

Cabinet Agenda



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Date: 3 November 2011
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A meeting of the

Cabinet

will be held on Friday 11 November 2011 at 2pm
The Abbey House, Abingdon, OX14 3JE

Cabinet Members:

Councillors

Matthew Barber (Chairman)
Roger Cox (Vice-Chairman)
Yvonne Constance
Reg Waite
Elaine Ware

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Reed', is written in a cursive style.

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

(Page 4)

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 take care of your interests across the Vale with enterprise, energy and efficiency.

1. Apologies for absence

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Minutes

To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 9 September and 21 October 2011 (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 chairman's announcements

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

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

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

6. Referrals to Cabinet from other committees

Health and safety

At its meeting on 28 September 2011, the Audit and Governance Committee considered an internal audit report, following up on its recommendations from six months previous on health

and safety. The committee noted that the some recommendations had not been implemented following the original audit. The committee had concerns that health and safety was not being given full consideration. The committee recommended the Cabinet to seek assurance that health and safety was being given full attention by managers.

Comments and complaints procedure

The Audit and Governance Committee also considered an annual report on the complaints received by the council. The committee questioned whether councillors should be more involved in the assessment of complaints at stage three of the comments and complaints procedure. The committee noted that Cabinet would need to amend the council's procedure. The Committee resolved to ask Cabinet to consider whether the comments and complaints procedure should be amended so that councillors should review all stage three complaints, or whether the chief executive should consult the two group leaders on every stage three case.

7. Treasury management outturn 2010/11

(Pages 5 - 14)

To consider report 38/11 of the head of finance.

Cabinet to note that the Audit and Government Committee has supported the report recommendations.

8. Budget monitoring - quarter 2

(Pages 15 - 20)

To consider report 39/11 of the head of finance.

9. Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area, Abingdon - supplementary planning document

(Wards Affected: Abingdon Abbey and Barton;)

(Pages 21 - 52)

To consider report 40/11 of the head of planning.

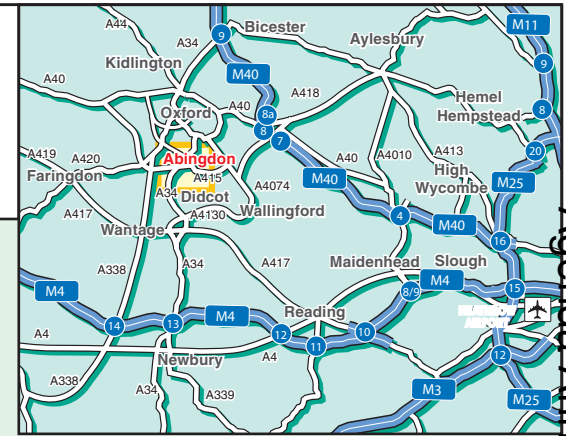
10. Car park order

(Pages 53 - 69)

To consider report 41/11 of the head of economy, leisure, and property.

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

None



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OS data. PU100040256. Crown ©2008. Mapping sourced from Ordnance Survey

KEY: Car Parks

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

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

Report to:

Audit and Governance Committee Cabinet Council

Report of: Head of Finance

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To: Audit and Corporate Governance Committee on: 28 September 2011

To: Cabinet on: 7 October 2011

To: Council on: 19 October 2011

Report no. 38/11

Treasury management outturn 2010/11

Recommendation to council

To approve the treasury management outturn report for 2010/11;

To approve the actual 2010/11 prudential indicators (appendix 1).

To note the prospects for the return on investments from 2011/12 onwards.

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise councillors of the performance of the treasury management function (the management of our investments) for the financial year 2010/11. This complies with the requirements of the CIPFA treasury management code of practice and the council's Treasury Management Practice 6 (TMP6).

Strategic Objectives

2. The report helps us to achieve our strategic objective of managing our business effectively by providing transparency and demonstrating effective management of our investments. The income from the investment portfolio contributes to the in-year revenue budget.

Background

3. As part of the 2010/11 budget setting process, council approved the treasury management strategy for 2010/11 on 17 February 2010. The treasury management strategy sets the parameters within which officers manage the council's treasury management activities.
4. This report outlines the performance over the last financial year of those funds managed in-house and those managed by *Investec Asset Management*, the Council's appointed investment manager. The Fund Manager's performance is reviewed by *Sector*, the Council's investment adviser. In addition, the report explains how background events in the financial markets and economy have affected investments and returns for 2010/11 and presents Members with a general overview of the current situation in the investment market.

Economic conditions in 2010/11 and looking forward

5. In 2010/11 the global financial markets were concerned with: the financial crisis in the euro-zone triggered by the threat of sovereign debt default by Greece; a last minute rescue from a total collapse of the euro single currency mechanism and, more recently, the announcement by the US Federal reserve Bank that it intends to keep its central rate unchanged until mid 2013.
6. In the UK, the coalition Government announced the most severe austerity package of public sector spending cuts since the Second World War, the effects of which are expected to have an impact on local government for many years to come.
7. Deposit rates picked up modestly in the second half of the year as rising inflationary concerns, and strong first half growth, fed through market expectations of the prospects of an early increase in the BoE Bank Rate. However, in March 2011, slowing actual growth, together with projected weak growth prospects, saw a market consensus of expectations of the first UK rate rise move back from May to August 2011 despite high inflation. However, the disparity of expectations on domestic economic growth and inflation encouraged a wide range of views on the timing of the start of increases in Bank Rate in a band that ranged from May 2011 through to early 2013. This sharp disparity was also seen in MPC voting which, by year-end, had three members voting for a rise while others preferred to continue maintaining rates at ultra low levels.
8. The Bank of England base rate started the year at 0.5 per cent and remained at this historically low level throughout 2010/11.
9. Consequently, both short and long term investment rates remained at extremely low levels throughout 2010/11.
10. The BoE has forecast that inflation will remain above target throughout 2012 but will return to target by 2013/14. There is a general consensus amongst economic commentators that interest rates will rise only very gradually through to 2014. This view is opposed by a small number of commentators who are worried by the potential inflationary pressures further quantitative easing (QE) may generate.

11. The economic environment remains difficult for the council and concerns over investment counterparty risk persist. This means that the council continues to maintain investments with high quality counterparties for relatively short periods. The obvious downside of this is that investment returns continue to remain low.

Base rate and LIBID rate

12. The London Interbank Bid Rate (LIBID) is the benchmark used to compare treasury management performance against because historically it has reflected the market conditions at which rates the banks lend to each other. The 7 day LIBID rate started 2010/11 at 0.42 per cent and moved slowly to close the year at 0.45 per cent, whilst base rate in comparison remained constantly at 0.50 per cent throughout 2010/11.

Icelandic bank collapse

13. The Council still holds a fixed-term deposit of £1m with Landsbanki, one of the Icelandic banks in administration, which should have been repaid in October 2008. Recovery of these investments by public authorities is being pursued as a group action by the LGA through the Icelandic courts and the Council is still anticipating to receive a substantial proportion of this deposit (and accrued interest) back.
14. On 1 April 2011 the Reykjavik District Court confirmed that local authority claims qualified for priority under Icelandic bankruptcy legislation. On this basis the estimated recoverable amount has remained the same at 94.85% although repayments will be received in stages up to 2018 with the first amount due in December 2011.

Treasury activities in 2010/11

Investment income

15. The actual investment income achieved in 2010/11 was £0.262 million. This was below the original budget forecast of £0.490 million by £0.228 million, although actual outturn was ahead of the revised forecast made in February 2011 by £21,900.

Out-turn compared with budget – investment income earned

	Fund manager	In-house team	total
Original budget 2010-11	£ 309,000	£ 180,900	£ 489,900
Actual out-turn 2010-11	£ 181,060	£ 80,840	£ 261,900
Out-turn short of budget by:	£ 127,940	£ 100,060	£ 228,000

The actual return achieved was 53.5% of the budget. This was largely due to the fact that interest rates have held at an historic low; this was not anticipated when the budget for 2010/11 was being drawn up in December 2009. The majority of forecasters were predicting that interest rates would have to start rising to combat rising inflation, probably reaching 4.8% in 2012. In the event rates have hardly moved at all and are not expected to for some time. Also because of the turmoil in the financial markets the council was restricting investments in order to reduce counterparty risk.

In-house Investment Performance

- 16 At the beginning of 2010/11 the in-house team had a debit balance of £1.843m due to the need to borrow short-term over the year-end. During the year the maximum investment holding was £24.2m and the total of investments made (turnover) was £88.64m. In-house investment income in the year amounted to £80,840 on an average invested balance of £11.968m - an average return of 0.675%. On 31 March 2011 the in-house team had a debit balance of £0.477m (again as a result of short-term borrowing at year-end).
- 17 It was necessary to borrow 3 times in the year to cover temporary cash flow shortages; a total of £3.5m for a total 29 days at an average 0.48%.
- 18 It is difficult to set targets for this sort of operation which aims to maximise returns within the constraints of security, liquidity and flexibility. Some measure of achievement can be obtained by looking at the rates achieved compared to a benchmark. The annual investment strategy says the target should be the widely published 7-day LIBID rate which is appropriate to the short-term nature of the council's investments.

In-house investment performance against benchmark.

Rate of return:	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
In-house investment team	4.84%	1.07%	0.675%
In-house investment team (incorporating Landsbanki capital loss)	4.44%		
7 day LIBID	3.60%	0.37%	0.42%
LIBID exceeded by:	1.24 or 0.84%	0.70%	0.255%

- 19 The Council only holds funds to meet its daily cash-flow requirements and also invests the council tax and business rate receipts for a short temporary period until they are due to be paid over to precepting authorities or central government. In 2010/11 the weighted average life (WAL) of the council's investments was 22 days (2009/10, 19 days). WAL on any day is the remaining period of investments adjusted for the different amounts. The current, restricted availability of suitable counter-parties (i.e. the financial institutions to whom we are willing to lend) and the present very low rates available has meant that it has not been possible to achieve the rates of return seen in previous years.
- 20 Another performance target for the in-house team is the full investment of balances held. The low rates available mean that it costs more to lend £400,000 overnight than the interest received so funds are left in the bank accounts. The average balance at the bank at the end of the day during 2010/11 was £228,319.

External Fund Managers

- 21 The performance in 2010/11 is set out below showing the fund manager's return before payment of fees.

Sum Managed at 1.4.2010	£15,313,518
Sum Managed at 31.3.2011	<u>£15,494,584</u>
Increase in value during year (gross)	£ 181,066

The Council's money is held in what is known as a 'cash plus' fund; because of the nature and spread of the fund, the manager will generally hold a wider range of investments than the in-house team; these are within the legal constraints that apply to local authorities and the requirement for security mentioned above. This includes certificates of deposit (CDs) and government-issued stock (gilts) which may be held with the intention of making a return, not just from the yield, but from changes in value over a period. For this reason the return above may be unrealised at the year-end and the fund manager is allowed to retain this increased value within the fund until it is needed to be paid over to the council. This longer-term view can also mean that the fund might have investments temporarily showing a loss. These will rise in value as the maturity date approaches.

- 22 The result for *Investec* shown above equates to a gross rate of return (i.e. before fees) of 1.18% (1.00% after fees). References to fees relate to the actual charges made per quarter. In accordance with industry practice the fund manager deducts the fees from the sums held but these are accounted for as a revenue cost by the Council.

Investec Performance over 3 years (net of fees)

Rate of return:	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Investec Asset Management	7.42%	1.31%	1.00%
7 day LIBID	3.60%	0.37%	0.42%
LIBID exceeded by:	3.82%	0.94%	0.58%
Comparable LA funds average*	6.48%	1.37%	0.89%
Average exceeded/(short) by:	0.94%	(0.06%)	0.11%

- 23 The Council's investment advisers (*Sector*) provide the comparative figures* and have reported on the state of the market and the performance of the fund manager (*Investec*). They commented that the uncertain economic climate led fund managers generally to take a very cautious approach.

Looking Forward

- 24 The outlook for returns on cash investments in 2011/12 is still poor. Markets are continuing to remain volatile and unpredictable. Economic recovery is likely to be slow and prolonged with the Monetary Policy Committee becoming more concerned with poor economic growth and downplaying inflation concerns.
- 25 The estimate of investment income for the 2011/12 budget was based on economic predictions in December 2010, which had the BoE base rate starting to rise in 2011-12 and reaching 4% in 2014. The most recent forecasts are that base rate will not start to rise until the last quarter of 2012 and will only reach 2.5% by 2014. This will not have much effect on the estimate for 2011-12 which was based

on rates staying low but will mean a reduction in the predicted income over the 5 years of the medium term financial plan.

Land and Property

- 26 The council holds a portfolio of non-operational assets, which includes land, offices and shops that are let on a commercial basis. These assets had a net book value of £30.7 million (£29.0 million as at 31 March 2009) and generated income of £1.52 million (£1.65 million in 2009/10). This is equivalent to a return of 5.0% (2009/10, 5.7%). At March 2011 the ratio of property to cash investments was 66:34.
- 27 The Economy, Leisure and Property (ELP) team manages investment property ensuring that rent is collected and rent reviews are implemented. The performance of the investment property is assessed annually to determine if assets should be retained or disposed of.

Treasury Management Advisors

- 28 Together with South Oxfordshire District Council, we appointed Butlers, a business division of ICAP Securities Ltd, as our treasury advisors in July 2008. We awarded a three year contract to July 2011 which has been extended until 2012; this costs £9,375 in the current year and has produced efficiency savings for both councils over the contract period in terms of costs for South Oxfordshire District Council, and in terms of an increased range of services for the Vale of White Horse District Council. In October 2010, ICAP transferred Butlers to Sector Treasury Services Ltd and assigned the contract as allowed under the original agreement.

Prudential Indicators

- 29 As part of the 2010/11 budget setting process the council set a number of prudential indicators. These indicators establish the parameters within which we manage the overall capital and treasury management functions.
- 30 The Council is debt free and has no borrowing so the majority of the indicators are negative and therefore prove to be difficult to relate to the day-to-day treasury management activities. This does not mean however that the council should not still monitor its performance against the indicators
- 31 During 2010/11 the council has performed within all the parameters set out under the prudential code during 2010/11. The details of the actual indicators against the budget are shown in appendix one.

Financial Implications

- 32 The report gives financial information to help Members oversee the treasury management function.

Legal Implications

- 33 All the council's investments are, and will continue to be, within its legal powers.

34 There are no other legal implications of this report.

Risks

35 Treasury investments are made using the following principles (listed in order of priority):

- Security – certainty of return of the principal invested.
- Liquidity – the principal is returned at the time required for effective cashflow management.
- Yield – the Council achieves the best return on investment as possible without unnecessary exposure to risk.

36 Treasury Management Practices are recommended by CIPFA and are reviewed on a regular basis. These advocate the best practice to follow in order to reduce the level of risk involved in the treasury activities as much as possible; however, with the volatility of the markets, there will always be an element of exposure to risk. To reduce risk to its absolute minimum would mean that the level of return on investments will severely impact upon the revenue income of the Council.

Conclusion

37 The return on cash invested in 2010/11 was lower than initially anticipated due to the sustained very low interest rates – the outturn position was close to that expected during budget monitoring revisions.

38 The budgeted net income for 2011/12 is £371,800 and the current view is that this may still be achieved. Any variation will be shown in the in-year budget monitoring reports. However, the income over the next 4 years will be reduced from that forecast in the medium term financial plan and this will be reflected in the 2012-13 budget-setting process.

Appendix

1. Outturn against Prudential Indicators 2010/11

Background Papers

- CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Sector.
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes
- Treasury Management Strategy 2010/11 – Council 17 February 2010.
- Fund Manager review March 2011 issued by Sector 11 August 2011.

Treasury management outturn 2010/11

Annual report on the actual prudential indicators 2010/11

Prudential indicators set the parameters within which the council manages the overall capital and treasury management functions. It is a requirement of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities for the council to set prudential indicators for each financial year, and to report on performance against those indicators. The performance for 2010/11 is reported in detail below.

The council's capital expenditure and financing 2010/11

- 1 The council incurred capital expenditure on long term assets. Capital expenditure may either be:
 - financed immediately from capital receipts, capital grants and contributions, or revenue; or,
 - if insufficient financing is available, or a decision is taken not to apply capital resources, the expenditure will be funded by borrowing.
- 2 The council has previously fully financed its capital expenditure and does not therefore have a current borrowing need.
- 3 The wider treasury activities also include managing the council's cash flows and the investment of surplus funds. These activities are structured to manage risk first and foremost, then to ensure funds are available when needed (liquidity) and then to optimise performance.
- 4 Actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. Capital expenditure for the year was £4.727 million which is shown in the table below, together with how the expenditure was financed.

