

Date: 5 July 2007

TO: All Members of the Executive
FOR ATTENDANCE

TO: All Other Members of the Council
FOR INFORMATION

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** to be held in the **GUILDHALL, ABINGDON** on **Friday, 13th July, 2007** at **2.30 pm.**

Yours faithfully

Terry Stock
Chief Executive

Members are reminded of the provisions contained in Part 2 of the Local Code of Conduct, and Standing Order 34 regarding the declaration of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

A G E N D A

Open to the Public including the Press

A large print version of this agenda is available. Any background papers referred to may be inspected by prior arrangement. Contact Steve Culliford, Democratic Services Officer on telephone number (01235) 540307; e-mail: steve.culliford@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

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

Map and Vision

(Page 9)

A map showing the location of the venue for this meeting, together with a copy the Council Vision is attached.

STANDING ITEMS

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive apologies for absence.

2. **Minutes**

To adopt and sign as a correct record the public minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 1 June 2007, (previously circulated).

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of Personal or Personal and Prejudicial Interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

In accordance with Part 2 of the Local Code of Conduct and the provisions of Standing Order 34, any Member with a personal interest must disclose the existence and nature of that interest to the meeting prior to the matter being debated. Where that personal interest is also a prejudicial interest, then the Member must withdraw from the room in which the meeting is being held and not seek improperly to influence any decision about the matter unless he/she has obtained a dispensation from the Standards Committee.

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 and Petitions from the Public Under Standing Order 32**

Any statements and/or petitions from the public under Standing Order 32 will be made or presented at the meeting.

6. **Questions from the Public Under Standing Order 32**

Any questions from members of the public under Standing Order 32 will be asked at the meeting.

7. **Referral under the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules or the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules**

8. Referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Other Committees

Scrutiny Committee – 14 June 2007
Corporate Governance – Fourth Quarter 2006/07

In considering the above report, the Scrutiny Committee

RESOLVED

that the Executive be advised:-

- (1) that the Scrutiny Committee is concerned at the number of inaccuracies contained in the report;*
- (2) to consider including the issue of affordable housing and rural exception sites on the agenda for the Joint County/District Parish Liaison Meeting to be held in the autumn.*

9. Financial Monitoring

Members are requested to consider any significant budget variances and any requests for virement or permanent budget adjustment.

KEY DECISIONS

10. Forward Plan

(Pages 10 - 11)

To receive the Forward Plan containing Executive decisions to be taken from July to October 2007.

Recommendation

that the Forward Plan be received.

OTHER MATTERS

11. Provision of Schools in Grove

(Wards Affected: Grove)

At it's meeting on 20 June 2007 the County Council's Cabinet considered three options to meet future demand for secondary school places in Wantage/Grove and the surrounding villages. The options were:

- (a) Two schools each with 1,250 pupils;
- (b) One school on two sites with 2,500 pupils; and,
- (c) A new 600 place 11-16 school for Grove and retain King Alfred's as existing.

The Cabinet agreed to proceed with Option C and provide a new 600 place 11-16 school for Grove and retain King Alfred's Sports and Community College under the existing arrangement and authorised Officers to complete negotiations with developers to secure a sufficient and appropriate site to meet the needs of the selected option and any possible future expansion and report back on the potential implications in terms of timeline and cost of the preferred option. The County Council's Scrutiny Committee has called this item in for consideration. The Executive may wish to comment on this option.

12. Ridgeway Shared Services Organisation

(Pages 12 - 42)

To receive and consider report 31/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

In establishing a shared financial service between Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council, known as the Ridgeway Shared Services Organisation (RSSO), an informal committee was created.

The report will explain that following legal advice it has been concluded that both Councils should establish a formal Joint Committee

This report seeks authority to agree a formal joint committee between the two councils, to formalise both the joint working and the way any future decisions are made. The report also makes recommendation that appointments to the Joint Committee should be made by the Executive (if not already done so by recent appointments to outside bodies).

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Bishop, Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer), (01235 540332), email steve.bishop@whitehorsedc.co.uk.

Recommendations

Members are recommended to:-

- (a) approve that the Council and South Oxfordshire District Council create a Joint Committee responsible for the provision of financial services to both Councils;*
- (b) delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to approve any minor drafting changes to the Joint Committee agreement and constitution attached to this report;*
- (c) authorise the Agreement between the two constituent Councils to be completed;*
- (d) that appointments to the Joint Committee are made by the Executive.*

13. Treasury Management – Review of Activities in 2006/07

(Pages 43 - 45)

To receive and consider report 32/07 of the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The Council's Treasury Management Policy requires a report to be made on Treasury Management performance in the previous financial year. It is also required by the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice as embodying sound financial management.

The purpose of this report is to detail the Council's cash investment performance in the financial year 2006/07 and to raise any treasury management issues.

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Lawrence, Head of Asset Management, telephone 01235 540321, e-mail address: steve.lawrence@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Recommendations

- (a) *to note the return on cash invested during 2006/07 and the balances of the funds at 31 March 2007; and*
- (b) *to note the prospects for the return on cash investments in 2007/08.*

14. 2006/07 Annual Outturn Monitoring

(Pages 46 - 52)

To receive and consider report 33/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The report details, in accordance with the corporate planning framework the outturn position for 2006/07, subject to audit.

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Bishop, Strategic Director (& Chief Finance Officer), (01235 540332).

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- (a) *Note the overall outturn position of the Council as well as the outturn of individual service areas and cost centres; and,*
- (b) *Take into account the impact of the outturn position in the Integrated Service and Financial Planning process when setting the 2007/08 Revised Budget and 2008/09 Original Budget.*

15. Service Area Annual Reports 2006/07

Copies of Service Area Annual Reports have been circulated to Members of the Executive and all Members of Scrutiny Committee. Members of the Executive are asked to report back to this meeting on any significant issues for the service areas for which they are responsible. A template has been provided.

16. Corporate Equalities Action Plan 2007/08

(Pages 53 - 66)

To receive and consider report 34/07 of the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

- a) As a major employer and public service delivery body, the Council is committed to meeting the needs of all its employees, residents and customers. To help the Council realise this commitment in a proactive, proportionate and co-ordinated way, a Corporate Equalities Action Plan (CEAP) has been drafted for 2007/8.
- b) The Plan brings together all the Council's key areas of work for the current year with regards to the promotion of equality and diversity. It will help us to meet our statutory duties and achieve our BVPI targets for 2007/08.
- c) The Plan incorporates all the actions from the Council's recently updated Race Equality Scheme.
- d) Progress against the actions will be reported on in October 2007 and April 2008. The CEAP will be revised by the end of the calendar year in order to include the action plans from the forthcoming Disability and Gender Equality Schemes (these are both due to be finalised and approved by the end of December).
- e) The revised CEAP will cover 2008/09 – 2010/11 and will be subject to approval by the Council's Executive.
- f) This report summarises the contents of the CEAP and makes a recommendation for its adoption by the Council's Executive.
- g) The contact officers for this report are Katharine Doherty (Equalities Officer, 01235 520202 katharine.doherty@whitehosedc.gov.uk) and Tim Sadler (Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer, 01235 520202 tim.sadler@whitehosedc.gov.uk).

Recommendation

That the Executive adopts the Corporate Equalities Action Plan 2007/08.

17. Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy - Environmental Implementation

(Pages 67 - 70)

(Wards Affected: Abingdon Abbey and Barton)

To receive and consider report 35/07 of the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to invite Members to consider committing funding from the capital budget to enhance the highway works in Stert Street and Broad Street, Abingdon being carried out by Oxfordshire County Council as part of the town centre Phase 2 implementation of the Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy.

The Contact Officers for this report is Grant Audley-Miller, Section Head (Environmental Planning & Conservation) on (01235) 540343.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (a) *Commit £72,500 from the Capital Budget towards enhancing the ABITS highway works in Stert Street and Broad Street, Abingdon during the current financial year.*
- (b) *Suspend Contract Standing Orders in relation to procurement for the works in Stert Street and Broad Street, Abingdon.*
- (c) *Enter into formal contracts with Oxfordshire County Council and Isis Accord for the works in Stert Street and Bath Street, Abingdon.*
- (d) *Agree that further commitments to contribute to the environmental enhancement of Phase 2 of the ABITS strategy await the outcome of the review of the proposed highway works.*
- (e) *Ask the County Council to confirm that in the event of High street works not being implemented that the funds would be earmarked for highway schemes in and around Abingdon.*
- (f) *Welcome the intention to continue a Members Working Group for ABITS open to the public but seek assurances from the County Council on how this will be achieved.*

18. Local Development Framework - Core Strategy

At the meeting of the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group on 25 June 2007, Members considered the timetable and responsibility for signing off the Core Strategy document as part of the Local Development Framework. The first stage is to produce an Issues and Options Report containing policies or preferred approaches. There was a short timescale to produce this (this had to be published by November), the Advisory Group recommends that approval of the detailed wording should be delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy) in consultation with the Executive Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Shadow Member for Planning. The Advisory Group will be given the opportunity to comment on and agree the substance of the document prior to final drafting.

Recommendation

that authority be delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy), in consultation with the Executive Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Shadow Member for Planning, to publish the Issues and Options Report on the Core Strategy and other information for publication, including Vale Views.

19. Exclusion of the Public, Including the Press

The Chair to move that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the remainder of the meeting to prevent the disclosure to them of exempt information, as defined in Section 100(l) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, to the Act when the following items are considered:

- Item 20 Minutes
(Category 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).)
- Item 21 Old Gaol, Abingdon
(Category 2 - Information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual.)
(Category 3.)
- Item 23 Concessionary Bus Pass Scheme
(Category 3.)
- Item 24 Property Matters
(Category 3.)

EXEMPT INFORMATION UNDER SECTION 100A(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

STANDING ITEMS

20. **Minutes**

To adopt and sign as a correct record the exempt minutes of the Executive meeting held on 1 June 2007 (previously circulated).

KEY DECISIONS

21. **Old Gaol, Abingdon - Shortlisting of Development Partners**

(Wards Affected: Abingdon Abbey and Barton)

To receive and consider report 30/07 of the Chief Executive.

OTHER MATTERS

22. **Concessionary Bus Pass Scheme**

(Pages 71 - 79)

To receive and consider report 36/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

23. **Property Matters**

To consider any property matters.



