure that all relevant statutory regulations, policies and procedures are followed.

- compliance with the general safety rules outlined in Appendix C.

- attending as requested, health and safety training sessions designed to further the cause of health and safety, and increase individual awareness.

- ensuring that where required, safety equipment/devices are used as directed and appropriate protective clothing worn.

- reporting to their manager/supervisor all faults, hazards, unsafe practices, accidents, adverse incidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses whether injury is sustained or not (the councils have a joint whistleblowing policy in place).

- ensuring that any ill health or medical condition, which may affect their ability to work safely, is reported immediately to their manager.

(NB: Intentionally interfering with, or misusing any equipment or materials provided to ensure a healthy and safe environment, is a disciplinary matter. In some circumstances, it could lead to prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive.)

Agency Workers

20. Any manager using agency workers must ensure that:

- before any agency worker starts work they must be given basic induction training appropriate to the service
- before any agency worker uses equipment they are shown the correct operation
- minimum health and safety competency requirements shall be identified in all contractual agreements between the councils and agency providers, to ensure safe working practices for all employees and workers.

Health and Safety Organisation Structure

21. Attached at Appendix A is a flowchart describing the arrangements for team debate, consideration and action planning in relation to health and safety risks identified within the councils.

Arrangements

Resources for Health and Safety

22. Not all working environments within the premises managed by the councils are ideal. The councils are faced with substantial demands on capital and maintenance programmes to effect improvement to meet current political and legal requirements. Progress will therefore be slow, but the councils anticipate that where additional funds cannot be found for capital replacement or maintenance works, a written safe system of work will be developed by managers, with involvement from employees, which minimise risks to those concerned.

23. The councils remain committed to improving the working environment and have therefore given priority to programmes of work necessary to effect improvements in health and safety and to minimise risk. In addition, the councils will provide adequate resources in the form of senior management level support to ensure the promotion and maintenance of the appropriate level of safety performance.

Specialist Advisers

24. Specialist advisers are employees working within, or managing a team within the councils who have designated responsibilities for advising on and ensuring the implementation of health and safety measures. Managers within the councils should refer to these advisers on matters relevant to their speciality, and for assisting in investigating adverse incidents and near misses, and identifying solutions to prevent reoccurrence (contact details are on both intranets).

Health and Safety Review board

25. The health and safety review board (HRSB) is responsible for ensuring the proactive, progressive and continuous improvement in the councils approach to health and safety is achieved. This includes overseeing the development and implementation of the health and safety policy and associated management system and for encouraging and fostering greater awareness of health and safety. The terms of reference and membership for the HRSB are available on both councils' intranets.

Safety Action Group

26. The safety action group is responsible for overseeing and advising on operational safety within the service teams and to initiate, where appropriate, any necessary corrective action. The terms of reference and membership for the safety action group are available on both councils' intranets.

Occupational Health Service and General Practice

27. An occupational health referral service is available for managers to utilise; referral is via the human resource business partner.

28. A local general practice is used to ensure that employees are physically and mentally suited for the job they are undertaking through pre-employment screening.

Consultation

29. The councils see communication between employees at all levels as an essential part of effective health and safety management. Consultation will be facilitated by means of Unison and direct consultation with staff.

30. One of the purposes of Unison and the management and staff committee is to provide a platform for promoting health and safety, information exchange and assessing the effectiveness of the health and safety management system within the councils.

Contractors

31. All contractors engaged by the councils have a responsibility, as specified in all contract documents, to carry out their work in a safe manner in respect of their own employees, subcontractors, councils employees and premises, and members of the public.

32. The councils will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the employment of competent contractors who are able to demonstrate that they have in place management systems for safely undertaking work for which they have been employed.

33. The work of contractors used by the council will, as far as reasonably practicable, be monitored to ensure compliance with the method statement and/or contract, to ensure that the work is carried out safely and that the quality of work/service is satisfactory.

34. Contractors will be advised of any required standards, codes of practice, procedures, rules or other guidance applicable to the work to be undertaken. Special care is required to ensure that these matters are covered, although nothing in contract documents can free those engaging contractors, the contractors or councils employees from their own liability under health and safety legislation.

Risk Assessment

35. In accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, managers will identify hazards and undertake assessments of the associated risks for all work activities (whether regular or occasional) using the council's risk assessment process. In assessing these risks, account will be taken of the effectiveness of existing control measures. The assessments will include the hazards and risks arising out of tasks/activities undertaken and assess their potential to, for example:

- cause injury or ill health to people
- result in claims or litigation
- result in enforcement action, e.g. from the Health and Safety Executive
- cause damage to the environment
- cause property loss or damage
- result in operational delays (impact on day to day activities)
- result in loss of reputation.

