

# Abingdon Area Committee Agenda



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A meeting of the  
**Abingdon Area Committee**  
will be held on Monday 24 November 2014 at 6.30 pm  
Abbey House, Abingdon

## Members of the Committee:

### Councillors

Marilyn Badcock  
Mike Badcock  
Margaret Crick  
Tony de Vere  
Gervase Duffield  
Jason Fiddaman  
Jeanette Halliday  
Jim Halliday

Angela Lawrence  
Pat Lonergan  
Sandy Lovatt  
Julie Mayhew-Archer  
Aidan Melville  
Helen Pighills  
Andrew Skinner  
Richard Webber

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Reed".

Margaret Reed  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

# Agenda

## Open to the Public including the Press

### Council's vision

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

(Pages 4 - 6)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 April 2014 (attached).

### 3. Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

### 4. Urgent business and chair's announcements

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

### 5. Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting the area committee.

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

### 6. Capital Community Grants (CCG) 2014/15 (round 2)

(Pages 7 - 24)

To consider the Head of Corporate Strategy's Report.

### 7. 2014/15 New Homes Bonus (NHB) Grants

(Pages 25 - 40)

To consider the Head of Corporate Strategy's Report.

## **8. Abbey Gardens and Meadows**

(Wards Affected: Abingdon Abbey and Barton)

(Pages 41 - 54)

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

None

# Minutes

of a meeting of the

## Abingdon Area Committee

held on Monday, 28 April 2014 at 6.00 pm  
at the Guildhall, Abingdon OX14 3HL

Open to the public, including the press

### Present:

Members: Councillors Julie Mayhew-Archer (Chair), Aidan Melville (Vice-Chairman), Marilyn Badcock, Mike Badcock, Julia Bricknell, Gervase Duffield, Jeanette Halliday, Jim Halliday, Angela Lawrence, Pat Lonergan, Sandy Lovatt, Andrew Skinner and Richard Webber

Officers: Jayne Bolton, Susan Harbour and Shona Ware

Number of members of the public: 1

### **Ab.28 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from councillors: Tony de Vere, Jason Fiddaman and Helen Pighills.

### **Ab.29 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2014 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting and the chair signed them.

### **Ab.30 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations from councillors.

### **Ab.31 Urgent business and chair's announcements**

None notified.

### **Ab.32 Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting the committee**

Steve Oaks, from the Abingdon Camera Club, spoke when this item was considered.

## Ab.33 Capital Community Grants

### Capital Community Grants.

The committee considered the head of corporate strategy's report. This set out details of four applications the council had received for capital community grants: requesting a total of £13,673. The report also set out the financial position, there being £44,024 remaining in the current year's budget, which included £17,510 of unallocated funds and under spend carried forward from the previous financial year.

The committee considered each application, assessing it against the grants criteria and awarded grants as follows:

Applicant	Project	Grant	Comments
Abingdon Camera Club	Upgrading IT equipment	£1,847	Members mostly from Abingdon. Subscriptions £30 pa and £2 per meeting or £60 pa. membership has risen from 21 to 33 in 16 months. Award as per officer recommendation.
Abingdon Rugby Club	Replacement set of patio doors and shutters	£3,800	Despite capital reserves of £342,791, available monies for use at 31.08.13 were £8,831* Club should be encouraged to apply to Abingdon Town Council. Award as per officer recommendation.
Drayton Village Hall	Kitchen refurbishment, replacement windows and fire doors	£5,000	This is part of a larger project which has been split into discreet mini projects. Award as per officer recommendation.
St Nicholas Preschool and Playgroup	Replacement of the outdoor play surface	£3,026	Award as per officer recommendation.

\*The Committee requested that, for future rounds, the evaluations should include an organisation's available funds in addition to the total assets.

### Scheme's Policy: non-agenda item.

After considering the applications, the committee decided to discuss the scheme's policy and to make comments to the Cabinet member as follows:

- More flexibility in the allocation of funds, to award more than 50 percent of project costs/ £5000, if needed and the money was available.
- In the policy, under "Decision Making", to add an "s" to "committee" to change the wording to read: "grant applications will be determined by the relevant area committees".
- In the policy, under "Opening and closing dates" to read: references to an election should be changed to DISTRICT elections.
- The Abingdon Area Committee is granted less money *per capita* than other area committees, under the policy, and the committee would like the policy changed to redress the imbalance. They would like consideration to be taken of the fact that clubs and facilities in Abingdon attract users from out of the area, but the costs of maintenance etc are borne by Abingdon residents under the current policy.

- The policy should contain an **expectation** that applicants will apply to their town or parish councils, and that a section on the application form, and the report to committee should contain an "if not, why not" question.

Additionally, the area committee asked officers for clarification on the schemes which area committees could initiate, and officers undertook to get this information back to the committee, as soon as possible.

The committee requested that the first round of applications in 2015/16 could open as early as possible after the elections, so that applicants would not need to wait an entire year between rounds: officers agreed to take this question away for consideration, and to respond as soon as possible.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

# Abingdon Area Committee



Report of Head of Corporate Strategy  
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 To: Abingdon area committee  
 DATE: 24 November 2014

REPORT NO:

## Capital Community Grants (CCG) 2014/15 (round two)

### Recommendation

- (a) that the Abingdon area committee considers the four applications received for CCG funding and awards grants in line with the agreed policy

### Purpose of report

1. To give the committee the information needed to award CCG grants in their area.

### Strategic objectives

2. We have a corporate priority to support local communities through grants to voluntary and community organisations who are delivering projects/services that support our objectives or those in need.

### Background

3. We opened the scheme between 16 July and 15 September 2014 and received four applications for the Abingdon area, requesting a total of £14,128 against a budget of £34,119.
4. Officers have evaluated the applications using the scoring criteria in the CCG policy approved in July 2012. See appendix one for these evaluations and appendix two for the agreed policy.
5. In line with the policy, which sets out an award based on the score the application receives (see table overleaf), officers have made grant recommendations for the committee to consider. Officers are not recommending awarding the full amounts requested as some projects did not score enough to qualify for funding.

<b>Total score</b>	<b>Officer recommendation</b>
100 to 140	Officers recommend the project be a funding priority and should receive the amount requested up to the usual maximums, budget permitting.
80 to 99	Officers recommend the project receives some funding, usually 80 per cent of the requested amount, budget permitting to a maximum of 40 per cent of the total cost (to a maximum of £4,000).
79 or less	Officers do not recommend the project for funding

## **Financial implications**

6. The committee had a budget of £47,724 at the start of the year for this scheme and following its decisions in the first round back in May 2014 has £34,119 available for this round. This includes any unspent money from completed or withdrawn projects.
7. All the applications are requesting money for capital projects and therefore meet our financial requirements for awarding grants from this scheme.

## **Legal implications**

8. The council's legal powers to award these grants are contained in section one of the Localism Act 2011 that gives a general power of competence for local authorities.
9. In July 2012 the leader of the council delegated authority to the four area committees to determine capital community grant applications and to the head of corporate strategy in consultation with the chair of the relevant area committee to determine grants up to £1,000.

## **Risks**

10. There are no overarching risks of awarding these grants. Officers have highlighted any risks to a particular project in their evaluation reports.

## **Conclusion**

11. That the committee awards CCG grants in line with the approved policy.

## **Background papers**



# APPENDIX ONE - OFFICER EVALUATIONS

## Scoring summary

Ref no.	Organisation	Scheme	Town / Parish	Scheme cost	Amount requested	Score (max 140)	Recommended award
CCGA\5	Preston Road Community Centre Association	New lounge chairs and tables and two fire exit doors	Abingdon	£7,456	£3,728	100	£3,728
CCGA\11	Abingdon Town Band	Two replacement instruments	Abingdon	£5,532	£5,000	80	£2,213
CCGA\3	TrinityLearning	Equipment for 'Hello Abingdon' youth newsletter	Abingdon	£858	£400	85	£320
CCGA\6	Abingdon Lawn Tennis Club	Build a seventh tennis court	Abingdon	£34,500	£5,000	65	£0
				<b>Total</b>	£14,128	<b>Total</b>	£6,261
<b>Award criteria</b>						<b>Budget</b>	<b>£34,119</b>
<b>100 to 140 points</b>	<b>funding priority</b> (normally the requested amount, if it's within the usual maximums)					<b>Remainder</b>	<b>£27,858</b>
<b>80 to 99 points</b>	<b>some funding</b> (normally 80 per cent of request recommended unless otherwise stated)						
<b>79 or less points</b>	<b>no funding</b>						

## Capital Communities Grants 2014-15 Abingdon

<b>Preston Road Community Centre Association</b>	Ref	CCGA\5
<b>New lounge chairs and tables and two fire exit doors</b>		

<b>Total project cost</b>	£7,456		
<b>Amount requested</b>	£3,728	<b>Organisation's latest bank balance</b>	£29,981
<b>Organisation's contribution</b>	£2,456		
<b>Other funding</b>	£0		
Including a town/parish council contribution of	£0		

### Previous grants:

Six awards totalling £21,825 between 2003/4 and 2013/14 towards various improvements to the centre including toilets, room partitions and furniture

### Scoring

<b>Officer general and finance comments</b>			
They have said they will cover the £1,272 funding gap from their reserves. They have a number of other projects planned and will need some of their reserves for them, limiting their contribution to this project.			
<b>Viability</b>			
Viable and likely to complete within 12 months.		<b>Score</b>	60/60
<b>Community and sustainable benefit</b>			
Wide and extensive - the whole community can access the centre and benefit from the improvements.		<b>Score</b>	20/20
<b>Broadening the range</b>			
Minimal - the project replaces existing furniture and fire doors so will not offer any new facilities.		<b>Score</b>	5/20
<b>Consultation</b>			
Minimal - they submitted three letters supporting their decision to buy new chairs and tables. There is no evidence that the fire doors are no longer fit for purpose.		<b>Score</b>	5/20
<b>Local need</b>			
Good - the centre is a key facility for residents of South Abingdon, however local need specifically for this project is minimal.		<b>Score</b>	10/20
<b>Award criteria:</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>100/140</b>
100 to 140 – <b>funding priority</b> (requested amount up to maximum, budget permitting)			
80 to 99 – <b>some funding</b> (80 per cent of the requested amount up to the maximum, budget permitting)			
79 or less – the project does not receive any funding			
<b>Recommended award</b>	<b>£ 3,728</b>	<b>Recommended %</b>	<b>50.00</b>