OUR VISION AND AIMS

Our Vision is to build and safeguard a fair, open and compassionate community

The Vale of White Horse District Council aims to:

Strengthen local democracy and public involvement through access to information, consultation, and devolution of power so that everyone can take part in our community and contribute to the decisions which affect our lives

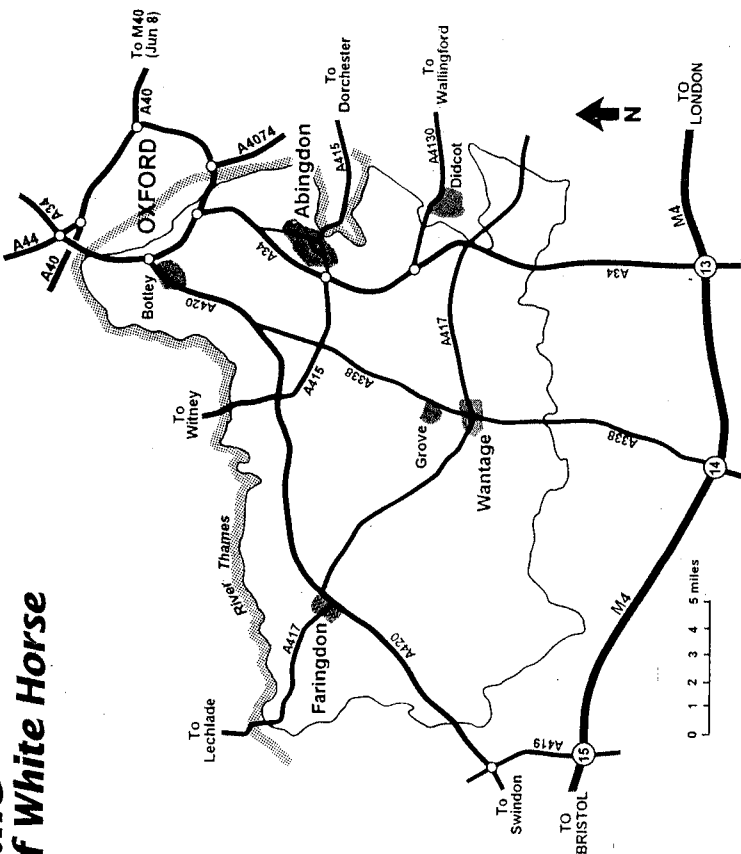
Create a safer community and improve the quality of life among Vale residents

Encourage a strong and sustainable economy which benefits all who live in, work in or visit the Vale

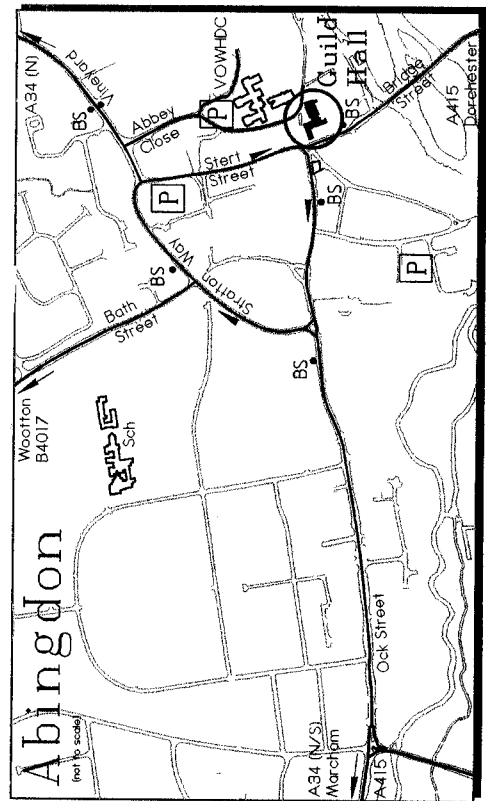
Help disadvantaged groups and individuals within the Vale to realise their full potential

Provide and support high quality public services which are effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of people within the Vale

Protect and improve our built and natural environment



Abingdon, Guildhall



KEY : BS = Bus Stop

LOCATION MAP



VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN

CONTAINING EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 1 JULY 2007 - 31 OCTOBER 2007

This Forward Plan sets out a schedule of Key Decisions likely to be taken over the four-month period shown above. It is a rolling plan, subject to change monthly. A Key Decision is a decision of the Executive which is likely to result in: the Council incurring significant expenditure or making significant savings; a high proportion of the community being affected; or an impact on two or more agendas or services. Executive decisions can be taken by the Executive as a whole, a committee of the Executive, an individual Member of the Executive, an Officer of the Council, an Area Committee, or through joint arrangements with other bodies or another Council.

Where the decision is to be taken by the Executive, this comprises the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jerry Patterson, and the following elected Members: Councillors Mary de Vere, Tony de Vere, Richard Farrell, Jenny Hannaby, Bob Johnston and Angela Lawrence.

Representations can be made on any of the following issues before a decision is taken. Representations must be made to the relevant contact officer shown below by 5pm on the working day preceding the date of the decision.

Decision	Key decision?	Decision maker	Date first published on Forward Plan	Consultees	Consultation method	Contact Officer	Documents used
Financial Monitoring	No	Executive 13th Jul 2007	This item will appear on the Executive agendas each month	Executive Portfolio Holders	Consultation with budget holders	Steve Bishop, Strategic Director and Section 151 Officer Tel. (01235) 540332 steve.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk	2006/07 Budget
Old Gaol, Abingdon - Shortlisting of Development Partners	No	Executive 13th Jul 2007	July 2007	Councillor Jerry Patterson	Submissions to be considered by Old Gaol Advisory Group	Andrew Morgan Tel. 01235 520202 E-mail: andrew.morgan@whitehorsedc.gov.uk	Submissions from potential development partners

Decision	Key decision?	Decision maker	Date first published	Consultees	Consultation method	Contact	Documents used
Ridgeway Shared Service Partnership - Creation of a Joint Committee	No	Executive 13th Jul 2007	June 2007	Councillor Mary de Vere and Councillor Tony de Vere	Ridgeway Shared Service Partnership Board Members Counsel's Opinion Vale and South Oxfordshire District Council's Legal Services	Steve Bishop, Strategic Director and Section 151 Officer Tel. 01235 540332 E-mail: steve.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk	Counsel's Opinion Best Practice Checklist for Partnership Agreements
Housing Nominations Policy Review	No	Executive 13th Jul 2007	March 2007	Councillor Mary de Vere	Consult Executive Portfolio Holder then Executive to make recommendations for any policy changes to Council	Paul Staines Tel. (01235) 547621 E-mail: paul.staines@whitehorsedc.gov.uk	Existing Housing Nominations Policy

Handwritten signature
15 JUNE 2007

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR
TO THE EXECUTIVE
13 JULY 2007

Ridgeway Shared Services Organisation

1.0 **Introduction and Report Summary**

- 1.1 In establishing a shared financial service between Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council, known as the Ridgeway Shared Services Organisation (RSSO), an informal committee was created.
- 1.2 The report will explain that following legal advice it has been concluded that both Councils should establish a formal Joint Committee
- 1.3 This report seeks authority to agree a formal joint committee between the two councils, to formalise both the joint working and the way any future decisions are made. The report also makes recommendation that appointments to the Joint Committee should be made by the Executive (if not already done so by recent appointments to outside bodies).
- 1.4 The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Bishop, Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer), (01235 540332), email steve.bishop@whitehorsedc.co.uk.

2.0 **Recommendations**

Members are recommended to:-

- (a) *approve that the Council and South Oxfordshire District Council create a Joint Committee responsible for the provision of financial services to both Councils;*
- (b) *delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to approve any minor drafting changes to the Joint Committee agreement and constitution attached to this report;*
- (c) *authorise the Agreement between the two constituent Councils to be completed;*
- (d) *that appointments to the Joint Committee are made by the Executive.*

3.0 **Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies**

This report is consistent with the Financial Strategy Medium Term Financial Plan and Procurement Strategy

4.0 **Background**

- 4.1 At present, the provision of shared financial services is overseen by a Strategic Board comprising two Councillors from each Council advised by Officers. This is underpinned by two written Statements of Understanding setting out a framework within which the Ridgeway Shared Services Organisation operates. It also sets out the objectives of the joint working. One Statement covers internal audit whilst the other Statement covers the remaining financial services.
- 4.2 The present arrangement works but relies on the Councillors and Officers exercising individual Delegated Authorities. A formal contractual document is not yet in place. Work on the legal Agreement has been suspended pending receipt of advice on the best way to structure arrangements
- 4.3 The absence of a formal agreement has made it difficult to authorise Officers from one Council to act on behalf of the other. Matters have been working well but, as in all commercial matters, a formal contractual document is necessary to clearly set out the framework for the joint working.

5.0 **Legal Advice**

- 5.1 Counsel's advice is that the Council should create a formal Joint Committee with SODC for the following reasons:
- 5.2 Legislation provides for this as the way to jointly discharge local authority functions to be exercised by two or more local authorities. Section 20 of the Local Government Act 2000, which is headed "Joint Exercise of Functions", provides that the Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for permitting joint working arrangements under Section 101(5) of the 1972 Act.
- 5.3 If the functions are the responsibility of the Executive then arrangements to discharge those functions by a Joint Committee can be made by the Executive – Regulation 11(3)(a) of the Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions (England) Regulations 2000.
- 5.4 The Financial Services functions that are being carried out by the RSSO are the responsibility of the Executive
- 5.5 The Executive is advised to appoint the number of Members and agree their term of office.
- 5.6 The legislative authority for the Council to proceed in the manner set out in this report is also confirmed in the Constitution. Members are referred to Article 11 headed "Joint Arrangements".

6.0 **Governance**

- 6.1 The Joint Committee Strategic Board will consist of four councillors, two formally nominated from the executive of each council. The chairmanship of the Strategic Board will rotate every two years between the councils with the Executive Portfolio Holder for Finance from South Oxfordshire being Chairman for the first two years.
- 6.2 An Operations Board made up of relevant officers from the two councils will support the Strategic Board; again, the Chairmanship of the Operations Board will rotate every two years between the respective councils with the strategic director

responsible for finance for South Oxfordshire being chairman for the first two years. For clarity, the first two years term will cease on the date of the annual Council meeting in May 2008.

6.3 The agreement covers the need for confidentiality between the two partner organisations, both now and where legally relevant for five years after any agreement is terminated. This protects both authorities' needs. If there are any disputes between the two partner authorities that escalate and cannot be resolved then the respective chief executives and leaders will be invited to assist in finding a resolution.

6.4 The agreement is due to come into effect on 1 October 2007 after both parties are satisfied that the partnership and work flows are in 'steady state'. This will then require that meetings are open to the public in the same way as those of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership and take place on no less than a quarterly basis.

7.0 **Financial Implications**

7.1 The creation of the Joint Committee does not lead to any additional financial obligations beyond those already agreed for the RSSO. The administrative support for the Strategic Board and the Operations Board is shared between the authorities on an equal basis.

STEVE BISHOP
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER)

Background Papers: None.

DATED

2007

VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL

and

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGREEMENT

**RIDGEWAY SHARED SERVICES
ORGANISATION**

CONTENTS

1. Definitions and Interpretation
2. Partner Authorities' Commitment to the provision of Joint Financial Services
3. Partner Authorities' Commitment to the Ridgeway Shared Services Partnership
4. Cost of the RSSP
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6. Operations Board
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17. Survival of Terms
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20. Third Party Rights
21. Costs
22. Governing Law

THIS AGREEMENT is made on the _____ day of

Two Thousand and Seven

BETWEEN:-

- (1) **VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL** of Abbey House Abbey Close Abingdon OX14 3JE (“Vale DC”); and
- (2) **SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** of Benson Lane Crowmarsh Gifford Wallingford OX10 8QS (“South Oxfordshire DC”)
(together “the Partner Authorities”)

WHEREAS:

- (A) An informal non-binding partnership between the Partner Authorities to jointly provide financial services for their authorities has been operating up to the date of this Agreement under a Statement of Understanding
- (B) The Partner Authorities now wish to formalise their joint working arrangements and have agreed to enter into this Agreement and to establish a joint committee (“the Strategic Board”) with effect from the 1st day of October 2007, in accordance with their powers under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2001 made under Section 20 of the Local Government Act 2000 and all other enabling legislation.

- (C) The Strategic Board will be responsible for the strategic, financial and operational functions agreed by the Partner Authorities for the Ridgeway Shared Services Partnership as more particularly set out in schedule 2 to this Agreement

NOW IT IS AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

1 DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

In this Agreement unless the context otherwise requires the following expressions shall have the following meanings:-

“**Agreement**” means this agreement between the Partner Authorities;

“**Best Value**” is as defined in Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999;

“**Commencement Date**” means the 1st day of October 2007

“**Board Members**” means the members appointed by the Partner Authorities in accordance with the RSSP Constitution to represent them on the Strategic Board;

“**FSA**” means an Agreement for the provision of financial services made the 15th day of May 2006 between Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council (1) Capita Business Services Limited (2) and Capita Group Plc (3)

“**Partner Authorities**” mean the parties to this Agreement and shall include any successor in title to a Partner Authority’s statutory functions;

"RSSP Constitution" means the Constitution of the Ridgeway Shared Services Partnership Strategic Board as attached in Schedule 1 to this Agreement;

"Services" means the services more particularly set out in Clause 2 hereof;

"Strategic Board" means the group of members appointed by the Partner Authorities in accordance with the terms of the RSSP Constitution, working together to carry out the strategic, financial and operational functions described in Schedule 2 to this Agreement;

"VAT" means value added tax;

2. PARTNER AUTHORITIES' COMMITMENT TO THE PROVISION OF JOINT FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Partners have agreed to work jointly for their shared financial services needs which include but are not limited to:-

- (i) Revenues and Benefits, Benefits Counter Fraud, Accountancy, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable and Associated IT Services;
- (ii) The financial services that are being provided pursuant to an agreement dated 15 May 2006 (the "FSA") reached by a joint procurement between the Partners and which appoints Capita Business Services Limited ("Capita") as the same are more particularly set out in Schedule 5 hereof

3 PARTNER AUTHORITIES' COMMITMENT TO THE RIDGEWAY SHARED SERVICES PARTNERSHIP

3.1 The Partner Authorities declare and agree that they have each sought and obtained the requisite authority to enter into this Agreement and the mutual commitments set out below.