Capital Expenditure & Financing	2009/10 actual £m	2010/11 working budget £m	2010/11 actual £m
Non-HRA capital expenditure	2.136	5.991	4.727
HRA capital expenditure	nil	nil	nil
Total capital expenditure	2.136	5.991	4.727
Resourced by:			
Capital receipts	1.358	5.142	4.133
Capital grants	0.636	0.689	0.557
Developer & other contributions	0.142	0.160	0.037
Total resources applied	2.136	5.991	4.727

The council's overall borrowing need

- 5 The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is designed to measure the authority's underlying need to borrow for, or finance by other long-term liabilities, capital expenditure. It is not a straightforward concept especially in a debt-free authority since it is designed to show that medium and long term net borrowing will only be for a capital purpose. Borrowing may not necessarily take place externally but the authority may be, in effect, lending to itself. Any change in the CFR would show

an increase or decrease in borrowing and the cost would fall on the council tax. The CFR at the year-end is calculated from figures on the council's balance sheet. A positive figure would show a borrowing requirement.

	£'000
CFR at beginning of year	(22)
Movement in year	0
Closing balance at 31.03.2011	(22)
Closing balance calculation	
Property, plant and equipment	38,222
Investment property	30,652
Intangible assets	86
Assets held for sale or surplus	303
Capital adjustment account	(68,982)
Revaluation reserve	(303)
CFR from balance sheet	(22)

Prudential indicators and compliance issues.

- 6 Some of the prudential indicators provide either an overview or specific limits on treasury activity. These are shown below:
- 7 **The authorised limit** - The authorised limit is the “affordable borrowing limit” required by section three of the Local Government Act 2003. The council is not permitted to borrow in excess of this level once it is set. As detailed in the main report it was necessary to borrow 3 times in the year to cover temporary cash flow shortages. The total outstanding was always within the authorised limit.
- 8 **The operational boundary** – The operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the council during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary is acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.
- 9 **Actual financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream** - This indicator is meant to show the cost of capital (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income) against the net revenue stream (the budget requirement). In an authority with borrowing it would show how affordable the repayments are. In a debt-free authority it shows the contribution of income on cash invested to the net cost of services.

	2010/11
Original indicator - authorised limit	£5m
Maximum borrowing position at any time	£3m
Original indicator - operational boundary	£2m
Average borrowing position over all days when borrowing outstanding	£1.4m
Financing costs as proportion of net revenue stream	(2.03%)

Treasury Position at 31 March 2011

10 The figures in this report are based on the principal amounts borrowed and invested and so may differ from those in the final accounts by items such as accrued interest.

11 During 2010/11 the treasury position compared with the previous year was:

	31 March 2010		31 March 2011	
	Principal	Average Rate	Principal	Average Rate
Total Debt	£2.7m	0.46%	£1.5m	0.47%
Fixed Interest Investments	£0.5m	0.45%	nil	
Instant access (money market fund)	£0.09m	0.43%	£0.58m	0.61%

12 **Investment policy** – The council’s investment policy is governed by DCLG and CIPFA guidance, which is implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by council on 17 Feb 2010. The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy, and the council had no liquidity difficulties.

13 **Resources** – The council’s longer term cash balances are a mixture of revenue and capital resources, although these will be influenced by cash flow variations (debtors and creditors). The council’s core cash resources are as follows:

Balance sheet resources	31 March 2010 £m	31 March 2011 £m
Balances	2.163	3.326
Earmarked reserves	1.000	0.751
Grants and other contributions	0.859	1.194
Usable capital receipts	9.776	7.662
Total	13.798	12.933

14 The council has complied with all of the above relevant statutory and regulatory requirements which limit the levels of risk associated with its treasury management activities. In particular its adoption and implementation of both the Prudential Code and the Code of Practice for Treasury Management means both that its capital expenditure is prudent, affordable and sustainable, and its treasury practices demonstrate a low risk approach.

Cabinet Report



REPORT NO

39/11

Report of Head of Finance

Author: Bob Watson, Chief Accountant

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Wards affected: All

Cabinet member responsible: Matthew Barber

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To: Cabinet

DATE: 11 November 2011

Budget Monitoring – Quarter 2

Recommendation

To note the current position and forecast of outturn by the services.

Purpose of report

1. The report details the current revenue and capital expenditure position for the second quarter of financial year (fy) 2011/12. The report is submitted to the cabinet 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.
3. Both the revenue and capital positions to date and the forecasted outturn position are covered in this report. The budget is as set by council and includes approved virements to date; actual income and expenditure figures are derived from the Council's general ledger system and the predicted outturn with explanation of variances are provided by the budget holders within the service areas.

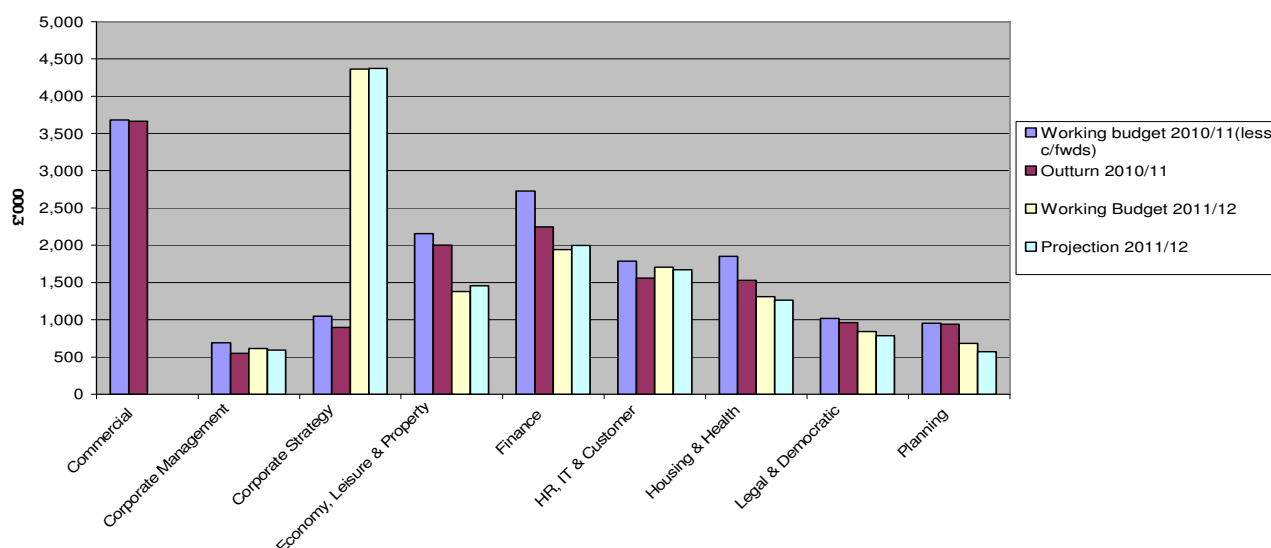
Revenue budget monitoring report

4. Budget monitoring for the second quarter of 2011/12 (1 Jul – 30 Sep) indicates that, at the date of this report, the Council is predicting an over spend of £132,188 by year end. Qtr 1 was predicting a pressure on budgets of £352,119.
5. Service areas are reporting a net predicted under spend of £130,542, but there is £262,730 of 'below the line' pressure, which relates to contingency and property investment income. The contingency budget assumed that we would receive £162,000 of additional income due to having the freedom to be able to increase our planning fees; this is now unlikely to happen due to limitations on the scope to increase the fees and delays in approval from central government. The contingency budget also included £50k revenue savings arising from a capital scheme for Manor Park, Wantage which now looks unlikely to happen. Also, the outturn includes an estimated amount payable to Capita under the terms of the payment and performance mechanism. Property income is also less than budgeted due to rent starting to be received later than anticipated for Telfer House.

Table 1 – Outturn forecast by service area as at 30 Sep 11
(all figures in £'000)

	Working budget	Actuals & commitments	Year end projection	Year end variance
Corporate strategy	4,361	2,077	4,371	10
Economy, leisure & property	1,377	498	1,454	77
Finance	1,940	4,587	1,998	58
HR, IT & customer	1,704	818	1,669	(35)
Housing & health	1,309	603	1,264	(45)
Legal & democratic	843	373	785	(58)
Planning	682	161	569	(113)
Corporate management	614	381	589	(25)
	12,830	9,498	12,699	(131)
<u>Below the line</u>				
Contingency	908	0	1,132	224
Property income	(2,074)	(945)	(2,035)	39
Total	11,664	8,553	11,796	132

Comparison of net working budget against outturn for 2010/11 and working budget and prediction for 2011/12



6. The main variances within the individual service areas are highlighted in the table below, which shows the variance against the gross expenditure and income budget lines within the services. These explanations are edited from those provided by budget holders in their budget monitoring reports and from the meetings held with their service accountants. Significant elements of the savings are a direct result of cost reduction measures being implemented.

Table 2 – Detail by service area of main variances

	<u>£000</u>
Corporate strategy	
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Higher than expected bonus payment to the waste contractors due to the district exceeding its recycling targets (off set against income – as detailed below). Street cleaning contract payments are being predicted on six months actuals, which is coming out higher than budget.	250
<u>Income</u>	
Over achievement on recycling targets and brown bin customers	(240)
	<hr/> 10 <hr/>
Economy, leisure and property	
<u>Expenditure</u>	
£27k due to savings on vacant posts within the car parks section. The remaining under spend is made up of small savings within a number of cost centres.	(36)
<u>Income</u>	
£82k of the under achievement of income is due to the introduction of 2 hours free parking from December 2011. There is a predicted £23k reduction in income at the Civic Hall, and also £16k reduction in Civic Hall bar income (partly offset by a £8k reduction in purchases of bar stock). Income from service charges is up by £16k, but commission from turnover of mobile homes is down by £11k. The balance is made up of over achievement of income on various cost centres.	113
	<hr/> 77 <hr/>
Finance	
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Bulk of variance due to net increased expenditure on housing and council tax benefits (now est at £934k), although this is mitigated by increased related subsidy income receivable. Other main variances include savings estimated on the Capita contract, due to lower than budgeted sharing arrangement of additional benefits admin grant and inflationary savings and reduction in costs due to contract extension.	893

<u>Income</u>	
Variance is mainly a result of increased subsidy receivable for housing and council tax benefits due to a rise in related expenditure.	(835)
	<hr/>
	58
	<hr/>
HR, IT & customer	
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Savings of £52k are mainly due to vacant posts within property data, and IT operations due to the pending restructure. This is offset against numerous small over spends within various cost centres.	(38)
<u>Income</u>	
Slight reduction in address management fees, which is offset by unbudgeted recharge income for support services provided by Capita.	3
	<hr/>
	(35)
	<hr/>
Housing & health	
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Bulk of variance forecast reflects increased expenditure on temporary accommodation funded through housing benefits (see related income variance).	44
<u>Income</u>	
Forecast increase in temporary accommodation subsidy income receivable. This forecast is provided by Capita who advise this is due to beneficial changes in subsidy scheme.	(89)
	<hr/>
	(45)
	<hr/>
Legal & democratic	
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Variance mainly relates to a vacant post in committee management and reduced use of the Guildhall.	(16)
<u>Income</u>	
The variance is mainly due to due to higher than anticipated income for land charges, which is as a result of a greater number of searches and increased fee charges.	(42)
	<hr/>
	(58)
	<hr/>
Planning	
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Variance is due to vacant posts within building control, and development policy.	(118)
<u>Income</u>	

Building control income is forecast to be under budget.	5
	<u>(113)</u>
Corporate management	
<u>Expenditure</u>	
The variance is mainly due to the temporary transfer of a post to the brown bin project.	(25)
<u>Income</u>	
-	0
	<u>(25)</u>
Contingency	
Contingency is split into two pots – “earmarked” contingency funds to be allocated pending confirmation of their requirements (ie: budgeted amounts for which the actual details are still to be firmed up) and an ‘unallocated’ amount for unexpected pressures on budgets (not requiring a supplementary budget estimate). The forecast includes a pressure on the former of these pots and it is currently presumed that the unallocated contingency is fully utilised in year. The “earmarked” contingency budget assumed £162k of increased income due to the ability to increase planning fees, however unlikely to happen due to limited scope to increase the fees and delays in approval from central government. The “earmarked” budget also included £50k revenue saving as a result of the capital scheme for Manor Park - this now looks unlikely to happen – see paragraph 7 below.	224
Below the line	
Property trading income – Telfer House now let but rent is not payable until later in the year than previously budgeted for.	39
Current over spend against budget predicted in year	132

- The outsourcing of the payroll service is planned for February 2012 as a consequence in-year savings will not cover one-off costs as anticipated. The costs of redundancy are built into the figures above, but there is also likely to be a hidden pension cost of £9,650. There is no budget provided to cover any costs of the management initiative to ask staff to volunteer for redundancy/early retirement.

Capital budget monitoring report

- The capital programme expenditure budget was agreed for the year at £5,176,917 and £24,212 of community safety partnership grants entirely funded from grant income has been added. £636,761 was unspent in 2010/11 and has been carried over to the current year giving a total budget in 2011/12 of £5,837,890. Wantage Town Council resolved in June 2011 to withdraw from negotiations to take over responsibility for Manor Road

Memorial Park and also to scrap the scheme for altering the layout of the Market Place, so grants of £525,000 and £250,000 included in the programme will not now be paid. This gives a 'working' budget of £5,062,890.

9. Expenditure to the end of September amounted to £1,973,799 (39% of the 'working' budget) but this includes the £1.2 million capital grant paid to Abingdon Town Council at the beginning of the year on the transfer of the Guildhall. A complete review of the programme was carried out in October. Some slippage into 2012/13 has been reported; the major items are:
 - only £100,000 of the £840,000 budget for YA18 - Development of additional plots at the mobile homes park is likely to be spent in 2011/12 due to the complexities of specifying and tendering the work.
 - a £300,000 grant to works at Abingdon Museum which was profiled in 2011/12 and 2012/13 has all been paid over.
10. The Council remains within the confines of its prudential indicators for borrowing and lending as specified in the 'yellow pages' agreed by Council in Feb 11. The Council had to borrow for a short period to cover a temporary cash flow shortage but remained within its operational debt boundary.

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

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

Risks

13. 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 than were originally anticipated in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Other implications

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

Conclusion

15. Current revenue outturn prediction is £132,188 over spend (1.13% of net budget). Forecasted capital outturn is as per budget.

Background Papers

- Executive Budget Proposal 2011/12 (Yellow Pages) approved by Council on 23 February 2011.

Cabinet Report



REPORT NO 40/11

Report of Head of Planning

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To: CABINET

DATE: 11 November 2011

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area

Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Recommend Council to agree the proposed responses to the key points of feedback from public consultation and proposed revisions to the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area Draft Supplementary Planning Document, summarised at paragraphs 9 to 21 of the report, and set out in more detail at paragraphs 17 to 30 of the Consultation Statement at Annex A.
2. Recommend Council to adopt the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area Supplementary Planning Document with the revisions referred to above.

Report purpose and structure

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet about public consultation feedback on the draft Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and to agree a council response to the main points raised and the arising changes recommended to the final SPD.
2. The first part of this report sets out the background to the SPD. The second part notes key consultation issues, recommends a council response including, where appropriate, changes to the draft SPD. The Consultation Statement at Annex A provides a more detailed summary.

Background

3. The redevelopment of Bury Street and the Charter Area has been a longstanding objective for Abingdon. These areas were developed in the 1960's and now look rather dated and do not meet present day needs. The challenge is to create a more attractive and vibrant town centre that helps retain more local expenditure.
4. The principle of redevelopment is established by policy S7 of the adopted Vale Local Plan. This was updated through the draft Core Strategy review, for example at sections 2.34, 3.4 and 5.4 of Preferred Options document (2009), and in the additional consultation leaflet produced in January 2010.
5. The latter consultation introduced proposals for an anchor store, and in February 2011 the Council appointed Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design to develop these proposals further by preparing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the site. The draft SPD sets out planning and urban design principles to guide the design of high quality proposals for the site. Once adopted it will be material for the determination of planning applications for the site.

Summary of content and conclusions

6. There was a mixed response to the draft SPD, with slightly more people disagreeing with the principles and proposals than expressing support. Refurbishment of Bury Street Precinct was largely welcomed but concerns were raised over the need for a supermarket in Abingdon town centre and threat to independent retailers, traffic in the town centre, relocation of the health centre and library to first floor level, and removal of the canopies in Bury Street.
7. The recommended changes acknowledge these concerns and address points of detail where appropriate. However the consultation has not raised fundamental planning reasons to significantly amend either the SPD approach or the general type of development proposed.