36. When completing the assessment, managers will rank the risks in accordance with the councils' risk assessment process, and formulate action plans that identify the necessary actions to either eliminate or control exposure to the risks. Copies of risk assessments must be sent to the health and safety adviser.

37. The outcomes of risk assessments and action plans will be made known to employees or anyone else that may be affected and discussed with them, to ensure actions are being taken. Managers will regularly monitor and review the risk assessments to ensure proactive action is being taken. Any significant health and safety risks will be recorded in the councils' risk register which is reviewed by the shared management team.

Incident/Hazard Reporting

38. Incident and hazard records are crucial to the effective monitoring of health and safety performance and revision of policy and must therefore be accurate and comprehensive. All incidents causing injury and property damage and hazards must be reported promptly on the appropriate form and submitted through the correct channels as laid down in the council's procedures on incident and hazard reporting. It is also important to report all adverse incidents and near misses, as they may be indicators of potential incidents.

39. It is a line manager's responsibility to ensure that all incidents and hazards are properly investigated. The immediate and underlying causes must be identified and recorded, and appropriate remedial action and lessons learnt, and longer-term objectives relating to health and safety are introduced.

40. Due to incidents/hazards reported or trends identified, it may be necessary for managers to review risk assessments and written safe systems of work, and develop action plans addressing any concerns.

41. Incident statistics and trend analysis reports will be produced for the shared management team, shared heads of service, Unison, management and staff committee and health and safety review board on an annual basis (or on request) with recommendations on the appropriate actions to be taken for matters of concern.

42. The councils adopt a "fair and just" approach in relation to incident reporting. Involvement in an incident will not lead to disciplinary action except where acts or omissions are malicious, criminal, fraudulent or constitute gross professional misconduct.

43. There is a legal duty that all occurrences covered by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995 are directly reported to the Health and Safety Executive. Fatal, major injury accidents, over three day injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences fall into this category and it will be the responsibility of the council's health and safety adviser to ensure that reports are submitted.

Training and Information

44. Training is a key element of an effective health and safety system. It is essential that all employees are trained to perform their job effectively and safely. It is the view of the councils that if an activity is not undertaken safely, then it is not being done effectively.

45. The shared head of HR, IT and customer services will ensure that general aspects of health and safety are incorporated into the councils' training and development policy and relevant training programmes. It shall be a responsibility of all managers to identify the health and safety training needs of their employees as part of the performance review process and individual development planning.

46. General health and safety awareness will be included in the corporate induction programme, reinforced with more specific training as part of service team induction. Additional training will be provided when employees are exposed to new or increased risks because of a change in responsibilities or place of work. Refresher training will be provided as appropriate.

47. The corporate learning and development officer will ensure the maintenance of training attendance records, and that inadequate attendances are notified to the relevant shared head of service.

48. Councillors need to be given adequate training to allow them to understand their health and safety role and enable them to carry out their duties under the health and safety policy.

Policies, Procedures and Guidance

49. In addition to this policy, the councils will produce other policies, procedures and guidance to cover all significant health and safety risks. The health and safety adviser will identify and arrange for such documents to be drafted, consulted upon and presented to the shared management team, shared heads of service, management and staff committee, Unison and all employees.

50. Managers shall ensure that each employee is made aware of and understands those documents that apply to them.

Emergency Procedures

51. The shared chief executive must ensure that arrangements are in place for the development of robust plans to deal with all situations, which may present serious and imminent danger to the health and safety of people. These include for example:
   - Peacetime emergency plan
   - Fire emergency plan
   - Business continuity plan

Records

52. All shared heads of service must ensure that records are maintained, which are available for inspection by employees, safety representatives and auditors, of the following:

   - service team risk assessments and written safe systems of work
   - personal protective equipment issued

53. The shared head of HR, IT and customer services will ensure that records are kept centrally of the following:
   - display screen equipment assessments
   - driving licences
   - training

Health and Safety Representatives

54. The principal responsibility for health and safety lies with managers. Therefore, managers have the duty to make decisions on all matters affecting health and safety. However, the councils believe that safe working is best brought about by the participation of all employees.

55. The councils therefore, support the appointment of Trade Union/Professional Organisation nominated health and safety representatives as in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977. Unison as a trade union recognised by the councils has appointed safety representatives, who will represent the branch and any Unison member employed directly by the councils (or a Unison branch member in an outside "satellite" organisation) on health and safety matters. It also recognises that these representatives have certain legal rights, with regard to time off and facilities for trade union activities.

56. Employees not represented by Unison will be consulted directly.

Information and Communications

57. The councils shall ensure that managers disseminate suitable and relevant information relating to health, safety and welfare at the workplace to employees, councillors, volunteers, contractors and other users of the councils' premises. This will include information on the hazards and risks associated with their work, and the systems in place to minimise exposure to these risks. Health and safety should be an agenda item on all regular service team meetings.

58. The statutory notice – Health and Safety Law (what you should know) will be prominently displayed at all building entrances and other identified locations within councils premises. All other statutory notices will be displayed as appropriate.

59. Each service team has a notice board, to post health and safety information, such as the list of current first aiders, fire emergency plan, up to date health and safety policy, etc.

60. The health and safety policy, subsequent policies and procedures and generic risk assessments and procedures are posted on the both councils' intranets.

Shared Premises

61. It will be the responsibility of the shared heads of HR, IT and customer services and economy, property and leisure services to ensure that effective arrangements exist for the co-operation and co-ordination of health and safety measures with other employers sharing the council's facilities. Such measures include:

- exchange of information on risks within the working environment and safe systems of work
- co-operating on matters such as implementing evacuation procedures, first aid, and waste disposal
- safety monitoring procedures, including routine inspections of common parts of the facility.

Distribution of the Policy

62. The general statement of intent will be included in the councils guide for new employees and issued to all employees on commencing work with the councils, and displayed on the notice board within reception.

63. The health and safety policy will be posted on the both councils' intranets, issued to all shared heads of service and safety representatives and will be included in the designated health and safety area on notice boards.

Evaluation and Monitoring

64. Implementation of policies and a health and safety management system can only be effective with adequate monitoring and evaluation to check the system and ensure any shortcomings are identified and dealt with. Managers are responsible for initiating an on-going monitoring process within their areas of responsibility.

65. As part of the audit processes, it shall be the responsibility of the health and safety adviser to identify and report areas of non-compliance with this policy and deficiencies in the health and safety management system. This will include regular audits of health and safety related policies and procedures to establish its intent, scope and adequacy.

66. The shared head of HR, IT and customer services and the health and safety adviser will prepare an annual corporate health and safety report detailing incident trends, overall levels of performance and matters of concern, plus an action plan containing objectives and targeted reductions. The shared head of HR, IT and customer services will be responsible for presenting this report to the shared management team, shared heads of service, Unison and management and staff committee.

Review

67. The health and safety adviser will continually monitor and update this policy as necessary, to reflect substantial changes affecting the nature of operations or in best practice and changes in legislation.

68. Formally, the shared management team, Unison and management and staff committee will assess and approve this policy at least every three years, to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness. Councillors will be advised of any changes resulting from this via the Weekly Information Sheet (WIS) (South) and Councillors' Information Sheet (Vale).

69. This document replaces the council's policy on health and safety, May 2008.

Date approved: Aug 2010
Review Date: Aug 2013
Author: Shared Health and Safety Adviser
Further Guidance: Shared Health and Safety Adviser

References

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977
- The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
- Successful Health and Safety Management (HSG 65) – Health and Safety Executive 1997
- Leading Health and Safety at Work (INDG 417) – Health and Safety Commission and Institute of Directors 2007

Appendix A: Health and Safety Organisation Structure

The flowchart below describes the arrangements for team debate, consideration and action planning in relation to health and safety risks identified within the councils. At all stages of the process, documented evidence needs to be maintained and outcomes recorded.

Health and Safety Organisation/Communication System

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┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────┐
│ Councillors  │-----│    Chief     │────────────────────│ External Health  │
│              │     │  Executive   │                    │ and Safety Inputs│
└──────────────┘     └──────────────┘                    └──────────────────┘
                            │                                      │
                     ┌──────────────┐          ┌──────────────┐    │
                     │  Management  │──────────│  Health &    │----┘
                     │     Team     │          │Safety Adviser│
                     └──────────────┘          └──────────────┘
                            │         │
                     ┌──────────────┐ │ ┌──────────────────┐
                     │   Heads of   │ │ │ Management and    │
                     │   Service    │ │ │ Staff Committee   │
                     └──────────────┘ │ │ /Unison           │
                            │         │ └──────────────────┘
                     ┌──────────────┐ │          │
                     │     Line     │ │ ┌──────────────┐
                     │   Managers   │ │ │  Specialist  │
                     └──────────────┘ │ │    Roles     │
                            │         │ └──────────────┘
                     ┌──────────────┐ │
                     │  Employees   │─┘
                     └──────────────┘
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