- 3.2 The Partner Authorities agree that they shall co-operate in good faith with each other at all times and that they shall act at all times in a manner compatible with the objectives and key principles of the RSSP as set out set out Schedule 3 and Schedule 4 respectively and in accordance with the RSSP Constitution and the terms of this Agreement.
- 3.3 To achieve these objectives the Partner Authorities will create the structure, any relevant codes of practice or protocols to support the creation of a shared service organisation.
- 3.4 The Partner Authorities wish to operate the management and monitoring of the FSA through the creation of the Ridgeway Shared Services Team (“RSST”), which shall comprise all relevant staff from each Partner Authority allocated to the management and monitoring of the FSA and/or the provision of either of the Partner Authorities financial service needs for compliance with outcomes and against the key performance indicators within the FSA.
- 3.5 The Partner Authorities wish to be able to make use of the maximum flexibility of service delivery through the RSSP.

4 COST OF THE RSSP

- 4.1 The Partner Authorities hereby commit to the joint responsibility for the cost of the provision of the Joint Financial Services by the RSSP. For the avoidance of doubt:-
- 4.1.1 Each Partner Authority will contribute 50% of the cost of the provision of the services.

- 4.1.2 Each Partner Authority will make its contribution notwithstanding there may be included an Industrial Relations claim against the Partner Authority in relation to an officer of the RSSP.
- 4.1.3 Each Partner Authority shall be solely responsible for all claims demands and actions prior to any of services being incorporated into the RSSP.
- 4.2 Each Partner Authority will issue to the other Partner Authority within one calendar month of the close down of its accounts notice in writing of a statement of reconciliation as to the amounts due and owing by each Partner Authority which said notice shall be issued no later than the 31st July in each year of this Agreement.
- 4.3 The RSSP Strategic Board will formally agree settlement of statements of reconciliation and any amounts due and owing by each Partner Authority at the earliest convenient meeting after the 31st July in each year of this agreement
- 4.4 If there is a dispute in respect of the settlement of any amounts due or owing by each Partner Authority the matter will be referred to a special meeting of the Strategic Board with Leaders and Chief Executives of the Partner Authorities or their duly authorized deputies for resolution.

5 STRATEGIC BOARD

- 5.1 The Partners have agreed to the creation of a governance structure for the RSSP. The Strategic Board will act as the overarching body with the function of reviewing and monitoring the RSSP.
- 5.2 The Strategic Board will be made up of 2 Councillors from each Partner Authority and will be advised by the Strategic Directors for Finance of each Partner Authority. The Strategic Board will be chaired by a Board Member, alternating on a biennial basis between the Partners. The Strategic Board may request the assistance of the Chief Executive Officers of both Partner Authorities in the event that a dispute has been escalated. The Strategic Board shall meet at least quarterly. The Strategic Board may request assistance from time to time of any other Senior Managers of either Partner Authority when considering further joint working opportunities.
- 5.3 The Strategic Board will appoint the Operations Board which shall comprise the Strategic Directors for Finance of each Partner Authority and the Joint Head of Financial Services of both Partner Authorities who will report to the Strategic Board, and such other appointees as they deem necessary for the joint working.
- 5.4 The Strategic Board will make recommendations to the Partner Authorities regarding the structure of the RSSP. All appointments to the RSSP will be made by the relevant officers of each of the Partner Authorities. The Strategic Board will be involved in the appointment of the Joint Head of Finance of both Partner Authorities (including any replacements or substitutes therefore).

5.5 All Board members will act within their delegated authority and for decisions required outside of their respective delegated powers will revert to the relevant Partner Authority's executives and/or cabinet.

6. OPERATIONS BOARD

6.1 The Operations Board ("OB") will support the work of the Strategic Board and will comprise the Strategic Directors for Finance of each Partner Authority the joint Head of Financial Services of both Partner Authorities and such other appointees as they deem necessary for the joint working.

6.2 From the date of this Agreement until the date of the annual general meeting of each Partner Authority in the year 2008 the Chairman of the OB shall be the Strategic Director for Finance at South Oxfordshire DC and thereafter shall rotate automatically between the Strategic Director for Finance at each Partner Authority every 2 years.

6.3 The role of the OB shall be to:

6.3.1 prepare reports and recommendations for consideration by the Strategic Board, including setting of strategic direction and the framework within which projects are developed and managed;

6.3.2 Set up and oversee other officer working groups on a "task and finish" basis as necessary to deliver the objectives determining the terms of reference and required outputs of such groups and ensuring these are delivered to timescale. Any such working groups will be accountable to the Strategic Board through the OB;

6.3.3 direct, monitor and control the performance of the RSSP and the FSA

6.3.4 advise the Strategic Board on progress in delivering the objectives of the RSSP;

7 GENERAL INDEMNITIES

If a Partner Authority shall:

fail substantively or persistently without good and sufficient cause to comply with any of the provisions of this Agreement **AND** if in consequence thereof the other Partner Authority shall suffer any loss, damage, claim, liability or expense;

THEN such Partner Authority shall indemnify and hold harmless the other Partner Authority who shall have suffered as aforesaid against all such actual and provable direct loss as shall be or have been as a direct consequence caused to and suffered by that Partner Authority.

8 INSURANCE

The Partner Authorities shall ensure that they maintain in force throughout the term of this Agreement and for such period as may be prudent after its termination for whatever reason (where necessary) adequate insurance cover with a reputable insurer to meet all potential liabilities under the terms of this Agreement including insurance to cover the provision of professional services, where applicable

9 **REPORTING AND CONSULTATION**

9.1 The Partner Authorities shall comply with their reporting and consultation obligations as determined by the Strategic Board from time to time or as otherwise specified and any supporting documentation.

9.2 The Strategic Board shall be responsible for setting the standards and regularity of such reporting and consultation (both financial and otherwise) and the Partner Authorities shall use all reasonable endeavours to comply with such standards.

10 **CONFIDENTIALITY**

10.1 Subject to this Clause 10.1 each Partner Authority shall use its reasonable endeavours to keep in strict confidence, and shall bind all its employees and agents to keep in strict confidence, all and any commercial and technical information or confidential information relating to the RSSP or the affairs of or concerning any other Partner Authority in whatever form acquired by it (whether directly or indirectly) in consequence of this Agreement. No Partner Authority shall use or disclose any such confidential information other than for the purposes of the RSSP or as expressly permitted by this Agreement. This restriction shall not apply to:

10.1.1 information which at the time of disclosure is generally available to the public;

10.1.2 information which the receiving Partner Authority can show was in its possession prior to disclosure and which was not acquired directly or indirectly from any other Partner Authority; and

10.1.3 Information which is required to be disclosed by law or any lawful authority.

10.2 The confidentiality obligations set out in Clause 10.1 shall survive the termination of this Agreement until such time as the information ceases to be confidential or the Partner Authority as defined at the beginning of this agreement as appropriate consents to its disclosure or for a period of five years (whichever is the earliest).

11 **DATA PROTECTION**

The parties acknowledge their obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and agree and declare that they will at all times when acting in connection with the RSSP have due regard to those obligations including, without limitation, the obligation to comply with the Data Protection Principles set out in the Data Protection Act 1998.

12 **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

The Partner Authorities acknowledge that they may be required to disclose information relating to the RSSP or to this Agreement to a person or to each other to comply with obligations under the Freedom of Information

Act 2000 and hereby agree to consult with each other in the event that any or all of them receives such a request, prior to making any disclosure.

13 DISPUTES

13.1 In the event of any dispute or difference arising between the Partner Authorities as to the construction or application of this Agreement, or as to any issue arising under it, the matter shall be referred in the first instance to a joint meeting of the RSSP Strategic Board, the Leaders of both Partner Authorities together with the Chief Executives of both Partner Authorities who shall take all reasonable steps that shall lie within their power to conciliate and resolve such dispute or difference whether by negotiation, mediation or other appropriate form of dispute resolution procedure.

13.2 The parties shall only have recourse to any legal or arbitration proceedings in the event of the failure of such bona fide endeavours to resolve the dispute or difference in question by alternative methods of dispute resolution

14 DURATION AND TERMINATION

This Agreement shall come into effect on the Commencement Date and shall continue in force unless terminated by unanimous decision of the existing Partner Authorities PROVIDING ALWAYS that the Agreement shall not terminate unless and until such contracts as have been entered into in connection with the RSSP or as a result of this Agreement, have been or can

be terminated without incurring any avoidable costs on the part of any of the Partner Authorities.

15 GENERAL

15.1 Nothing herein contained or implied shall prejudice or affect the Partner Authorities' rights powers duties and obligations in the exercise of their functions as local authorities or in any other capacity and all rights, powers, discretion, duties and obligations of the Partner Authorities under all public and private statutes bylaws orders and regulations and statutory regulations and statutory instruments may at all times be fully and effectually exercised as if the Partner Authorities were not parties to this Agreement and as if this Agreement had not been made.

15.2 The Partner Authorities shall not represent themselves as being any other Partner Authority nor an agent, partner, contractor or employee of any other Partner Authority and shall not hold themselves out as such nor as having any power or authority to incur any obligation of any nature express or implied on behalf of any other Partner Authority and nothing in this Agreement shall operate so as to constitute any one Partner Authority an agent, partner contractor or employee of any other.

15.3 This Agreement is personal to the Partner Authorities and no Partner Authority shall assign or transfer or purport to assign or transfer to any other person any of its rights or sub-contract any of its obligations under this Agreement save in the event of a statutory reorganisation.

15.4 Nothing in this Agreement shall constitute or be deemed to constitute a legal partnership under the Partnership Act 1890 between the Partner Authorities or any of them and neither of the Partner Authorities shall have the authority or power (nor represent themselves as having such authority or power) to contract in the name of or to undertake any liability or obligation on behalf of or to pledge the credit of the other Partner Authority.

15.5 The RSSP shall have no legal existence apart from that of the individual Partner Authorities and the mutual commitments between them under this Agreement and the RSSP Constitution.

15.6 Any notice required or permitted to be given by a Partner Authority to the other Partner Authority under this Agreement shall be in writing and addressed to the Partner Authority concerned.

16 **FORCE MAJEURE**

The parties shall have no liability to each other in respect of any event excusing performance beyond the control of the Partner Authorities including without limitation events occurring by reason of acts of God, war, or legislative changes.

17 **SURVIVAL OF TERMS**

No term shall survive expiry or termination of this Agreement unless expressly provided or where it comprises an obligation which has not yet been complied with.

18 WAIVER

The failure by any Partner Authority to enforce at any time or for any period any one or more of the terms or conditions of this Agreement shall not be a waiver of them or of the right at any time subsequently to enforce all terms and conditions of this Agreement.

19 SEVERANCE

If any term or provision of this Agreement shall in whole or in part be held to any extent to be illegal or unenforceable under any enactment or rule of law then that term or provision or part shall to that extent be deemed not to form part of this Agreement and the enforceability of the remainder of this Agreement shall not be affected.