Consultation

8. Consultation on the draft SPD took place for six weeks between 12 August and 23 September 2011. Three public exhibitions were held in a vacant unit in Bury Street Precinct on Thursday 18 and Friday 19 August, and Saturday 10 September, attended by approximately 670 people. Comments could be made in writing, via email, or via the council's website, and consultation questionnaires were also available online and in paper form. A total of 332 responses were received.

Consultation feedback and recommended responses

9. Generally there is mixed support for the SPD and development proposed with a slight majority opposing it. Approximately 40% of respondents generally agreed with the principles in the development brief and believed that it would improve Abingdon town centre (including Oxfordshire County Council, English Heritage, and Natural England), whilst 45% generally disagreed¹. Refurbishment of Bury Street Precinct was more widely welcomed.
10. More specific comments, the proposed council response and recommended changes to the SPD arising are summarised and grouped into the themes below. The Consultation Statement attached at Annex A provides a more detailed account.

Shopping

11. This topic generated the most comment (146 respondents), but no formal objections from statutory bodies. Most respondents were either objecting or proposing development alternatives. Many questioned the need for another supermarket in Abingdon, especially a very large one, and would prefer to see a department store or leisure facility. Tesco Ltd suggests a larger foodstore is contrary to previous policy and question the evidence justification. Many respondents were also concerned that a supermarket would have a negative impact on the independent shops in Abingdon (the majority view in an Abingdon Chamber of Commerce survey of its members).
12. Response: To deliver the vision for Abingdon as a vibrant and economically viable town centre, it is necessary to reduce 'expenditure leakage' to other towns and out-of-centre shopping parks. A large anchor store will help achieve this, and should encourage 'linked trips' to help maintain the viability of independent shops and the town centre area as a whole. Whilst some individual shops in the town centre may experience competition, this is something national planning policy actively promotes to encourage consumer choice, value and sustainable economic growth.

¹ Taking questionnaire and other responses together

13. Supermarkets are the only type of retailer interested in taking on an anchor store role in Abingdon. The Retail Study carried out alongside this SPD has shown that Abingdon town centre has the capacity for more convenience goods floorspace over the core strategy period. If that is not planned for in the town centre, there would likely be pressure for less sustainable and accessible out-of-town development that could further undermine town centre vitality and viability.
14. Recommended changes: That some text is added to the SPD explaining in more detail the justification for an additional supermarket and the reality of market interest for the anchor store in Abingdon town centre.

Traffic

15. Oxfordshire County Council raised holding objections relating to site access and parking provision given current traffic congestion and air quality issues in Abingdon. They have a preference to retain service and parking access from Broad Street, noting the risk of undermining work carried out previously in the Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy (AbITS) to improve traffic flow and the pedestrian environment. Comments on this issue from other organisations and the general public broadly re-iterate county council concerns.
16. Response and recommended changes: The access points in the development scenarios are indicative only, and for indicative proposals the supporting parking assessment can only reach generalised conclusions. A detailed traffic assessment would always be required at planning application stage to assess the impact the specific development proposal would have on the surrounding road network and exactly how service and parking access would be satisfactorily achieved. We recommend adding text to this effect, including that developers will need to satisfy Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority through a detailed transport assessment at planning application stage, and that this may have implications for the scale and layout of development.

Health centre, library and day centre (accessibility)

17. Proposals to locate the health centre on the first floor provoked strong opposition from parts of the community with 76 respondents including the Malthouse Surgery raising concern over accessibility issues, particularly for the elderly and less mobile (the remaining 77% of respondents mainly did not comment on the issue rather than offer support). Similarly, 54 respondents objected to the library being relocated to a first floor level. Oxfordshire County Council welcomed the opportunity to re-provide an improved, expanded library, but added that it must have a prominent ground floor entrance. They also requested reference to re-providing the day centre on site.
18. Recommended response: There is no basis in planning policy to require that these facilities be provided at ground level. The Equality Act 2010 places a legal duty on those who provide services to the public to make reasonable adjustments to the physical environment of their premises to ensure that disabled people can access them. This is put into effect at design stage through the building regulations (Part M). The SPD already states that there

must be a generous ground floor entrance for any public facilities located at first floor level.

19. Proposed changes: We recommend that text be added to note the strong preference expressed by part of the community during consultations for a ground floor health centre, and that it is a legal requirement that access arrangements put in place are safe, reliable and accessible for the less mobile. In addition to note a preference for re-provision of the Day Centre within the development area. We recommend the SPD also promote inclusion of shop mobility initiatives to ensure the shopping centre as a whole is more accessible to older or less mobile shoppers.

Design, environmental and landscaping

20. English Heritage and some members of the public raised concern over the design challenge of incorporating a large foodstore into the historic town centre of Abingdon. Oxfordshire County Council raised the importance of sensitive archaeology underneath the town and recommended reference to green infrastructure within the development brief. More detailed comments were received from other organisations relating to sustainability requirements, minimising the opportunity for crime, and ensuring equal opportunities for all across the scheme. 57 respondents expressed a desire to maintain or replace the canopies on Bury Street as they provide shelter from adverse weather conditions and encourage window browsing and therefore retail expenditure.
21. Recommended response and changes: The SPD already sets out design principles to reduce the apparent bulk of a large store when viewed from street level. We recommend that some text be added to the SPD regarding archaeology, sustainability requirements, reducing opportunities for crime and providing equal opportunities for all. We also recommend that the SPD make reference to providing some form of shelter for shoppers, but there is no planning basis to make retention of the canopies a requirement.
22. The specific changes proposed to the SPD are listed in paragraph 32 of the Consultation Statement at Annex A.

Conclusion and Next Steps

23. Cabinet is recommended to agree the proposed responses to consultation feedback, and the changes to the SPD outlined above. The draft SPD will be amended accordingly and a final version reported to full council on 14 December 2011 to consider for formal adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Other options

24. Cabinet may wish to vary or supplement the changes recommended.

Risks

25. If there are significant delays in finalising the SPD it may not be adopted in time to assist the determination of the submitted Phase One planning application to refurbish the Abbey Shopping Centre.

Financial Implications

26. The Council owns the freehold of the Abbey and Charter site, leased in 2010 to Scottish Widows.

Legal implications

27. None.

Background Papers

Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area draft development brief
Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area draft sustainability appraisal
Retail Capacity Analysis of Abingdon Town Centre

Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area - Consultation Statement (Annex A)

Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area Draft SPD – Consultation statement

October 2011

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Introduction

1. Community involvement plays a key role in the development of new policies and documents for the Vale of White Horse District Council. We are committed to ensuring that the community is involved in the preparation of the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
2. This consultation report provides an account of the different methods of engagement used to assist in the development of the draft SPD and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal. The report also goes on to identify a summary of the main issues raised from the consultation. This is accompanied by the main changes that we have made to the draft SPD to take account of the findings from the consultation in accordance with regulations¹. A comprehensive summary of all consultation responses is available on request from the planning policy team (planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk or tel. 01235 540 499).
3. This consultation report and process undertaken with the Abbey and Charter Area SPD was also in compliance with our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)². This sets out how the council expects consultation to be undertaken on different planning documents.
4. In future the council will look to adopt the Abbey and Charter Area SPD and it will form part of the Local Development Framework.

Background

5. The Abbey Shopping Centre (formerly the Bury Street Precinct) and Charter Area draft SPD, is a policy document that originates from the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011. The SPD also assists in the delivery of some of the main objectives for Abingdon, as set out in our core strategy preferred options document.³
6. The core strategy preferred options (the document that sets out how the district will develop up until 2027) identified the need for the area to be looked at, stating a need for a 'comprehensive development and environmental improvements including new shops and town centre uses, such as restaurants and commercial leisure uses.'⁴
7. The draft SPD and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal goes on to look at several different themes. These include:
 - Urban design context and principles

¹ Reg.17, Town and Country Planning, England – The Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations – Amended 2008

² Statement of Community Involvement – The Vale of White Horse District Council, December 2009

³ Vale of White Horse Core Strategy Preferred Options – Vale of White Horse District Council, January 2009

⁴ Vale of White Horse Core Strategy Preferred Options – Vale of White Horse District Council, January 2009

- Assessment of retail capacity and quality of the existing retail offer
 - Development scenarios and viability testing.
8. Once finalised (amendments made and the document adopted) the SPD will be used by developers to draw up design proposals in keeping with the SPD. The planning department will also use the document to help assess future planning applications for the area.

Previous consultation on this subject

9. As stated previously, redevelopment of the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter area was identified in the initial core strategy preferred options consultation that took place in January 2009, with the principle established in the Vale Local Plan 2011. This was later iterated through the Additional Preferred Options consultation that took place in January 2010. Appendix 1 provides a full copy of the leaflet that was distributed for this consultation stage. The consultation leaflet produced for that consultation asked for feedback on the following points⁵:
1. The refurbishment of the shopping centre to improve its appearance (including Queen Street) and enable the gradual replacement and enlargement of the existing shops,
 2. The redevelopment of the Cargo (now Poundland) and Somerfield (now Co-op) stores for more modern shopping units on the ground floor with a new library and health centre above, with the possibility of space for a hotel, offices and flats,
 3. A major new store in the Charter area with car parking above it.
10. The consultation received a fairly good response rate, as part of the wider core strategy consultation, with approximately 200 responses to that relevant section. Over 150 respondents supported proposals for some sort of scheme to improve the appearance of the area, including potentially replacing and enlarging retail units. As part of this process the council, with the support of Scottish Widows Investment Group (leaseholders for the area), produced some display material. This display material provided illustrative options for the potential proposals. The responses that were received from that consultation process were used to help shape the draft SPD. However, it must be noted that there were some areas of the brief that were included that did not have wide support. These included the relocation of the health centre, library and no reference to the retention of canopies or some sort of shelter in the Precinct area. Another issue that received a smaller proportion of responses related to the belief from respondents, that Abingdon did not require another food store. This was at odds to the significant proportion of responses in support of the proposals as a whole. A full copy of the response summary is available to view at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/corestrategy.

⁵ Additional Consultation – Your Vale Your Future, Vale of White Horse District Council, January 2010.

Current consultation engagement methods and timescale

11. The consultation on the draft SPD took place for a period of six weeks from **12 August 2011** to **23 September 2011**. The regulations provide the flexibility for consultation on this subject to fall between 4 and 6 weeks. Copies of the newspaper advertisements containing the SPD matters and Statement of Representations Procedure are available in appendix 2. These signified the official start of the consultation period. We opted for six weeks' consultation to extend the closing date two weeks beyond the school summer holiday period. This should therefore provide adequate compensation for this issue, as our SCI states that we will try and avoid 'where practicable' consulting over known holiday periods⁶. However, due to the timescales involved with this consultation, this was unavoidable.
12. The table in appendix 3 highlights the various consultation methods used. The shaded boxes denote regulatory minimum requirements of consultation. The boxes without shading identify methods over and above the minimum requirements. We felt that these additional methods were an appropriate level of consultation for this subject matter. The third consultation exhibition day was added on a Saturday in response to demand from local residents and businesses. A copy of the consultation leaflet and poster can be found in appendix 4.

Responses from the consultation

13. The following summary highlights the main issues arising from the consultation. A more full summary of the responses received is available on request from the planning policy team (planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk or tel. 01235 540 499). The list of participants can be viewed in appendix 5.
14. The quantitative data that is presented only represents data taken from questionnaire responses. A separate table has been provided for responses received outside of the questionnaire. It is important to remember that this consultation is **not a vote**, but a process to enable the council to identify any potential issues with the documents and establish whether or not it should be formally adopted.

Response breakdown

Letter responses:	=	6
Email responses:	=	55
Electronic questionnaire responses:	=	142
Hard copy questionnaires responses:	=	<u>129</u>
Total responses:	=	332

⁶ Statement of Community Involvement – The Vale of White Horse District Council, December 2009

15. Exhibitions were also held over three days, including a Saturday added on public request. The responses received at the exhibition were included within the consultation responses. The attendance over these three days can be broken down as follows.

Exhibition attendance

Thursday 18 August	=	182
Friday 19 August	=	192
Saturday 10 September	=	<u>292</u>
Total	=	666

16. The responses from the consultation are broken down into main issues. Within these themes the responses are further sub-divided into statutory and non statutory responses.

Comments in general support of the draft SPD

Statutory bodies

17. Oxfordshire County Council, English Heritage and Natural England inter alia raised a number of points supporting the draft SPD, recognising the opportunity to improve the built and natural environment of the area, while at the same time improving retail and facility provision. Appleton with Eaton Parish Council also supported the proposals.

Other responses

18. The Friends of Abingdon Civic Society welcomed the refurbishment of the precinct. A smaller proportion of responses received from members of the general public, supported the draft SPD, recognising that the Abingdon town centre area is in need of redevelopment, as long as the proposals respect the historic character of the surroundings.

Comments raising general objections

Statutory bodies

19. No objections of a general nature were received from statutory bodies.

Non statutory responses

20. Some members of the public raised general objection to the draft SPD, feeling that the proposals needed a rethink, as neither development scenario illustrated in the document were thought favourable. Some comments received requested the council to preserve the 1960's and 70's architecture demonstrated in the Bury Street Precinct and Charter Area.

Shopping

Statutory bodies

21. No formal objections relating to shopping provision were received from statutory bodies.

Non statutory responses

22. The largest amounts of responses/objections were received within this theme. Tesco stores ltd objected to the brief. They stated that proposals for a larger food store were contrary to previous policy documents. They questioned the evidence base used (expenditure per head projections and population projections) to justify the proposals. The Friends of Abingdon Civic Society accepted the need for an anchor store but questioned whether this should be a food store rather than a department store. A large proportion of the responses received from the general public were along these lines. Requests were made for specific department stores such as John Lewis or Marks and Spencers to be considered instead of a food store. The vast majority of responses within this theme and outside of these areas were against the idea of a food store of any size. Most of these comments centred around fears that the food store would adversely impact on the independent stores that Abingdon has. This point was also highlighted through Abingdon Chamber of Commerce who quote a survey they conducted with local business with the vast majority (99 businesses) believing that the food store proposals would have a negative impact on their business. There was concern that Abingdon would become a clone town and lose its uniqueness, with smaller independent traders being unable to compete with a large food store. These comments were also supplemented by views that Abingdon was already well catered for in relation to food retail provision and such a large potential food store was not needed. In addition to the concept of an anchor store a large amount of respondents wanted to see alternatives considered. Examples of the cinema at Didcot or the Cornerstone art centre were often quoted as examples to look to, essentially anything other than a food store.

Traffic

Statutory bodies

23. Oxfordshire County Council raised a number of objections under this area. Their major concern relates to the known traffic problems and air quality issues that Abingdon suffers from. They also highlight issues with how access and egress would be achieved with any development proposals associated with the area. The County highlight that they have carried out a number of works to take traffic away from the town centre and do not want improvements undermined. They request that further work be undertaken before they can fully support the proposals. This approach is endorsed by Sutton Courtenay Parish Council

Non statutory responses

24. Comments on the theme of traffic from other organisations and members of the general public tended to mirror the main issues highlighted by the County Council. These raised concern over existing traffic problems within Abingdon being exacerbated by development proposals.

Relocation of the health centre, library and day centre

Statutory bodies

25. Oxfordshire County Council commented on the day centre and library relocation. Their main issue with relocation of the library was that if this were to be relocated above ground level, there would need to be a prominent ground floor entrance. The County also want to see reference to provision of the Day Centre accommodated within the brief.

Non statutory responses

26. Relocation of the health centre was the third largest area of objection after concerns over shopping and traffic. The Malthouse Surgery stated a preference for the health centre to be located on the ground floor. They felt there was significant scope to take advantage of their existing location in order to help to provide a holistic approach to health and well being in their locality. A large number of responses stated similar comments to that of the surgery. The main concern being accessibility problems for the elderly and infirm, along with ease of access in event of the proposed lifts breaking down. In short some members of the public did not see any logic to these proposals, or implicitly placed less value on retail use at ground floor. The issue of accessibility was also the main concern highlighted as objection relating to relocation of the library and day centre from members of public.

Environmental/landscape/design issues (including canopies)

Statutory bodies

27. English Heritage raised a number of points relating to the potential design challenges that would be involved in incorporating a large food store into the historic urban styling Abingdon town centre. Oxfordshire County Council raised the importance of the sensitive archaeology under the town centre. They stated that any intrusion to this area must be kept to a minimum and have identified the areas where the draft SPD needs to address this. The County also put forward recommendations for the inclusion of green infrastructure within relevant sections of the document.