<b>Applicant responses</b>
<p><b>Please give some details of your project.</b>  This summer we have decorated internally throughout and replaced seven internal doors at a cost of over £7k. To complete the refurbishment we have applied to the Abingdon Town Council for a grant towards new curtains and curtain poles for 10 windows and this application is to replace the chairs and tables in the lounge. The existing chairs are badly stained, some are broken and were second hand when we acquired them several years ago. The small tables are much more than twenty years old and stacking tables would be preferable. The two fire exits from the main hall need replacing. The fire exit with double doors is the exit for any disabled people as it leads onto the ramp for disabled people.</p>
<p><b>Financial statement from organisation about their contribution</b>  The bank statements do not include the payments made for this summer's work which equal 12k.</p>
<p><b>Statement about town or parish council support</b>  This spring we spent around £7k on a new public address and hearing loop system and the Town Council gave us £1000 towards the projector as part of the audio visual improvements. This August we have spent £7.5k on redecorating internally and replacing 7 internal fire doors. This September we intend to replace the disabled toilet and do further work zoning the heating system and putting in a loop system for hot water to the toilet washbasins. We have applied to the Town Council for £1000 for new curtains and curtain poles. So the chairs and tables in the lounge and the fire doors are the finishing touches of the improvements made in 2014.</p>
<b>Project viability</b>
<p><b>How does your project deliver best value for money?</b>  The Lounge -as its name implies- needs to promote a relaxed atmosphere- so the furniture has to be in accordance with these requirements to get returned bookings. One group meeting at the centre are GP referrals for weight problems. For these people the furniture has to be strong and substantial. The fire doors must be reliable and functional.</p>
<p><b>How is the scale and design of your project suited to the target audience/ the need you have identified?</b>  The lounge is mostly used by adults so the chairs need to be comfortable and strong. Some will need to be moved from one room to another when we have large groups attending hence the chairs on the moveable trolley meet this need better. The fire exit doors must be reliable, easy to open by adults and children alike but secure when the building is locked.</p>
<p><b>How will you manage the project?</b>  I will order the items, and myself or another volunteer trustee will receive the deliveries. One of the trustees will meet the door installers on site to oversee the installation. As Trustees we have experience in overseeing the installation of the kitchen in 2007, the toilets in 2009 and 2011, the redecoration this summer and several smaller projects on site.</p>
<p><b>What are your ongoing management and finance arrangements for the facilities this project will provide?</b>  Regular and one-off bookings will continue as now. A small group of volunteers fund raise every Tuesday evening to keep the centre running. These volunteers also have to prepare every week for these fund raising activities.</p>
<b>Community benefit</b>
<p><b>Who will benefit from your project?</b>  The centre is used seven days a week and frequented by around 500 different people each month. Some groups meet weekly and others monthly. The largest single group, Abingdon U3A has 150 members over 60 years of age. Other groups include: Weight watchers, Philippa Aldridge Fitness, Kickstart, Bingo, Kickboxing, Older and Bolder, CSMA, ADTTS, Youth Club, Alpha Youth Groups, Abbey Lacemakers, ADTC, Blood Donors, Lifeline Screening, More Life less weight, Vineyard Church, Mother and Toddler Group, Singing Group, Dancing Couple, and the Wine Circle. Other group, individuals and families also book the centre for family celebrations and events.</p>
<p><b>What sustainable/energy saving measures will your project include or offer?</b>  Not applicable, but we have installed new boilers, and new lighting in recent years and we are undertaking an energy audit on October 16th 2014.</p>
<b>Broadening the range</b>
<p><b>What extra facilities (or equipment) will the project provide?</b>  Tables and chairs- some with arms and some without arms. More chairs on a moveable trolley to be used wherever needed. New fire exits for enhanced safety.</p>

**What new activities will take place as a result of this project?**

No new activities are planned but moving some of the furniture should become easier for hirers and the regular volunteers. The centre is already in use seven days a week but we do have slots of time that could still be used if people come forward willing to start and run activities. We are always open to people to do this.

**Consultation and local need**

**What consultation has your organisation carried out?**

Various groups who use the centre have been consulted and their responses are included.

**What professional advice have you received relating to this project?**

None.

**Why is there a need in your community for this project?**

South Abingdon is an area in the Vale of White Horse with several indices of multiple deprivation. The Community Centre provides a place where people can meet informally and at a reasonable cost. It functions as a church, bingo hall, activity centre, youth centre, exercise room and in many other guises. The centre is run by a small group of volunteers who are trying to improve the well being of the local residents by offering a well run social centre with varied activities taking place. We are always open to people who would like to start new groups and activities.

## Capital Communities Grants 2014-15 Abingdon

<b>Abingdon Town Band</b>	Ref	CCGA\11
<b>Two replacement instruments</b>		

<b>Total project cost</b>	£5,532	<b>Organisation's latest bank balance</b> £8,354
<b>Amount requested</b>	£5,000	
<b>Organisation's contribution</b>	£532	
<b>Other funding</b>	£0	
Including a town/parish council contribution of	£0	

**Previous grants** six grants totalling £8,750 between 2003/4 and 20011/12

### Scoring

<b>Officer general and finance comments</b>		
The project scored enough for officers to recommend awarding some funding (budget permitting) but it is not a funding priority.		
As they have requested more than the usual 50 per cent our recommendation is to fund 80 per cent of the maximum they could normally request.		
The organisation may be able to fund any gap in funding from their reserves.		
<b>Viability</b>		
Viable and likely to take place in the next 12 months.	<b>Score</b>	60/60
<b>Community and sustainable benefit</b>		
Minimal - the immediate benefit is limited to the four band members getting new or second hand instruments.	<b>Score</b>	5/20
The potential knock-on benefit is to the public from their performances.		
<b>Broadening the range</b>		
Minimal - the band will have an additional two instruments, but may not result in additional performances.	<b>Score</b>	5/20
<b>Consultation</b>		
None - the purchase of replacement instruments doesn't lend itself to consultation as the band itself monitors the condition of its assets and if any need replacing.	<b>Score</b>	5/20
<b>Local need</b>		
Minimal - the band is well supported by the community but there is no clear need for the new instruments.	<b>Score</b>	5/20
<b>Award criteria:</b>		
100 to 140 – <b>funding priority</b> (requested amount up to maximum, budget permitting)		
80 to 99 – <b>some funding</b> (80 per cent of the requested amount up to the maximum, budget permitting)		
79 or less – the project does not receive any funding		
<b>Recommended award</b>	<b>£ 2,213</b>	<b>Recommended %</b> 44.26
		<b>Total</b> 80/140

<b>Applicant responses</b>
<p><b>Please give some details of your project.</b></p> <p>As a brass band we fulfil a number of engagements locally mainly in Abingdon and surrounding villages. These include a number of non-paid and charitable jobs, and many that support civic and community events in Abingdon. To fulfil these successfully we need to have a reasonable set of instruments, and a number of our instruments are reaching a point when they are no longer suitable for playing for the public. For most of our members, owning their own instrument is prohibitively expensive so the band needs to own its own set of instruments. Our project is to replace two of these - a soprano cornet and a baritone - to fill this gap. The instruments which have reached the end of their useful life for main band use will be refurbished and passed on to training band members for them to learn to play.</p>
<p><b>Financial statement from organisation about their contribution</b></p> <p>In addition to our instruments and insurance, our key commitments are to fund practice facilities throughout the year and new music as required. We are also currently saving to make essential repairs to our band room which we use to store instruments and music</p>
<p><b>Statement about town or parish council support</b></p> <p>Not for this project. We are proposing to make an application to the Town council to help buy some new music stands</p>
<p><b>Project viability</b></p>
<p><b>How does your project deliver best value for money?</b></p> <p>We have identified a number of specialist suppliers of brass instruments and will seek quotations for suitable instruments from them to ensure that our purchases provide value for money - lists of potential purchases are supplied. Once purchased the instruments will be covered by our insurance in case of theft or accidental damage; and will be expected to be payable for performances for a significant number of years.</p>
<p><b>How is the scale and design of your project suited to the target audience/ the need you have identified?</b></p> <p>Because of the longevity of brass instruments, it is rare to need to replace them. However, the band needs to have a set of instruments which are playable for public performances. We are proposing to replace two of the oldest which have deteriorated to the extent that they are no longer fit for purpose for this. The instruments will then be refurbished to a state where they will be able to be used for new members joining our training band.</p>
<p><b>How will you manage the project?</b></p> <p>The new instruments will be purchased by our band master and those who will play the instruments, who have many years of experience in brass bands and are well placed to make value for money decisions on suitable instruments to purchase</p>
<p><b>What are your ongoing management and finance arrangements for the facilities this project will provide?</b></p> <p>The instruments will be cared for by the band members who will play them - this is ingrained in our constitution. They will be covered on band insurances. They are not expected to need any significant maintenance or repair for many years.</p>
<p><b>Community benefit</b></p>
<p><b>Who will benefit from your project?</b></p> <p>The immediate beneficiaries will be band members who will play these instruments and training band members who 'inherit' the older instruments. Our membership is open to anyone who wishes to play and we actively recruit within Abingdon for new members e.g. the clubs and societies day. We have an active training band where more experienced members train new members, aged 8 and up to play. Owning band instruments removes the main barrier to access as new or existing members don't need to be able to afford their own instruments, in this way band is a great 'leveller' and we have members from a wide variety of backgrounds. The wider beneficiaries are the community for whom we play. The band is justifiably proud of its role as a core part of many civic events in Abingdon e.g. bun throwing, remembrance day, proms in the park which brings the wider community together.</p>
<p><b>What sustainable/energy saving measures will your project include or offer?</b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Broadening the range</b></p>
<p><b>What <u>extra</u> facilities (or equipment) will the project provide?</b></p> <p>We are seeking funding for two new instruments - a soprano cornet and a baritone horn.</p>
<p><b>What <u>new</u> activities will take place as a result of this project?</b></p>

As our set of band instruments will remain fit for purpose we will continue to be able to fulfil our engagements within and around Abingdon and the quality of our performance for the public will improve. Good quality musical performances are a core part of many Abingdon events, and we will be able to continue to do Abingdon and the band justice in taking part in these. The older instruments will pass to the training band so we will be able to train two more beginners to play.

### **Consultation and local need**

#### **What consultation has your organisation carried out?**

As this application is to fund replacements consultation isn't appropriate as such. With these additional instruments we will be able to actively recruit new training band members. The people of Abingdon are incredibly supportive of the band and our performances, demonstrated by the number of people who turn up regularly to events such as proms in the park, bun throwing, remembrance day and the recent WWI memorial service. Feedback we get from those who attend is that we do Abingdon proud and that these events wouldn't be the same without us. We believe that bands like ourselves and others in the town are a fundamental part of a rich cultural and civic life and helps to make Abingdon the vibrant and active town that it is.