20 THIRD PARTY RIGHTS

A person who is not a party to this Agreement has no rights under the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 to enforce any terms of this Agreement.

21 COSTS

Each of the Partner Authorities shall pay any costs and expenses incurred by it in the preparation of this Agreement.

22 GOVERNING LAW

The validity, construction and performance of this Agreement shall be governed by English law.

IN WITNESS whereof the Parties hereto have executed this Agreement the day and year first above written as a Deed.

SCHEDULES

- SCHEDULE 1 CONSTITUTION OF THE RIDGEWAY SHARED SERVICES ORGANISATION JOINT COMMITTEE
- SCHEDULE 2 RIDGEWAY SHARED SERVICES ORGANISATION JOINT COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS
- SCHEDULE 3 RIDGEWAY SHARED SERVICES ORGANISATION VISION AND OBJECTIVES
- SCHEDULE 4 RIDGEWAY SHARED SERVICES ORGANISATION KEY PRINCIPLES
- SCHEDULE 5 SERVICES PROVIDED BY CAPITA

All defined terms as set out in the Agreement shall have the same meanings in this Constitution.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC BOARD

2.1 The purpose of the Strategic Board is to carry out the strategic, financial and operational functions agreed by the Partner Authorities of the Ridgeway Shared Services Partnership (“the RSSP”), as more particularly described in Schedule 2 hereof and, in doing so to:

2.1.1 discharge, on behalf of the Partner Authorities, such of their respective statutory responsibilities to provide a range of financial services as are delegated to the Strategic Board from time to time, so far as this accords with the agreed objectives and policies of the RSSP; and

2.1.2 provide a framework and mechanisms to enable joint working between the Partner Authorities on financial services.

3. COMPOSITION OF THE STRATEGIC BOARD

3.1 The Strategic Board shall comprise four Members, being two Councillors appointed by each Partner Authority (“the Board Members”). Each Partner Authority shall ensure that each of its appointed Board Members is a member of its Executive or Cabinet.

3.2 Partner Authorities may change their appointed Board Members at any time provided that they shall notify each other in writing such change taking effect upon the recipient Authority’s receipt of such notification.

4. ROLE OF BOARD MEMBERS

4.1 The role of each Board Member will be to:

4.1.1 attend (where possible) all meetings of the RSS Strategic Board, vote on items of business and make a positive contribution to the Board;

4.1.2 demonstrate commitment to and act as champion for the Financial Services Vision and Objectives and Key Principles as set out in Schedules 3 and 4 hereof

4.1.3 act as ambassador for the Strategic Board and ensure that his or her Partner Authority supports the RSSP and abides by the RSSP Key Principles ;

- 4.1.4 act as advocate for the Strategic Board in seeking any necessary approvals from his or her Partner Authority;
- 4.1.5 act generally as champion to encourage further joint working between the Partner Authorities.
- 4.2 A Board Member shall not represent himself as having any power or authority to incur any obligation of any nature express or implied on behalf of any other Board Member or the RSSP.

5. ADMINISTRATION OF THE BOARD

- 5.1 The Partner Authorities shall host the Board meetings of the RSSP alternately.
- 5.2 The Partner Authority hosting the meeting shall be responsible for the administration of the Joint Committee which shall include:
 - 5.2.1 organisation of Strategic Board meeting and venue;
 - 5.2.2 distribution of papers and reports;
 - 5.2.3 the minuting of the Strategic Board meeting and ensuring that all legal requirements relating to the meeting is met;
 - 5.2.4 all other administrative support as shall be required from time to time for the operation of the Strategic Board.
- 5.3 The post of Chairman of the Board shall be held by a Member and shall rotate automatically between the Partner Authorities every two years in accordance with the terms set out in the Agreement. The first such Chairman shall be a Board Member for South Oxfordshire DC who shall undertake the responsibilities of the Chairman with effect from the 1 October 2007 until the date of the Annual General Meeting in 2008 of each Partner Authority on which date the chair of the Strategic Board will pass to a Board Member of the Vale of White Horse DC.
- 5.4 In the absence of the Chairman, for any reason, the responsibilities of the Chairman will be discharged by the Vice-Chairman, which post shall be held by a Board Member for the other Partner Authority.

6. MEETINGS

- 6.1 The Strategic Board shall meet on a quarterly/monthly basis. The venue for meetings shall be determined by the Strategic Board. One meeting in each year shall be specified as the Annual General Meeting.
- 6.2 A printed copy of the summons and agenda for each meeting and (to include, except for the initial meeting, the minutes of the previous

meeting), shall be despatched in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972, at least five clear days before such meeting to each Board Member. The summons shall contain notice of all business, except urgent business, which is in the ordinary course or by direction of the Chairman or the Strategic Director or either or both Partner Authorities required to be brought before the Strategic Board. Public notice shall also be given of each meeting at least 5 clear days in advance thereof, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 6.3 If within ten minutes of the appointed time for the commencement of the meeting a quorum (that is one Voting Board Member from each Partner Authority) is not present, the meeting shall be dissolved. Any business not disposed of shall be considered at the next meeting.
- 6.4 The Chairman may invite any person to attend a meeting of the Strategic Board for the purpose of making a presentation, or participating in discussion, on any item relevant to the Strategic Board's functions, where that person is able to provide a professional or commercial viewpoint, which the Chairman considers, would be of assistance to the Strategic Board.
- 6.5 Meetings of the Strategic Board will be open to the public and press except during consideration of items containing confidential or exempt information within the meaning of Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 6.6 Minutes of the Strategic Board shall (subject to the provisions of paragraph 6.5 above) be available to the public and press as though they were minutes of a meeting of either Partner Authority.

7. SPECIAL MEETINGS

The Chairman may summon a Special Meeting of the Strategic Board at any time. A Special Meeting shall be summoned on the requisition in writing of any two Voting Members, which requisition shall be delivered to the Executive Officer of both Authorities and shall specify the business to be considered at the Special Meeting.

8. DECISION-MAKING

- 8.1 Only Board Members or their duly authorised deputies shall be designated as voting Members ("Voting Members") and shall be entitled to one vote on items of business considered by the Strategic Board.
- 8.2 Subject to Paragraph 8.4 below, every question shall be determined by the voices of those Voting Members present, provided that if there is a

Voting Member who indicates dissent to this procedure then a vote by a show of hands shall take place. A simple majority shall be required.

- 8.3 In the event of there being an equal number of votes for and against a particular proposition the matter will be deferred for consideration and resolution by a special meeting of the Strategic Board with Leaders and Chief Executives of the Partner authorities or their duly authorised deputies in attendance and once resolved the matter will be reported to the next meeting of the RSSP Strategic Board.

8.4 Notification of Strategic Board Decisions

The decisions of the Strategic Board will be notified to Partner Authorities within 5 working days of the relevant Strategic Board meeting.

8.5 Call In

The decisions of the Strategic Board shall be deemed to be the decisions of the Partner Authorities and shall be subject to the call-in procedure of each Partner Authority.

- 8.6 Each Partner Authority shall publish Strategic Board decisions within two days of their receipt and call-in requests must be made to the administration of the individual Partner Authorities within 5 days of publication. Partner Authorities must notify the other Partner Authority immediately of any call-in.

9. DELEGATION TO SUB-COMMITTEES AND OFFICERS

The Strategic Board may appoint working groups of Members and officers to consider specific matters referred for report back to the Strategic Board.

10. CONDUCT AND EXPENSES OF STRATEGIC BOARD MEMBERS

- 10.1 All Strategic Board Members shall observe at all times the provisions of the code of conduct adopted by their Partner Authority under Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000 or any existing code of conduct adopted by their Partner Authorities or, where none exists, the National Code of Local Government Conduct.
- 10.2 Each Partner Authority shall be responsible for meeting any expenses incurred by any Strategic Board Member appointed by them, as a result of their attendance at Strategic Board meetings.

11. LIABILITIES OF STRATEGIC BOARD MEMBERS.

- 11.1 Strategic Board Members have the same responsibilities and liabilities as those which apply when sitting on other committees and bodies as appointed representative on behalf of their Partner Authorities.
- 11.2 Where contractual arrangements are authorised by the Strategic Board, any liabilities arising under those arrangements will rest with the constituent Partner Authorities which are parties to those contractual arrangements.
- 11.3 Indemnification for any liabilities, which do arise, is a matter between individual Strategic Board Members and their Partner Authority.

12. OBJECTIONS TO PROPOSALS BEFORE THE STRATEGIC BOARD

- 12.1 In the event that a Partner Authority has a fundamental objection to a proposal being placed before the Strategic Board, the relevant Strategic Board Member must notify the Chairman of the Strategic Board in advance or at the time of the meeting.
- 12.2 If notice of such objection is given, the Strategic Board must defer consideration of the proposal for 21 days during which time the Chief Executive of the Partner Authority concerned must prepare a further analysis in writing of the reasons why his Authority objects to the proposal in question.
- 12.3 A special meeting of the Strategic Board with Leaders and Chief Executives of the Partner Authorities, or their duly authorised deputies, in attendance will be urgently convened to try to resolve the matter.

13. TERMINATION OF STRATEGIC BOARD

The Strategic Board will cease to exist on the expiry or other termination of the Agreement.

SCHEDULE 2

The responsibilities of the RSSO Joint Committee are to :

STRATEGIC

- (a) annually review and revise as necessary the objectives of the RSSP for consideration and approval by the Partner Authorities.
- (b) develop proposals for the future management of financial services that achieve the objectives.

FINANCIAL

- (c) prepare, commit and oversee expenditure of pooled budgets to ensure the prioritised jointly operated financial services are delivered.
- (d) agree a draft budget by 31 December for the forthcoming financial year to include the proposed contribution from each RSSO partner, for consideration.
- (e) make recommendations to the Partner Authorities to request resources as required to meet the core objectives.
- (f) annually review the costs of administering the RSSP and determine the contributions of the partners ensuring that the distribution is equitable.

OPERATIONAL

- (g) take decisions as required on the matters presented, voting on such matters if any voting member present requests it. Voting is by a show of hands.
- (h) continually seek more efficient and cost effective ways of delivering the objectives including opportunities for joint procurement and shared services.
- (i) issue press releases and carry out publicity as the Committee deems necessary for the furtherance of the objectives.

SCHEDULE 3

VISION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RSSP

Vision

Our Vision is to deliver Council services to a higher standard and to greater cost effectiveness through collaboration and joint working.

Objectives

The objectives of the joint working are to :

1. Enhance the integration of services across the Partners' organisations and their stakeholders and external partners.
2. Improve service delivery and efficiency.
3. Achieve delivery of the Partner's common and developing harmonised policies and service objectives.
4. Achieve a larger single team which provides higher standards of service and greater resilience with motivated staff than that which the Partner Authorities can individually provide.

SCHEDULE 4

Principles

1. We are equal partners in the agreement.
2. We will work together to provide a range of financial services to both councils, including ;
 - Revenues and Benefits
 - Benefits Counter Fraud
 - Accountancy
 - Internal Audit
 - Accounts Payable
 - Accounts Receivable
3. A joint team will manage the Capita contract and fulfil our obligations under that contract. The services provided by Capita are set out in Schedule 5.
4. The joint team will directly provide other financial services to both councils.
5. Staff are employed by one or other of the councils. So far as practicable staff responsible for a particular function will be employed by the same council.
6. Functions will be arranged so that we employ roughly equal numbers of staff.
7. The costs of the joint team are split equally unless agreed otherwise.
8. The agreement will last for at least the length of the contract with Capita.

SCHEDULE 5

Services provided by Capita

1. The collection (including recovery of arrears) of council tax and national non-domestic rates.
2. The administration and payment of council tax benefits and housing benefits.
3. The administration of the non-public cashiering service (for SODC only)
4. The administration of accounts payable and receivable.
5. The provision of a payroll service and system administration.
6. The provision of an integrated financial information system (general ledger, accounts payable and receivable) and system administration.
7. The collection of car park excess charges (for SODC).
8. The administration of a bus pass scheme (for Vale).
9. The customer contacts for these services (excluding contacts in the local service points at Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage).