Non statutory

28. The Vale of White Horse Climate Change Officer put forward some minor text updates relating to 'Sustainability Requirements'. The Vale of White Horse Equalities Officer put forward comments relating to the provision of a 'shop mobility scheme' and a 'Changing Places' toilet within the redevelopment. Thames Valley Police made comments relating to the need for the brief to provide guidance on how any of the proposed design elements will assist in reducing crime, particularly relating to the Night Time Economy. The vast majority of comments from members of the general public concerning this section related to the retention of the canopies. Respondents identified the need to keep the canopies or totally enclose the area. They stated that the existing canopies provided excellent shelter in times of adverse weather conditions. There was a belief that the removal of

this form of shelter would reduce window browsing and ultimately retail expenditure.

Consultation process

Statutory bodies

29. North Hinksey Parish Council welcomed the consultation process.

Non statutory

30. A number of comments from the general public questioned the consultation process, feeling the proposals were already 'a done deal'. Some respondents also felt that more consultation was necessary and that further detailed plans should be provided to enable respondents to make a better informed choice.

Quantitative analysis of responses

31. The following data is taken from the questionnaire responses. A separate table is provided for totals of responses that fall outside of the questionnaire mechanism.

Q1 The development brief will help Abingdon town centre become more vibrant and successful. If you disagree with the statement, how could the development brief be improved?

Total number 257 responses		
Preference	Counts	Percentage
Strongly Agree	35	13.6%
Agree	70	27.2%
Neither agree or disagree	31	12.1%
Disagree	65	25.3%
Strongly disagree	56	21.8%

A total of 41% being in support of the question, with a total of 47% against.

Q2 The development brief will help improve the shopping and other facilities in Abingdon town centre. If you disagree with the statement, how could the development brief be improved?

Total number 253 responses		
Preference	Counts	Percentage
Strongly agree	29	11.5%
Agree	80	31.6%
Neither agree or disagree	25	9.9%
Disagree	67	26.5%
Strongly disagree	52	20.6%

A total of 43% being in support of the question with a total of 47% against.

Q3 The development brief will help secure a well-designed and comprehensive redevelopment of the Abbey Centre and Charter area. If you disagree with the statement, how could the development brief be improved?

Total number 245 responses		
Preference	Counts	Percentage
Strongly agree	24	9.8%
Agree	64	26.1%
Neither agree or disagree	50	20.4%
Disagree	52	21.2%
Strongly disagree	55	22.4%

A total of 36% being in support of the question with a total of 44% against.

Q4 The development brief will help protect and enhance the historic quality and character of the wider town centre area. If you disagree with the statement, how could the development brief be improved?

Total number 246 responses		
Preference	Counts	Percentage
Strongly agree	19	7.7%
Agree	58	23.6%
Neither agree or disagree	58	23.6%
Disagree	57	23.2%
Strongly disagree	54	22.0%

A total of 31% being in support of the question with a total of 45% against.

Q5 Do you agree with the development principles as set out in the development brief. If you disagree with the statement, how could the development brief be improved?

Total number 246 responses		
Preference	Counts	Percentage
Strongly agree	22	8.9%
Agree	71	28.9%
Neither agree or disagree	38	15.4%
Disagree	64	26.0%
Strongly disagree	51	20.7%

A total of 38% being in support of the question with a total of 47% against.

Numerical data outside of the questionnaire responses

General themes	Number of comments
General Support	30
General Objection	25
Shopping	146
Traffic/Parking/cycling	79
Malthouse Surgery	76
Library/Day Centre	54
Environmental/Landscape/Design	68
Canopies on Bury Street	55

Conclusions and recommended changes to the SPD

32. The points raised as a result of the consultation have led to changes to the draft SPD in the following ways:

Major changes

- Addition of text in section 3.3.8 stating that the development scenario access points are indicative and the parking assessment is a generalised assessment only. The applicant will need to satisfy Oxfordshire County Council as the highway authority regarding traffic circulation, parking levels and site access for customer parking and HGV deliveries. If there are adverse effects that cannot be designed out or adequately mitigated by other means this may impact on the scale and siting development.
- Addition of text in section 3.3.3 that consultation feedback indicates a strong community preference expressed by part of the community that the Health Centre should remain on a ground floor location. Whilst there is no basis to make this compulsory, the Equality Act 2010 places a legal duty on those who provide services to the public to make reasonable adjustments to the physical environment of their premises to ensure that disabled people can access them. This is put into effect at building design stage through the building regulations (Part M). (See also changes below relating to equality of access and recommending a shop mobility scheme).

Minor changes

- Addition of text in section 2.3.4 explaining in more detail the justification for a supermarket in Abingdon town centre.
- Addition of text to section 2.5.1 noting that there was some objection to a supermarket, but that actual market interest for the anchor store is purely from supermarket operators.
- Insertion of a table into section 3.3 of the development brief to indicate overall quantitative capacity for comparison goods in the catchment, the approximate amount existing in the precinct and extra likely to be provided in the refurbishment.
- Addition of a bullet point to section 3.3.2 stating that 'The redevelopment must provide an equivalent number of new car parking spaces above the food store, including designated disabled and parent with child spaces. Any application must also comply with the district council's parking standards'.
- Insertion of wording provided by Oxfordshire County Council to section 2.4.4 as follows 'Stert Street has narrow pavements, the town centre scheme undertaken in 2007 narrowed the carriageway and widened the footways where possible which significantly improved facilities for pedestrians. The footways are still narrow in places and coupled with the high volume of vehicular traffic, can make the pedestrian environment somewhat cramped at times...'

- Amending the sentence in section 2.4.3 to read 'Crossing the road involves either using an underpass or signalised crossing'
- Addition of text to section 3.3.8 second bullet point 'a routeing agreement for HGV will be required to ensure impact on the town centre is minimal'.
- Addition to the key on figure 1.2 (scenario 2) to indicate that the yellow area represent some units for comparison goods.
- Amending section 1.14 of appendix 2 to refer to 'both options' rather than 'each three options'.
- Amending section 2.2.3 to read '...leading to a service yard on Queen Street, serving retail units on Stert Street and the eastern side of Bury Street'.
- Addition of missing bus stops to figure 2.8
- Addition of bullet to section 3.3.7 to state 'Cycle routes and areas where cycling is not permitted must be clearly sign posted.'
- Addition of a bullet point to section 3.3.3 stating that the Day Centre should be re-provided somewhere on the site.
- Addition of text to section 2.4.33 'Subsurface intrusion is likely to be minimal during the refurbishment of Bury Street. However, it is recommended that trial trenching is carried out and recording is undertaken. Any planning application must comply with Planning Policy Statement 5, the National Planning Policy Framework, and policies contained within the council's local plan 2011.
- Addition of the text to section 2.5.1 fifth bullet point '...and includes green infrastructure such as street trees and green roofs'.
- Addition of text to section 3.7.4 to state that any development must comply with the standards set in the council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.
- Addition of text to chapter 3.3 as new para 3.3.10 'equality of access for disabled and elderly people is an important consideration for the Vale of White Horse District Council. Development proposals should promote equality access for older people and people with disabilities or reduced mobility. We recommend inclusion of shop mobility initiatives to ensure the shopping centre as a whole is more accessible to older or less mobile shoppers'.
- Addition of text to the end of chapter 3.6 as para 3.6.4 'It is important for development to consider the Night Time Economy and designs should reduce opportunity for crime and disorder. Any application should refer to

the Public Realm Community Safety Checklist (attached as appendix 4 to the SPD).

- Addition of text to the end of chapter 3.3 as para 3.3.11 'Designing out crime – designs should reduce opportunity for crime and disorder, particularly at night time. Any application should refer to the Public Realm Community Safety Checklist (attached as appendix 4 to the SPD). Similarly CCTV should be properly planned for early in the process and funds made available to adapt and alter the existing scheme. It is desirable that the development should be built to the principles of 'Secured by Design' (www.securedbydesign.com)
- Remove extra key on page 22 as it is repeated on page 23. Add yellow dashed line to show 'primary active retail frontage' on this key.

Appendix 1 – Additional preferred options consultation leaflet

Other matters

Previously we said we would have a policy for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople in a later document, but we will now include one in the core strategy. Our policy should allow sites:

- next to or near urban areas and larger villages with a reasonable range of services, or on a bus route with good access to them
- if all the facilities needed on site and a safe access can be provided
- in the Green Belt if there are no suitable sites anywhere else.

General policies will safeguard the amenities of nearby residents and the landscape. A partial review of the South East Plan is proposing that 12 new pitches should be provided in the district by 2016. We will identify a site in our forthcoming managing development document.

In the preferred options report we also said the core strategy would contain policies on

- the size of new homes - but we now think this would be better in a more informal supplementary planning document as it can be changed more easily in response to changing needs
- the Green Belt - but as there are no proposals for major development these policies will be included in the managing development document
- the centres of Wantage and Botley - but these will be included in the managing development document.

If you prefer large print or different formats, please telephone 01235 520202.

The next steps

Your views on these changes will help us finalise a draft core strategy to be published in June 2010. It will be sent to the Government in October, after which it will be examined by an independent planning inspector. It will then be adopted by the council.

More Information

More information can be seen

- on website www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk
- at the council offices in Abingdon

You can contact us :

- by telephone: 01235 540496 or 01235 540511
- by email: planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Events

Please come along to the following exhibitions where you will be able to learn more and speak to us

- Harwell Village (Freemans) Hall
Thursday 7 January, 3.30pm to 7.30pm
- Charlton Parish Hall (no wheelchair access)
Wednesday 13 January, 3.30pm to 7.30pm
- Abingdon, Unit 33, Abbey Shopping Centre (Bury Street Precinct)
Friday 15 January, noon to 7pm
Saturday 16 January, 10am to 3pm
Monday 18 January, 10am to 3pm

Please come along to a meeting about retail

- Faringdon Corn Exchange
Tuesday 26 January, 6pm to 7pm

Making your comments

Please send your comments by 29 January 2009 via

- the Council's website
- Email: planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk
- Post: The Development Policy Team,
Abbey House, Abingdon, OX14 3JE
- Fax: 01235 540396

Additional Consultation

Your Vale Your Future



The council is preparing a new plan for the district to 2026.

The first part is a core strategy that will identify the major sites for new homes, jobs, shops and infrastructure such as roads.

We asked for comments in January 2009 on our preferred approach of locating most new development in Abingdon, Wantage, Grove, Faringdon, Botley and an area west of Didcot.

We have done further work since then and want your comments on some changes before we finalise the draft plan.

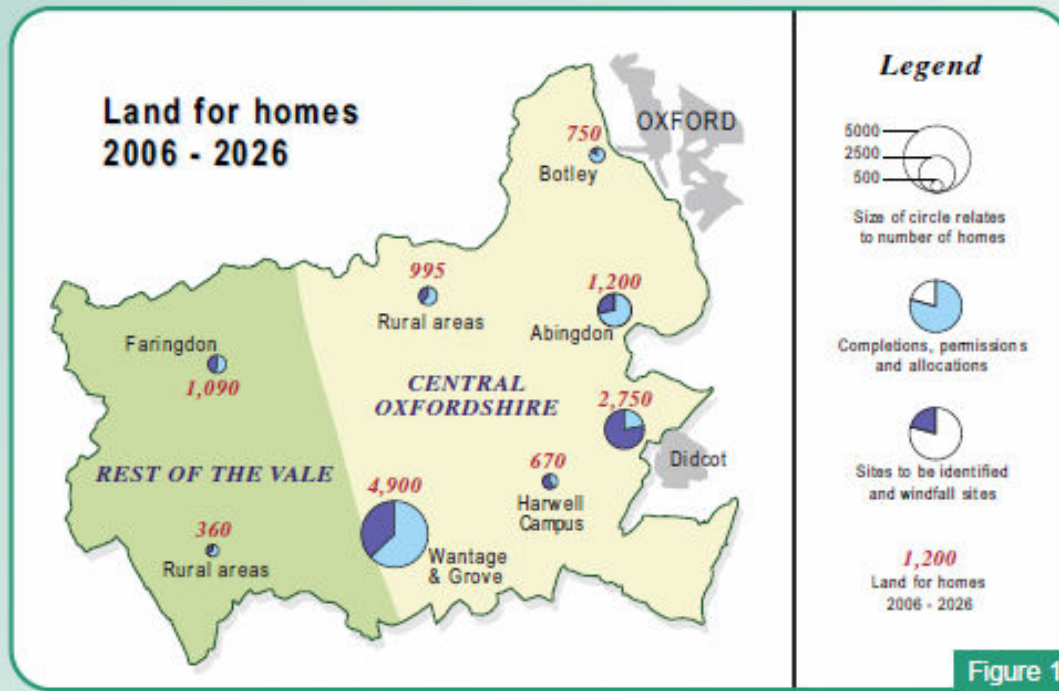


Housing

Figure 1 shows the proposed distribution of new homes across the district. The key differences made from our ideas last January are

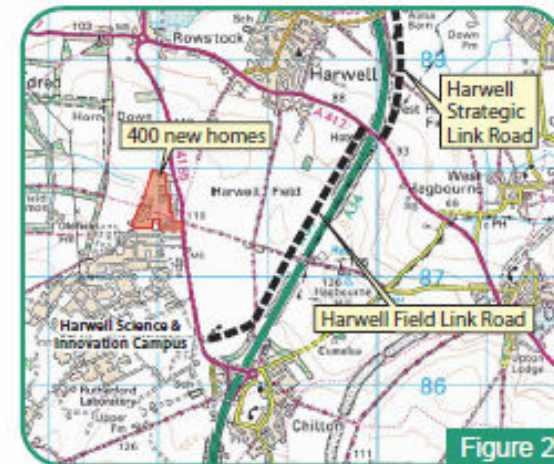
- 10% more land for housing to ensure the targets in the South East Plan are met
- a new housing site of about 400 homes in the north of the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus (see figure 2). This is close to a range of services and facilities, on land already identified for growth and the Campus has an excellent and expanding range of job opportunities
- no major housing development south west of Abingdon as there are currently no solutions to the serious transport problems
- a site for up to 1500 homes north east of Wantage with a new relief road.

We are continuing to work on proposals for a development of 2150 homes west of Great Western Park at Didcot and about 400 homes south of Park Road in Faringdon.



Affordable homes

As house prices in the district are high, having more affordable homes (for rent or shared ownership below market rates) is an important priority. We are looking to secure affordable homes on all new sites with three or more properties. This will not always be possible on small sites where existing land values are high. Our current policy operates on sites of 15 homes or more in towns and five or more in villages.



Transport

Oxfordshire County Council advises there is currently no justification in transport terms for an Abingdon southern bypass, a Wantage western relief road or the reopening of the A34 slip roads at Drayton. As a result we will not safeguard land for them in the strategy.

The Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Strategy (SCOTS) includes a new road west of the A34. Originally a road east of the A34 was suggested. We think land for the new road - the Harwell Field Link Road - shown in figure 2 - should be safeguarded in the core strategy and contributions towards building it sought from development in the area.

Shopping in Abingdon

Last January we said the core strategy should identify the Bury Street Precinct (now known as the Abbey Shopping Centre) and Charter area for comprehensive development and environmental improvement. We want to know what you think about the following schemes.

1. The refurbishment of the shopping centre to improve its appearance (including from Queen Street) - see figure 3 and enable the gradual replacement and enlargement of the existing shops.
2. The redevelopment of the Cargo and Somerfield stores for more modern shopping units on the ground floor with a new library and health centre above. There may also be space for a hotel, offices and flats.
3. A major new store in the Charter area with car parking above it - see figure 4



Figure 3 - Artists Impression

The economy

We expect most new jobs to be created at the major sites of Milton Park and Harwell Science and Innovation Campus and some at smaller sites in and around the towns. These two major sites could create between 7,000 and 10,500 jobs by 2026.

This is lower than expected last year but we consider it sufficient to meet the needs of economically active people likely to be living in the Vale and Didcot in 2026. The original estimate of 12,000 jobs might be achieved if economic growth is better than expected.

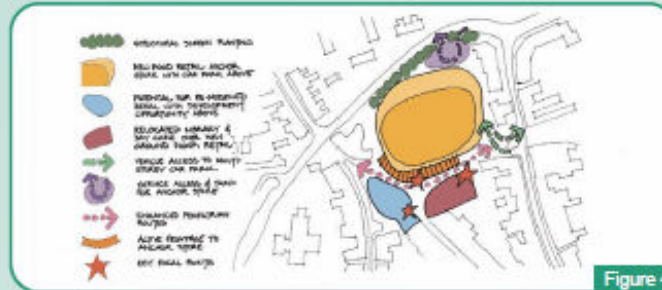


Figure 4

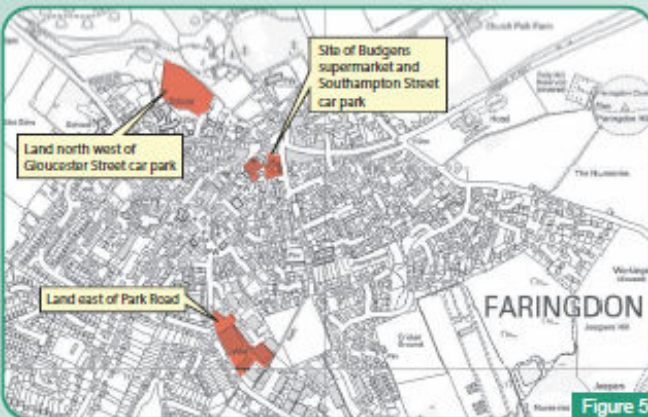


Figure 5

Shopping in Faringdon

We are considering whether shopping facilities in Faringdon should be improved, and would like to know what you think about the following ideas - see figure 5

- Extending Budgens supermarket to create a larger sales area with limited extra car parking spaces in the Southampton Street car park. Due to its historic town centre location there are limited opportunities for further expansion, or
- Identifying a site for a new supermarket and car parking out of the town centre
 - Either north west of Gloucester Street car park
 - Or east of Park Road.

If Faringdon is to have a new supermarket our preference is the land off Gloucester Street. It is closer to the town centre and pedestrian links could be created to help retain town centre vitality. Although Park Road is closer to the new housing, it would involve a longer and less attractive walk to the town centre. It would be more likely to draw trade from the town centre and would result in the loss of an important employment site for the town.

The Reservoir

Thames Water is promoting a new reservoir in the Vale. The South East Plan requires us to allocate and safeguard land for it in case a need is established. Need will be assessed through a public inquiry into Thames Water's water resources management plan. Until need has been assessed by the inquiry we think the core strategy should



Appendix 2 – Public notice (SPD matters and Statement of Representation Procedures)

Thursday, August 10, 2011

heraldseries.co.uk HERALD - 51

PUBLIC NOTICES

Public Notice

Vale of White Horse District Council

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTION 14(1)

Notice of Temporary Traffic Order A4074 and side roads, Season Prohibition of Through Traffic & 30mph Speed Limit, Date of Order: 15 August 2011, Closing Date for: 15 August 2011

This Order is being introduced because of anticipated roadworks and drainage works in part of the A4074, Dorset which is anticipated to take 2 weeks to complete. The effect of the Order is to temporarily prohibit any vehicle from proceeding to:

- a) Churchfield Lane (north) from its junction with the A4074 westwards for 10 metres;
- b) Churchfield Lane (south) from its junction with the lay-by adjoining the A4074 westwards for a distance of 10 metres;
- c) The unclassified road leading from the A4074 to the Avenue Community centre for 30 metres.


For the duration of the Order the 40mph speed limit on the A4074 will be reduced to 30mph. This part of the Oxfordshire County Council (Season-Exempt Area) (Speed Limits) Order 2011 will be temporarily suspended.

Exemptions are included for police, fire and ambulance services and for the works set for vehicular access to adjacent premises which are only accessible from the closed section of road.

The alternative route for traffic affected by closure a) & b) is via Church Road and Oxford Road & vice versa and for closure c) via Preston Crossroads and the A4074 & vice versa.

This Order will remain in force for a maximum period of eighteen months or until the works have been completed whichever is the sooner.

Traffic Regulation Team (Ref 02) on behalf of the Director for Environment & Resources, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford OX1 1NF, 0445 310 1111.

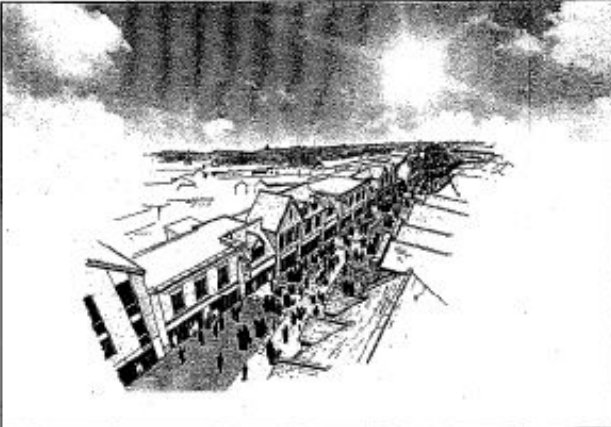


Vale of White Horse District Council

PUBLIC NOTICE

Have your say on the future of Abingdon town centre

The Vale of White Horse District Council is working with Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design consultancy to produce a development brief for the redevelopment of the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area in Abingdon.



We want you to have your say on these development guidelines.

"This is a really important opportunity to deliver major improvements for Abingdon town centre," said Cllr Roger Cox, cabinet member for planning. "We want people who live and work in the town to have plenty of opportunity to express their opinions about what is being proposed. The first crucial step is the development brief that will help ensure the best redevelopment possible for Abingdon and I urge people to let us have their views on these proposed guidelines."

We are consulting until **23 September 2011**. For more information see www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/spds

You can also pop in to the Abingdon library, Abingdon Town Council or the district council offices at Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE to view copies of the consultation documents.

Or why not visit one of our public exhibitions at Unit 33 Abbey Shopping Centre, Abingdon, next to the YMCA charity shop on Thursday 18 and Friday 19 August from 12 – 7pm.

Public Notice

South Oxonshire District Council

PLANNING ACTS

Planning Acts require the District Council to give notice to the following applications:

- W1702 (14) Grant of a new single storey dwelling with an enclosed garden and new parking spaces. Location of a new brick wall to screen the property from the public access, law and landscaping drawings. West House Downs OX11 8EY
- W1703 (15) Installation of solar panels at The Cliff East Redburn OX11 9US
- W1704 (16) Installation of gas fired central heating system, 32 for the flats, Redburn. The site is to be used in 1970s annex to North East corner of building. This annex is to be of high level on north east wall of annex, not made from horizontal of building, 34 Wellington Road Chobley OX14 8LE
- W1705 (17) New two storey stone, with grey stone and dark grey. Led to the rear of 27 Preston Crescent, Oxon OX11 8EY
- W1706 (18) Conversion of part to auxiliary residential accommodation. The Garage High Street Long Widdington OX14 4JA
- W1707 (19) Conversion of part to auxiliary residential accommodation. The Garage High Street Long Widdington OX14 4JA
- W1708 (20) Garage extension to bring accommodation. Part of Great House, Thame Road, Sandgera-Thames OX12 9JA

Proposed work may affect character/setting of reserved area and setting of a listed building.

Proposed work may affect character/setting of reserved area and setting of a listed building.

For further information on your website www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk, or at the Council Offices, for an appointment if you wish. Telephone: (01235) 830300. You should send representations in writing by 01st August 2011. These will be made to the public to view and copy.

Council will notify you of any objection where if you wish a response submitted available.

ADRIAN DUFFIELD, Head of Planning

South Oxonshire District Council, Mill Office, Abbey Close, Abingdon, Oxford, OX14 3JE

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Appendix 3 - Principal methods of consultation

The table below outlines the methods of consultation used for the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area SPD. The table provides further information on what we were looking to achieve with each identified consultation activity.


Proposed method of Consultation	Description and Aim	Date
Councillor and staff workshop or drop in session	To inform internal staff and councillors about the latest options contained within the SPD and provides an opportunity to test consultation material before public displays. The session will also allow for further discussions with key officers.	Held before the first exhibition opened
Letters and e-mails to statutory consultees	Correspondence sent out to statutory consultees to notify them of the consultation period and meet regulatory requirements. Also provides opportunity to notify consultees of any associated consultation events. Statutory consultation list will be tailored from the prescribed list set out in the regulations, to those that we see as most suitable for this consultation.	10 – 12.08.11
Letters and e-mails to non statutory consultees	Correspondence sent out to non statutory consultees to notify them of the consultation period and meet regulatory requirements. Also provides opportunity to notify consultees of any associated consultation events. We identify non-statutory consultees through the use of our stakeholder consultation database.	10 – 12.08.11
Press advert and SPD matters statement online and local newspaper (Herald series & Oxford Times)	To set out formal requirements of the consultation (both local newspapers and online), as identified in the regulations. This will also provide an opportunity to promote the consultation period and associated activities. The press advert will cover the formal requirements of the SPD matters.	Adverts to run: Herald on 10.08.11 and Oxford Times on 11.08.11 (deadline for submission 05.08.11)
Hard copy documents to be held in the council office, local libraries across the district	To allow access to consultation information for those without online facilities. Reference copies of the draft SPD will be held at various locations across the district, including those previously mentioned.	10.08.11. – 12.08.11


Proposed method of Consultation	Description and Aim	Date
and Abingdon Town Council		
Letters to businesses/ property adjoining the development area	To provide access to consultation information for those in or adjoining the potential development area. (Need to ensure that that library, day centre and health centre are included in this information)	10.08.11 – 12.08.11
Questionnaire and standard comment forms	To capture both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis. Survey and comment forms will be available online on, libraries, town council and exhibition venue.	10.08.11 – 12.08.11
Press release	To increase publicity and maximise opportunity for those not viewing the consultation electronically. Press releases also provide an improved method of presenting the consultation information compared to the more formal press adverts.	Press releases: Herald 10.08.11 and Oxford Times 12.08.11
Unvaled article (the council's own magazine)	To increase wider publicity and coverage across the district. This is the most effective way to reach all residents in the district through the council's subscription. The article will be designed in a way that will sign post residents to the consultation, as the definitive consultation dates will not have been identified at the time of writing.	Quarterly meeting, the distribution starts on 4 July (Article produced)
Choose Abingdon	To engage and promote the consultation to businesses with an Abingdon focus. Board members will be used a primary method of wider distribution. Additional key contacts have also been provided by the Choose Abingdon project leader.	w/c 08.08.11
Information pack to South Abingdon residents' group	To promote the consultation and engage with established residents' group, who have a significant interest within the Abingdon area and who have felt disengaged with previous consultation processes. Consultation pack may include special invitations to exhibition, hard copy of consultation document, questionnaire forms etc.	10.08.11 – 12.08.11
Exhibition/ static display	To promote consultation to residents and users of the town centre area. Exhibition will provide an opportunity for members of the public to talk to members of staff. Unmanned exhibitions will allow continued promotion of the consultation with main	Unit 33, Abbey Shopping Centre) 3 exhibition dates 18,

Proposed method of Consultation	Description and Aim	Date
	<p>users of the town centre area.</p> <p>Special early admittance for Abingdon Town Council 30 mins before official exhibition starts.</p>	<p>19 and 20.08.11 (static displays will be left outside of the timeframe for the staffed exhibition dates) Breakdown of viewing time on exhibition dates Thur & Fri 12 – 7pm Extra date of 10 September 10am – 3pm added (due to demand)</p>
Consultation posters /Leaflet	To raise awareness of consultation and main consultation activities. Coverage around the town centre will help to increase consultation participation rates and simplify message. Copies of these documents are available to view in appendix 4.	03-05.08.11
Key Messages Article	Quarterly subscription run by the Embrace partnership. The magazine will allow us to target/raise awareness within ethnic minority groups covering the district.	<p>Subscription is a quarterly run magazine, 27.05.11</p> <p>Article produced</p>
Consultation pack to Ethnicity Panel	Consultation information sent to representatives from the council's ethnicity panel. Preferably the representatives selected to be individuals that live in or adjacent to Abingdon where possible.	10.08.11 – 12.08.11
Conservation pack to representatives of Disability Access Group	Consultation information sent to representatives from the council's ethnicity panel. Preferably the representatives selected to be individuals that live in or adjacent to Abingdon where possible.	Quarterly meeting scheduled dates on the following (18, 19 or 20.08.11)TBC
Youth engagement session through	Session with young people through Cothill House School looking at the principles of the town centre SPD. The format will primarily be discussion based, centring around	3.10.11 (slightly outside of the

Proposed method of Consultation	Description and Aim	Date
exhibition	key themes identified by the policy team. This can be tied to one of the exhibition dates, as all the display material will already be up and available.	consultation, but as we want to capture the views of young people this is acceptable).
Online survey/questionnaire/comment forms	Online survey and standard response forms will help to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on the consultation issues. Response forms can be distributed to town council, library and made available on the exhibition days.	10.08.11 – 12.08.11 (available throughout consultation period)

Appendix 4 – Abbey consultation leaflet and poster





Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter Area Development Brief

The council is preparing a new development brief to help shape the redevelopment of the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area in Abingdon

We need your views on these guiding principles before we finalise the brief

The consultation closes

Background

The Abbey Centre, formerly known as Bury Street Precinct, and the Charter Area form a key part of Abingdon Town Centre. Improving Abingdon town centre and its shopping provision is a longstanding council objective, as the buildings are now rather dated and not well suited to the requirements of modern retailing and community services.

This area is located in the heart of the historic town centre. We know that any redevelopment will have to be sensitively designed and we've incorporated this within the brief.

Once finalised this planning brief will be used by developers to draw up designs and by the planning department to help assess future planning applications for the area.



Content of the Development Brief

- The Development Brief describes in detail the characteristics of the site, in particular the listed buildings and main routes through the town. Based on this analysis, the brief sets out development principles that developers should follow when drawing up a proposal. These intentionally allow scope for creativity, and some flexibility to ensure the final scheme is viable.

- The Brief illustrates two scenarios with slightly different arrangements of shops and other facilities. These are examples of the different ways the design principles could be applied to create a viable



Examples of the development principles

- The foodstore should act as an anchor store at the northern end of Bury Street, encouraging pedestrian movement past other shops.
- The junction of Sturt Street and Stratton Way is visually very prominent and should be well designed to act as a 'gateway' to the town centre.
- Create a new public open space for the town centre where Bury Street intersects with Bath Street providing an intimate and enclosed environment.
- Buildings should be designed to be energy efficient.

You can view the full brief and document on our website by visiting www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/spds



Consultation

We would like your views on the Development Brief. We've put together a short questionnaire, which is available on our website, or at the council offices, Abingdon Town Council and Abingdon library.

The sorts of things covered in the questionnaire and that we would like you to think about are:

- Do you agree with the development principles in the Development Brief?
- Do you think the Development Brief will help Abingdon to become a vibrant and attractive town centre and improve its facilities?
- Remembering that the Development Brief sets out broad principles, have we missed anything important?

Please send your comments by Friday 23 September via

- The council's website www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/spds
- Email: planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk
- Post: Development Policy Team, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE.

Next stages

All comments made during the consultation will be considered before the brief is approved and adopted by the council.

The planning applications will show the final development design and layout. The public will be able to comment on them before the council decides whether to grant planning permission. Subject to planning permission, work on Abbey Shopping Centre could start as early as February next year and work on the Charter in 2013.



Exhibition

On 18 and 19 August we are holding staffed exhibitions in Unit 33 of the Abbey shopping centre, next to the YMCA charity shop from 12.00 – 7.00pm.

This is an opportunity for you to come and talk to us about the brief. You will still be able to view the display boards outside of these dates up until the 23 September 2011.

For more information you can call the planning policy team on 01235 540511

Appendix 5 – List of participants

Please note IDX represents participants who do not want us to hold their details. Q numbers are those taken from the electronic questionnaire reps.

ID1384	Mr Thompson
ID1385	Oxfordshire County Council – Archaeology
ID1386	Stefan Walters
ID1387	Ann Loescher
ID1388	Penny Mc Dougall,
D1050	Tom Garrud
ID1389	Dr Roger Cox
ID1390	Michael Harrison
ID1391	Halima Brewer
ID1392	Wilfred Laylock
ID1393	Neil Harrison
ID1250	The Coal Authority
ID1394	Carol Philip
ID1395	Roger Davies
ID1396	Nigel Winter
ID1397	Ms PK Lucas
ID1398	Mrs S Davison
IDX	R. Saunders
ID1399	Irene Kinsella
ID1235	Roger Arscott
ID1402	JM Balsamino
ID1403	Mr R Tourret
IDX	Gillian Pett
IDX	Mike Lain
ID1408	Stella Harbleton
IDX	Stephen Lewis
IDX	Colin Gill
IDX	Mrs S Gill
IDX	Max Herring
ID1410	Mrs Potter
ID1411	Les Brown
ID1405	Roxanne Halima Brewer
ID1243	Eric Nuttal
ID1244	Mrs Pauline Nuttal
ID1245	Anshea Pearse
ID1246	Stephen Rich
IDX	S Matthews
IDX	
ID1247	M White
ID1409	Ronald Taylor
ID1417	Mrs Luker
ID1418	Gemma Sedgwick
ID1419	Mrs Kathleen Margaret Parker
ID1420	Hamlet
ID1421	Davina Chapman
ID1406	Mrs Gillian Harrison
ID1422	J Townsend
ID1423	Susan Davis
ID1424	Mrs Daphne Simpson
ID1425	Alastair Fear
ID1426	David Barrett
ID1427	Michael Bloom
ID1428	Jacquelyn Humphreys
ID1429	Mrs S Costar
ID1430	Kim Pearce
ID1431	Alison Walters
ID1407	Malcolm Moor
IDX	P.D.Lewis
IDX	James Hitchcock
IDX.	Renee Harrison
ID1432.	Dorothy Giacomini
ID1433	Mrs Sheila Wallen
ID1434	Jan Elliott
ID1435	Mrs Jill Lewis
ID1436	Antony Purkis
ID1437	Mark Goodacre
ID1438	James Sayers
ID1439.	Sarah Hendy
ID1440	Mr Christopher Lee
ID1441	Mrs S Kiff
ID1442	Mrs Jill Mitchell
ID1443	Lynne Holt
ID1444	Mr & Mrs Bowkett
ID1445	Juan Matthews
ID1446	Mark Hoare
ID1447	Margaret Langsford
ID1448	J Yasmin
ID1449	Lara
ID1450	Mrs Hetherington
ID1451	R Grimsdale-Yates
ID1452	Muriel Welch
ID1453	Mrs J Jones
IDX	C Lane

IDX	M Hanbury Brown
IDX	Mrs M Thompson
IDX	Jonathan Evans
IDX	Sabine Malveik
ID1454	Timothy John Oates
ID1455	L.A. Jewitt
ID655	Alan Stone (North Hinksey Parish Council)
ID1456	Mr John Jewitt
ID1457	Health & Safety Executive - Gerard Adderley
ID1458	Avril Holmes
ID1459	Simon Wise
ID1460	Sue Hargreaves
ID1461	Mrs M Allen
ID1462	Mr AM Strange
ID1463	GC Ward
ID1464	J Heavens
ID1465	G Pearce
ID1466	Tricia Aspin
ID1467	G King
ID1468	Helen Irving
ID1469	NL Hancox
ID1470	Rachel Cassidy
ID1471	Shared Equalities Officer (South & Vale) Cheryl Reeves
ID1472	Zoe Davis-Heaney
ID1473	Lindsay Epsom
ID1474	SSE Power Distribution - Chris Gaskell
ID1475	Mr Maurice Stanley
ID1476	David Luscombe Elliot
ID1477	Mrs Arna Blum
ID1388	Penny McDougall
ID1496	Deborah Brotherton
ID1495	Mrs Wendy Wiggins
ID1494	Angela and Ian Waterhouse
ID1493	Sylvia Bird
ID1492	Mrs Susan Henderson
ID1491	Rushbridge
ID1490	Mrs GA Coldwell
ID1489	Patricia Purkis
ID1488	Linda Webster

ID1487	HAE Wilkins
ID1486	MW Matthewi
ID1485	Robert Simmonds
ID1484	Mrs June Ann Bruce
ID1483	Martin Buckland
ID1482	John Orchard
ID1481	Thames Valley Police - Lesley Nesbitt
ID1480	Michael Drower
ID666	Sutton Courtenay PC - Linda Martin
ID653	Marcham PC - Linda Martin
ID1479	Caroline & Nigel Gregory
ID1478	Alan and Roberta Nichols
IDX	Mrs M Crossley
ID1497	Patricia Benoist
ID807	Friends of Abingdon
ID108	JP Bryden -
ID1498	
ID1499	District Councillor - Gervase Duffield
ID562	Abingdon Area Archaeological & Historical Society – Roger Thomas
ID1500	Don Ferris
ID403	Natural England - Olivia Euesden
ID446	Thames Water - Mark Matthews
ID1501	Turley Associates on behalf of Westgate Oxford Alliance - Sarah Stevens
ID1502	Marguerite Osborne
ID1503	Abingdon Chamber of Commerce - Paul Townsend
ID404	Environment Agency - Cathy Harrison
ID1505.	Shared Community Safety, Licensing & Land Charges Manager - Liz Hayden

ID402	English Heritage - Richard Peats
ID716	Oxfordshire County Council - Tamsin Atley
ID1506	Miss EE Willcock
ID1507	Mrs AH Jacobs
ID1407	Malcolm Moor
IDX	A Langsford
IDX	Octanio Dotel
IDX	Mr R Highsmith
IDX	DG Stretton-Smith
IDX.	James
ID1517	Gift Centre
ID1518	Thae Malthose Surgery
ID 1519	Frilford Parish Council
ID976	Tesco Stores Ltd

Q130	John Enticott
Q131	Roger Ainslie
Q132	Susan Roberts
Q133	Mrs Kate Beswick
Q134	Robin Owen
Q135	Mr P.J. & Mrs S.M. Clare
Q136	S M Murrin
Q137	Paul Gill
Q138	Alex Cameron
Q140	Dave Gernon
Q141	Gareth Davies
Q143	Kim Pearce
Q145	David Lake
Q146	Helena Fryer
Q147	suzanne white
Q148	frank debney
Q150	Katarzyna Vandermesh
Q151	Peter Weber
Q152	I Boyce
Q153	Lesley Legge
Q154	Mrs A D Barnes
Q155	Mrs Suzanne Beckett
Q156	Les Clyne
Q157	Andrew Ludlow
Q158	Mrs W Bowden
Q159	Laura Bowles
Q160	Ruth Walker
Q161	Nick Baldwin

Q162	Kurt Rosenfeld
Q163	Alan Boyce
Q164	Rachel Burns
Q165	Ruth Weinberg
Q166	Iain Littlejohn
Q167	antonella scherillo
Q168	Sally Johnson
Q169	Richard Dix
Q170	sarah richens
Q171	ELEANOR BRITTON
Q172	Jutta Weber
Q173	Sandra Huckin
Q174	Rebecca Corn
Q175	I am not willing to share this information
Q176	Vivienne Illingworth
Q177	
Q178	Dr David Mazey
Q179	David Illingworth
Q180	Lynda Wigley
Q181	Sue Hodgson
Q182	Dr A. Wilson
Q183	Jenny Tinson
Q184	Matthew Bates
Q185	john Billingham
Q186	Jenny Hazelden
Q187	Peter Gore
Q188	Mrs E. Clack
Q189	Michael Towndrow
Q190	Hannah Bichard
Q191	Eve Bartholomew
Q192	Stefan Paetow
Q195	Kathy Pearmain
Q196	Felicity Jenkins
Q197	Nicola Wright
Q198	Dr Roger Cox
Q199	Mrs Patricia Summers
Q200	Mark Turner
Q201	Local Person
Q202	J Fabes
Q203	Jonathan Bourbour
Q204	Paul Johnson
Q205	Alistair Buckley
Q206	Eric Dunford
Q207	mervyn j. sollis

Q208	Hester Hand
Q209	Martin Buckland
Q210	Sheena Bell
Q211	Janet Morgan
Q213	Richard Bahu
Q214	E Irving
Q215	Andreas Schneider
Q216	Nicola Titcombe
Q217	Jan Perris
Q218	h g johnson
Q219	Dr John Williams
Q220	Ken Packer
Q221	Howard Spencer
Q222	Peter Jennings
Q223	Diana Matthews
Q224	Susan Ward
Q225	Sally Watson
Q226	K Hodder
Q227	Mrs. M J Burgess
Q228	Jessica Brod
Q229	Virginia Parker
Q230	Monica Littleboy
Q231	David Perrow
Q232	Mr. David Cameron-Young
Q234	Claire McCauley
Q235	Maria Drummond
Q237	Daniel Scharf
Q238	Concerned citizen
Q239	Manfred Brod
Q240	Cicely Bilverstone
Q241	Chris Jones
Q242	LS
Q243	Robert Jones
Q244	Becky Jennings
Q245	Mrs Pat Jones
Q246	Noel Newson
Q249	Lisa Abbott
Q250	Roger Thomas
Q251	Mr Robin Clay
Q253	Sally Adam
Q254	Sue Stevens
Q256	Kate Jones
Q257	Barbara Townsend

Q258	Kim Johnson
Q259	Mark Wilkinson
Q260	Emma Jones
Q261	Arthur
Q262	Mrs Ulyatt
Q263	Mr Neil Harrison
Q265	Eleanor Dangerfield
Q266	Graham
Q267	Sarah Turner
Q269	Rob Alexander
Q270	Bridget Haffenden
Q271	Diana Nicholson

Cabinet report



Report of head of economy, leisure and property

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To: CABINET

DATE: 11 November 2011

Report No. 41/11

Car park order 2011, consideration of objections and representations

Recommendations

1. That cabinet considers the objections and representations received on the council's proposed car park order 2011.
2. That cabinet makes no changes to the draft order.
3. That cabinet authorises the head of legal and democratic services to make the car park order 2011 and determine the date it comes into effect.

Purpose of report

1. This report invites cabinet to consider the objections and representations received on the Vale Council's proposed car park order 2011 so that it can decide whether to make any changes to the draft order and to authorise the making of the order.

Strategic objectives

2. The provision and pricing of car parking impacts on two of the Vale Council's strategic objectives: supporting a vibrant local economy and managing our business effectively. Introducing free parking may help sustain vibrant market towns, which is a corporate objective.

Background

3. In July 2011, cabinet agreed to introduce a two hour free parking period and to advertise a new draft car park order setting out the proposed changes at the Vale Council's car parks.
4. Cabinet also agreed to authorise the head of legal and democratic services to prepare and publish a draft order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and carry out the necessary consultations in accordance with the requirements of the Act and the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and to report back to cabinet on the responses received after the end of the consultation period.
5. The main changes at the Vale Council's car parks are to:
 - have a period of up to two hours free parking, which will require users to display a ticket
 - increase the other daily fees by 30p and permits by six per cent.
6. The new 2011 order does not include the Vale Council's car parks at Rye Farm and Hales Meadow, as they fall outside of the district boundary and require a separate agreement with South Oxfordshire District Council and a separate order. Please see 'other implications' in paragraph 20 below.

Consultation September to October 2011

7. Officers carried out a statutory consultation exercise on the proposed car park order. The consultation process included advertising the proposals in a local newspaper (The Oxford Times), at each car park in the district, on the Vale Council's website, consulting a number of statutory organisations and notifying the parish and town councils that the consultation was taking place.
8. Besides the formal response from Oxfordshire County Council, which had no objections to the proposal, 17 responses were received in support of the proposals and 12 responses were received opposing the proposals. The responses are set out in appendices 1 and 2 attached to this report and include officers' comments where appropriate. The objections and replies are summarised below.

The high cost of the scheme

9. Six respondents oppose the proposals due to the high cost of the scheme and three expressed concerns that the Vale Council was going against the financial officer's recommendations. The Vale Council considers the offer of free short stay parking will boost the vitality of its market towns. We will carry out surveys that will provide a good evidence base to assess the impact of the new parking scheme on the vitality of the Vale's town centres. Whilst the Vale Council's financial officer recommended against the free parking on purely financial grounds, councillors exercised their political choice to prioritise economic development and other non-financial factors above car parking income generation.

Other objections

10. One respondent is against the proposals as they consider that it will become more difficult to get a parking space, that the benefits are not assured, that it affects the

air quality and that there is no coherent strategy. One respondent questions whether the proposals will increase the number of people shopping in the towns and believes that shop keepers over estimate the importance of the car in terms of a means of getting customers into shops.

11. In reply to this, officers refer to the Vale Council's scrutiny committee meeting on 22 September 2011. The scrutiny committee considered proposals by officers on how to monitor the impact of the free two hours. Appendix 1 of the scrutiny report lists the surveys that were agreed to be carried out, which include car park usage, air quality and the economic benefits to the towns. The surveys will be used to identify the impact of free parking on the towns. Officers have agreed to report back at a later date with the results of the surveys, which will aim to show the impact of the free parking on the towns.
12. One respondent believes that parking should be free all day. Officers consider that this is not financially viable without either an increase in the council tax or the reduction of other services.
13. Two respondents thought that it was an inconvenience to have to display a ticket for the free period. Officers consider that obtaining a ticket for the free period is the most cost effective way of ensuring that the free parking offer is not abused.
14. One respondent is concerned about the effect on on-street and residents parking and the lack of enforcement of residents' parking spaces. As part of the monitoring of the impact of the free parking, officers will work with Abingdon Town Council to measure how the free parking impacts on the on-street parking, as measured by the income taken, and work with the town council to consider any changes required to the monitoring of the on-street parking.
15. One respondent is against the proposals as they believe that more effort should be made to encourage alternative modes of transport, such as walking, cycling or using the bus. Officers consider that for many people living in rural locations in the district, taking the bus or cycling or walking is not always feasible and using the car is the only real means of transport.

Financial Implications

16. The report to cabinet on 8 July 2011 considered the financial implications of offering the free two hours parking, which will cause a significant loss of income, estimated at £250,000 a year. As cabinet has agreed to increase some other charges, the loss of income reduces to an estimated £192,500 per year. However, the increases in the other charges will not include Rye Farm and Hales Meadow car parks, which will mean an increase in the loss of income of an estimated further £7,500, increasing the overall loss to an estimated £200,000.

Legal Implications

17. At its meeting on 8 July 2011, cabinet considered how the new draft order would accord with the purposes and other matters set out in Section 122(g) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

18. Cabinet is required to consider the objections and representations upon the order and decide whether it wishes to modify the order in response to them or authorise the making of the order as advertised.

Risks

19. Officers have benefited from the counsel opinion obtained by South Oxfordshire District Council in the recent making of its car park order. Officers have followed a very similar procedure and the order, notices and reports have been written along similar lines to those produced by South. We are now in a position to make the order and to implement the changes for all Vale Council car parks, apart from Rye Farm and Hales Meadow as explained below.

Other implications

20. The two car parks at Rye Farm and Hales Meadow are owned by the Vale Council but located in the district of South Oxfordshire. These two car parks will need to be operated under a separate car parking order to the rest of the Vale car parks. However, we will be able to introduce the free two hours in Rye Farm and Hales Meadow car parks in line with cabinet's proposals at the same time as the other Vale car parks. This change can be effected by the display of notices in the car parks and in the local newspaper. However, until such time as a new order can be made and confirmed, users of those car parks will not have to display a ticket when parking for free and we will not be able to introduce the proposed increase in fees or permits or extend the charging period until then.

21. Therefore, officers will prepare reports for South and Vale councils to authorise an updated agency agreement and for the Vale Council to operate these car parks in accordance with a separate order, which it is intended would bring these two car parks fully in line with all the other Vale car parks by 1 June 2012.

Conclusion

22. Cabinet is asked to consider the objections and representations received on the Vale Council's car park order 2011 and decide whether to change the order in the light of these objections and representations. Officers do not recommend any changes. In addition, cabinet is asked to authorise the head of legal and democratic services to make the order and to determine the date it comes into effect.

Background Papers

- none

Appendix 1 Objections received to the proposals during the consultation

Comment	Response
<p>1. Dear Sirs,</p> <p>With reference to the article in the Abingdon Herald about the views being sought on the proposed "free parking" scheme, I wish to repeat what has already been spoken about in detail at the Scrutiny Meeting on this subject. Surely this speaks for itself!</p> <p>The Vale's scrutiny committee carried out an in-depth review of the council's plans to introduce free parking.</p> <p>Given the high cost of the scheme (£250,000 each year), the committee suggested that detailed monitoring of the impact of the scheme on town centre vitality should be carried out and that it be modified in the light of experience.</p> <p>Given that the council's chief financial officer strongly recommended that the scheme should not proceed, as he was concerned that it could not be afforded, the committee asked a series of probing questions about how it would be paid for.</p> <p>In the first year, much of the cost will be paid by using the New Homes Bonus - money recently awarded by Government to reward the council for building homes, which it was presumed would be used to fund infrastructure improvements in the towns and villages in which the houses had been built.</p> <p>The committee also learnt of a series of changes to car park charges throughout the Vale. Drivers will now pay to park from 8am - 6pm (instead of 8am - 4pm), so two hours' free parking at the end of the day will be lost to help pay for the two hours free parking.</p> <p>The cost of annual permits will increase, eg by up to £16 for residents in Abingdon and up to £44 for commuters to Abingdon. The cost of parking will increase eg two and half hours will increase from £1.20 - £1.50 in all Abingdon car parks.</p> <p>Council papers also show that it is planned to introduce charging on Sundays in all Abingdon car parks for stays longer than two hours, though somewhat surprisingly Wantage and Faringdon are spared this.</p> <p>How the scheme will be paid for in future years?</p> <p>In summary, it seems that nothing is "free" at all!</p>	<p>You refer to the scrutiny committee meeting of 4 August 2011, which considered the call-in of the cabinet's decision to introduce two hours free parking taken on 8 July 2011. Please note that on 22 September 2011 the scrutiny committee considered a further report from officers about proposals to monitor the impact of the free two hours car parking scheme. Officers agreed to carry out both car park usage surveys and surveys measuring how many people come into the towns. This will be done before the introduction of the free two hours and again after six to 12 months to measure the impact. This report can be viewed on the council's website, see:</p> <p>http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/local-democracy/councillors-and-committees</p> <p>The new order proposes to extend the charging period to 6pm but allow for two hours free parking. This means that in essence, nothing changes as you will still be able to park for free after 4pm but you will have to display a free ticket obtained from the machine.</p> <p>Yes, the proposal is to increase the other fees by 30p and the permits by six per cent. This will help reduce the loss of income from the proposed introduction of the free two hours.</p> <p>No, there was an error in the council report, and I confirm that it is not proposed to introduce charging on Sundays in all Abingdon car parks. The draft schedule to the car park order shows that only Abbey Meadows car park will charge on Sunday, as this is the current arrangement, so no changes are proposed from what already exists.</p> <p>In response to your question about how the scheme will be funded in future years, like all council service costs and income, any estimated changes in car park income will be factored into the council's annual budget-setting and medium term financial planning process. Councillors will determine which council services can be afforded within its finite resources.</p>

<p>2. Dear Mr Backley Blewbury Parish Council opposes the free parking on the following grounds: Firstly, parking after 4pm and on Sunday was free anyway. The period in which the parking regulations operate has been extended to 6pm and takes in the whole of Sunday. In other words, you may get two hours free but the Council have taken time away a substantial chunk of the time when it was free anyway. Also, these changes are going to cost the Vale in the region £250,000 which will have to be paid for either by cutting some other service or by the council tax payer. Given that there are somewhere between 115,000 and 120,000 residents registered to vote in the Vale, that works out at over £2.00 per head of the electorate or a little over 3 hours parking per annum if they wanted to use a Vale car park. Most people in Blewbury will use Didcot rather than Abingdon or Wantage anyway so we will end up helping to fund free parking for other people to use Vale car parks. We strongly oppose this. Yours sincerely</p>	<p>The new order proposes to extend the charging period to 6pm but allow for two hours free parking. This means that, in essence, nothing changes as you will still be able to park for free after 4pm, but you will have to display a free ticket obtained from the machine.</p> <p>Regarding your concerns about the cost of the scheme, officers consider that for the next couple of years, this can be funded from the new homes bonus as detailed in the report to cabinet on 8 July 2011. In terms of long term funding, like all Vale Council service costs and income, any estimated changes in car park income will be factored into the Vale Council's annual budget-setting and medium term financial planning process. Councillors will determine which Vale Council services can be afforded within its finite resources.</p>
<p>3. What puts me off using Council carparks is the hassle of having to key in my car registration. Why shouldn't another person, who wants to park briefly, use the unexpired portion on my ticket if I want to hand it over? The total time parked is the same.</p> <p>The last time I tried to use a Council car park, the machine wouldn't accept my coin, and I couldn't remember my reg.no, so I went back to the car and drove off to park elsewhere - I only wanted to buy one thing!</p> <p>If a ticket is needed for the free 2-hours, that still involves the hassle of going to the machine and taking the ticket back to the car!</p>	<p>The council considers that having to put in your registration is a small inconvenience that helps the council with the enforcement of the car park. It means that if someone forgets to display their ticket for whatever reason, or if the ticket falls off, if they subsequently produce the ticket with the correct vehicle registration, we can consider cancelling the excess charge and save that person a fine of up to £80.</p> <p>Officers consider that having to obtain a free ticket for the free parking is the most cost effective way of managing the car park. Experience from neighbouring authorities is that if you do not have to display a ticket for the free period, then this leads to widespread abuse and a loss of income.</p>
<p>4. Whilst it would have been useful for Abingdon to have 2 hours free parking for the last 10 years, there is no justification for spending district council money on subsidising car parking in the current economic climate. I am concerned that the Council is going against the advice of its officers who feel that this initiative is unaffordable. The Council should not be taking money from other higher priority spending areas - such as housing - to subsidise car parking. This is taking from the poor to give to the rich.</p> <p>If the Council wishes to pursue this policy, then the retailers in the town should be asked to fund it, since they will (allegedly) be the main beneficiaries. The Chamber of Commerce could be asked to run a scheme for 2 hours car parking to be refunded against shopping expenditure using a token system. This system of refunding car parking charges is already successfully used in the doctor's surgery, so why not in our shops?</p>	<p>The council considers that having free short stay parking will boost our local market towns. This will help to make our towns a more attractive place to visit for shoppers, tourists and businesses.</p> <p>The council considers that in the current economic climate the retailers are not in a financial position to be able to pay for the proposed scheme.</p>
<p>5. I have in the past been bemused as to why places like Didcot could offer free parking when Abingdon could not</p>	<p>The council proposes to fund the cost of the free two hours parking by using money that the council</p>

<p>and this has at times swayed my shopping decisions. However, I am very concerned by press coverage stating that your financial officers have advised against moves to axe parking fees in Abingdon completely Local government funds are totally overstretched at the moment & if these cuts mean a choice between parking and social service provision or road maintenance, the choice is clear. I suspect that the move to continue with these cuts is pure political expediency.</p>	<p>receives from central government for building new homes (new homes bonus). So, at the moment there is no requirement to cut any other services to pay for the parking. Please note that Vale of White Horse District Council is not responsible for social services or road maintenance as these are Oxfordshire County Council functions.</p>
<p>6. We do not agree with your policy. Parking in centre of Faringdon should be FREE throughout the whole day for at least 4 hours. You cannot visit the dentist, lawyer, accountant and other businesses without having to run out to move the car in 2 hours or you can only go to the accountant, and NOT do any shopping in town. quite stupid.</p> <p>and why do we all have to pay Council tax for the guy who spends his time wandering around to check tickets. SAVE some money... Do not send a man from Wantage - which you presently do -- you have probably not costed the cost of car hire, car fuel, milage done from Faringdon to Wantage and return.</p> <p>Instead - get a man from Faringdon who can walk to work, or Ride a Bike. and while there he can service the dreadful toilets. SAVE money and it will be £3000 - £5000.</p> <p>Better still, get rid of your very difficult car parking ticket machines. You councillors, with your GIVEN tickets etc and with no cost to you don't understand the inconvenience you create to others., These machines cost money to purchase and more money to install and then service them.</p> <p>Have you tried remembering the number plate of the car... and you might not be driving same car each time... and then needing to find some spectacles from the bottom of your handbag to read the numbers and letters to press on this machine, and find these numbers as they are often difficult to find.... and then return across the car park to unlock your car again and put the ticket inside.</p> <p>And then you have to employ another person to sweep up the tickets that we all COULD throw down in disgust - just so that the Council can add up number of cars in the carpark!!</p> <p>Let us ALL be sensible... Take a leaf out of Witney and start making it a thriving centre and SAVE money</p> <p>Didn't you know that some of your Faringdon Councillors and others do not park or shop in Faringdon because of this dreadful system you have. Many will drive to Witney, Standford in the Vale, Highworth or Lechlade to shop for the small items where they can park outside the shops, INSTEAD of experiencing the HASSEL you are</p>	<p>The council considers that to a point the users of the car park should fund the cost of running them. If the car parks were free all day, 100 per cent of the cost would fall on the council tax payer, which is considered unfair. The council did consider different lengths of free parking and considered that offering two hours was a happy medium, as one hour is too short and three or four hours would put an unsustainable financial burden on the council.</p> <p>The monitoring of the car parks is done from a central location In Abingdon. Although modern technology allows for some information to be passed electronically, the processing of the excess charges still requires information to be downloaded onto computers in Abingdon. Also, from experience we know that using a local resource can mean that the person may patrol impartially and can become complacent, which leads to less efficient issuing of fines. As an aside, the council does employ a local person via its contractors to clean the toilets in Faringdon.</p> <p>The council considers that having to put in your registration is a small inconvenience that helps the council with the enforcement of the car park. It means that if someone forgets to display their ticket for whatever reason, or if the ticket falls off, if they subsequently produce the ticket with the correct vehicle registration, we can consider cancelling the excess charge and save that person a fine of up to £80.</p>

<p>creating.</p> <p>Start thinking of the people who live there instead of the large quantity of paper you think you need and the people you think you must employ to add up the sums.</p>	
<p>7. Dear Sir / Ms,</p> <p>I have read in the in the Oxford Times, with some surprise, the proposals to make parking free for two hours in Abingdon car parks.</p> <p>I would like to raise to the attention of the consultation on this policy, which I understand will be carried out on this decision the following matters.</p> <p>On a personal basis: As a resident, with a car parking permit, the value after this will be reduced because if the aim of the scheme succeeds at the cost of £1/4 Millions in lost revenue then obtaining a space is likely to be less easy. Market days and times of events affect the ability to obtain a space and this is likely to be made worse by the proposals if they work.</p> <p>http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/yourtown/abingdon/9135434.Free_parking_in_Abingdon_and_Wantage_approved/</p> <p>The benefits are not assured: Retailers often believe that people who arrive by car are likely to spend more in a town, this is not the case as research has shown that people who arrive by public transport spend more time and money on a shopping excursion than people in cars who have invested less effort in arriving they are therefore more likely to depart sooner.</p> <p>Supermarket in town: Additionally, the proposals referred to in the discourse below the main article, cited above, refer to other changes in Abingdon, which are likely to have an effect on the vitality of the centre in all likelihood to their detriment. I would suggest that a coherent strategy for the economic and aesthetic renewal of Abingdon would be a more constructive approach than encouraging people to arrive by car and affecting the already poor air quality at times.</p> <p>Strategy: Abingdon needs a spruce of the urban realm with less generic shopping to attract people by sustainable modes this can only be achieved through active involvement with businesses and not car parking fee gimmicks.</p> <p>A lot would seem to be possible to learn from the environment provided in Wallingford, which has a sense of place, attractive and far fewer charity shops / pound shops and no shut down shops.</p> <p>Abingdon should be a premier market town and would more gladly be inconvenienced by visitor parking if more</p>	<p>The council has agreed to monitor the impact of the free parking and this includes the usage of the car parks. The council can use the pricing policy to try and affect where people park for short or long periods and we will use this if our monitoring of car parks shows that car parks are becoming full and shoppers cannot find spaces.</p> <p>The monitoring will also measure the impact on businesses and measure how many people come into the town centres.</p> <p>In a rural location like the Vale of White Horse, it is not always practical to use public transport and not everyone lives within cycling or walking distance of the town centres. A lot of people rely on the motor car as their main mode of transport.</p> <p>The council considers that offering free parking for towns is just a part of building a strong local economy through the delivery of the council's market town strategy and associated annual market town action plans. The council is also looking at additional measures to improve the viability and attractiveness of the Vale's market towns, such as the introduction of free public Wi-Fi hotspots.</p>

<p>constructive proposals were on the table than a supermarket in town and an unenforceable parking regime of two hours free.</p>	
<p>8. Brief observations:</p> <p>Why do you have to display a ticket if it is free. This takes away much of the convenience of attracting shopper to go into town for a short stay if they have to spend time messing about with tickets. Are the wardens not there to monitor parking or are they to be made redundant?</p> <p>If it is free to park from 16.00 now, why is there a need to display a ticket (see above) if it will also be free from 14.00 to 16.00 when the existing free period starts?</p> <p>It seems as if the idea of free parking isn't such a simple or convenient idea after all.</p>	<p>Officers consider that having to obtain a free ticket for the free parking is the most cost effective way of managing the car park. Experience from neighbouring authorities is that if you do not have to display a ticket for the free period, then this leads to widespread abuse and a loss of income.</p> <p>It is proposed to extend the charging period to 6pm so that, in essence, with the free two hours, you can park for free from 4pm, which is the same as the current arrangement. However, you will have to display a free ticket.</p>
<p>9. Dear Madam/Sir,</p> <p>Anything for free is welcome. But is it financially viable?</p> <p>The funding has to come from somewhere. Is it cuts in other areas? Or putting up prices with permits and longer parking? Becoming too expensive will put people off using the facilities, resulting in less income for the council.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <p>-- 20 pence for the two hours would give income and is not off-putting. This might ease putting other prices up.</p> <p>-- to display a ticket is such a hassle for having to walk back to the car. More so when the weather is poor or due to any bodily impairments. Recently I have used the P&R in Redbridge. One has to enter the car registration into the machine, pay and that is it. No display required. So practical. Would a similar scheme be possible?</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p>	<p>Regarding your concerns about the cost of the scheme, no, there are no specific plans to cut other services to fund the free parking. Officers consider that for the next couple of years, this can be funded from the central government grant for building new homes (the new homes bonus as detailed in the report to cabinet on 8 July 2011). It is proposed, however, to increase all other fees by 30p and increase the cost of permits by six per cent.</p> <p>Officers consider that having to obtain a free ticket for the free parking is the most cost effective way of managing the car park. Experience from neighbouring authorities is that if you do not have to display a ticket for the free period, then this leads to widespread abuse and a loss of income.</p> <p>I will investigate the new scheme at Redbridge P+R to see if it is something that can be considered for the council car parks.</p>
<p>10. Dear Vale of White Horse District Council,</p> <p>It is very difficult to respond to this consultation since the proposed Car Park Order is not written in Plain English, and so is not at all transparent. The Plain English summary of the changes on your website is very brief.</p> <p>My interest in this is that I currently hold a Resident's Permit for Abingdon Town Centre, which is issued by Oxford County Council and administered by Abingdon Town Council. I pay £100 a year for this Permit. I live in Thames St which has on-street residents' parking spaces, and also some pay parking spaces which I think are held</p>	<p>The car park order is written in a way so that the council can use it to enforce the car park if it is necessary to consider the representations in a court of law. The plain English summary was brief on the website in order to get the main points quickly and easily across to the public.</p> <p>We consider that the two hours free parking will encourage more people into the council's car parks. This would free up some of the on-street parking and hopefully reduce the numbers of people that are</p>

by Oxfordshire County Council.

I am concerned about the effect of the proposed changes to arrangements for Vale off-street car parks in Abingdon on non-Vale parking, including on-street and residents' parking. I would like reassurance that any such effects have been considered, and that the Vale has worked with the other local councils (i.e. Oxfordshire County Council and Abingdon Town Council) with an interest in Abingdon car parks in development of your proposals. Residents don't care who owns which car park, the rules for each should be clear and consistent. Your consultation web page etc doesn't even make it clear which car parks these proposals apply to. Many will assume this is all car parks & on street parking in the Vale.

The residents' spaces in Thames St, Abingdon are already under pressure, and it is often impossible to park in one of these spaces, despite having paid for the privilege. This means I often have to park elsewhere, for example in the Rye Farm car park. Since this is not on your schedule I assume it is also owned by OCC.

I understand the free parking for 2 hours was an election pledge by the Conservatives presumably intended at revitalising town centres with more shoppers. But this encouragement of cars into Abingdon Town Centre will make current problems with traffic and car parking for residents more difficult. The multiple owners and administrators of Abingdon's car parks make the situation complicated, and I do not want visitors to have the impression that they can park anywhere free for 2 hours. They should never park in a resident's space (we already have issues with people doing this in Thames St). Resident's parking permit charges, and longer term parking (of the type most likely used by those who work in Abingdon town centre) should not be increased to subsidise these temporary visitors. It is local residents and employees who most contribute to our town's economy, and we should have precedence for car parking.

Any changes to car parking arrangements will need to be accompanied by more stringent enforcement of the rules, and I hope this will include enforcement of those without residents' permits in resident's spaces. I would also like to make you aware, if you weren't already, that the weekly 'Sunday' and 'Friday' jazz evenings at the Broad Face on Thames St in Abingdon are causing twice weekly parking violations with 3 -4 cars each evening parked on the double yellow lines, and in fact halfway onto the pavement. This is not only illegal, and inconvenient for pedestrians, but makes it difficult to use the resident's spaces on the opposite side of the road, and also makes the street look very untidy / unattractive. With this allowed to go on I'm not confident that your revised arrangements will be enforced. I'm glad that the pub is busy at these times, but Rye Farm car park is just a few hundred yards over the bridge, and is free in the evenings. Parking on double yellow lines is unacceptable and the law should be enforced.

I'm copying this to my Town, Vale and County councillors,

abusing the residents parking. As part of the monitoring of the impact of the free parking, we will be working with Abingdon Town Council to monitor the effect on income from on-street parking.

We will make it clear from signs that we plan to put up in the council's car parks, which car parks the free two hours applies to. We have talked to the Abingdon Town Council about the proposals and also as part of the formal consultation process, we have obtained the formal consent from the county council. To confirm, the free two hours parking only refers to the Vale Council's off-street pay and display car parks.

The Rye Farm and Hales Meadow car parks are owned and enforced by the Vale of White Horse District Council but the consultation didn't include these two car parks as they are actually in the district of South Oxfordshire. Rye Farm and Hales Meadow car parks will form part of a separate agreement, although we hope to include two hours free parking there also.

The council is working on a publicity and promotional campaign to get the message across about parking in the Vale off-street car parks. The on-street and residents parking is enforced by the Abingdon Town Council on behalf of the county council and as part of the monitoring we will measure the impact of the free two hours, in partnership with the Abingdon Town Council.

I will pass your feedback about the parking on Thames Street to the Police who deal with infringements on double yellow lines.

<p>as the issues here affect all councils. I hope you can work together on car parking in the interests of everyone who parks in Abingdon, and not only people popping to the shops from outside town.</p>	
<p>11. Hi</p> <p>This email is in response to the council seeking comments on the 'Car parking off street parking order 2011' regulations. I understand the aim of this change is to encourage shoppers into Abingdon.</p> <p>My concern is that the success, or otherwise of this change will be measured by any changes in use of car parking, and also any changes in the level of traffic in Abingdon.</p> <p>I'd like to suggest that a reliable way to assess the impact is to do foot fall counts of shoppers before and after the change and also surveys to see how shoppers arrived in town.</p> <p>In this email is a link to a study which concludes that that shop keepers hugely overestimated the important of the car in terms of a means of getting customers to their shop. In the survey most shoppers arrived at the shops by waking, with 34% of people using the car.</p> <p>http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/liveable%20neighbourhoods/Shoppers%20info%20sheet%20-%20LN02.pdf</p> <p>I'd be very interested if any similar surveys have been carried out in Abingdon? Additionally before this regulation is introduced I trust the following items have been discussed and accommodated for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the provision of free parking actually increase the number of people shopping in the centre? • What assessment has been done to see if any increased traffic as a result of this change deters pedestrians / bus users and cyclists coming into the town? • If the majority of shoppers use other forms of transport to shop in Abingdon over cars would the opportunity cost in providing the free parking be put to better use elsewhere? <p>Thanks for listening to my concerns.</p>	<p>Yes, the council's scrutiny committee has considered proposals to monitor the impact of the free two hours car parking scheme.</p> <p>This report can be viewed on the council's website, see:</p> <p>http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/local-democracy/councillors-and-committees</p> <p>As well as carrying out surveys to look at any change in usage of the car parks, we will be monitoring the change in the number of people coming into the town centres (including footfall surveys) and the views of businesses about the impact on their trade.</p> <p>The survey that you provided the link to is interesting, although I note that they were both carried out in large cities and I question if the same would apply to rural market towns such as Wantage, Faringdon and Abingdon. Unfortunately no similar surveys have been carried out in Abingdon.</p> <p>The council is keen to find out the impact of the free two hours parking so that it can look at how this affects the vitality of the towns. The council considers that the provision of free parking will increase the number of people shopping in the town centre but will look to survey results to support this opinion.</p>
<p>12. Dear Sir or Madam</p> <p>I cannot find within the Reasons for these proposed changes the analysis of the context in which the access roads, parking, walking and cycling alternatives cycle and public transport services are set out? Without this information it is impossible to make an assessment of the effects of the free parking and small increase of</p>	<p>In a rural location like the Vale of White Horse, it is not always practical to use public transport and not everyone lives within cycling or walking distance of the town centres. A lot of people rely on the motor</p>

charging. having said that the making of free parking available is very likely to be a retrograde step at a time when all efforts should be made to increase the use of cycling and buses - as well as walking into the town. Increased pedestrian (and bicycle) movement on all roads coming into the town centre would be a good thing. As would much greater use of the subsidised town bus service. What is the Council's estimate of the effect on these environmentally preferable modes? What is the Council's estimate of the impact on the air quality?

If this proposal is calculated to also lose revenue for the Council and cause environmental harm I cannot see that the possible benefit to trade (which would be unsustainable if not built on sound environmental principles) can be supported.

Yours sincerely

car as their main mode of transport.

The council's scrutiny committee has considered proposals to monitor the impact of the free two hours car parking scheme, which includes measuring air quality. Officers will be reporting back to cabinet and scrutiny committee the results of the surveys showing the affects of the free parking on the towns.

This report can be viewed on the council's website, see:

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/local-democracy/councillors-and-committees>

Appendix 2 Replies received in support of the proposals

Comment	<u>Response</u>
<p>To whom it may concern</p> <p>I am responding to your article in the Wantage and Grove review Issue 401 3rd October 2011 – Possible free car parking for the area?</p> <p>As the owner of a Complementary health centre, 'The Wantage Clinic of Osteopathy' In Portway . And also someone who has shopped in the town for many years (My Mantra being ;if Wantage doesn't have it I can probably live without it). I feel your proposal to allow up to two hours free parking in the town is very forward thinking, and would greatly benefit the town on many levels.</p> <p>I have listen to patients conversations and concerns over the years, about where they will park for their appointment, how much will it cost, and, "sorry I'm late, I couldn't remember my car registration and had to go back to the car". Appointments after 4pm are often sought, so that people can relax and not worry about rushing around paying for parking.</p> <p>Our average appointment is around 40 minutes long, this means people pay for one hour, they then want to pop into the square to grab a paper, sandwich, supper, before going home or back to work they fret that twenty minutes won't be long enough and end up driving off, who knows were to instead.</p> <p>I am confident it would make a big difference to us and our customers and would ultimately result in our patients relaxing after their visit and using the shops in the town more.</p> <p>Wantage has come a long way since that awful article in the Daily Mail spring 2008 :<i>Credit crunch central</i> - about the boarded up shops in the town (I notice they haven't returned to report that Woolworths has been replaced by Cargo and that Costa has arrived in town (whether you like it or not) giving a bit of a buzz to the square. Or that we have a fantastic new Delicatessen in Newbury street, and a newly enlarged and refurbished Waitrose about to launch.</p> <p>It appears to me that Wantage is heading firmly in the right direction, and your proposal would be right on cue to help to ensure it continues to do so.</p> <p>I await news of your decision with hope and optimism.</p> <p>Yours Faithfully</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals.</p>
<p>I think it is a good idea to have free 2 hour parking, displaying a ticket. I think it should last until 4pm and be ticket free after that time. I think this should apply in the market place in faringdon</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>We would like to support the car parking proposal - the 2 hours free parking especially Possibly this comes 20 odd years too late to help Faringdon - Witney has had free parking for many years and during this time many people from this area have visited Witney rather than Faringdon & other Vale towns and will probably continue to do so If adopted, the new proposals need to be widely advertised</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals. Yes, the council will be promoting the changes widely in the press and across the towns.</p>
<p>Dear Officers & Members</p> <p>I am sure anything that helps local business attract more people shopping will be a help. The Vale must decide if it can afford that loss of income as the Govt have just said that the no increase in Council Tax will continue into succeeding years.</p> <p>As a North Hinksey resident the web information is a bit confusing. I checked with Cllr</p>	<p>Yes, there are no proposals to change any of the arrangements at the car parks in Botley/North Hinksey and no proposals to introduce car parking meters here.</p>

<p>Debby Hallett whether there was an intention to include the current at all times free parking at the Vale owned precinct car parks in Botley/North Hinksey. She informed me that this will continue and introducing parking meters is not on the agenda.</p> <p>If this is correct perhaps it would be better if the web information could say it was for the market towns etc? However, I guess that would raise the disgruntled voices to want the same in other places!</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p>	
<p>Dear Mr Backley</p> <p>I would welcome the proposed change in car parking charges in the Vale. I use the 2 hour 'free' parking at 4 o'clock but this would make the whole thing more flexible and encourage me to visit Wantage during the day instead of just the last hour when shops are shutting.</p> <p>Best wishes</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals</p>
<p>Dear Sir</p> <p>The free window sounds an extremely positive idea. As a means of encouraging local business this is excellent, and we have often wondered why this was not done. Witney does!</p> <p>I do not think that penalising longer stays with more expensive charging is useful however. Why would you wish to encourage potential custom to leave after two hours? There are several excellent coffee houses/ restaurants in Faringdon which are wonderful in which to enjoy a sociable - and more leisurely- coffee/ lunch with a friend around a shopping trip. Two hours is just a little short of time for shopping - especially a browsing Christmas shop- and a light sociable lunch. Returning to the car to top up for an extra hour is a nuisance and I would suggest that many may choose to not bother, and leave town instead.</p> <p>I would like to see two things:</p> <p>(1) extension of the free period to three hours</p> <p>(2) keeping the current competitively low later rate</p> <p>Witney, already appealing as it offers much more extensive shopping than Faringdon, after all, will offer up to 5 hours free parking.</p> <p>Yours faithfully</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals. The council considers that one hour is insufficient time to spend in the town centres and three hours would prove too costly. Two hours is a happy medium. The council considers that an increase of the other fees is reasonable to make up for some of the income by offering the free two hours.</p>
<p>Whilst your proposals to extend the active period of parking control and an increase in fees would be very unwelcome, the proposal to offer free parking for two hours may just help to save the death of town centre shops, especially in Wantage, Faringdon and Abingdon, where it is difficult to persuade people that it is cost effective to shop there.</p> <p>You state that your two hours proposal is generous in comparison to other councils. Maybe, but it does not equate with most out of town shopping parks and/or supermarkets, where, if there are restrictions, it is normally three hours free. You may need to consider extending your free period to give a level playing field.</p> <p>Regards</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals.</p> <p>The two hours free parking is generous compared to others who offer town centre parking rather than out of town parking where large supermarkets or retail estates normally offer longer stays for free.</p>
<p>Dear Sir / Madam</p> <p>In favour of introducing a Free 2hr period of parking and increase of charges above this time limit.</p> <p>As a resident on the very extremity of Wantage, the necessity of car parking within the town centre and other towns within the council's remit is vital to my family. Although we</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals.</p>

<p>are within walking distance (if time permits) the requirement to pop in to town to use the bank, post office and various shops requires us to park up for a short time, do our business and then nip home again. I and my husband both work from home some of the time and need to use the town centre facilities.</p> <p>I believe that introducing a free 2hr parking period will encourage us to pop in and use the local shops far more readily, rather than driving further to find an out of town store with free parking. Anything that encourages residents and visitors to park up, have a look around and therefore spend money in local businesses can only be good for the town as a whole and subsequently the council. If I know that I have only bought a ticket for 1 hr then I will be out immediately after doing the necessities, whereas if I know I have a free 2hrs I am far more inclined to have a browse and maybe buy or use services on impulse that I would not have envisaged previously.</p> <p>As a number of the local council run car parks are situated very near or even adjacent to store car parks I can't see that introducing this benefit will detract much from having those spaces empty in any case because drivers opt for the free car parks nearby if space is available.</p> <p>However, re the parking in the centre of Wantage Market Square, I do believe that this should remain limited to 30 minutes as the turnover allows for the urgent visits to bank and post office. I had heard rumours that this parking area might be disposed of completely and the traffic system altered into a pedestrian and one way system, with the loss of the parking. This would be disastrous for the town centre as it would drive all the 'service' businesses to move out of the centre to get nearer to their parking. As a rural community we must have accessible and free parking to save our towns.</p> <p>Many thanks for the opportunity to comment. Yours faithfully</p>	
<p>To whom it may concern</p> <p>I think the idea of two hours free parking is a great idea as this may encourage people to use the car parks rather than the roads and encourage people to shop in our local towns thus stimulating and encouraging more business to these area.</p> <p>Well thought of Mathew</p> <p>Regards</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals.</p>
<p>I am generally in favour of the proposals; in particular the need to display a ticket for free parking, and the extension of free time to two hours. I note that the increased free time will be offset by increased costs for pay time. Is the overall outcome expected to be cost neutral? What I wouldn't want is for the proposal to cost us money.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals.</p> <p>No, this is not cost neutral and there is an overall cost to the council estimated at £200,000. The council aims to pay for this from central government grants for building new homes (the new homes bonus). The council is not planning to pass on any additional costs of the free parking to the general tax payer.</p>
<p>Dear Sir</p> <p>I think this is an excellent idea and would maybe attract more people into Abingdon</p> <p>Certainly I think carefully about whether or not to go into Abingdon at the moment as I have to pay parking</p> <p>Best wishes</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals.</p>
<p>Dear Sir The Appleton with Eaton PC is in favour of your proposal to provide free car parking in</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the</p>

<p>the centre of Abingdon, for the first 2 hours. This would encourage shoppers to use Abingdon town centre rather than go somewhere else. Yours faithfully</p>	<p>proposals.</p>
<p>The view from Charney Bassett PC is that 2 hour free car parking in the Vale is most welcome. We are not sure how much this will accomplish, given that motorists can park at Sainsbury's and Waitrose for 2 hours for nothing. You need to offer something that they don't! Also, West Oxfordshire DC have free car parks, with different parts of the same car park allowing different durations. This may be what you need.</p> <p>Regards,</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals.</p>
<p>I would just like to register my support for this proposal.</p> <p>I would like to see some clarity on how the success of the change will be measured eg increase in footfall.</p> <p>Kind regards</p> <p>Cllr Iain Littlejohn</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals.</p>
<p>Dear Sir</p> <p>I very much welcome the changes to the car parking charges, in particular the first two hours free. This has been LONG OVEDUE as businesses struggle through these difficult times.</p> <p>On one hand the VOWH seems to want to encourage visitors to the town and yet I personally feel penalised for supporting shops and trades each time I have to pay.</p> <p>Just for once the VOWH might actually be in the 'real world', having listened to tax payers and actually done something positive for the town.</p> <p>If so, it will be a first.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals.</p>
<p>FAO John Backley</p> <p>Response to VWHDC car parking consultation;</p> <p>Dear Mr Backley,</p> <p>Please note that Sparsholt Parish Council supports the proposals set out in the consultation, and views the 2-hour free parking period as a very positive step.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals.</p>
<p>I am rather confused by some of the statements in the proposal</p> <p>At present the free parking is after 16:00. No staff to issue tickets/clamp. There are no tickets printed (registration number not recorded in machines).</p> <p>So I can park in the evening and spend time at a Restaurant or the few shops that are open.....</p> <p>Exactly which two hours will be free?...</p> <p>I would prefer working together with the shops in Abingdon to arrange late night shopping and have those two hours as truly 'Free.... It could be offered 1-3 times a week (Monday Wednesday and Friday).</p> <p>The proposal is for everyone to record their registration number and display a ticket. park during that period, and no returns thereafter....so extra admin required to fill the machines/empty the cash.</p>	<p>Yes, two hours will be offered free at any time during the charging period (ie from 8am to 6pm) at other times - for example, the car parks are free in the evening.</p> <p>There are no proposals within this consultation for everyone to have to input their car registration. This only applies to certain car parks. What will be required is for everyone parking for the free two hours, is to obtain a free ticket from the machines and display it.</p>

<p>Will the signage be improved, at the moment it is a mess with red stickers which display Free parking after 4:00pm....</p>	
<p>It seems like a reasonable set of proposals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Abingdon town centre is dying on its feet, it looks shabby and there are lots of empty units. 2) You need to attract more people to come and do their shopping there. Particularly from the prosperous outlying villages. 3) You need to attract more businesses to fill the empty units, preferably high quality ones. 2/3a) People who are forced to use their car due to poor public transport and distance will vote with their wallets. 4) Would the revenue lost by making parking free at all times (maybe limited to 2 or 3 hours at a time) be replaced by extra council tax raised from more businesses? Not if the council tax is set so high as to scare them off. 5) Look at how successful Witney is with totally free parking in the town centre and very few empty units. 6) It's more than just parking, there has been poor planning as well. All the major shops (Tesco, Waitrose {to some extent} , the Fairacres group) are on the periphery and have free parking. There is little incentive for me to go to the centre if I have to pay and there are few quality shops when I get there. A lot of money was wasted on converting Stratton Way from one-way to two-way to no great improvement on the traffic flow that I can see, but it diverts people away from the shops - a lose - lose idea (lose money, lose custom). 7) Convert the commercial parking areas behind the pedestrian area (Bury Street) into a 1 hour only and/or disabled parking except for commercial permit holders. Maybe encourage commercial vehicles not in constant use to park for free on the top floor(s) of the multi-story car park instead. <p>Regards,</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and your general support of the proposals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1), 2) and 3) yes, the free parking is part of an overall vision to build a stronger local economy. 4) The council is not planning to pass on any additional costs of the free parking to the general tax payer. 5) We will be monitoring the effect of the free parking to see the impact on the businesses in the town. 6) The free parking aims to get more people to come into the centre of the towns 7) The council is looking at the development of the Charter area including the multi-storey car park and the commercial parking areas.