#### **What professional advice have you received relating to this project?**

No external advice as bands members themselves have the experience necessary to make these purchases, and have years of experience to know which are the best companies to provide quality instruments and best value

#### **Why is there a need in your community for this project?**

As above - so that we can continue to provide good quality performances in Abingdon and surrounding areas

## Capital Communities Grants 2014-15 Abingdon

<b>TrinityLearning</b>	Ref	CCGA\3
<b>Equipment for 'Hello Abingdon' youth newsletter</b>		

<b>Total project cost</b>	£858		
<b>Amount requested</b>	£400	<b>Organisation's latest bank balance</b>	£3,178
<b>Organisation's contribution</b>	£458		
<b>Other funding</b> Including a town/parish council contribution of	£0 £0		

**Previous grants received** - None

### Scoring

<b>Officer general and finance comments</b>		
<p>The project scored enough for officers to recommend awarding some funding (budget permitting) but it is not a funding priority. In these cases, we usually recommend 80 per cent (budget permitting).</p> <p>This project works in nine schools in the Abingdon area. Children chosen by the schools help to produce a youth newsletter (500 copies per issue).</p> <p>The organisation hasn't approached any other funding sources towards this project however, Drayton PC has given £200 towards the general running costs and Abingdon Town council has funded them in the past. The schools they work with are not contributing to the project.</p>		
<b>Viability</b>		
Likely to complete in the next 12 months but the funding may not be necessary if the participating schools allowed the children to use their equipment.	<b>Score</b>	50/60
<b>Community and sustainable benefit</b>		
Minimal - direct benefit is limited to the 35-40 children they work with each year. There is a potential knock on benefit to the other children receiving the newsletter in the schools.	<b>Score</b>	5/20
<b>Broadening the range</b>		
Minimal - they won't offer any more placements or increase the number of publications as a result of this project.	<b>Score</b>	5/20
<b>Consultation</b>		
Minimal - their comments on consultation relate to the service in general not this specific project.	<b>Score</b>	5/20
<b>Local need</b>		
Good - provision of a children's community newsletter is included in the Armed Forces Community Covenant.	<b>Score</b>	20/20
<b>Award criteria:</b> <b>100 to 140 – funding priority</b> (requested amount up to maximum, budget permitting) <b>80 to 99 – some funding</b> (80 per cent of the requested amount up to the maximum, budget permitting) <b>79 or less – the project does not receive any funding</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>85/140</b>
<b>Recommended award</b>	£320	<b>Recommended %</b> 37.30



## **Applicant responses**

### **Please give some details of your project.**

We work with nine primary schools from 7 parishes in VOWH. Children from local and Armed Forces' families work together in small teams, learning about their community and producing a 500-copy newsletter which is distributed free within their school, Abingdon and at Dalton Barracks. Each group of children spends seven afternoons working with staff from TrinityLearning, using laptops, cameras and office printing equipment. While applying literacy skills to a real-world context, the children learn through experience the importance of team-work, responsibility and working to deadlines – as well as a lot about their community. The magazine helps to raise awareness of local issues such as Abingdon Hospital or cycle safety. We need to replenish and expand the equipment used by the children. We currently have just two laptops and one camera, all bought with a Big Lottery Fund grant in 2009. These are now inadequate and unreliable.

### **Financial statement from organisation about their contribution**

Project running costs of £3500/yr, to come from these & future goodwill giving from church members.

### **Statement about town or parish council support**

Drayton Parish Council has given us a grant of £200 towards the running costs of Hello Abingdon. We have received a grant from Abingdon Town Council in the past.

### **Project viability**

#### **How does your project deliver best value for money?**

School space and equipment is limited and working at The Conduit Centre gives us access to the printers, scanners and telephone in the office there. It is difficult for six children to use just our two existing laptops. One new laptop would give one laptop per pair, but our old computers are now unreliable and would work on a different operating system, causing confusion for the children. Three new laptops would give a fresh start, with the old laptops available as back-ups, or to use in other projects. Notebooks & i-pads are unsuitable for extended text from young children. Cloud storage is problematic, as internet access is sometimes difficult in our workshop. 15" screens allow easy reading. Our choice is minimal specification laptops, with HD memory. PC World is marginally dearer, but provides a helpful service department.

#### **How is the scale and design of your project suited to the target audience/ the need you have identified?**

The project addresses the social and educational issues created by the mobility of forces' families. It has a proven track record of success, having been run before using grants from The Big Lottery and The Community Covenant. Hello Abingdon links the needs of local schools with those of Forces' families and the wider community. Hello Abingdon helps both schools and individual pupils to reach their targets. It has been proved to help improve literacy, motivation & team-work and raises the profile of Forces' families. We have a good working relationship with the nine schools who have used the project in the past and know of several others who would like to get involved. We have found that community groups featured in the magazine really appreciate the publicity, which is particularly useful for Barracks families, who can feel very isolated.

#### **How will you manage the project?**

Two sessional staff are managed by TrinityLearning's Education & Development Officer. All staff are experienced ex-teachers with DBS Clearance. Our Education & Development Officer was formerly Head of Department & Deputy Head of Sixth Form in local schools and has worked for TrinityLearning for five years.

#### **What are your ongoing management and finance arrangements for the facilities this project will provide?**

Hello Abingdon is managed by TrinityLearning's Education and Development Officer, who liaises with schools and oversees two sessional staff. This post is funded by Trinity Church in Abingdon. Ongoing costs are funded by grants and the goodwill giving of church members. The equipment will be kept in locked storage within a locked room at The Conduit Centre. This room is used solely for work with young people. The equipment would be covered by the general contents insurance for the building. TrinityLearning has been operating for five years, with funding from various grant-awarding bodies, as well as the good-will giving of members at Trinity Church, Abingdon.

### **Community benefit**

#### **Who will benefit from your project?**

Local schools - nine currently participating, but offered to all schools in the area particularly those with children from Forces' Families. Children selected by school as needing extra input - get individual

mentoring improved school profile through magazine produced. Local organisations chosen as a focus for the magazines - e.g. Choose Abingdon; Abingdon Naturalists' Society; Abingdon Museum. 500 Families living at Dalton Barracks & in the community receive free magazine .
<b>What sustainable/energy saving measures will your project include or offer?</b> Magazines are printed at A5 size and made available online, to reduce paper usage . Buildings and equipment at The Conduit Centre are fully utilised, rather than standing idle. All paper & plastic waste is recycled. Children on the project are made aware of energy conservation issues, such as paper recycling, while with us.
<b>Broadening the range</b>
<b>What <u>extra</u> facilities (or equipment) will the project provide?</b> 3 extra laptops and cameras will enable each pair of children to use a fast, reliable set of equipment. This will make team-work easier and allow them to explore new, more ambitious presentation techniques.
<b>What <u>new</u> activities will take place as a result of this project?</b> This will allow us to continue existing projects into the future.
<b>Consultation and local need</b>
<b>What consultation has your organisation carried out?</b> Our Education & Development Officer has researched the needs of the local educational community by discussions with local teachers & governors, through school visits and interviews with linked organisations, as well as using OFSTED reports. The Hello Abingdon Project has evolved from an earlier TrinityLearning News, following consultation with local schools, The Abingdon Education Partnership and The Oxford Education & Business Partnership, who all identified the disruption to Forces' children and their classes as a priority for intervention. Participating children and schools are asked to complete feedback forms - see attached evaluation report, written for The Community Covenant in 2013.
<b>What professional advice have you received relating to this project?</b> Discussion with local head teachers and Abingdon's Home-School Liaison Officer for Forces' Families. Our Education & Development Officer has attended training courses run by The Service Children's Support Network.
<b>Why is there a need in your community for this project?</b> Dalton Barracks has around 200 families living on-site. These families often arrive within the school year, so that children find integration difficult. This affects their educational achievement and emotional wellbeing, with consequent effects on the classes and schools into which they move. Arriving within the school year, Forces' children are placed at whichever schools have places left - often at a distance from their homes and with town children who cannot relate to their lives. In this context, making friends is very difficult, giving rise to behavioural issues. **use data from chart & lottery form*

## Capital Communities Grants 2014-15 Abingdon

<b>Abingdon Lawn Tennis Club</b>	Ref	CCGA\6
<b>Build a seventh tennis court</b>		

<b>Total project cost</b>	£34,500		
<b>Amount requested</b>	£5,000	<b>Organisation's latest bank balance</b>	£40,794
<b>Organisation's contribution</b>	£20,500		
<b>Other funding</b> Including a town/parish council contribution of	£9,000		
	£0		

**Previous grants received** - none

### Scoring

<b>Officer general and finance comments</b>			
<p>They have also applied for a NHB grant during this round requesting a total of £14,000 over both schemes. They are contributing £20,500 themselves and will cover the £6,900 in VAT which leaves just £3,393 in reserve once their £10,000 running costs are deducted. They have not identified any other sources of funding.</p> <p>Since their unsuccessful NHB application last year, the club hasn't identified any other sources of funding or updated its quotes so the costs are likely to have increased, which could add to their financial pressures.</p>			
<b>Viability</b>			
<p>The project may not complete within 12 months if the costs have increased in the last year, especially if they aren't successful with their other application.</p> <p>According to Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) guidance the club has sufficient courts for 360 members, which is 110 more than they currently have, and based on its growth rate should be enough for around seven years. The Vale's (draft) leisure strategy also doesn't identify a need for more tennis provision in Abingdon and lists five other sites in the town offering tennis facilities.</p>	<b>Score</b>	40/60	
<b>Community and sustainable benefit</b>			
Minimal - only the 250 members will benefit during particularly busy periods.	<b>Score</b>	5/20	
<b>Broadening the range</b>			
Minimal - the court will only be available to club members and will probably only see use during peak times.	<b>Score</b>	10/20	
<b>Consultation</b>			
Minimal - members were informed of the project, but weren't consulted before deciding to build the court. The Vale's draft leisure strategy doesn't list a need for more tennis facilities in the town.	<b>Score</b>	5/20	
<b>Local need</b>			
Minimal - LTA guidance and the draft leisure strategy doesn't list a need for more tennis facilities in the town.	<b>Score</b>	5/20	
<b>Award criteria:</b>			
100 to 140 – <b>funding priority</b> (requested amount up to maximum, budget permitting)		<b>Total</b>	<b>65/140</b>
80 to 99 – <b>some funding</b> (80 per cent of the requested amount up to the maximum, budget permitting)			
79 or less – the project does not receive any funding			
<b>Recommended award</b>	£0	<b>Recommended %</b>	0.00

<b>Applicant responses</b>
<b>Please give some details of your project.</b> To provide an extra court to meet growing demand. Membership of the club has increased by over 50% in the last two years (75% over 5 years), and we have a resource limited junior programme at weekends.
<b>Financial statement from organisation about their contribution</b> Most of the club's income comes through annual subscriptions in April, and expenditure runs at approximately £1200pcm, so the current balances includes Approximately £10k to cover running expenses for the remainder of this financial year. If the project goes ahead, there will be a further £6900 for VAT. If the VAT is included in the project costs, then the calculated percentage costs requested is reduced to 12%.
<b>Statement about town or parish council support</b> No. What sources of funding are available?
<b>Project viability</b>
<b>How does your project deliver best value for money?</b> We need more courts. We have gone for the cheapest and most durable playing surface (porous tarmac, lifetime of 10-15 years), as other desirable surface options, such as synthetic clay or artificial grass, are approximately £15000 per court more expensive and so are outside our projected budget.
<b>How is the scale and design of your project suited to the target audience/ the need you have identified?</b> In the long term we wish to add further tennis, mini tennis and padel tennis courts. The present project is the minimum investment of a single court.
<b>How will you manage the project?</b> The project will be managed by the ALTC Committee, and can call upon members with architectural, planning and project management skills. The current status of the project may be seen in the latest planning application P14/V1411/FUL on the Vale planning website.
<b>What are your ongoing management and finance arrangements for the facilities this project will provide?</b> The new court will be managed in the same manner as the existing courts. Its use will be added to the court allocation plan, and its maintenance costs will be added to sinking fund cost calculation, which in turn is funded by the members subscriptions.
<b>Community benefit</b>
<b>Who will benefit from your project?</b> The club facilities are available for all who wish to play tennis. The primary beneficiaries of the new court will be the junior players. The existing courts are used Saturday and Sunday afternoons for matches. The extra court will allow coaching, junior play and social play sessions to be extend from the mornings to these afternoons.
<b>What sustainable/energy saving measures will your project include or offer?</b> None. The purpose of the tennis court is to provide a facility where people can expend energy keeping fit and enjoying themselves.
<b>Broadening the range</b>
<b>What <u>extra</u> facilities (or equipment) will the project provide?</b> Extra tennis and eventually Padel tennis courts.
<b>What <u>new</u> activities will take place as a result of this project?</b> Coaching, junior play and social tennis sessions. The Padel courts will open racket sports to a wider range of participants, as it can be played by less fit and mobile players than play tennis.
<b>Consultation and local need</b>
<b>What consultation has your organisation carried out?</b> The club committee review the forward plans for the club on a regular basis. Historical minutes and newsletters can be provided if required. An architect member of the committee to reflect the current thinking of the committee drew up the present plans. Wilsham Consulting Ltd have been employed to provide a profession flood assessment of our proposed developments.
<b>What professional advice have you received relating to this project?</b> Practical advice on the courts have been provided by the companies that provided quotes for installing the porous macadam tennis courts that we hope to add. Wilsham Consulting Ltd have been employed to provide a profession flood assessment of our proposed developments.
<b>Why is there a need in your community for this project?</b> Court space limits activities at peak times, and an extra court will ease this. New members are welcomed at Clubnights, beginners and returnee course, Saturday morning supervised junior sessions and at junior and adult coaching sessions. There is an active social life revolving around tennis into which new members are rapidly assimilated. We engage with the local community by actively encourage beginners of all ages. The steady growth in membership (from 137 in 2007 to about 250 at present) indicates that extra courts will be needed in the near future.

# **APPENDIX TWO – CCG POLICY**

## **Capital Grant Policy and Procedure** (revised April 2012)

### **Introduction**

The council has a corporate objective to support local communities and their representative bodies to create opportunities to localise service delivery. It aims to offer grants to voluntary and community organisations who are delivering projects and services that support the council's own corporate objectives or those in need.

The council has a recurring annual capital allocation of £100,000 in its capital programme funded from its capital receipts reserve to offer in capital grants to local community projects.

The scoring criteria and policy and procedure rules will be determined from time to time by the cabinet. Details of the application procedure will be included in the application forms held by the head of corporate strategy.

### **What type of project will the scheme fund?**

The council seeks to support a variety of community initiatives. Applications for funding towards a wide variety of different community projects can be made. Only capital expenditure, such as spending on buildings, extensions or equipment will be considered under this scheme. Repairs and maintenance work does not fall within capital expenditure. Applications for revenue funding to cover such things as salary costs, heating or rent cannot be considered under this scheme. Retrospective projects will not be considered.

### **Who can apply to the scheme?**

The council will not fund large public sector bodies, such as Oxfordshire County Council or Primary Care Trusts. Because education is a function of Oxfordshire County Council, we will not accept applications from schools. Businesses and individuals are not eligible to apply for a grant.

The council is committed to promoting equality and diversity and welcomes applications from all sectors of the community, regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, status, religion or belief.

### **Schemes initiated by Area Committees**

As well as receiving applications from eligible groups, Area Committees may also choose to initiate their own projects. Each area would have to fund its own projects from its overall budget and any consultants costs would have to be drawn from the same budget.

### **What is the maximum award from the scheme?**

In most cases any grant awarded by the scheme will be up to 50 per cent of the total cost of the project capped to a maximum of £5,000 for any individual project. All grant awards will be offered as a percentage of the total cost of the project, capped with a maximum grant amount. In this way, the council will share 50% of any saving if a project under spends, but does not share the cost if the project overspends.

### **Scheme eligibility criteria**

Applications will normally be considered if organisations/projects meet the following eligibility criteria:

- are a properly constituted charitable or non profit making organisation
- has secured all appropriate planning and listed building consents
- provides two years audited accounts (six months of bank statements for new organisations)
- provides a minimum of two quotations for all work, equipment and fees relating to the costs of the project
- the project has not already commenced

## Opening and closing dates

The scheme will generally have one funding round each year; subject to budget availability a second round will be held. The first round will open for applications in July (unless an election has taken place when it will be September) each year and close at the end of September). Decisions will generally be made by the end of November.

If a second round is required it will generally open for applications in October each year and close at the end of December and decisions will be made in February.

## Decision making

Grant applications will be determined by the relevant area committee; Abingdon, South East, Abingdon and West. The area committees will meet in November and February (if required) each year.

## Allocation of budgets to area committees

The funds will be allocated to each committee as follows:

- for each parish within the area committee's boundary excluding Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage: £500
- for Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage: £500 per district councillor, noting that for Faringdon only two of the three councillors are included reflecting that it is a mixed urban/rural ward
- £0.60 per elector, using the June 2012 electorate figures.

Area	Abingdon	Abingdon	South East	West	Total
<b>Parishes (exc towns)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>	
<b>Cllrs per town</b>	14	0	5	2*	
<b>Electors</b>	30024	21553	26507	16672	94756
<b>£500 per parish/cllr</b>	£ 8,500.00	£ 7,500.00	£14,000.00	£13,500.00	
<b>60p per elector</b>	£18,014.40	£12,931.80	£15,904.20	£10,003.20	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£26,514.40</b>	<b>£20,431.80</b>	<b>£29,904.20</b>	<b>£23,503.20</b>	<b>£100,353.60</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>26.4%</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>29.8%</b>	<b>23.4%</b>	

\* noting that the Faringdon and Coxwells ward is a mix of urban and rural (2 councillors are allocated to the town in this formula).

## Delegated decisions

The head of corporate strategy will make decisions on awards for grants from the scheme of between £1 and up to a maximum of £1,000 in consultation with the relevant area committee chairman (if required) in all instances the scoring criteria will be applied. Any project that fails or which cannot meet the grant conditions will not receive its grant award and the grant will be cancelled. These decisions will be taken by the head of corporate strategy. The funds will be available to award grants to other applicants. The head of corporate strategy will also determine any requests for extensions of time when a grant is due to expire.

If any officer of the council has a pecuniary interest in any application being determined under this delegation the decision will be referred to a strategic director or the chief executive. These decisions will be published to all councillors and an update provided to the next area committee meeting.

## Area Committees

Each area committee will consist of all councillors (elected in the appropriate area) who will consider a detailed evaluation report and receive a presentation from officers including a recommendation, based on the approved scoring criteria (appendix 1) for each application to the scheme.

Each area committee will determine the applications taking into account the budget availability.

## Procedure at meetings of each Area Committee

Meetings of the area committees will be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Procedure set out in Parts 4 and 5 of the council's Constitution.

## Declaration of interests

Declarations of interests by councillors and officers will be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Procedure set out in Parts 4 and 5 of the council's Constitution.

If any officer of the council has a pecuniary interest in any application being determined under this scheme they will take no part in the process and register their interest as required by the employee's code of conduct policy.

## Standard conditions of all grant awards

- grants will not be payable towards any costs incurred before the grant award decision date
- projects must commence within one year of the date of the grant being awarded
- evidence that a contract of works is in place is required before any grants are advanced
- evidence that all funding is in place to **complete** the project must be provided to the grants team prior to commencement of work and the release of any part of the grant award
- council staff must be allowed to enter and inspect the work being carried out, by arrangement, subject to them abiding by any necessary health and safety requirements

- grants will be paid on completion of the project by returning a grant claim form attaching evidence of expenditure
- grants (or part of) will not be paid in relation to any spend that does not comply with the definition of 'capital expenditure'
- requests for information to assist us in monitoring the success of the project must be supplied to the grants team as required
- A plaque, supplied by the council, must be displayed in a prominent position to acknowledge grant awards of over £2,000

Breaches of one or more of the above grant conditions may result in the head of corporate strategy repealing the grant.

## Scoring criteria

### Assessment methodology for capital grant applications

The scheme aims to offer grants to voluntary and community organisations who are delivering projects and services that support our own objectives or those identified as being in need. All applications will be assessed using the scoring system shown below.

#### Summary of scoring system

Assessment factor	Maximum available
Broadening the range	20
Community participation	20
Meeting a local need	20
Community benefit	20
Viability	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>

<b>Local issues</b>		<b>up to 20 each (totalling 80 points)</b>
<b>Broadening the range</b>	Is this more of the same or will the project enable new activities?  This will involve an assessment of the added value that the proposal brings. To score points a project must include evidence to show that a wider range of people will use the facility.	
<b>Consultation</b>	To what extent has the relevant community been consulted and participated in putting the proposal together? Is the project identified in a local parish plan?  A community need does not have to be geographically based and participation is not a headcount – the relevant community will vary in size dependent upon the project being proposed.	
<b>Local need</b>	How well is this evidenced/detailed?  Need and demand are different - this is about a proven lack of something that the project provides.	
<b>Viability of project</b>		<b>up to 60 points</b>
<b>Viability</b>	Is the project reasonable and appropriate for the area? Does the project deliver best value for money? Is the project likely to secure full funding and progress within 12 months? Will the organisation be able to manage the project now and in the future?	
<b>Community benefit</b>	Who will benefit? This will go beyond a simple number count, to take account of the imbalance in size between different communities.  Community benefit also includes wider social, economic and environmental benefits that contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and energy saving in the district.	



# Abingdon Area Committee



Report of Head of Corporate Strategy  
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To: Abingdon Area Committee  
DATE: 24 November 2014

REPORT NO:

## 2014/15 New Homes Bonus (NHB) Grants

### Recommendations

- (a) that the Abingdon area committee considers the five applications received for NHB funding and awards grants in line with the agreed policy.
- (b) that the committee considers what suggestions, if any, it has for improving the policy to feed into a review early next year.

### Purpose of report

1. To give the committee the information it needs to award NHB grants for their area and suggest improvements to the policy for a review early next year.

### Strategic objectives

2. We have a corporate priority to support local communities through grants to voluntary and community organisations who are delivering projects/services that support our objectives or those in need.

### Background

3. We opened the scheme between 16 July and 15 September 2014 and received five applications for the Abingdon area, requesting a total of £17,700 against a budget of £15,000.
4. Officers have summarised the applications in appendix one, highlighting any concerns and/or points of note in their comments.
5. The main aim of this scheme is to help support communities that have accommodated new housing, to integrate new and existing communities. With this in mind officers have produced a table, attached in appendix two, showing each

parish's percentage of the area committee's overall growth and its percentage increase in size between September 2012 and September 2013.

6. The interim NHB policy attached in appendix three expires on 31 March 2015 and the cabinet member for finance would like the area committees to feed into a review of the scheme before agreeing a new policy. Any feedback the committee gives will be considered as part of that review.

### **Financial implications**

7. In June 2014 the Abingdon area committee was allocated £15,000 of the 2014/15 NHB community grant budget. As per the agreed policy these grants can fund either revenue or capital projects.

### **Legal implications**

8. The council's legal powers to award these grants are contained in Section one of the Localism Act 2011 that gives a general power of competence for local authorities.
9. In June 2014, the cabinet member for grants delegated authority to the four area committees to determine NHB funding applications in their respective areas.

### **Risks**

10. As we usually pay NHB grants when they're awarded and not when the projects complete there's a risk that we can't recover any money given to projects that for whatever reason don't go ahead or need the full amount. There is also a risk that projects we agree to fund don't achieve the desired results.

### **Conclusion**

11. That the committee awards New Homes Bonus grants in line with the approved policy and makes any suggestions for improving it to feed into a review early next year.

### **Background papers**

## APPENDIX ONE – APPLICATION SUMMARIES

Ref no.	Organisation	Scheme	Town / Parish	Total cost £	Amount requested	% of area growth	% of growth in parish
NHBA\1	Music for Autism	Two Music for Autism workshops at Kingfisher school, Abingdon	Abingdon	£2,400	£1,200	74.76	0.43
NHBA\5	Abingdon Lawn Tennis Club	Build a seventh tennis court	Abingdon	£34,500	£9,000	74.76	0.43
NHBA\7	Abingdon town band	Purchase six new band blazers	Abingdon	£1,500	£1,500	74.76	0.43
NHBA\8	Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council	Fun in the park and music in the park (one day event)	Abingdon	£18,700	£2,000	74.76	0.43
NHBA\10	SOFEA	'Get to Work' training programme	Sutton Courtenay	£9,400	£4,000	19.30	1.39
				<b>Total</b>	<b>£17,700</b>		
				<b>Budget available</b>	<b>£15,000</b>		

## New Homes Bonus 2014-15 Abingdon

<b>Music for Autism</b>	<b>Ref</b>	NHBA\1
Two Music for Autism workshops at Kingfisher school, Abingdon		

### Financial

<b>Total project cost</b>	£2,400		
<b>Amount requested</b>	£1,200		
<b>Organisation's contribution</b>	£200	<b>Organisation's latest bank balance</b>	£7,687
<b>Other funding</b> Including a town/parish council:	£1,000 £ unspecified		

**Previous grants received** – 2013/14 NHB £1,200 towards eight workshops around Abingdon.

### Officer (and any consultation) comments

<p><b>General comments/concerns</b></p> <p>These workshops will both take place at Kingfisher school for their pupils so offers little community benefit or integration between new and existing residents.</p> <p>We awarded the organisation a NHB grant (£1,200) last year towards eight workshops for autistic children, dementia patients and their carers at various venues around Abingdon. However according to the information provided by the applicant only Kingfisher School has benefited so far.</p> <p>The school, which appears to be the sole beneficiary, is not contributing towards the cost. The organisation is contributing £200 and they have approached the town council for an undisclosed amount.</p> <p>They recently applied for a £1,000 festival grant but were asked to re-apply closer to the time of the events. If that bid is not successful there is a risk the workshops will not go ahead.</p>
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### Applicant responses

<p><b>Please give some details of your project.</b></p> <p>Two more workshops at the Kingfisher School. 'Music for Autism' and 'Moving Music' provide specially tailored workshops aimed at involving autistic children and their families and dementia patients and their carers in the live music making experience, and also adults with learning difficulties. They offer stimulation and enjoyment, in whichever way is appropriate, in a safe and supportive environment. Musicians perform in special schools, day care centres and small venues. In an initiative led by John Lubbock and Christine Cairns, a quartet of musicians give their time to play for children inhibited from social interaction. Not your ordinary concert-hall atmosphere. The children are encouraged to get up and conduct. Most find the experience incredibly empowering, with a new feeling of control as they conduct with their arms and move in time. The tones and rhythms appear to touch the soul where words can fail, and children lose their inhibitions.</p>
<p><b>Statement about any financial constraints on their bank balance affecting their contribution.</b></p> <p>All our current reserves are committed to future workshop projects. Essentially demand exceeds our ability to fund and arrange all the workshops we are invited to hold.</p>
<p><b>Statement about town or parish council support</b></p>

Town council - we applied in 2014 and didn't hear from them. We will apply again for 2015.

**How does your project deliver best value for money?**

We are the only organisation in Bucks/Beds/Berks/Oxon who runs this type of project. We are very experienced. We do not include any overhead costs.

**Which housing development(s) have affected your community and what impact did they have?**

Recent housing developments in Abingdon (including Springfield Drive, the Old Gaol, the old Renault garage site on Drayton Road , two recently opened residential homes for elderly people – Bridge House by Waitrose and Fleur-de-Lis, Wootton Road) have focussed on increasing provision (social housing, private rental and owner-occupied) for younger families and, at the other end of the age-range, retirement housing. Increasing the numbers in these groups will provide additional demand for support services of many kinds, including those we offer.

**How will this specific project or service help integrate people from the new development and the existing community?**

The planned series of sessions of music experience, involving John Lubbock and his supporting musicians, will enable children and adults with special needs to share together their engagement with music. The sessions will take place in local venues, including Kingfisher School. Integration will be achieved through the encouragement given to school age groups, and to adults with special needs, to become involved. Sessions are emotionally charged; the experience is mutually rewarding for the musicians as they use their skills to make a difference. A far more intense interaction than that experienced with the usual audience. Orchestra of St John's is committed to orchestrating stronger lives through music for autism. These projects make a tremendous difference to the lives of individuals with autism and their families.

**What recent evidence can you provide to show that the local community supports your project?**

Their 73 pupils enthusiastically received our 2014 workshop at Kingfisher. They are keen to arrange two more in 2015. They work with groups of children who need individual and special education. Email from Head Adrienne Martin: "The children and students in the school were able to access a workshop with John and his musicians who were most sensitive to the individual needs of our children, tailoring the programme to suit need and engage the young people. It was a privilege to watch their very special response to the music and it engaged some of our most hard to reach pupils. Music is a vital part of our provision at Kingfisher and elicits a response in our in our children that that few other curricular activities do, engaging them at a deep and drawing responses that we rarely otherwise see. Thank you sincerely for the very special day.

## New Homes Bonus 2014-15 Abingdon

<b>Abingdon Lawn Tennis Club</b>	<b>Ref</b>	NHBA\5
Build a seventh tennis court		

### Financial

<b>Total project cost</b>	£34,500		
<b>Amount requested</b>	£9,000		
<b>Organisation's contribution</b>	£20,500	<b>Organisation's latest bank balance</b>	£40,794
<b>Other funding</b> Including a town/parish council contribution	£5,000 £0		

**Previous grants received** - None

### Officer comments

Benefit to new and existing residents is limited to those wishing to play / watch tennis.

According to Lawn Tennis Association guidance the club has sufficient courts for 360 members (110 more than they currently have), and based on its growth rate should be enough for around seven years. The Vale's (draft) leisure strategy doesn't identify a need for more tennis provision in Abingdon and lists five other sites in the town offering tennis facilities.

They have applied for a CCG grant during this round requesting a total of £14,000 over both schemes. They are contributing £20,500 themselves and will cover the £6,900 in VAT, which leaves just £3,393 once their £10,000 running costs are deducted. They have not identified any other sources of funding.

Since their unsuccessful NHB application last year the club hasn't identified any other sources of funding or updated the quotes so the costs are likely to have increased, which could add to their financial pressures.

### Applicant responses

#### Please give some details of your project.

To provide an extra court to meet growing demand. Membership of the club has increased by over 50% in the last two years (75% over 5 years), and we have a resource limited junior programme at weekends.

#### Statement about any financial constraints on their bank balance affecting their contribution.

Most of the club's income comes through annual subscriptions in April, and expenditure runs at approximately £1200pcm, so the current balances includes approximately £10k to cover running expenses for the remainder of this financial year. If the project goes ahead, there will be a further £6900 for VAT. So the percentage of the project cost inc VAT requested is 21.7% rather than the 26.1% displayed above.

#### Statement about town or parish council support

No. What sources of funding are available?

#### How does your project deliver best value for money?

We need more courts. We have gone for the cheapest and most durable playing surface (porous tarmac, lifetime of 10-15 years), as other desirable surface options, such as synthetic clay or artificial grass, are approximately £15000 per court more expensive and so are outside our projected budget.

#### Which housing development(s) have affected your community and what impact did they have?

The club serves a large area around Abingdon, and we have new members who have moved to new housing in Drayton, Sutton Courtenay, Didcot, and the area around Waitrose. We already have members from older developments such as the brewery area, Drayton Road and the Marina, and expect to see members from the Old Gaol development. The proposed new Drayton Road development is likely to have a large impact on Southern Town Park facilities and saturate our facilities at peak times.

**How will this specific project or service help integrate people from the new development and the existing community?**

Court space limits activities at peak times, and an extra court will ease this. New members are welcomed at Club nights, beginners and returnee course, Saturday morning supervised junior sessions and at junior and adult coaching sessions. There is an active social life revolving around tennis into which new members are rapidly assimilated. We actively encourage beginners of all ages.

**What recent evidence can you provide to show that the local community supports your project?**

The two clearest pieces of evidence of support are the growth in membership (from 137 in 2007 to about 250 at present) and the money contributed by members to the club. Over the past four years, £114,000 of this money has been used in refurbishing the existing courts and clubhouse.

<b>Abingdon town band</b>	<b>Ref</b>	NHBA\7
Purchase six new band blazers		

## Financial

<b>Total project cost</b>	£1,500		
<b>Amount requested</b>	£1,500		
<b>Organisation's contribution</b>	£0	<b>Organisation's latest bank balance</b>	£8,354
<b>Other funding</b> Including a town/parish council contribution of	£0 £0		

**Previous grants received -** Previous community grants totalling £8,750 in six awards between 2003/4 and 2011/12

## Officer comments

While purchasing uniforms doesn't directly integrate or benefit the community, they may benefit indirectly from performances. A professional appearance will also make the band more appealing to event organisers as well as potential band members.

The band isn't contributing to this project and has requested 100 per cent of the costs as they are saving for work to their band hall.

They haven't asked the town council for funding for this project but they have received other funding from them in the past.

## Applicant responses

### Please give some details of your project.

The band needs to have a suitable, matching set of uniform jackets to wear when performing for the public - as our membership changes over time these are reallocated to new players. However, it is inevitable that we will not always be able to fit existing spare jackets to new players and we need to purchase some new ones.

### Statement about any financial constraints on their bank balance affecting their contribution.

Our key financial commitments are for instruments and insurance, to fund practice rooms and new music. In addition we have allocated funds towards works to our band hall which is badly in need of repair

### Statement about town or parish council support

We have not approached the Town council for funding on this occasion for this specific project, however the Town has provided support to us in the past and we will be seeking funding from them for some new music stands

### How does your project deliver best value for money?

We will seek quotes from a number of specialist providers of this type of jacket to ensure that we get the best price possible whilst still maintaining a good match with existing jackets. However, we do need to ensure that the jackets are an exact match for our existing set so this will reduce the number of suppliers we are able to use, and may mean that we have buy from our existing supplier.

### Which housing development(s) have affected your community and what impact did they have?

All new housing development leads to an increase in the population of Abingdon and therefore an



increase in the number of people attending events in the Town where most of our performances are undertaken

**How will this specific project or service help integrate people from the new development and the existing community?**

Most of our performances take place in Abingdon and surrounding villages. Many of these are a core part of special and civic occasions in the Town e.g. bun throwing, proms in the park, remembrance day parades. This type of event brings all of the community together to celebrate or commemorate special occasions; and most are free or low cost to members of the community. This type of event attracts significant numbers of people and help to make Abingdon the vibrant community that it is. It is important to the band to look our best at these and all of our performances and so we need to replenish our stock of jackets so that we have one to fit each band member

**What recent evidence can you provide to show that the local community supports your project?**

The number of people attending events of which we are a core part e.g. proms in the park, remembrance services, historical events, bun throwing and the reception the band receives demonstrates that the people of Abingdon support what we do

## New Homes Bonus 2014-15 Abingdon

<b>Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council</b>	<b>Ref</b>	NHBA\8
Fun in the Park and Music in the Park (one day event)		

### Financial

<b>Total project cost</b>	£18,700		
<b>Amount requested</b>	£2,000		
<b>Organisation's contribution</b>	£6,450 (£3,434 is 'in kind' staff time)	<b>Organisation's reserves at 31 March 2014</b>	£1,344,962
<b>Other funding</b>	£10,250		

**Previous grants received** – community grants: £17,250 between 2003/4 and 2009/10 towards twinning, £5,000 towards the Old Gaol and £1,000 for the museum.

### Officer comments

The town council has applied for funding towards this event through the NHB scheme as town and parish councils currently can't apply to the festival and event scheme.

The event will help to integrate new and existing residents of the town by introducing them to some of the groups and activities it has to offer.

The town council is contributing £3,000 in cash, £3,434 in staff time and will raise the majority of the balance through ticket sales and pitch fees on the day. They have confirmed they will cover any shortfall in funding from their reserves.

The council has substantial reserves, but this includes a significant amount earmarked for the Guildhall improvement project.

### Applicant responses

#### Please give some details of your project.

This is a community festival which brings all the residents of Abingdon-on-Thames and the surrounding hinterland together for a fun day of music, traditional fete stalls, and information about community groups, charities and volunteer work. It is split into two parts (daytime and evening event) so that a charge can be made for the evening entertainment but the daytime can be free so that it is accessible to all in some form. In the evening, the numbers have to be limited for health and safety reasons and the ticket sales help to pay for part of the event costs. It has become increasingly popular over the past five years and is an important part of the town's annual cycle of events, and an event which has been noted to attract a broad cross-section of society.

#### Statement about any financial constraints on their bank balance affecting their contribution.

I am advised by the Treasurer that there are sufficient reserves to provide full cover in the event of poor ticket sales or stall pitch sales. Our stated amount in the bank balance section is the Annual Return Balance. This year just gone has not yet been audited so I am not able to send it. Therefore we have quoted last year for now and will be able to add to this information as soon as audit has been completed. The figure quoted is the balance brought forward not including short term investments (Box 7 on the annual return).

#### Statement about town or parish council support

We are the Town Council. Our contributions are based on £3000 cash and £3432 of estimated staff costs. We are also the organisation that will fund any shortfall due to bad weather or unforeseen events

clashing reducing the popularity of the event.

**How does your project deliver best value for money?**

We have also considered letting an outside company run this event for us but were not satisfied after running due diligence checks that the organisations we have so far spoken to will provide a suitable service for the Town Council. We remain open to discussions with outside bodies on this but will insist on high standards as this event is a flagship event for the town. Our present plans all involve keeping the event management in-house.

**Which housing development(s) have affected your community and what impact did they have?**

Information still to be entered here

**How will this specific project or service help integrate people from the new development and the existing community?**

Providing a single focus summer event for the whole of Abingdon-on-Thames is very important in giving new residents a sense of identity and belonging. Whilst neighbourhood events are also important in helping the physical integration of people who live close to each other, an event which operates at a parish or town level offers the chance to link in to local organisations such as hobby clubs, political organisations, volunteer groups and charities. It also provides the chance to meet residents from all across town who are active in creating events and running campaigns, who help others and who keep the lifeblood of the town generally flowing. It is also an opportunity to learn more about the rich heritage of the town which is a source of great pride to many who live not just in the town but also nearby.

**What recent evidence can you provide to show that the local community supports your project?**

Attendances at the day and evening events have grown steadily in past years even with weather conditions not always being in our favour. Last year the daytime attendance was 6 000+ Tickets for the evening event sold out on the preceding Thursday

## New Homes Bonus 2014-15 Abingdon

SOFEA		Ref	NHBA\10
'Get to Work' training programme			
<b>Financial</b>			
<b>Total project cost</b>	£9,400		
<b>Amount requested</b>	£4,000		
<b>Organisation's contribution</b>	£2,400	<b>Organisation's latest bank balance</b>	£12,698
<b>Other funding</b> Including a town/parish council contribution of	£4,500 £unknown		

**Previous grants received - none**

### Officer comments

<b>General comments/concerns</b>
<p>This project trains mainly young unemployed people (16-18) with the aim of getting them into or back to work. The training includes warehousing and logistics work, business skills, English and maths.</p> <p>Their catchment area is a mix of Vale and SODC residents (50/50 split between the districts based on last year's figures) with the majority of Vale users coming from Abingdon.</p> <p>They have approached Didcot town council for a grant (unspecified amount). If they secure all the other funding listed they would only need £2,500.</p> <p>Officers recommend that, if awarded a grant, we don't release payment until their other funding is confirmed and that the grant reduces depending of the amount secured elsewhere.</p>

### Applicant responses

<b>Please give some details of your project.</b>
<p>SOFEA takes oversupplied food from supermarket distribution centres in the local area and diverts that food to members of the community who need it. In order to do this we have a warehouse based on Trident Business Park, in which those people who are unemployed and seeking work - including the young unemployed - gain work experience while receiving and delivering the food.□□This grant will help to provide a specific service to those on work experience, focusing on working with local employers to address the specific skills required to be successful through their recruitment processes.□□This will assist those on the programme, but it will also assist those employers whoa re currently struggling to find sufficient employees to fill vacancies.</p>
<b>Statement about any financial constraints on their bank balance affecting their contribution.</b>
<p>Although reserves appear high, the project we are applying for is one part of what SOFEA does. These funds are committed to the overheads of the larger organisation including rent, rates and leasing of equipment.</p>
<b>Statement about town or parish council support</b>
<p>We have approached Didcot Town Council, as some of the participants and employers based in Didcot. The Town Council is due to consider our application on the 29th September.</p>
<b>How does your project deliver best value for money?</b>

There is no other training provision of this type in the local area. The benefits of getting people into work are very large, particularly for this client group. In addition to the employability training, the participants will be making a significant contribution to reducing landfill and providing food to those in need as part of the programme.

**Which housing development(s) have affected your community and what impact did they have?**

Great Western Park. The development on Great Western Park has brought more people into the area. While many are prospering, there is a group, particularly of young people aged 16-24 who are not. There is no provision like this in the local area for young people with low or no qualifications to prepare themselves for work in the local economy. There is also no similar provision for older people seeking to get back into the labour market.

**How will this specific project or service help integrate people from the new development and the existing community?**

The focus of the programme is to develop specific employability skills for people disadvantaged in the labour market, so that they understand and can respond to the needs of local employers who are seeking new ways to recruit. While employment levels are high in the local area, there are a significant number of people who are disadvantaged in the labour market, because of mental health issues, physical health problems, personal circumstances or age related. At the same time, large employers are reporting difficulties in recruiting to fill vacancies. Our project aims to address this by preparing people to successfully navigate the recruitment processes and then be able to perform the job successfully. This will help provide more people with the opportunity to play a positive economic role. This is in the context of the charity reducing landfill and providing food to those in need.

**What recent evidence can you provide to show that the local community supports your project?**

Ed Vaizey has indicated his support for the programme. The environment committee of Didcot Town Council has minuted its approval of the programme. SOFEA is working closely with Job Centre Plus, the Early Intervention Service, the Youth Offending Service, MENCAP and others to recruit participants. Asda, Tesco and Rapier are all supporting the programme - Asda are on the Advisory Board, Tesco are supplying food and SOFEA is supplying recruits to Rapier.

## APPENDIX TWO – AREA GROWTH DATA

We took all figures from the council tax breakdown referred to in the 2014/15 NHB grant policy. It shows the band D equivalent increases (or decreases) during the period.

### Abingdon Area

Town/parish	% of total growth in area	Number of new properties	Percentage increase of parish housing
Abingdon	74.76%	61.56	0.43%
Sutton Courtenay	19.30%	15.89	1.39%
Appleford	3.78%	3.11	1.85%
Drayton	2.16%	1.78	0.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>82.33</b>	<b>0.49%</b>

# APPENDIX THREE – CURRENT NHB POLICY

## Interim New Homes Bonus Community Fund Policy and Procedure 2014/15

This scheme seeks to support community initiatives in areas that have accommodated new housing. The council will consider applications from groups for funding towards a variety of community projects aimed at improving local facilities or services, or integrating new communities.

### Budget

The council set a budget of £100,000 for this scheme at its budget setting meeting in February 2014. This budget has been split amongst the area committees according to its areas' proportion of the district's increase in band D equivalent properties (in per cent) between September 2012 and September 2013. This approach directs the funding to the areas where the new homes bonus was generated, and follows on from the last round, which included the figures up to September 2012. The splits are as follows:

Committee	Percentage budget split	New homes bonus community fund budget
Abingdon	15%	£15,000
Abingdon	26%	£26,000
West	12%	£12,000
South east	47%	£47,000

### Funding criteria

The area committees will normally only consider applications for funding in 2014/15 against the following criteria:

- from constituted voluntary community groups and town and parish councils for revenue and/or capital funding
- for projects **with the necessary** planning and/or listed building consents in place
- for projects that will benefit the communities where housing growth **has taken place since September 2012**, unless the scheme is under subscribed when the committees can consider applications for other projects within their areas.

The area committees will not consider applications for retrospective projects or those that other organisations would be expected to fund.

### Application and decision dates

The scheme will open on 16 July, following an advice workshop on 15 July. It will close on 15 September so the area committees can consider any applications at their November meetings.

## **Conditions of grant awards**

The following standard terms and conditions will apply to the successful grants:

- the project must be completed within one year of the area committee awarding the grant and comply with all relevant statutory regulations and consents
- council staff must be allowed to inspect the work being carried out, at any time, in line with any necessary health and safety requirements
- the organisation must acknowledge the council's support in any publicity on the project receiving a grant.

Area committees may also apply specific conditions to the grants they agree to award.

## **Equalities**

The council is committed to promoting equality and diversity and welcomes applications from organisations representing minority or vulnerable groups.

## **Payment of grants**

The council will normally pay the grants as soon as possible following the area committee meetings. The organisation receiving a grant will be required to sign a declaration, confirming it will only spend the money on the project described on the application form and will return any unspent money after the 12 month award period.

## **Monitoring of grants**

Organisations receiving a grant will be asked to provide evidence that they've spent it on the project described on the application form, when it's complete.



# Abingdon area committee



Report of head of economy, leisure and property

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To: Abingdon area committee

DATE: 24 November 2014

## The Abbey project

### Recommendation

That the committee considers the Abbey project, particularly the proposed consultation process, and makes any recommendations to the cabinet members for parks and for economy, leisure and property for them to take into account when considering the consultation process.

### Purpose of report

1. Abbey Meadows is a strategically important riverside site that, with some investment, could significantly improve Abingdon's offer as a visitor destination. Officers carried out research and consultation to identify "*A vision for Abbey Meadows and Abbey Gardens that will build on the area's strength's as public open space and as a leisure and recreation destination.*" Officers have reviewed existing consultation evidence and have consulted a wide range of community organisations in Abingdon to identify ways to improve Abbey Meadows and Abbey Gardens.
2. The purpose of this report is to present the research and consultation work that has been carried out on the Abbey project to date, and present three scenarios that have been identified through reviewing existing consultation evidence and through community consultations on the future development of the Abbey grounds.

## Strategic objectives

- This project will contribute towards the corporate objectives of “building the local economy” and “continue to invest to improve the viability and attractiveness of our towns”, in this case Abingdon.

## Background

- Abbey Meadow is the Vale’s most-visited and busiest park and is one of Abingdon’s most visited attractions, and is particularly busy in the spring and summer months. The site comprises a play park, pitch and putt, tennis court, outdoor swimming pool and a riverside. In 2013, there were 11,420 swimmers at the outdoor pool, and typically visitor numbers range from 6,000 to 12,000 p.a. The total net cost to the public sector to run the pool was £54,000 in 2013 and there were just over 11,000 swimmers, which equates to a net cost to the public sector (after swimmer’s entry charges) of £4.80 per swim.
- The Vale Council maintains Abbey Gardens and Abbey Meadows and spends just under £60,000 every year on routine grounds maintenance for Abbey Gardens and Abbey Meadow.
- The number of people using the facilities is declining over time:

NUMBERS ATTENDING		2011	2012	2013	2014
PITCH AND PUTT		435	284	351	293
CRAZY GOLF	Adults	396	235	236	201
CRAZY GOLF	Juniors	802	598	733	454
TENNIS COURT	(1 HR)	2	11	11	3
TENNIS COURT	(½ HR)	78	53	59	61
<b>Total users</b>		<b>1736</b>	<b>1181</b>	<b>1390</b>	<b>1012</b>

- The Vale Council employs a seasonal attendant at a cost of around £7,000 p.a. and the total income received in 2014/15 was just short of £2,000. Income has been reducing generally overtime as the quality of the facilities has deteriorated.
- Abbey Gardens are designated as a scheduled ancient monument as the Abingdon Abbey, which dates back to the seventh century, once stood on the site.

The layout of the outer wall to the abbey is marked on the ground with stone blocks, and interpretation boards in the gardens give an impression of how the site would have looked when the abbey was there.

9. The gardens comprise of two main areas; the formal garden area with flower beds, herbaceous borders, seating and an Italian walkway; and open parkland with a number of mature trees, an ornamental lake and a folly that stands near a statue of Queen Victoria. The lake is a haven for wildlife and is home to the nationally scarce water vole. The Abbey Gardens offers visitors a quiet retreat where they can relax, enjoy the flower displays, explore the archaeology or take part in informal recreational activities. In July 2013, Abbey Gardens was judged one of the best parks in the country and it was awarded Green Flag status for the fifth year in a row. The Green Flag is a national award that recognises parks that are well maintained and managed with excellent facilities. The gardens first scooped the Green Flag Award in 2009 following a five-year restoration project to transform the site to the way it looked in its Victorian heyday.

## **Development constraints**

10. A number of development constraints associated with the sites have been identified and are included at appendix 1 attached to this report.

## **Review of the existing consultation evidence**

11. Officers have reviewed consultation evidence that has been carried out in Abingdon in recent years, including: annual surveys of the users of Abbey Meadows and Abbey Gardens; The Choose Abingdon consultation work carried out over 2009 to 2012; South Abingdon residents consultation work in support of the South Abingdon residents community-led plan; and visitor surveys carried out by Hidden Britain in 2012. A summary of the existing consultation evidence is provided in appendix 2 attached to this report. In short, previous consultations support investment in Abbey Meadows to make it an even better place for visitors and residents. In particular, teenagers have been identified as a particular user group that would benefit from more activities and free access to sport and leisure facilities; in general, it would be desirable to have additional seating by the river; making more of the riverside location and the views; better playgrounds and equipment, and specifically an adventure playground for children aged 10+; open-air gym; picnic areas; and upgrades to paths to allow circular walks to be made.
12. At an internal officer meeting on 2 October, officers suggested that access and signage were key considerations and that additional play equipment should be focussed on those not presently catered for (i.e. children aged 10+) and highlighted that it should be a priority to get Blue Flag status for Abbey Meadows. Parents have fed back to officers a request that the splash area is fenced for health and safety reasons.

## **Additional consultation – October 2014 to February 2015**

13. Officers worked closely with Hidden Britain, a national charity specialising in community engagement and tourism projects to identify three scenarios to develop the Abbey Grounds.

14. We initially consulted key user groups and stakeholders on the Abbey Gardens/Abbey Meadow site and consulted separately with young people at Fitzharris and Larkmead Schools. In doing so, we funnelled the potential options for the site into three overarching scenarios, and held a community consultation event on 4 November (30 different groups were represented), and asked community groups to identify and rank facilities in order of preference. This has led to the development of scenarios or options for further public consultation.

### **Community group workshop**

15. To promote a wider discussion, a community workshop was held on 4 November in the Guildhall. To reach as many people as possible, but also maintain workable numbers, all the known community groups in Abingdon were invited to send one or two representatives. Around sixty people attended the event, representing 30 different groups. The full list of those attending is shown in appendix 3 attached to this report.

16. Because of the number of people involved, the workshop was structured into specific activities and those of like-minded interest were grouped together to work on them. After explaining the context and constraints, we asked attendees to:

- outline their objectives for the site, and then prioritise those
- to evaluate and rank the existing assets in terms of importance
- to debate/discuss and rank individual facilities within the three scenarios
- to review and comment on all the options produced in the room
- to prioritise the elements and facilities within the scenarios.

### **General findings**

17. The following represent the key trends and issues that were articulated as important, no matter what the potential solution was:

- the site needs to appeal to a wide range of people - not specific niche groups
- however, young people, families and especially older children were cited as key focal groups, as were visitors to Abingdon
- the site needs both formal and informal provision - allowing both specific activities, but also dog walkers and casual walkers
- access is key, both to reach and to get around - currently there are issues for disabled users and children in buggies/prams and in general with path surfaces and layout
- toilet facilities are needed year round, whatever the solution
- signage and awareness raising are vital, so potential users know about it
- parking and access needs to be considered - current consensus suggests on-site provision is inadequate and although further options are available, the routes need to be improved
- the character of the site needs to be maintained, whatever the solution
- there are anxieties about personal safety, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour on the site and how this could impact future development

- viability and ongoing sustainability needs to be considered before any new development - there is little appetite for investment without a robust plan to maintain it going forward.

### **Ranking the existing facilities**

18. The table below shows the combined ranking of current assets from the workshop and the young people's consultation:

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Rank</b>
<b>Splash area</b>	1
<b>Playground</b>	2
<b>Lake &amp; Gardens</b>	3
<b>River bank</b>	4
<b>Paths</b>	5
<b>Outdoor Pool</b>	6
<b>Pitch &amp; Putt</b>	7
<b>Crazy Golf</b>	8
<b>Tennis Courts</b>	9

19. Specific groups clearly have strong opinions on the various assets. However the following general conclusions can be drawn on the value of existing assets

- playground and splash areas are key current assets to retain and improve
- work needs to be included to protect and maintain the natural assets - the lake and Abbey Gardens and the river bank.
- users value the paths and access, but want to see better surfaces and more integrated network
- pool is valued by many, but clearly not at the expense of the preceding assets
- other assets are closely linked, so either need to benefit from extensive renovation or removal/change of use.

20. All users agreed that the overall objectives for the site are:

- extend the seasonal usage of the Abbey Meadows
- preserve and maintain Abbey Gardens
- increase the scope of the user groups accessing the site
- improve the appearance and maintenance of the sites
- expand the scope of activities within Abbey Meadows
- make the sites a key part of Abingdon's leisure offer
- ensure the riverside is a key draw for visitors.

### **SCENARIOS IDENTIFIED THROUGH CONSULTATION**

21. In order to help digest and make sense of the comments and ideas received, we developed three broad scenarios based on differing overarching purposes for the site. These are as follows:

## **A - Focus on structured sport and recreation in Abbey Meadows**

22. This scenario largely retains the current assets and focuses on upgrading and improving them, as well as providing new ideas and elements to complement. The specific ideas *in order of priority* assigned to this vision includes:

- refurbish/upgrade pool and combine into a joint facility with cafe, toilets and include green energy
- open up the pool area to integrate with surrounding assets (splash area etc)
- expand and enhance current play area for younger children
- multi-use games area on tennis court site
- extend and enhance splash area.

## **B - Focus on tourism and leisure in Abbey Meadows**

23. This scenario requires the removal of redundant assets and replacement with those more conducive to a less formal approach, allowing interaction and use at any time by numerous groups. The specific ideas *in order of priority* assigned to this vision includes:

- cafe/restaurant on pool site (remove pool) - to include wi-fi, toilets and visitor information
- expand and enhance current play area for younger children
- adventure play for older children (including zipwires / ropes etc)
- picnic area/bbqs (including shelters)
- bandstand or performance space in Abbey Meadows
- mobile ice rink or seasonal events.

## **C - Focus on informal use of green space in Abbey Meadows**

24. This scenario also requires the removal of redundant assets, but advocates replacement with either re-landscaped natural features or low key facilities that enable informal use of the green space. The specific ideas *in order of priority* assigned to this vision includes:

- improved surface to paths and routes (multi-use enabling circular walks)
- public art (interactive if possible or combined with seating)
- disabled access (landing stage and re-graded access points and paths)
- green gym and adult exercise equipment
- pop-up cafe
- performance or event space in Abbey Meadows
- natural / wildlife areas with interpretation, possibly sensory gardens
- expand and enhance childrens' play areas
- bandstand in Abbey Gardens
- improved interpretation in Abbey Gardens.

25. In relation to all the scenarios, council officers question the commercial viability of continuing to operate pitch and putt, crazy golf and outdoor tennis courts. The table in paragraph six illustrates the very low usage of these facilities. This is something that can be given further consideration once the Vale Council has agreed the overall focus for improvements.

## **Next Steps**

26. Following the consultation outlined above, the following steps are being undertaken:

- itemise the proposed scenarios and obtain indicative costs, and ensure that proposals are commercially viable
- using the results as a guide, the next step is to work with quantity surveyors and other experts (both within and external to the Vale Council) to cost out the options within the three scenarios and recommend which elements are pursued (given the budgetary and other constraints on the site)
- a report will go to cabinet for it to consider and approve the consultation exercise
- consultation with statutory bodies
  - based on the finalised options - further consultation needs to be undertaken with statutory bodies, e.g. planning, Environment Agency, English Heritage, HLF, Sport England etc in order to ensure all options are feasible and possible before releasing to public consultation
  - finalise and develop concept designs for the three scenarios
  - on completion of statutory consultation, the finalised designs and concepts will be produced visually prior to public consultation
  - public consultation.

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

27. Running from January to February 2015 the three design 'scenarios' or options will be released to the public who will be asked to vote on their preferred option. Officers will take a report to scrutiny committee as a consultee, during the consultation phase.

28. The public consultation will be open to all Vale residents, as the Abbey Grounds are used by residents across the Vale. The public consultation will comprise:

- online consultation
- physical voting through a period of display in the Abingdon community shop during one week in February
- paper versions of the consultation will be available and disseminated - how do councillors think we can best reach 'hardest to reach' members of the public?

29. Results, once collated, will be released publicly, most likely in March 2015. The scenario receiving the most votes will be the one taken forward to delivery phase, where practically possible.

## Financial implications

30. Cabinet members have asked officers to submit a discretionary capital growth bid of £0.5 million to allow the capital improvements to be made. This is the working budget that the quantity surveyor and architect are working to. There may be revenue budget consequences depending on the option that is chosen. For instance, we may be able to reduce our revenue costs by some £7,000 if we no longer need a leisure operative in Abbey Meadows collecting fees for the crazy gold and tennis during the summer holidays.
31. The revenue budget implications will be known, in full after the public consultation is complete, and detailed costs have been received. At this time officers will need to review the budget position and either submit revenue growth bids or offer up savings.

## Legal Implications

32. As mentioned below in appendix 1, there are some legal issues that need to be taken into account when deciding which scenario is most suitable, and also which may need to be addressed before a plan is recommended:
- The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) will need to give its approval to any scheme, although its main focus will be on Abbey Gardens and the area around the existing recreational area. These were the main areas that received grant funding and consequently HLF needs to give its consent to any alterations to existing layouts. The recreational area is of lesser importance as HLF provided little direct funding for any improvements to this area and, therefore, any constraints on development of Abbey Meadows would be unlikely.
  - There is a covenant affecting Abbey Meadows (again as mentioned in appendix 1), the benefit of which is held by the Master and Governors of the Hospital of Christ of Abingdon (“the Charity”). This prevents the erection of any building or other structure on Abbey Meadows, other than such buildings or structures as may be ancillary to the intended use of the land as a public open space for recreational purposes. As all the schemes do not contemplate any building other than for ancillary purposes, this covenant should not be breached. However, it is recommended that any development plans should be communicated to the charity to ensure that no problems arise at a later date.
  - There is a water pipe owned by Thames Water on the Abbey Meadows site, which runs around the edges of the site from the river. There are the usual covenants not to build over this or plant any trees within a certain distance of the pipe. There should not be an issue as long as the location of this pipe is taken into account in any development. Thames Water will have a plan of the location, which can be used for consultation on any development of the waterside area
  - The existing car parking area must continue to be used as a car park.
33. In conclusion, as long as the above matters are taken into account in terms of the extent of the proposed development, and consultations with the appropriate bodies are done at any early stage, the legal risks of development at Abbey Meadows as outlined in this report should be minimal.



## **Risks**

34. The main risk is over deliverability of the improvements, and specifically whether the improvements will be deliverable within time and within budget. We have engaged professionals (quantity surveyor and architect) to minimise these risks.

## **Conclusion**

35. The committee is invited to:

- note the research to date, and the three scenarios with associated facilities that have been ranked in order of preference by 30 different community groups and 60 young people at Fitzharrys and Larkmead Schools
- make any recommendations to the cabinet members for parks and for economy, leisure and property for them to take into account when considering the consultation process
- advise officers on the best ways of reaching the hardest to reach members of the community to ensure that the voting process is as democratic as possible.

## Appendix 1

### Development constraints

36. A number of development constraints associated with the sites have been identified and are included at Appendix 2. , including the following:

- **conservation area:** Abbey Meadows and Abbey Gardens are in a conservation area, which protects the special architectural and historic interests of the area
- **heritage assets:** most of Abbey Garden has scheduled ancient monument status as Abingdon Abbey once stood on the site
- **floodzone** – the development site floods regularly and is categorised as either floodzone 2 or 3, and this will impact on the type and location of development.
- **landfilled gravel extraction site** - Abbey Meadow previously formed part of a gravel extraction site, which has been landfilled, but parts of the site suffer from subsidence. The areas that are worst affected include the tennis courts and pitch and putt. This does not preclude any new development, but further ground investigations at the specific locations for any new development will need to be undertaken to determine what, if any, mitigation measures are needed.
- **restrictive covenants** – Abbey Meadows is subject to a restrictive covenant that prevents the erection of any building or structure other than such buildings that are ancillary to the intended use of the land as public open space for recreational purposes.
- **Thames Water** own a water pipe on the Abbey Meadows site, which runs around the edges of the site from the river. There are covenants not to build over this or plant any trees within a certain distance of the pipe. There should not be an issue as long as the location of this pipe is taken into account in any development. Thames Water will have a plan of the location which can be used for consultation on any development of the waterside area
- **grant funding conditions** – the Vale Council received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2002, and the areas funded by the grant were extensive, including Abbey Gardens and the children’s play area. We would need to consult HLF on proposed changes, and it is unlikely to give its consent to any material alterations to the areas that were improved in 2002.
- **ecology** - ecological issues may arise depending on the proximity to the river
- **moorings** - a moorings policy is currently being reviewed by the Vale Council, which will consider the type of enforcement actions to take. This is likely to include charging for overnight moorings, which are free at present, in order to pay for enforcement.
- **funding** – officers have submitted a discretionary capital growth bid to improve the area. It may also be possible to use private sector capital, and to apply for grants from other bodies, depending on what is proposed.
- **Sport England** – it will need to be consulted about the loss of any sporting facility.

## **Appendix 2 – Feedback from previous Abingdon-based consultations**

### **Feedback from users of Abingdon Abbey Meadow and Abbey Gardens**

The parks team gather feedback from the visitors to the park each year. Generally satisfaction with Abbey Gardens is very high, with visitors providing very positive feedback that they are beautiful, quiet gardens with space to picnic and relax. Feedback from Abbey Meadows is less favourable, and in recent years comments have provided quite a high level of dissatisfaction with public toilets, the tennis courts and crazy golf which are now in a poor state of repair.

### **Choose Abingdon Partnership public consultation 2009-2012**

Choose Abingdon Partnership (CHAP) undertook large-scale public consultation exercises to identify Abingdon's strengths and weaknesses and to identify project ideas that would help enhance town centre vitality and improve linkages between the town and the river.

Specifically, CHAP Strategy and Action Plan for 2012 onwards identified the following priorities:

- Lack of 'family' things to do within Abingdon
- Lack of music & entertainment
- Lack of a single major visitor attraction
- Low footfall in town centre
- Poor evening 'offer'
- Poor access and signage from the centre of town

CHAP Strategy and Action Plan for 2012 onwards identified the following projects:

- Hydro scheme with visitor centre (the hydro scheme is likely to proceed, but plans for the visitor centre have been put on hold)
- Need to assess and improve leisure offer at Abbey Meadows
- Larger redevelopment of Abbey Meadow as leisure offering
- Assess and improve leisure offer far side of river
- Summer Festival (one or two week package and main event)
- Riverside Tourist Information point for summer season
- Signage and interpretation linking river to town

The need to assess and improve the leisure offer at Abbey Meadows was given a very high weighting in the CHAP Strategy.

### **“The Abingdon Visitor Survey, 2012” by Hidden Britain**

Hidden Britain undertook over 200 face to face visitors in Abingdon at a range of different locations within the town and at the riverside between May and July 2012. They found that over half of visitors were aged over 56 years. This highlights a need to attract younger visitors to the town.

The report highlights Abingdon's USP as its setting on the river and its historic character are key features within its visitor economy, offer and experience and should be placed front and centre within any promotional or developmental strategy taken forward. However there is the need to implement a clear and consistent strategy and

implementation model to direct visitor and tourism development. New developments, infrastructure and facilities should be prioritised to complement and improve the Abingdon visitor offer.

There were some basic areas where Abingdon did not do so well with the following requiring specific attention:

- Toilets in very poor condition and seasonal opening
- High relative proportion of vacant shops in key areas
- Signage pointing in wrong direction, and better signage between the river and town
- Questionable location of map boards.
- Literature available on the town was confused and duplicated itself
- Lack of Sunday or evening opening for many of the retail outlets

The public toilets issue should be addressed as a key priority, these facilities are key to the visitor experience, and a poor experience is likely to be a memorable one even if the rest of the visit has been positive. In essence the details do matter “Sense of destination – the extent to which it has met a visitor’s needs and made a strong and positive impression – is therefore vital to secure repeat trade and sustainable economic development.” In tandem with toilets is the upkeep of the public realm. Abingdon scored very highly for the physical appearance of the town, its buildings, green space and street furniture, and this should be maintained going forward as it again it is an important detail that impacts on the visitor experience.

Abingdon is a little lower than anticipated on what could be termed visitor attractions and activities with only 17 business or organisations providing these services. Given the nature of the destination, encouragement or development of sites and activities of visitor interest would be advantageous in the future. However Abingdon does perform very well once we add in the interpretive activities that make the most of its natural and historical features (the 20 promoted routes and the various events in particular). But this can always be expanded and built upon and work should be undertaken to ensure these activities are well publicised and the content not lost (or in the case of the promoted routes made available clearly to visitors either online in centrally organised place or visibly in situ).

A number of ‘themes’ emerged from the research in terms of comments supplied by visitors as to what improvements they would like to see in Abingdon. These included:-

1. Retail offer – improve the range and quality of shopping
2. Improving signage – particularly pedestrian signage and improvements between the town and the river
3. Traffic and transport was a key problem for many people, almost exclusively relating to the congestion and traffic flow caused by the one-way system.
4. Improvements to the river were mentioned many times, with specific requests for more improved facilities by the river (food, toilets and seating) as well as improvements to the riverside path and better signage and promotion of the lock and riverside walks.

South Abingdon residents developed a questionnaire, in the context of their Community-led plan which was not taken forward to completion, but several hundred responses were received when the questionnaire was issued in 2011/12. These responses that related to the Abbey Meadows / Abbey Gardens area were summarised by the shared corporate projects officer as:-

- More activities for teenagers to do
- Seating by the river
- Improving the views
- Better playgrounds and equipment, and specifically a 5-12 year old adventure playground
- An open-air gym
- Picnic areas
- Circular walks
- Basketball Court and keep-fit classes or facilities
- More seating by the river
- Develop riverside park (make better use of space & area: nature walks, play park & keep fit circuit.)

#### **Internal workshop with Vale Council staff**

An internal workshop was held on 2 October 2014, and officers from most of the service areas attended. Some of the ideas and suggestions for improvements to the Abbey grounds included:-

- better facilities for older children and teenagers
- Improved seating, picnic areas and bins
- Café / restaurant
- BBQ pits
- Improved signage between the river and the town
- Bandstand or amphitheatre – better events space
- Circular walking routes
- Poetry trail
- Longer summer season for pool and water feature
- Arts centre

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Community Groups attending the 4 Nov event**

Abbey Brass  
Abbey Close resident  
ABC Tots  
Abingdon artists  
Abingdon Artists & Ox Art Groups  
Abingdon Carbon Cutters  
Abingdon Flower Club  
Abingdon Hydro  
Abingdon Museum  
Abingdon Naturalist Society  
Abingdon Town Band  
Abingdon Town Council  
Air Cadets  
Bid Team  
Carbon Cutters  
Choose Abingdon Partnership  
Christ's Hospital of Abingdon  
Drama Group  
Friends of Abingdon  
Friends of Abingdon Outdoor Pool  
NCT Abingdon  
Oxfordshire Arts  
Pasiol Play  
Preston Road Community Centre  
Silver Band  
South Abingdon Resident Plan  
St Helens Baby & toddler group  
VWHDC  
Womens Institute