The Services shall comprise the provision and administration of a Revenues and Benefits Service (excluding counter-fraud), the collection (including recovery of arrears) of Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates, the administration and payment of Council Tax Benefits and Housing Benefits, the administration of the non-public cashiering service (for SODC), administration of accounts payable and receivable, provision of a payroll service and system administration, provision of an integrated financial information system (general ledger, accounts payable and receivable) and system administration, collection of car park excess charges (for SODC), administration of a bus pass scheme (for Vale), customer contact services (for SODC) for the Services excluding the delivery of customer contact local service points (LSPs) at Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage.

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR
TO THE EXECUTIVE
13 JULY 2007

Treasury Management – Review of Activities in 2006/07

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

- 1.1 The Council's Treasury Management Policy requires a report to be made on Treasury Management performance in the previous financial year. It is also required by the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice as embodying sound financial management.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to detail the Council's cash investment performance in the financial year 2006/07 and to raise any treasury management issues.
- 1.3 The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Lawrence, Head of Asset Management, telephone 01235 540321. email address: steve.lawrence@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

2.0 Recommendations

- (a) *to note the return on cash invested during 2006/07 and the balances of the funds at 31 March 2007; and,*
- (b) *to note the prospects for the return on cash investments in 2007/08*

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

This report relates to the Council's Vision Statement objectives A and B and complies with the Council's Treasury Management Policy, approved by Service Delivery Policy Overview Committee on 27 November 2001 and Council on 19 December 2001, and follows the procedures recommended in the revised CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, 2002.

4.0 Background and Supporting Information

- 4.1 This report outlines the performance over the last financial year of those funds managed in-house and those managed by the Authority's appointed investment manager (*Investec Asset Management*). The review of the Fund Manager's performance is provided by the Council's investment adviser – *Butlers*. In addition it gives Members a general overview of the current situation in the investment market.

5.0 In-house Investment Performance

- 5.1 At the beginning of 2006/07 cash held in-house totalled £5.78m. During the year the maximum invested at any time was £19.27m and the total cash that passed through the account (turnover) was £164.5m. In-house investment income in the year amounted to £576,492 on an average balance of £11.77m thus achieving an average return of 4.9%. At the end of March 2006 the net position was a balance of £4.4m

- 5.2 It was necessary to borrow small amounts for a total of 26 days during the financial year 2006/07 in order to cover temporary deficits. The maximum outstanding at any time was £2.7m and the average rate of interest paid was 5.12% (annual equivalent). The borrowing limit set by the annual Treasury Management Strategy is £5m.
- 5.3 It is difficult to set targets for this sort of operation which aims to maximise returns within the constraints of security and flexibility. Some measure of achievement can be obtained by looking at the rates achieved compared to a benchmark. *Butlers* use the widely published 7-day LIBID rate (London Interbank bid rate – the rate at which a bank is willing to borrow from other banks).

Return on cash investments	in-house team	LIBID rate
Fin. year 2006/07	4.89%	4.97%
Previous years:		
Fin. year 2005/06	4.83%	4.61%
Fin. year 2004/05	4.75%	4.58%

6.0 **External Fund Managers**

- 6.1 The performance in 2006/07 is set out below showing the fund manager's return before payment of fees.

Sum Managed at 1.4.2006 £	Sum Managed at 31.3.2007 £	Increase in value at 31.3.2007 (gross) £
15,754,585	16,379,557	653,986

- 6.2 The result for *Investec* shown above equates to a gross rate of return (before fees) of 4.15% (3.97% after fees).

Performance over 3 years (net of fees)

Rate of return	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Investec Asset Management	4.71%	4.50%	3.97%
7 day LIBID	4.58%	4.61%	4.97%
LIBID exceeded/(short) by:	0.13%	(0.11%)	(1.00%)
L A funds average	4.68%	4.59%	4.29%
Average exceeded/(short) by:	0.03%	(0.09%)	(0.32%)

- 6.3 The Council's investment advisers (*Butlers*) have reported on the state of the market and the performance of the fund manager (*Investec*). They comment that there has been no let up in the difficult market conditions that have plagued fund managers for the last two financial years and that all managers have struggled to raise their performances during the latter part of 2006/07.

6.4 Rising interest rates have put downward pressure on bond and CD (certificates of deposit) values and the economic uncertainties have led to fund managers keeping a low profile. *Investec* are better placed for a satisfactory performance this year but it will require more stability in interest rates. It will then be up to the fund manager to take the right decisions.

7.0 **Investment Income Review**

7.1 The actual investment income achieved in 2006/07 fell short of the revised budget forecast by £63,822 (£1.23m to £1.294m). This shortfall represents 4.9% of the budget and was largely due to an over-optimistic view of the returns that would be made both in house and by the fund manager in the final quarter of the year.

7.2 The investment income calculation for the 2007/08 budget was based on economic predictions in January 2007 which were that interest rates were expected to peak at 5.25% or possibly 5.5% in the first half of 2007 and then fall back slowly. In the event the base rate has risen to 5.5% and the market is expecting further rises to 6% before the end of the year with a possibility of 6.25%. The in-house return should be a little better than expected but the Fund Manager has not yet revised the forecast return used.

8.0 **Report Conclusion and Summary**

8.1 The return on cash invested was lower than expected in 2006/07. Rising interest rates mean that the return in 2007/08 should be better than expected providing that the Council's Fund Manager does not have another poor year.

8.2 There are no treasury management issues to raise at the moment.

STEPHEN LAWRENCE
HEAD OF ASSET MANAGEMENT

STEVEN BISHOP
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (& CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER)

Background Papers:

Treasury Management Policy agreed by Council 19 December 2001
Treasury Management Strategy agreed by the Executive March 2006
Fund manager review published by Butlers 26 April 2007
Economic and Financial Outlook published by Butlers 28 June 2007

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER)
TO THE EXECUTIVE
13 JULY 2007

2006/07 Annual Outturn Monitoring

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

- 1.1 The report details, in accordance with the corporate planning framework the outturn position for 2006/07, subject to audit.
- 1.2 The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Bishop, Strategic Director (& Chief Finance Officer), (01235 540332).

2.0 Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- (a) *Note the overall outturn position of the Council as well as the outturn of individual service areas and cost centres; and,*
- (b) *Take into account the impact of the outturn position in the Integrated Service and Financial Planning process when setting the 2007/08 Revised Budget and 2008/09 Original Budget.*

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

- (a) This report summarises the financial consequences of the Council's entire activities, which support the Council's Vision.
- (b) The report does not conflict with any Council Strategies.
- (c) The report complies with existing policies on financial management.

4.0 Financial Monitoring

- 4.1 The overall Council outturn position is summarised in section 5 below.
- 4.2 Appendix A sets out the revenue outturn position for service areas and their component cost centres across the normal subjective headings.
- 4.3 Major variances over £10,000 are explained in Appendix B (to follow).
- 4.4 Appendix C shows the capital programme outturn and major variances are explained.

5 Overall Council Outturn Position

- 5.1 The appendices cover the 'normal' service area cost centres that comprise the Council's Revenue Account. As such they do not include corporate revenue items such as property

income, investment income and Contingency. As a result the appendices do not reflect the true 'bottom line' revenue outturn position. The following table provides the overall projected outturn, which is a net under-spend of £765k (6.8% of Revised Budget Requirement), or if LABGI is excluded (see 6.2 below) is a net over-spend of £23k, or 0.2% of Revised Budget Requirement:

	Outturn £'000	Variance from Revised Budget ¹ £'000
Service areas outturn (as appendices)	14,111	(91)
Local Authority Business Growth Incentive	(788)	(788)
Contingency	624	(225)
Property Income	(1,853)	8
Investment Income	(1,229)	65
Reduced net use of Earmarked Funds	(755)	192
Other (Govt grants, prior year adj, debt prov'n)	(6,596)	74
To be met from Council Tax	<u>(4,634)</u>	<u>-</u>
Council Outturn (increase in balances)	<u>(1,120)</u>	<u>(765)</u> ²

Notes

- ¹ Underspends and overachieved income are negative; overspends and underachieved income are positive
- ² The outturn is finalised, subject to external audit

5.2 Appendix C shows the capital programme for 2006/07 and the out-turn for the year (subject to audit). Capital expenditure is funded by specific grants and contributions with the balance from the Council's Capital Receipts reserve. Many projects are complex and extend over more than one year. Any over or under spend in one year is often just a matter of timing. The provisional out-turn was considered by the Executive on 1 June when they agreed capital budget that could be carried forward i.e. under spend in 2006/07 that will be spent in 2007/08. Explanations are given for major variances.

6 Explanation of the Revenue Outturn

6.1 Service Area variances

Some cost centres ended the year over-spent, whilst others under-spent. The total of all the cost centre variances is a net £316k under-spend (Appendix A). The larger variances, each individually over £10k in value are explained in Appendix B).

The four main reasons for the larger under-spend variances, as listed in Appendix B can be summarised as being:

- Underspend of £293k on Housing Benefit payments
- Underspend of £250k on Housing Provision due to the capitalisation of social housing support. The Revised Revenue Budget included £250k provision for these activities, which would be funded from developers' contributions. However, it is more appropriate to capitalise the works, making the revenue budget superfluous.

- Over-achievement of income of £75k on Development Control. This was due to an unexpectedly large number of major applications being received in March, after the revised budget had been agreed.
- Underspend of £64k on ICT due to lower actual salaries.

6.2 Local Authority Business Growth Incentive

In March 2007 the Council was notified that it had been awarded £788k in Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) by Central Government (with a further £338k held back pending court cases regarding the LABGI award criteria). The LABGI scheme recognises any substantial increases in a local authority's business rates tax base, by the return to the local authority of a proportion of the additional business rates thereby generated.

Although the Council has positively and successfully promoted sustainable economic development across the district for many years, the Council has not undertaken any specific economic development initiatives targeted at attracting businesses into the area, nor initiatives designed to bring derelict business properties back into use. The Council had therefore not predicted any sizable increase in the local tax base.

Furthermore, when the Council contacted Central Government in February 2007 as part of the budget-setting process to enquire about a possible LABGI award, we were advised not to forecast any predicted LABGI grant.

For these reasons, no budgetary provision was made for the LABGI award, which therefore caused a substantial under-spend against Revised Budget at outturn. This money has been credited to general fund balances.

6.3 Contingency

The £225k outturn underspend variance on Contingency has two causes. Firstly, the £100k un-earmarked provision for unexpected costs was mostly unspent. Secondly, the Executive approved £149k of revenue budget carry forwards which were not known at revised budget setting time. These are specific project-related budgets which were unspent in 2006/07 and carried forward into 2007/08 via Contingency.

6.4 Property Income

The under-achievement of the corporate property income budget was £8k, or 0.4% down on the revised budget. This is within acceptable tolerances.

6.5 Investment Income

The under-achievement of the corporate investment income budget was £65k, or 4.9% down on the revised budget. The treasury fund managers had a disappointing year, especially the final quarter. All fund managers suffered due to interest rate and bond yield uncertainty. It should be remembered that the fund manager's brief is to maximise returns over three years and he is confident about an upswing in performance in the year ahead. The in-house team also fell short, largely due to over-optimistic forecasting.

6.6 Earmarked Funds and Reserves

The Council has a number of earmarked funds and reserves, each designated for a particular purpose. Each year we plan how much money needs to be returned to certain funds in order to build them up for their intended use, whilst others are used in the year according to their specific purpose. For 2006/07 we planned that the net usage of such funds would significantly exceed the contributions into the funds.

At the year-end review of earmarked funds it became apparent that the Contingency Fund needed to be replenished in order to meet the cost of projects carried forward for completion in 2007/08 as well as building an adequate reserve to meet as yet unforeseen costs. The balance on the Superannuation Fund has also been maintained in order to offset the impact of the next triennial actuarial review. As planned, a number of obsolete reserves have been closed down and the money returned to general fund balances.

6.7 Overall Outturn and Use of Balances

This has been a good year for the Council's finances. The unexpected receipt of LABGI grant has provided a welcome boost to general fund balances which provides some much-needed 'headroom' to face the financial pressures which will emerge in the 2008 budget-setting process.

Disregarding LABGI, the Council over-spent by £23k, which is only 0.2% variance - a remarkably close outturn. However, this masks a number of significant variances which are a concern. Budget holders need to work more closely with their accountants to ensure budget monitoring is much more effective in 2007/08.

STEVE BISHOP
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (& CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER)

Background Papers: Agresso download; Budget Holder variance explanations

Revenue Outturn 2006/07

Appendix 1

	Original Budget 2006/07	Original Budget (new structure) 2006/07	Latest Estimate Yellow Pages 21 Feb 2007 2006/07	Final Budget After Service Investment Changes 2006/07	Actuals 2006/07	Variance £ From Final Budget 2006/07	Variance % 2006/07
Service Costs							
Audit & ICT	125,330						
Building Control	490,880						
Chief Exec's	159,820						
Contact Services	6,020						
Democratic & Legal	1,015,900						
Environmental Health	4,495,520						
Estates	618,070						
Finance	3,156,550						
Housing & Comm Safety	1,653,770						
Human Resources	(2,530)						
Leisure	5,085,570						
Planning	1,238,810						
Audit & Performance Management		133,180	115,690	93,330	112,562	19,232	16.6%
Commercial Services		473,240	450,670	345,930	328,190	(17,740)	-3.9%
Contracts & Procurement		7,385,750	6,447,930	6,449,630	6,543,506	93,876	1.5%
Environmental Health		1,186,430	1,156,770	1,134,600	1,088,741	(45,859)	-4.0%
Estates		750,410	508,740	508,860	604,434	95,574	18.8%
Housing & Community Safety		2,341,470	1,895,110	2,003,200	2,449,555	446,355	23.6%
Legal & Democratic Services		995,770	1,011,580	841,000	899,323	58,323	5.8%
Organisational Development & Support		87,330	121,130	(116,080)	236,269	352,349	290.9%
Planning & Community Strategy		2,653,350	2,311,290	2,068,340	1,648,033	(420,307)	-18.2%
Ridgeway - financial services		1,981,620	1,943,600	2,215,850	1,736,423	(479,427)	-24.7%
Strategy (Chief Executive)		51,040	53,930	53,930	52,919	(1,011)	-1.9%
Strategy (SB)		1,212,370	1,183,400	1,077,060	1,110,226	33,166	2.8%
Strategy (TS)		8,210	8,180	6,030	8,181	2,151	26.3%
Contingency	571,470	(399,080)	100,000	225,000	0	(225,000)	-225.0%
Total service costs	18,615,180	18,861,090	17,308,020	16,906,680	16,818,362	(88,318)	-0.5%
Service investment & other budget changes	715,310		(401,030)				
Savings							
V V P & SPP savings achieved in 2005/06	(424,780)						
New 2006 Service Prioritisation Plans	(655,120)						
New 2007 Service Prioritisation Plans							
Actuals Rounded	18,250,590	18,861,090	16,906,990	16,906,680	16,818,000	(88,680)	-0.5%
Reversal of Capital Financing	(3,319,900)	(3,930,400)	(1,855,800)	(1,855,800)	(2,084,000)	(228,200)	-12.3%
Net Cost of Service	14,930,690	14,930,690	15,051,190	15,050,880	14,734,000	(316,880)	-2.1%
Investment Income	(1,152,900)	(1,152,900)	(1,294,300)	(1,294,300)	(1,229,000)	65,300	5.0%
Property Income	(1,919,600)	(1,919,600)	(1,861,000)	(1,861,000)	(1,853,000)	8,000	0.4%
Other					41,000	41,000	--
Net Expenditure	11,858,190	11,858,190	11,895,890	11,895,580	11,693,000	(202,580)	-1.7%
Contribution to Funds							
Total Contributions to Funds	686,000	686,000	108,540	108,540	315,000	206,460	190.2%
Total Usage of Funds	(1,090,374)	(1,090,374)	(1,055,520)	(1,055,520)	(1,070,000)	(14,480)	-1.4%
	(404,374)	(404,374)	(946,980)	(946,980)	(755,000)	191,980	20.3%
Amount to be Financed	11,453,815	11,453,816	10,948,910	10,948,600	10,939,000	(9,600)	-0.1%
Contribution to/(from) Balances	(181,785)	(181,785)	355,120	355,120	1,120,000	764,880	215.4%
Budget Requirement	11,272,030	11,272,031	11,304,030	11,303,720	12,059,000	755,280	6.7%
Government Grant			0	0	(788,000)	(788,000)	--
Government Grant - Revenue Support Grant	(1,071,226)	(1,071,226)	(1,071,226)	(1,071,226)	(1,081,000)	(9,774)	-0.9%
Government Grant - redistributed Business Rates	(5,517,372)	(5,517,372)	(5,549,372)	(5,549,372)	(5,507,000)	42,372	0.8%
Exchequer Contribution	(6,588,598)	(6,588,598)	(6,620,598)	(6,620,598)	(7,376,000)	(755,402)	-11.4%
Collection Fund Transfer	(48,945)	(48,945)	(48,945)	(48,945)	(49,000)	0	0.0%
Gross amount to be met from Council Tax	4,816,272	4,816,273	4,279,367	4,279,367	3,514,500	(764,867)	-17.9%
Net Amount to be met from Council Tax	4,634,487	4,634,488	4,634,487	4,634,487	4,634,500		
Tax Base	47,670	47,670	47,670	47,670	47,670		
Council Tax	97	97	97	97	97		
Revenue Reserves * (Appendix B)							
At start of year - Reserves	(805,636)	(805,636)	(1,720,260)	(1,720,260)	(1,720,000)		
Net reduction of/(Contribution to) Reserves	143,970	143,970	946,985	946,985	755,000		
At end of year - Reserves	(661,666)	(661,666)	(773,275)	(773,275)	(965,000)		
General Fund Balances							
At start of year-General Fund Balances	(698,780)	(698,780)	(723,743)	(723,743)	(724,000)		
Use/(contribution to) general fund balances	181,785	181,785	(355,120)	(355,120)	(1,120,000)		
At end of year-General Fund Balances	(516,995)	(516,995)	(1,078,863)	(1,078,863)	(1,844,000)		

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/07 with provisional out-turn 2006-07 and major variances

old cost centre	new cost centre	officer resp.	exp. to 31.3.06	revised estimate 2006/07	provisional out-turn 2006/07	c/fwd to 2007/08 agreed	2006/07 variance	2006/07 variance %	original estimate 2007/08	proposed 2008/09	estimated total cost	F/Y Rev. cost once complete
			£	£	£	£	£		£	£	£	£
Major variances												
	W20	PAS		500,000	368,800	131,400	(131,400)	(26)	500,000	500,000	2,500,000	
	W40	IRM	90,087	15,000	6,087	8,900	(8,913)	(59)	15,000	15,000	75,000	
	W49	CW		70,000	52,337	17,700	(17,663)	(25)			70,040	
	W54	MTL	624,368	501,230	468,294	32,900	(32,936)	(7)	20,000		1,145,560	10,830
	W55	TW	--	150,000		150,000	(150,000)	(100)			150,000	
	W97	IF	1,908,362	730,000	684,188	20,800	(45,812)	(6)	705,000	705,000	3,525,000	
	W98-Y03	IF	219,745	60,000	77,250	(17,300)	17,250	29	150,000	100,000	509,950	
	Y36	AJM	9,047	25,000	19,656	5,300	(5,344)	(21)	48,500		82,500	
	Y64	GW	--	30,000	12,408	17,600	(17,592)	(59)			30,000	
	Y61	MM	107,018	68,000	60,870	7,100	(7,130)	(10)	150,000		175,000	net(1,000)
	Y62	CW	9,525	100,000	10,000	4,700	(100,000)	(100)	150,000		159,520	(65,000)
	Y68	IF		150,000	115,609	34,400	(34,391)	(23)	5,000		155,000	
	Y72	AJM		38,470	433	38,000	(38,037)	(99)			38,500	
	Y76	MTL	2,988,152	2,447,700	1,871,028	451,500	(576,672)	(24)	1,593,500	1,320,000	8,626,070	(54,170)
Total major variances												
Minor or no variances												
W17	YA01	AJM	33,949	31,000	30,169	800	(831)	(3)	85,800	45,000	251,770	
W26	YH02	PAS	--	120,000	120,000				30,000		150,000	
W75	Y17	AJM	101,811	20,000	20,000						121,810	
Y17	Y17	MTL	71,546	650	650						72,200	10,000
Y22	YA04	LR	29,566	10,600	9,083	1,500	(1,517)	(14)			40,150	
Y23	YA05	LR	29,508	10,000	9,979		(21)				39,490	
Y67	YA10	AJM	1,960	213,200	213,223		23		6,800		222,000	
Y68	Y68	AJM	--	14,000	14,000						14,000	500
Y63	Y63	TW	--	10,000	10,000						10,000	
Y68	Y68	CW		19,630	19,625		(5)				19,620	
Y74	Y74	IRM		46,500	46,500						46,500	
Y78	YF04	WJ		156,120	156,115		(5)		314,840	11,742	594,900	(104,540)
Y38	YF06	IRM	450	2,500	2,880	(400)	380	15	67,050		70,000	3,500
Y30	YD03	HSB	386,550	29,000	30,800	(1,800)	1,800	6	38,000		433,550	20,000
Y51	YF02	SFL	3,910,009		1,750	(1,800)	1,750	in advance	1,855,000		5,765,000	(260,000)
Y71	YH11	PAS			3,000	(3,000)	3,000	in advance	25,000		25,000	(10,000)
W09	W09	MM	34,986	3,730	3,827		97	3			38,810	
W11	YC02	MM	20,847	23,000	22,782		(218)	(1)	21,750		65,380	(40,200)
W56	YA02	AJM	45,688	24,700	24,835		135	1	30,300		100,820	
Y16	Y16	PAS	36,351	6,000	6,404		404	7			42,750	
Y24	YA06	AJM	296,890	24,400	24,718		318	1			321,610	
Y39	YA09	MTL	150	4,400	4,506		106	2	105,600		110,260	2,000
Y59	Y67	AJM	14,077	5,750	4,750		(1,000)	(17)			18,830	1,000
Y73	YC11	SC		27,750	27,524		(226)	(1)			27,520	2,000
Y75	Y75	GW		3,000	2,835		(165)	(6)	227,000		230,000	
Y77	Y77	GW		23,000	23,236		236	1			23,240	
		AJM		102,000	102,053		53				102,050	
			4,994,338	930,930	935,244	(4,700)	4,314	0	2,807,140	56,742	8,957,260	(375,740)
Total minor variances												
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME			7,962,450	3,378,630	2,806,272	446,800	(572,358)	(23)	4,400,640	1,376,742	17,583,330	(429,910)
Capital programme funding			(2,450,319)	(875,250)	(757,548)	(117,685)	117,702	(128)	(423,000)	(423,000)	(3,922,010)	--
Specific grants			--	(348,970)	(179,100)	(169,900)	169,870	(153)	--	--	(349,000)	--
Contributions from developers and other bodies			--	(250,000)	(250,000)	--	--	--	--	--	(250,000)	--
Internal funding			(5,512,171)	(1,904,410)	(1,619,624)	(159,215)	284,786	303	(3,977,640)	(953,742)	(13,062,320)	429,910
Capital receipts												

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/07 with provisional out-turn 2006-07 and major variances

APPENDIX C

new cost centre	officer resp.	new cost centre	revised estimate 2006/07	provisional out-turn 2006/07	2006/07 variance		comments
					£	%	
Major variances							
YH01	PAS	Support development of Social Housing	500,000	368,600	(131,400)	(26)	
YC03	IRM	New & upgraded parks facilities - Council owned	15,000	6,087	(8,913)	(59)	
YC04	CW	Abbey Meadow Outdoor Pool renovation	70,000	52,337	(17,663)	(25)	
YC05	MTL	Abbey Grounds restoration - total cost of works	501,230	468,294	(32,936)	(7)	
YP03	TW	Rural Towns Initiatives	150,000		(150,000)	(100)	
YH05	IF	Renovation/Disabled Grants, mandatory	730,000	684,188	(45,812)	(6)	
YH06-09	IF	Renovation/Disabled Grants, discretionary	60,000	77,250	17,250	29	
YA08	AJM	Guildhall rear entrance repair and renovation	25,000	19,656	(5,344)	(21)	
YP07	GW	Staff lockers and cycle parking - green travel	30,000	12,408	(17,592)	(59)	
YC07	MM	Green waste wheeled bins	68,000	60,870	(7,130)	(10)	
YC08	CW	Tilsley Park phase 2	100,000		(100,000)	(100)	
YH10	IF	Renovate Elmside Hostel	10,000	5,296	(4,704)	(47)	
YC10	AJM	WHT&LC remedial car park works	150,000	115,609	(34,391)	(23)	
YC13	MTL	Coleshill Road play area	38,470	433	(38,037)	(99)	
Total major variances			2,447,700	1,871,028	(576,672)	(24)	

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR AND EQUALITIES OFFICER TO THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
13 JULY 2007

Corporate Equalities Action Plan 2007/08

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

- a) As a major employer and public service delivery body, the Council is committed to meeting the needs of all its employees, residents and customers. To help the Council realise this commitment in a proactive, proportionate and co-ordinated way, a Corporate Equalities Action Plan (CEAP) has been drafted for 2007/8.
- b) The Plan brings together all the Council's key areas of work for the current year with regards to the promotion of equality and diversity. It will help us to meet our statutory duties and achieve our BVPI targets for 2007/08.
- c) The Plan incorporates all the actions from the Council's recently updated Race Equality Scheme.
- d) Progress against the actions will be reported on in October 2007 and April 2008. The CEAP will be revised by the end of the calendar year in order to include the action plans from the forthcoming Disability and Gender Equality Schemes (these are both due to be finalised and approved by the end of December).
- e) The revised CEAP will cover 2008/09 – 2010/11 and will be subject to approval by the Council's Executive.
- f) This report summarises the contents of the CEAP and makes a recommendation for its adoption by the Council's Executive.
- g) The contact officers for this report are Katharine Doherty (Equalities Officer, 01235 520202 katharine.doherty@whitehorsedc.gov.uk) and Tim Sadler (Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer, 01235 520202 tim.sadler@whitehorsedc.gov.uk).

2.0 Recommendations

That the Executive adopts the Corporate Equalities Action Plan 2007/08.

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

- a) This report relates to the objectives of the Council's vision.
- b) This report relates to the Council's corporate priorities to "improve and modernise access to services" and to "build our capacity through managerial and organisational development."
- c) This report relates to the Council's Equality in Employment policy as well as to any policy that determines the delivery of services on the basis of need.

4.0 Background and Supporting Information

- a) The Council's Corporate Equalities Action Plan is a one-year action plan which sets out the work we will undertake in order to promote equality and diversity in everything we do as a service provider and as an employer.
- b) The action plan reinforces our commitment to recognising and valuing difference and respecting our staff and service users as individuals with individual needs.

- c) Our Corporate Equalities Action Plan will help us to:
- bring together all our equality and diversity activities for the year (including actions from our Race Equality Scheme) into one single document to help us approach our work in this area in a co-ordinated way
 - meet our statutory duties to promote race, disability and gender equality, as set out in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006
 - achieve our target of reaching level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (BVPI 2a) by the end of March 2008
 - raise our score against BVPI 2b (the duty to promote race equality checklist) to 78.9% by the year end
- d) The 2007/08 action plan focuses on the work we will need to carry out in order to meet our statutory duties relating to gender, race and disability equality. It also concentrates on strengthening the Council's internal processes in order to ensure that equality of opportunity is an integral part of our service planning and delivery.
- e) Actions in the CEAP sit under the following key areas:
- Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)
 - monitoring service use with regards to ethnicity, disability and gender
 - carrying out an Equalities audit across the Council (to identify existing Council good practice and priority areas for action regarding equalities)
 - equality and diversity training
 - policy development (Disability Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme and a Comprehensive Equality Policy (CEP) and action plan)
 - measuring and reporting progress
- f) The CEAP also includes a number of actions to develop Council engagement opportunities with the wider community (in particular with disabled people and people from ethnic minority groups) but this work will be prioritised in future Corporate Equality Action Plans.
- g) Everyone at Vale of White Horse District Council is responsible for ensuring that our services and employment opportunities are provided in an accessible and inclusive way. With regards to implementing the CEAP:
- The Council's Senior Management Group is responsible for ensuring that the Council has an effective framework in place in order for the actions to be delivered
 - The majority of the actions in the plan will be carried out by the Council's Equalities Officer, although Service Directors have day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that their teams deliver any actions identified in the plan which relate to them. Service directors and team managers are signed up to the areas of activity which relate directly to them and have included relevant actions in their service plans for 2007/08.
- h) The actions in the plan are set out according to their completion dates. They are specific, measurable and above all practical and realistic. Progress against the actions will be reviewed at regular intervals, with progress reports being produced in October 2007 and April 2008 to the relevant Portfolio Holder and Strategic Director.
- i) The CEAP will be revised by the end of the calendar year in order to include the actions set out in the forthcoming Disability and Gender Equality Schemes (these are both due to be finalised and approved by the end of December).
- j) The revised CEAP will cover 2008/09 – 2010/11 and will be subject to approval by the Council's Executive. It will be reviewed on a six monthly basis.

KATHARINE DOHERTY
EQUALITIES OFFICER

TIM SADLER
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

Background Papers

- k) Corporate Equalities Action Plan (CEAP) 2007/08, attached.
- l) Race Equality Scheme March 2007



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Vale of White Horse District Council

Corporate Equalities Action Plan 2007/08

Our vision is to build and safeguard a fair, open and compassionate community

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Equality Impact Assessment timetable 2007/08	11

Version control

Version number	Date	Author	Notes
4	04/04/07	Katharine May	Awaiting Jeremy Beach's comments
5	05/04/07	Katharine May	Revised following feedback from JB
6	25/04/07	Katharine May	Revised following feedback from TS
7	01/06/07	Katharine Doherty	Updated due to delay with Vale Voice
FINAL	19/06/07	Katharine Doherty	

Introduction

At the Vale of White Horse District Council, we are committed to the principle of equal opportunities. We believe we should deliver services to residents and customers and value our employees equally irrespective of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, family responsibility, trade union membership, whether they are suffering from a severe illness or any other irrelevant factor.

Providing our services and employment opportunities in an equal way does not mean treating everybody in the same way. It means that we recognise and value difference and respect our staff and service users as individuals. We therefore strive to provide our services and employment opportunities in ways which meet people's needs in a positive and proactive way.

To help us achieve this and move from principle to practice, we have produced our Corporate Equalities Action Plan (CEAP) for 2007/08. It brings together all our equality and diversity activities for the year into one single document to help us approach our work in this area in a co-ordinated way.

The actions in the plan are time bound and specific, enabling us to deliver real results and measure our progress effectively. They include those set out in our recently updated Race Equality Scheme.

Everyone at Vale of White Horse District Council is responsible for providing our services and employment opportunities in a fair and equal way. By having one corporate equality and diversity action plan, it will be easier to communicate and share our approach with others across the Council and the wider community.

Our CEAP helps us to meet our statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Equality Act. It relates to the Council's corporate priorities to "improve and modernise access to services" and to "build our capacity through managerial and organisational development." It also compliments the Council's Social Inclusion Policy and relates to our Equality in Employment policy. It will help us achieve our equality and diversity BVPI targets.

The plan is a working document. As such, it will be reviewed regularly and updated annually to keep our equality and diversity work relevant and comprehensive.

Katharine Doherty
Equalities Officer

Tel: ex. 407
Email: katharine.doherty@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Corporate Equalities Action Plan 2007/08

= completed

Action number	Issue	Action	Timescales	Deliverable(s)	Lead officer(s)	Communications
1	Comprehensive Equality Policy (CEP) and action plan	Update Corporate Equalities Action Plan for 2007/08	By end of July	CEP action plan for 2007/08 is approved by Executive	KM	Briefing to SMT 2007/08 action plan on the intranet Presentation to HR
2	Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)	Produce and agree 2007/08 corporate EIA timetable	By mid April 07	Timetable approved by SMT	KM	Service plans Briefing to SMT
3	Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)	Include EIAs in relevant 2007/08 service plans	By mid April 07	All EIAs in 2007/08 corporate timetable are included in relevant service plans	Team Managers/ Heads of Service	Service plans
4	Monitoring service use with regards to ethnicity, disability and gender	Include significant monitoring actions in relevant 2007/08 service plans	By mid April 07	Action to review service use monitoring arrangements is included in 2007/08	Team Managers/ Heads of Service	Service plans

Action number	Issue	Action	Timescales	Deliverable(s)	Lead officer(s)	Communications
5	Identifying existing Council good practice regarding equalities	Carry out a corporate equalities audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Member • CEO/SDs • Service heads • Team managers • Individual staff (via survey) 	By end of July 07	service plans Equalities audit completed and examples of good practice documented (to inform equality policies and practices)	KM	Article in horse's mouth and team brief about audit (pre and post)
6	Identifying priority areas for action regarding equalities	Carry out a corporate equalities audit (as above)	By end of July 07	Equalities audit completed and priority areas for action documented (to inform equality policies and practices)	KM	As above
7	Monitoring service use with regards to ethnicity, disability and gender	Develop monitoring plans for services/functions, as part of the corporate equalities audit (only team managers will be asked to develop these although results will be shared with relevant service heads)	By end of July 07	Monitoring plans developed and agreed	KM and Team Managers	n/a

Action number	Issue	Action	Timescales	Deliverable(s)	Lead officer(s)	Communications
8	Monitoring service use with regards to ethnicity, disability and gender	Collect, monitor and report on equalities data in accordance with monitoring plans	From Q2 onwards	Relevant equalities data in collected, monitored and reported on to inform EIAs/service delivery	Team Managers/ Heads of Service	n/a
9	Equality and diversity training	Identify unmet staff training needs as part of the corporate equalities audit (only team managers will be asked to identify these although results will be shared with relevant service heads)	End of July 07	Equalities audit completed and any unmet training needs are documented	KM	n/a
10	Equality and diversity training	Investigate how any unmet staff training needs could be met most effectively	End of July 07	Unmet training needs are addressed pro-actively	KM	n/a
11	Equality and diversity training	Deliver relevant equalities training to staff	Q3 – Q4	Training sessions for staff delivered according to need	KM	Timetable on equalities training sessions is included in horse's mouth and team brief (and on the intranet)

Action number	Issue	Action	Timescales	Deliverable(s)	Lead officer(s)	Communications
	Equality and diversity training	Deliver equalities training to newly elected members	In accordance with training plan for newly elected members	Briefing session delivered	KM and Steve Culliford	n/a
12	Disability Equality Scheme	Hold disabled residents' focus group to explore priority issues regarding access to our services	July/August 07 (dependent on Vale Voice schedule)	Focus group(s) held and feedback is used to inform the DES	KM	n/a
13	Disability Equality Scheme	Seek feedback from representative organisations on priority issues regarding access to our services for disabled people	July 07	Feedback is actively sought and is used to inform the DES	KM	n/a
14	Gender Equality Scheme	Hold residents' focus groups to explore priority issues regarding access to our services	July/August 07 (dependent on Vale Voice schedule)	Focus group(s) held and feedback is used to inform the GES	KM	n/a
15	Gender Equality	Seek feedback from	July 07	Feedback is actively	KM	n/a

Action number	Issue	Action	Timescales	Deliverable(s)	Lead officer(s)	Communications
	Scheme	representative organisations on priority issues regarding access to our services for women/men		sought and is used to inform the GES		
16	Equality Impact Assessments	Create template and guidelines for assessing and consulting on likely impact of all proposed policies on promoting equality	By end of August	Template and guidelines produced and made available on the intranet	KM and Steve Culliford	Article in team brief
17	Equality Impact Assessments	Develop guidance material and workbook for staff carrying out EIAs	By end of August	EIA guidance and workbook produced and made available on the intranet	KM	Documents on the intranet
18	Disability Equality Scheme	Draft the DES, using information from the equalities audit, representative organisations and residents' focus group	By end of October 07	Consultation held with service heads on draft action plan DES is drafted Document ready to go out for consultation	KM	Seek staff feedback on the draft via team brief/intranet Article in Vale Views
19	Gender Equality	Draft the GES, using	By end of	Consultation held	KM	Seek staff

Action number	Issue	Action	Timescales	Deliverable(s)	Lead officer(s)	Communications
	Scheme	information from the equalities audit, representative organisations and residents' focus group	October 07	with service heads on draft action plan GES is drafted Document ready to go out for consultation		feedback on the draft via team brief/intranet Article in Vale Views
20	Engagement opportunities	To set up an internal equalities advisory group	By the end of September 07	Equalities advisory group remit produced Members identified	KM	n/a
21	Equality Impact Assessments	Organise and facilitate regular progress meetings with staff carrying out EIAs in 2007/08	September 07 (introductory briefing) Q3 – Q4	A minimum of 4 meetings are held, including an introductory briefing	KM	n/a
22	Equality Impact Assessments	Carry out EIAs in accordance with the 2007/08 timetable	Q3 – Q4 (all EIAs completed by mid February)	15 EIAs completed	KM	Summary note of completed EIAs circulated to SMG and service heads Summary note on intranet and

Action number	Issue	Action	Timescales	Deliverable(s)	Lead officer(s)	Communications
23	Measuring and reporting progress	Produce six monthly update reports	October 07, April 08	Reports presented to SMG	KM	website Intranet
24	Gender Equality Scheme	GES is adopted	By end of December 2007	GES is adopted by the Executive Press release	KM	Article in Vale Views Article in staff newsletter Horse's Mouth GES on intranet and website
25	Disability Equality Scheme	DES is adopted	By end of December 07	DES is adopted by the Executive Press release	KM	Article in Vale Views Article in staff newsletter Horse's Mouth DES on intranet and website
26	Comprehensive Equality Policy (CEP) and action plan	Revise CEP and produce a 3 year corporate equalities action plan (in line with RES, DES and GES)	By end of December 07	CEP is revised and a 3 year action plan is produced, bringing together actions from the RES, DES and GES.	KM	Article in Vale Views Article in staff newsletter Horse's Mouth

Action number	Issue	Action	Timescales	Deliverable(s)	Lead officer(s)	Communications
27	Engagement opportunities	Approve revised CEP along with DES and GES Continue to actively support relevant community partnerships /projects e.g EMBRACE, HALT	On-going	EMBRACE = 3 partnership newsletters produced HALT = promotion of homophobic crime reporting scheme	KM, with input from community safety team, communications and economic development	Presentation to service heads CEP on intranet and website As agreed by relevant partnerships/projects

Equality Impact Assessment timetable 2007/08

Service Area	Service block	Function to be assessed
ODS	Communications	Consultation (including citizens' panel)
Planning & Community Strategy	Community Strategy	Community Funding/ Grants
Housing and Community Safety	Housing	Disabled Facilities Grants
ODS	Contact Services	LSPs - Customer advice and information/enquiries Cash transactions
Environmental Health	Environmental Protection	Noise Air environment control (air quality improvement) Water environment
Environmental Health	Food/Health and Safety	Food safety (including education) Health and safety
Finance	Ridgeway Shared Services	Community taxation
Housing & Community Safety	Housing	Housing advice, homelessness and temporary accommodation
Housing & Community Safety	Housing Register	Housing register and choice based lettings
ODS	Human Resources	Recruitment and selection
ODS	Human Resources	Training and development
Contracts and Procurement	Sport and Recreation (facilities)	Leisure facilities
Environmental Health	Licensing	Licensing (including taxi licensing)
Planning & Community Strategy	Development Policy	Development Policy
Planning & Community Strategy	Development Control	Applications, decisions Enforcement

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR
TO THE EXECUTIVE
13 JULY 2007

Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy: Environmental Implementation

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite Members to consider committing funding from the capital budget to enhance the highway works in Stert Street and Broad Street, Abingdon being carried out by Oxfordshire County Council as part of the town centre Phase 2 implementation of the Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy.
- 1.2 The Contact Officers for this report is Grant Audley-Miller, Section Head (Environmental Planning & Conservation) on (01235) 540343.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 *Members are asked to:*

- (a) *Commit £72,500 from the Capital Budget towards enhancing the ABITS highway works in Stert Street and Broad Street, Abingdon during the current financial year.*
- (b) *Suspend Contract Standing Orders in relation to procurement for the works in Stert Street and Broad Street, Abingdon.*
- (c) *Enter into formal contracts with Oxfordshire County Council and Isis Accord for the works in Stert Street and Bath Street, Abingdon.*
- (d) *Agree that further commitments to contribute to the environmental enhancement of Phase 2 of the ABITS strategy await the outcome of the review of the proposed highway works.*
- (e) *Ask the County Council to confirm that in the event of High street works not being implemented that the funds would be earmarked for highway schemes in and around Abingdon.*
- (f) *Welcome the intention to continue a Members Working Group for ABITS open to the public but seek assurances from the County Council on how this will be achieved.*

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

- 3.1 This report supports the Council's Vision and Priorities. It also supports the Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 Following the Executive on the 1 June the Leader, Deputy Leader and Councillor Richard

Farrell met with the Cabinet Members for Transportation of Oxfordshire County Council to discuss the review and implementation of Phase 2 of the town centre works.

- 4.2 On the 28th June the ABITS Members Steering Group recommended the County Council to implement the construction of the Stert Street element of Phase Two of the town centre works. The works involve widening of the footpaths, installing loading and disabled drivers parking areas, relocating the 2 pedestrian crossings and narrowing carriageway running lane using the 'no waiting' lines. This work is to commence in July 2007. In the light of the narrowing trials using white lining and concerns raised by the public, the Steering Group also recommended review of the implementation of the High Street element of Phase 2.
- 4.3 In the current financial year Oxfordshire County Council has allowed £690,000 for the Phase 2 town centre works. Members were also informed that this would be their last meeting as a Steering Group but were assured that they would continue as a Working Group open to the public.
- 4.4 In addition to the town centre works the County Council had proposed to carry out design work for Marcham Road in the current financial year and fund implementation in the 2008/09 and 2009/10 financial years.
- 4.5 The County Council had previously agreed to phase the town centre works over two consecutive financial years, the Stert Street element to be carried out during the current financial year and the High Street in 2008/09. The Steering Group recommended that that the High Street element be carried out during 2009/2010, and only after a review the proposed works during 2008/2009. This would be achieved by swapping funding that had previously been agreed for the Marcham Road Phase 2 works and the town centre funding for the 2008/09 and 2009/10 financial years. This would allow a longer settling in period for phase one and the Stert Street element of phase two, with a commitment to review the extent of the High Street works during the 2008/09 financial year. It will be important to ensure that in the event of reduced costs for the High Street improvements that the County Council will continue to make any surplus funds available for highway works in Abingdon.
- 4.6 Being a highway traffic management scheme, Oxfordshire County Council intend to use their standard highway materials throughout the town centre. These will be:
- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Roads: | Tarmac |
| Kerbs: | Concrete kerbs |
| Loading Bays: | Tarmac |
| Footpaths: | 200x100 concrete block pavers (as in Stratton Way) |
| Crossings: | Buff tactile paving |
- 4.7 The County Council had originally indicated that the road design in Stert Street and High Street would include a gutter/running strip detail consisting of two strips, each 750mm wide. These would provide the illusion of narrowing the road to a single carriageway, but provide sufficient width for two vehicles to pass each other (in the event of a breakdown or emergency). The material originally proposed, 'Tegula' block paving, would have provided a high quality material in these sensitive streets in the conservation area. Regretfully, for reasons of buildability and ease of maintenance, the County Council no longer wish to use 'Tegula' block paving in Stert Street and proposed an alternative called 'Inprint' (a coloured macadam with a rolled in pattern). This alternative your Officers considered totally inappropriate in Abingdon Town Centre. As a result the County Council are now

proposing to simply delineate the carriageway narrowing with the no waiting lines. The carriageway would remain as a tarmac finish.

- 4.8 Clearly, there are numerous options that could be pursued but your Officers consider that in deciding on how best to make most effective use of the budget then there are 5 main objectives should be taken account of; these are to:
- enhance the key elements of the historic streetscape and the setting of historic buildings;
 - enhance the main shopping/visitor streets/spaces;
 - complement the Town Council works already underway in the Market Place;
 - wherever practical use high quality, durable and appropriate materials where they will have the greatest impact on the environment of the town centre;
 - identify works that complement but are also achievable within the period of the Stage 2 works and achieve best value by incorporating the works into the County Council's contract.
- 4.9 Officers have been working with OCC and their consultants to consider the options available for enhancing the highway works. In the narrow streets of the town centre the potential for carrying out environmental improvements is limited to up-grading the quality of the materials to be used on the pavements but this would greatly improve the environment of the town centre. It may be possible to include a specimen tree on, for example, the widened Broad Street pavement.
- 4.10 OCC have provided the Vale with provisional construction rates from their annual contract with Isis Accord, in order that the cost of the various options can be estimated and Isis Accord, and clearly the Vale will also need to be satisfied that these rates represent best value.
- 4.11 The most practical way forward would be to replace the standard materials proposed by the County Council with materials more appropriate to the historic context. In Stert Street and Broad Street the proposal is to re-use the granite kerbs that exist in parts of Stert Street and supplementing them with new granite kerbs, and use larger and more traditionally proportioned paving slabs 400 x 400 rather than the 200 x 100 blocks currently used in the town centre. In addition, rather than using standard tactile paving on the crossings these are proposed for upgrading.
- 4.12 OCC will be undertaking the works using their direct services contractor, Isis Accord. Accordingly, it is intended that to enhance the County Council scheme, the Vale will pay to OCC to cost difference between using "standard" and the "enhanced" materials. As a result it will be necessary to suspend Contract Standing Orders in relation to procurement; and enter into formal contracts with OCC and Isis Accord.
- 4.13 To achieve these objectives as well as providing flexibility to meet changes to the overall scheme, your Officers recommend that from the available budget of £250,000, £72,500 should be provisionally committed for the financial year 2007/08. (Any variation in this figure will be reported at the meeting). This is made up of the following items:

Broad Street south side	14,000
Stert Street south (Stert Street from Station Yard junction to the High Street)	46,000
Street furniture & landscaping	2,500
Fees (County Hall design)	<u>10,000</u>
Total	72,500

- 4.14 £10,000 has been allowed for design fees for the area around the County Hall because this will require detailed design. Whatever scheme is ultimately implemented in the High Street the enhancement of the area around the County Hall should remain a key objective to complement the current Market Place improvements.
- 4.14 This would leave a total of £177,500 uncommitted. How the remainder of the budget is spent can be considered at a later stage after further monitoring of the Phase One works and the Stert Street element of Phase Two and after the review of the High Street works.

RODGER HOOD
Deputy Director (Planning & Community Strategy)

TIM SADLER
Strategic Director

Background Papers:

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted