

Date: 27 September 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, 5th October, 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](mailto: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 13)**

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 Executive meeting held on 13 July 2007, (copy 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**

None

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

(a) **Personnel, Regulatory and Appeals Committee - 28 September 2007**

The Personnel, Regulatory and Appeals Committee was due to meet on Friday 28 September 2007 and consider four reports containing recommendations to refer matters on to the Executive. The first is detailed below; the others appear under Exempt Information on this agenda.

**Establishment of Post - Client Monitoring Officer for Leisure Facilities Contracts**

The Personnel, Regulatory and Appeals Committee was recommended to establish a part-time post of Client Monitoring Officer for Leisure Facilities Contracts. The post is on scale 4 for a fixed term period of two years from the date of appointment, after which it would be subject to review. If the Committee approved this, the Executive will be recommended to approve a permanent budget adjustment of £11,600 (full year) to fund the new post from the permanent Wantage Civic Hall Facility Manager vacancy. An update on the Committee's decision will be given at the meeting.

(b) **Scrutiny Committee - 19 July 2007 – Waste Management Contract**

At its meeting held on 19 July 2007, the Scrutiny Committee received and considered the Waste Contract Annual Report 2006/07. In considering the report, Members recognised that the next Waste Management contract would need to find a more effective way of both penalising poor performance and rewarding good performance. Members also stressed the importance of clear performance management requirements. The Committee asked that these concerns were brought to the attention of the Executive.

**9. Financial Monitoring**

(Pages 14 - 16)

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

**KEY DECISIONS**

**10. Forward Plan**

(Pages 17 - 19)

To receive the Forward Plan containing Executive decisions to be taken from October 2007 to January 2008.

**Recommendation**

*that the Forward Plan be received.*

**OTHER MATTERS**

**11. Community Grants**

(Pages 20 - 32)

To receive and consider report 72/07 of the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to set out the budget position for the Executive Committee in respect of Community Grants and to invite Members to consider and determine the grant applications received. The Executive currently considers grant applications bi-annually. Executive considered applications in April 2007 and the next meeting, at which the consideration of grants is planned, will be in April 2008 at the beginning of the next financial year.

The contact officer for this report is Lorna Edwards, Community Strategy Officer (Tel: 01235 547626).

Recommendations

- (a) *Members are asked to note that the Executive's remaining budget for 2007/08 for Vale-wide grants is £5,914.*
- (b) *Members are asked to consider and determine the following grant applications and agree the Council agenda and priority:*
  - (i) *Oxfordshire Association for the Blind, £5,000, towards the cost of services for blind and visually-impaired residents in the Vale, Social Agenda, Access priority*
  - (ii) *South & Vale Carers Centre, £10,000, towards the cost of running the Outreach Service, Social Agenda, Access priority*
- (c) *Members are asked to consider and determine the following applications for funding from the Lottery and Other Grants Support Fund to release a grant from TOE (Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) or WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd), noting that the Fund currently has an unallocated balance of approximately £22,500:*
  - (iii) *Charney Hall and Field Trust, £5,000, to secure a TOE grant of £50,000, towards the redevelopment of Charney Village Hall;*
  - (iv) *Sutton Courtenay Parish Council, £5,318.83, to secure a WREN grant of £48,353 towards phase 2 of the Village Hall refurbishment; and*
  - (v) *Wootton and Dry Sandford Community Centre, £5,000, to secure a TOE grant of £50,000, towards the redevelopment of the Community Centre.*

**12. Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy and a Supplementary Planning Document**

(Pages 33 - 109)

(a) Draft Strategy

To receive and consider report 73/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The title of this draft strategy reflects the fact that it derives from the work done to deliver objectives outlined in the Government's planning guidance PPG17 "Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation" (July 2002). This draft strategy is based on a wide-ranging assessment of provision established through a detailed physical audit of all facilities across the Vale (whether in District, Parish or other ownership), a Vale Voice Citizens Panel survey in 2006 and a survey of Town and Parish Councils.

Open spaces and sport and recreation facilities are fundamental to quality of life in the Vale and the Council needs a strategy to manage and develop these facilities. The strategy identifies the key issues facing the Council and provides a vision and plan for tackling these issues. It provides an evidence base to support policies for open space, sport and recreation in the Council's developing Local Development Framework. It also strengthens the Council's ability to justify and secure s106 contributions from developers. The strategy is supported by a detailed background document, including amongst other things the detailed survey documentation.

The contact officer for this report is Mike Mackay, Deputy Director (Contracts and Procurement), telephone 01235 540337. [Michael.mackay@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.mackay@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

Recommendation

*That the Executive approves the draft strategy.*

(b) The Strategy and a Supplementary Planning Document

The Council's consultants are currently preparing an audit and strategy for green space, sport and recreation, as referred to in (a) above. To implement this strategy the officers are currently producing a Supplementary Planning Document to set out standards for provision which will enable contributions for these facilities to be collected from new housing developments. The draft Supplementary Planning Document will be considered by the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group on 22 October 2007.

Under the Local Plan system, the Executive delegated authority to approve draft Supplementary Planning Guidance for public consultation. It is recommended that a similar process should be established for Supplementary Planning Documents.

Recommendation

*That authority be delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy), in consultation with the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group, to agree all future draft Supplementary Planning Documents for public consultation.*

13. **Corporate Governance Report - First Quarter 2007/08**

(Pages 110 - 116)

To receive and consider report 74/07 of the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The Corporate Governance Report looks at the key areas of:

Corporate Priorities

Best Value Performance Indicators

Progress against Service Prioritisation Plans

Key staffing data (sickness levels and turnover)

Financial commentary

Corporate Governance reporting to the Executive during 2006/7 included the full versions of all of the individual reports. For 2007/8 the Executive have asked that only exceptions be included in the quarterly report to the Executive. The Senior Management Team (SMT) now has a standard quarterly agenda item for their meetings (which are held monthly) which considers all aspects of corporate governance. At its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> August SMT agreed the exceptions to be reported to the Executive and the appropriate comments / actions proposed have been included in this report. In addition, a number of areas of good performance have been highlighted. These have been included in section 4.

This new style of reporting has significantly reduced the length of the Quarterly Corporate Governance report. Previous versions were up to 40 pages long and contained too much detail. However, the full versions of the individual reports will be still available on the Council's website. They can be accessed through the performance section of the Council and Democracy area of the website.

The contact officer for this report is Tim Sadler, Strategic Director, telephone (01235 540360). Email address: [tim.sadler@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:tim.sadler@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

Recommendation

*That the Senior Management Team's Corporate Governance exception report and proposals be noted.*

14. **Budget Setting Process 2008/09**

(Pages 117 - 120)

To receive and consider report 75/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

Following the creation of the finance shared services partnership there is a need to develop common practices across the Council's and South Oxfordshire District Council's (SODC) finance function to ensure operational efficiencies are realised. This report proposes a harmonised approach to budget setting.

The report sets out the four stages the budget setting process will follow.

The contact officer for this report is William Jacobs (Head of Finance) telephone (01235 540455). Email address [William.jacobs@ridgeway-ssp.gov.uk](mailto:William.jacobs@ridgeway-ssp.gov.uk).

**Recommendations**

*That the budget setting process as detailed in this report and summarised in the timetable at appendix 1 is approved by the Executive.*

*That the Executive delegate authority to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to develop virement and supplementary estimate procedures appropriate to the budget setting process.*

**15. Communications Strategy**

**(Pages 121 - 128)**

To receive and consider report 76/07 of the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer.

**Introduction and Report Summary**

This report proposes the adoption of the communications strategy for the Vale as part of the Corporate Priority "Improving internal and external communications". The strategy needs to be adopted to move the priority forwards.

The strategy is based on information from the Senior Management Team and their service areas, the staff and Member survey and the public general satisfaction survey completed last financial year by polling company Ipsos MORI as part of the Best Value Performance Indicator requirement. The strategy is built from the position of where we are now and what we aim to achieve over the next three years. The communications policy is an inherent part of this.

The contact officer for this report is Nikki Malin, Head of Communications, telephone (01235 540376). **Email address [nikki.malin@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:nikki.malin@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)**

**Recommendations**

- (a) *that the Executive approve in principle the draft strategy to implement the Communications policy to be recommended to Council;*
- (b) *that the following policy which underpins the communications strategy is recommended for adoption by Council:*

*"The Council will adopt and implement a Communications Strategy which aims to safeguard and continuously improve:*

- *Customer satisfaction*
- *Involvement, engagement and information flow with staff and the community*
- *The Vale's reputation*
- *The Vale's website"*

16. **South East Plan - The Panel's Report**

(Pages 129 - 133)

The report of the Panel that considered the draft South East Plan was published at the end of August. This was considered by the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group on 24 September 2007. A copy of the report has been made available in the Members' Lounge at Abbey House, Abingdon and is available on line at [www.gose.gov.uk/gose/planning/regionalplanning](http://www.gose.gov.uk/gose/planning/regionalplanning). Annex 1 (attached) contains a summary of those issues in the Panel's report affecting the Vale.

There is no formal opportunity to comment at this stage; the next opportunity will be to respond to the Government's proposed modifications to the draft Plan due to be published at the end of the year. However, if there are matters of particular concern, a letter could be written to the Government Office as it may influence their consideration of the Panel's report and the subsequent modifications. The Advisory Group considers there are three areas where the Council should consider writing to the Government Office, as set out below.

Recommendations

*that the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy) be asked to write to the Government Office about the Panel's report on the draft South East Plan to:*

- (i) Advise that there is an error in the housing figures for the Vale;*
- (ii) Point out that full funding for the Harwell by-pass has not yet been identified but that every effort should be made to secure funding, including developer contributions. The Council therefore strongly supports the Panel's recommendation to refer to the pooling of developer contributions in the lower case text; and*
- (iii) Object to the reference to the Upper Thames reservoir being developed in Oxfordshire.*

17. **Partial Review of the South East Plan - Provision of Caravan Sites for Gypsies and Travellers**

(Pages 134 - 137)

To receive and consider report 77/07 of the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

SEERA is undertaking a partial review of the South East Plan relating to the provision of sites for gypsies and travellers in the south east. The first stage of the review is an opportunity for councils to submit their advice on the expected numbers and distribution of sites in their areas. In Oxfordshire a steering group of Councillors representing the County Council and the five District Councils has worked with the support of an officer working group to provide a response.

This work has involved consultation with stakeholders, a recalculation of the expected need as set out in the Association of Councils of the Thames Valley Regions (ACTVaR) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and an alternative disaggregation of the County figure down to District level. The recalculated need for the County to 2016 is 42 pitches in comparison to the original GTAA figure of 98 to 2016.



Advice on travelling showpeople was also requested but it was not considered that it was advisable to carry out a survey in the summer so the intention is that a survey will be carried out this winter. In line with other areas it was considered that advice could not be submitted to SEERA on transit provision and detailed costings.

Following submission of the advice to SEERA there will be public consultation on draft preferred option document and Sustainability Appraisal by SEERA May to July 2008, followed by submission of a draft Partial Review document and Sustainability Appraisal to Government in December 2008 and then an Examination in May 2009.

The Contact Officer for this report is Peter Williams, Principal Planning Officer, (01235 520202)

**Recommendations**

- (a) *that the Executive, in accordance with the agreed process approves the suggested overall provision of 42 pitches in Oxfordshire and provision for the Vale of either 1 pitch under option A or 8 pitches under option B and that a preference for option A be recorded by Executive for reference in future consultations;*
- (b) *that the participation in a joint study on travelling showpeople in winter 07/08 is approved by Executive, and*
- (c) *that the Executive approves no response being made to the request for transit site provision, as this should be considered by SEERA, or to the request for detailed implementation costs.*

**18. Joint Procurement of Waste Management Services - Memorandum of Understanding**

**(Pages 138 - 139)**

To receive and consider report 78/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

**Introduction and Report Summary**

The Vale has been working for a year with West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) with a view to jointly procuring the next contract for waste collection services. A recent report produced for the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership indicated that this was the lowest risk / best option for Oxfordshire Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) in terms of achieving financial efficiencies within the time frame of placing new contract(s) in 2009/10.

The Vale's Deputy Director for Contracts and Procurement is currently exploring two options for delivering the new contract(s) – a tri-partite approach by WODC, SODC and the Vale; or support for the South East Centre of Excellence, who are aiming to put in place Regional Framework Agreements for use by WCAs in the South East.

Joint working between the three authorities would be greatly facilitated by a Memorandum of Understanding committing each authority to the joint procurement exercise, to be signed by each participating authority as part of the governance

arrangements.

The contact officer for this report is Steve Bishop, Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer) 01235 540332. [steve.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:steve.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

### Recommendations

- (c) *The Executive approves that the Council should sign a Memorandum of Understanding committing the Council to a joint procurement exercise for waste collection services; and,*
- (d) *The Executive delegates authority to the Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer) in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Portfolio Holder for Waste Procurement to agree and sign a suitably worded Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Waste Procurement.*

## **19. Planning Delivery Grant 2007/08 – Provisional Second Tranche Allocations**

Members will be aware that the Department of Communities & Local Government has announced the latest Provisional Allocations of Planning Delivery Grant (2007/8) and that the Vale is likely to receive in the order of £389k. The Government has advised that this additional funding is to enable local authorities to improve their planning resources and services and to assist in the introduction of the many changes involved in its programme of planning reforms. The grant is required to be split 75%-25% between the recipient authority's resource and capital budgets.

The Vale's 2007/8 grant award is made up of the following award elements:

- Development Control performance: £147k  
(Reward for meeting application processing targets for major, minor & other applications in 2006/7)
- Housing: £180.5k  
(Reward for housing delivery in a "High Demand" area based on the net additions to housing stock over a rolled forward three year period)
- Plan making  
(Meeting the milestone targets in the Local Development Scheme & the extent to which the authority is able to report on a range of National Core Output indicators in its Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report) £ 58.5k
- E Planning  
(Reward for achieving e planning targets – the smallest component of the national award) £ 3k

The grant award will not be confirmed until later in the year, however, as the Executive will be preparing its revenue budget & capital programme over the next few months it would seem sensible to have the mechanism in place to authorise Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) expenditure, in particular where this can be seen to relieve pressures on the service area budget. Officers will be working up proposals designed to accord with

the Government's PDG objectives & ensure planning performance can be maintained and enhanced, but also, the aim will be to invest in schemes that will be of corporate wide benefit.

**Recommendation**

*That authority to agree expenditure of the Council's 2007/8 Planning Delivery Grant award be delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning & Community Strategy) in consultation with the Executive Portfolio holder for Planning & Community Strategy & the Opposition Planning Spokesperson.*

**20. Building Regulation Charges 2007/08**

**(Pages 140 - 150)**

To receive and consider report 79/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

**Introduction and Report Summary**

This report contains proposals to update this Council's Scheme of Charges for Building Regulations.

The changes are intended to ensure that the Charges:  
do not fall below the "proper costs" of the service provided  
are maintained at competitive and reasonable levels  
are presented in a simple and logical format and  
continue represent best value and the provision of a quality service

The contact officer for this report is Richard Beel, Head of Building Control. Tel: 01235 540355.

**Recommendation**

*The Executive recommends to the Council that:  
The Council adopts the revised "Scheme for the Recovery of Building Regulation Costs and Associated Matters" as its formal scheme, made under the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998, and to take effect from 1 October 2007.*

**21. Comments, Complaints and Compliments – Annual Review 2006/07**

**(Pages 151 - 160)**

The Comments and Complaints Annual Review for 2006/07 is attached. 125 complaints were received at Stage 1 under the Council's Comments and Complaints procedure and 99 recorded compliments. The majority of complaints were in connection with the procedures adhered to by Council staff and as part of the Complaints process recommendations will be discussed with relevant service areas to find ways of improving procedures where necessary. The recording of comments and complaints continues to be seen as a positive way of highlighting residents concerns.

**Recommendation**

*That the Comments and Complaints Annual Review for 2006/07 be received.*

**22. 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(I) and Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, to the Act when the following items are considered:

- Item 23 Minutes  
*(Category 2 - Information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual.)*  
*(Category 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information.)*
- Item 24 References from Other Committees  
*(Category 1 - Information relating to any individual.)*  
*(Category 2)*  
*(Category 3)*
- Item 25 Property Matters  
*(Category 3)*

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

**STANDING ITEMS**

**23. Minutes**

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Exempt minutes of the Executive meeting held on 13 July 2007, (copy previously circulated).

**OTHER MATTERS**

**24. References from Other Committees**

(Page 161)

To consider the attached references from the Personnel, Regulatory and Appeals Committee.

**25. 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

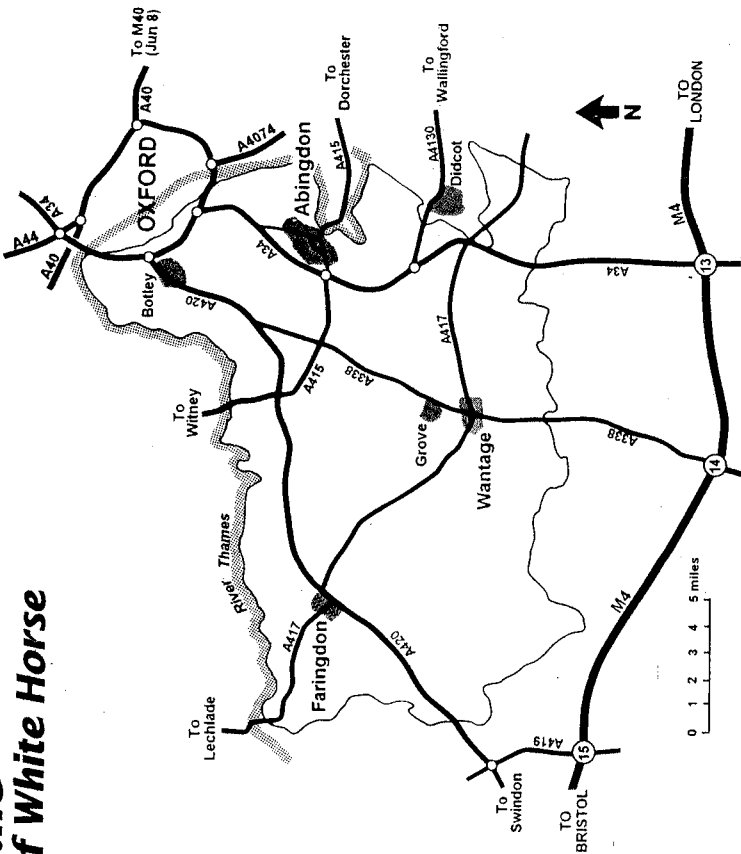
Create a safer community and improve the quality of life among Vale residents

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

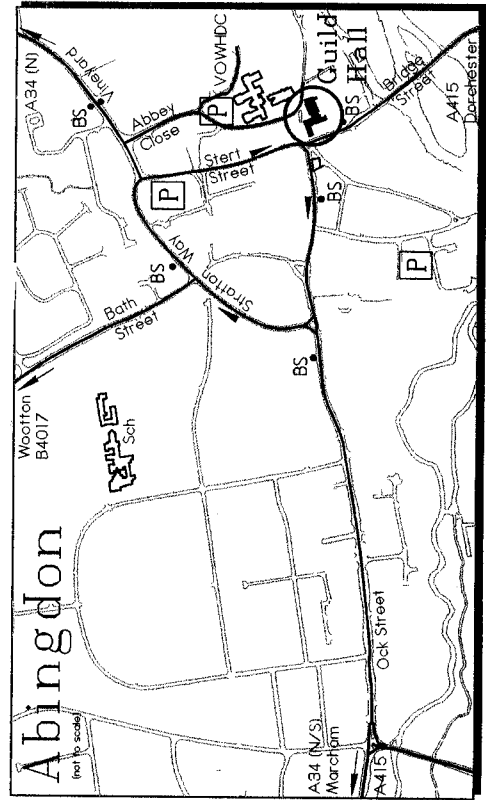
Help disadvantaged groups and individuals within the Vale to realise their full potential

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, Abingdon



KEY : BS = Bus Stop

# LOCATION MAP



**Note for Executive**

Virement requests received at 18 September 2007

**Key to Type**

- 1 Within a subjective within a cost centre
- 2 Within a Cost Centre but across subjective headings
- 3 Within the cost centres of a service area
- 4 Across service areas
- 5 Over £10,000

No.	Date	Account From	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Account To	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Virement Total £	Virement Percentage	Reason	Preventative Action	Type	Authorised by Director/Deputy Director	Requires Executive Approval	
1	02/08/2007	5000	RS71	Accountancy SSP	1001	RS11	Accountancy	9,840	2.4%	To provide budget for temporary Accountant for July - September during transition to Ridgeway/SODC	None - one off situation	3	Y	Y	
					1003	RS11	Accountancy	770	0.2%			3	Y	Y	
					1005	RS11	Accountancy	1,760	0.4%			3	Y	Y	
2	02/08/2007	5000	RS71	Accountancy SSP	1100	RS11	Accountancy	15,120	3.6%	To provide budget for temporary Chief Accountant for April - June during transition to Ridgeway/SODC	None - one off situation	3	Y	Y	
					1001	RS11	Accountancy	44,690	10.8%			3	Y	Y	
3	02/08/2007	5000	RS71	Accountancy SSP	1003	RS11	Accountancy	3,710	0.9%	To cover the cost of Accountancy staff not transferred to SODC until 1 July	None - one off situation	3	Y	Y	
					1005	RS11	Accountancy	8,310	2.0%			3	Y	Y	
					3008	RS11	Accountancy	140	0.0%			3	Y	Y	
					3010	RS11	Accountancy	530	0.1%			3	Y	Y	
4	07/09/2007	1005	CS11	CCTV	1207	CS11	CCTV	7,000	3.8%	To provide additional budget for shift allowance from predicted underspend on superannuation costs	Budget bid to be made for 2008/09	1	Y	N	
5	07/09/2007	9027	CS21	Community Safety	4706	CS21	Community Safety	14,830	10.9%	Funding from Government for the South East cut by 14% so expenditure on grants needs to be cut by a similar amount	N/a	2	Y	Y	
<b>Total Virements</b>								<b>106,700</b>							
<b>Summary</b>															
Total Type 1								7,000							
Total Type 2								14,830							
Total Type 3								84,870							
Total Type 4								-							
Total Type 5								-							
<b>Total</b>								<b>106,700</b>							

**Note to Executive**

**Key to Type**

- 1 Within a subjective within a cost centre
- 2 Within a Cost Centre but across subjective headings
- 3 Within the cost centres of a service area
- 4 Across service areas
- 5 Over £10,000

**Permanent Budget Adjustment Requests**

at 18 September 2007

No.	Date received	Account From	Code Centre	Cost Centre Name	Account to	Code Centre	Cost Centre Name	Adjustment total £	Reason	Type	
1	05/03/2007	1001	CH11	ICT	1001	CM31	Corporate Communications	26,770	Web Development function moved from ICT to Communications	3	
	05/03/2007	1003	CH11	ICT	1003	CM31	Corporate Communications	2,040		3	
	05/03/2007	1005	CH11	ICT	1005	CM31	Corporate Communications	4,980		3	
	05/03/2007	4512	CH11	ICT	4512	CM31	Corporate Communications	17,700		3	
2	04/05/2007	4400	DP01	Development Policy	1001	DP01	Development Policy	4,280		To fund the cost of regrading 2 Principal Officer posts following job evaluation from a reduction in Fees & Hired Services. (Approved by Executive Member under delegated powers 04/05/07)	2
	04/05/2007	4400	DP01	Development Policy	1003	DP01	Development Policy	1,080		2	
	04/05/2007	4400	DP01	Development Policy	1005	DP01	Development Policy	1,880		2	
3	15/05/2007	9307	BC01	Building Control	1100	BC01	Building Control	17,000	Increase in Building Control salaries to rectify a budgeting error, matched by additional income generated	2	
4	18/09/2007	4000	PA11	Highways Agency	2604	PA11	Highways Agency	13,300	Recurring SBCF posted to wrong account in 2006/07 and therefore converted incorrectly for 2007/08	2	
								<b>89,030</b>			
<b>Summary</b>											
Total Type 1								-			
Total Type 2								37,540			
Total Type 3								51,490			
Total Type 4								-			
Total Type 5								-			
<b>Total</b>								<b>89,030</b>			

**Note to Executive**

**Supplementary estimates approved by Strategic Director in consultation with the Leader of the Council**

as at 18 September 2007

No.	Date received	Account From	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Account To	Cost Centre Code	Cost Centre Name	Supplementary Estimate Total	Description
1	08/05/2007	4999	SB31	Contingency	4400	PS71	Non-operational Buildings	-£62,000	Return property consultancy budget to contingency - expenditure incurred in 2006/07 (see SBCF97)
2	29/06/2007	4999	SB31	Contingency	1001	LC11	Licensing	£3,400	
					1003			£320	
					1005			£630	
					1100			£2,270	Growth in the Licensing Unit from new duties, increased applications and increased enforcement cases
					1001	LC31	Taxi Licensing	£210	
					1003			£420	
					1005			£7,470	
					1100			£4,980	
3	13/07/2007	4999	SB31	Contingency	4308	RS61	Assisted Travel	£40,000	Expenditure on preparations for new bus pass scheme to be met from Government grant
		9027	RS61	Assisted Travel	4999	SB31	Contingency	-£40,000	
4	10/09/2007	4999	SB31	Contingency	1100	HR41	Payroll (Vale)	£7,500	Additional cost of Payroll during transition to shared service with SODC and cover for staff sickness
5	13/09/2007	4999	SB31	Contingency	2300		Various cost centres	£17,910	Annual uplift of budgets for business rates on Council property to reflect the increased multiplier rate
6	13/09/2007	4999	SB31	Contingency	2301		Various cost centres	£2,340	Annual uplift of budgets for council tax on Council property to reflect the increased charge
<b>Total Supplementary Estimates</b>								<b>-£14,550</b>	



**VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FORWARD PLAN**

**CONTAINING EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM 1 OCTOBER 2007 - 31 JANUARY 2008**

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.

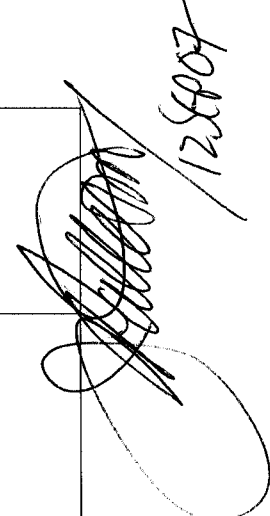
Where the decision is to be taken by the Executive, this comprises the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jerry Patterson, and the following elected Members: Councillors Mary de Vere, Tony de Vere, Richard Farrell, Jenny Hannaby, Bob Johnston and Angela Lawrence.

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 5 Oct 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 <a href="mailto:steve.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk">steve.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a>	2006/07 Budget
Budget Setting Process 2008/09	No	Executive 5 Oct 2007	October 2007	Councillor Tony de Vere	Executive Portfolio Holder	William Jacobs Tel. 01235 540455 E-mail: <a href="mailto:william.jacobs@ridgeway.ssp.gov.uk">william.jacobs@ridgeway.ssp.gov.uk</a>	None.

Decision	Key decision?	Decision maker	Date first published	Consultees	Consultation method	Contact	Documents used
Review of National Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief	No	Executive 5 Oct 2007	July 2007	Councillor Richard Farrell	Consult Executive Portfolio Holder then Executive to make recommendations for any policy changes to Council	Toby Warren Tel. 01235 547695 E-mail: <a href="mailto:toby.warren@whitehorsedc.gov.uk">toby.warren@whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a>	None.
Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy	No	Executive 5 Oct 2007	July 2007	Councillor Jenny Hannaby	Consult Portfolio Holders and Stakeholders	Michael Mackay Tel. 01235 540337 E-mail: <a href="mailto:michael.mackay@whitehorsedc.gov.uk">michael.mackay@whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a>	Planning Policy Guidance 17 Assessment
Procurement Strategy	No	Executive 5 Oct 2007	July 2007	Councillor Jenny Hannaby	Consult Strategic Review Committee and South Oxfordshire District Council	Michael Mackay Tel. 01235 540337 E-mail: <a href="mailto:michael.mackay@whitehorsedc.gov.uk">michael.mackay@whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a>	National Procurement Strategy for Local Government
Communications Strategy	No	Executive 5 Oct 2007	October 2007	Councillor Jerry Patterson		Helen Bishop tel. 01235 540372 E-mail: <a href="mailto:helen.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk">helen.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a>	None.
Payments Strategy	No	Executive 5 Oct 2007	October 2007	Councillor Tony de Vere		Helen Bishop tel. 01235 540372 E-mail: <a href="mailto:helen.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk">helen.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a>	None.

Decision	Key decision?	Decision maker	Date first published	Consultees	Consultation method	Contact	Documents used
Comments and Complaints Annual Review 2006/07	No	Executive 5 Oct 2007	July 2007	Councillor Jerry Patterson	Consult each Service Area	Helen Bishop tel. 01235 540372 E-mail: <a href="mailto:helen.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk">helen.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a>	Comments and Complaints received during 2006/07
Review of Flooding in the Vale July 2007 - following publication of Environment Agency report	No	Executive 7 Dec 2007	October 2007	Flood Recovery Grant Advisory Group Councillor Jerry Patterson	Review to be undertaken following publication of the Environment Agency's forthcoming report.	Tim Sadler, Strategic Director Tel. 01235 540360 E-mail: <a href="mailto:tim.sadler@whitehorse.dc.gov.uk">tim.sadler@whitehorse.dc.gov.uk</a>	None.
Award of Banking Contract	No	Executive 7 Dec 2007	October 2007	Councillor Tony de Vere	Executive Portfolio Holder	William Jacobs Tel. 01235 540455 E-mail: <a href="mailto:william.jacobs@ridgeway.ssp.gov.uk">william.jacobs@ridgeway.ssp.gov.uk</a>	None.
Old Gaol, Abingdon - Consideration of Bids from Short-listed Development Partners (Exempt Information)	KEY	Executive 7 Dec 2007	August 2007	Old Gaol Advisory Group and Councillor Jerry Patterson	Bids submitted by Development Partners considered by Old Gaol Advisory Group	Terry Stock, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service Tel. 01235 540301 E-mail: <a href="mailto:terry.stock@whitehorsedc.gov.uk">terry.stock@whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a>	None.



REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR & MONITORING OFFICER  
TO EXECUTIVE  
5 OCTOBER 2007

Community Grants

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the budget position for the Executive Committee in respect of Community Grants and to invite Members to consider and determine the grant applications received. The Executive currently considers grant applications bi-annually. Executive considered applications in April 2007 and the next meeting, at which the consideration of grants is planned, will be in April 2008 at the beginning of the next financial year.
- 1.2 The contact officer for this report is Lorna Edwards, Community Strategy Officer (Tel: 01235 547626).

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

- 2.1 This report supports the Council's Vision and Priorities. It also supports the Vale Community Strategy. It does not conflict with any Council strategy or any Council policy.

**3.0 Recommendations**

- (a) *Members are asked to note that the Executive's remaining budget for 2007/08 for Vale-wide grants is £5,914.*
- (b) *Members are asked to consider and determine the following grant applications and agree the Council agenda and priority:*
- (i) ***Oxfordshire Association for the Blind, £5,000, towards the cost of services for blind and visually-impaired residents in the Vale, Social Agenda, Access priority***
- (ii) ***South & Vale Carers Centre, £10,000, towards the cost of running the Outreach Service, Social Agenda, Access priority***
- (c) *Members are asked to consider and determine the following applications for funding from the Lottery and Other Grants Support Fund to release a grant from TOE (Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) or WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd), noting that the Fund currently has an unallocated balance of approximately £22,500:*
- (iii) ***Charney Hall and Field Trust, £5,000, to secure a TOE grant of £50,000, towards the redevelopment of Charney village hall***
- (iv) ***Sutton Courtenay Parish Council, £5,318.83, to secure a WREN grant of £48,353 towards phase 2 of the village hall refurbishment***

- (v) **Wootton and Dry Sandford Community Centre, £5,000**, to secure a TOE grant of £50,000, towards the redevelopment of the Community Centre.

#### 4.0 Community Grants

4.1 The budget position of the Executive for Vale-wide community grants for the remainder of 2007/2008 is shown below

Budget b/f 2006/07	Budget 2007/08	Total Budget 2007/08	Environmental Agenda Proportion	Social Agenda Proportion	Economic Agenda Proportion	Discretionary Proportion
£0	£23,814	£23,814	£8,334.90	£8,334.90	£2,381.40	£4,762.80
Allocated			£1,000 + £1,420.90 to Social = £2,420.90	£16,900 + £7,144.20 from Econ. & Discr.	£2,381.40 to Social Agenda	£4,762.80 to Social Agenda
Remaining		£5,914	£5,914	£0	£0	£0

#### 5.0 Applications

5.1 Applications for consideration under the Council's Community Grants Scheme have been received from the organisations listed below and there is a narrative providing additional details at Appendix A to the report. The total amount of grants requested is £15,000.

5.2 Members are asked to consider and determine the grant applications and to agree the Council Agenda and priority.

- (i) **Oxfordshire Association for the Blind, £5,000**, towards the cost of services for blind and visually-impaired residents in the Vale, Social Agenda, Access priority
- (ii) **South & Vale Carers Centre, £10,000**, towards the cost of running the Outreach Service, Social Agenda, Access priority

#### 6.0 Lottery and Other Grants Support Fund

6.1 Application have been received from the following organisations for third party funding from the Council in order to release a much larger grant from either TOE (Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) or WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd):

- (iii) **Charney Hall and Field Trust, £5,000**, to secure a TOE grant of £50,000, towards the redevelopment of Charney village hall
- (iv) **Sutton Courtenay Parish Council, £5,318.83**, to secure a WREN grant of £48,353 towards phase 2 of the village hall refurbishment
- (v) **Wootton and Dry Sandford Community Centre, £5,000**, to secure a TOE grant of £50,000, towards the redevelopment of the Community Centre

Further details on the application are included at Appendix A following the grant narratives for the applications already considered.

6.2 These applications comply with the criteria for an award from the Council's Lottery and Other Grants Support Fund which currently has a balance of approximately £22,500. Members are asked to consider and determine these applications from the Lottery and Other Grants Support Fund.

TOBY WARREN  
HEAD OF COMMUNITY STRATEGY

TIM SADLER  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR & MONITORING OFFICER

Background Papers: Applications and supporting documents

(i) **Applicant: Oxfordshire Association for the Blind (OAB), based in Gordon Woodward Way, Abingdon Road, Oxford**

**Years in existence:** 130 Years

**Type of organisation:** Charity (entirely independent local organisation, not affiliated to the RNIB)

**Project, service or event details:** Oxfordshire Association for the Blind is seeking a grant towards the running costs of providing a continued service to the blind and partially-sighted residents of the Vale which aims to improve their quality of life and help them to access services. The number of visually impaired people is rising as people live longer leading to an increasing demand for the services of OAB. Blind and partially-sighted people are most often elderly, frequently have additional disabilities, poor health, lack of access to facilities by reason of poor mobility and lack of information in appropriate formats, and they regularly have limited family support.

OAB addresses these needs by providing information, advice, equipment and support services to enable blind and visually-impaired residents to retain their independence and reduce their isolation. The Association works in partnership with the statutory agencies to supplement their provision in the following ways:

- Providing a Welfare Officer and a team of volunteers support the members of 3 self-help groups.
- Running a Resource Centre offering telephone advice, information leaflets, an award winning quarterly newsletter in appropriate formats, specialist equipment, often including free loan of expensive items, and counselling/emotional support.
- Providing a Counselling/Advice Worker based at the John Radcliffe Hospital to support patients immediately following a consultation.

Support for the services provided by the OAB is forthcoming from The Oxford Eye Hospital, Oxfordshire County Council's Social and Community Services, The Macular Disease Society, The Guide Dogs for the Blind and the Low Vision Services Committee of Oxfordshire. Some of these organisations have gathered evidence of need from local surveys they have carried out.

**Supports following Vale Community Strategy strands:** Access to Services, Health & Wellbeing

**Area of the Vale covered:** Vale wide

**Estimate of number of people the project/service/event will benefit in the Vale:** 990

**Charge to public for using the project/service/event?:** All services provided are free with the exception of specialist equipment which is for sale. An item can often be made available on loan to anyone experiencing financial hardship.

**Total estimated project cost:** £20,713.00 (VAT can not be reclaimed)

**Balances:** £398,631 at 31/03/07 of which £75,167 is restricted funds.

**Running costs:** £341,256 for year ending 31/03/07

**Own Contribution:** £12,213.00 through fundraising and they will continue to seek funding from a variety of sources both charitable and statutory. They are extending their fundraising capabilities with the setting up of a Patron's Circle lead by their Patron the Countess of Macclesfield. They also plan to start generating income by selling consultancy and training services, now that they have the appropriately trained personnel.

**Grant Sought:** £5,000.00

**Previous Awards (Vale):** £2,000.00 in 2006/07 towards services and the scoping of a future volunteer visitor service which they hope to commence as soon as other funding is secured.

**Parish Council Support:** Have applied to all the Parish Councils in the Vale area and have been awarded £415 to date, as follows:  
Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor £50, Watchfield £50, North Hinksey £180, Sunningwell £50, Shellingford £25, West Hendred £10, Kennington £50

**Other Support:** Support has been sought from a number of trusts for the OAB's work throughout Oxfordshire and a total of £12,500 has been raised to date. The proportion of the service users in the Vale area is 28.6% (994 people in the Vale out of 3,470 in the whole of Oxfordshire), therefore, approximately £3,500 of this amount will be used for work in the Vale. The outcome is awaited from another trust. Applications to a further five trusts have been unsuccessful.

South Oxfordshire District Council has awarded £4,730 towards OAB's work in that district. Applications have been submitted to the other district councils to support work with their residents and the outcome is awaited.

**Officer recommendation (Toby Warren, Head of Community Strategy):**

Recommend support	Yes
Amount recommended	
Reasons:	
Meets CG Scheme criteria	Yes
Supports Council priority(ies)	Cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment
Supports prospectus strand(s)	Access to services, Health & Well-being
Remaining budget	£5,914.00
Remaining Committee meetings	None
Total amount recommended for other applications being considered	N/A
Recommended conditions to grant award	
Other comments	



**(ii) Applicant: South and Vale Carers, based in Lydells Road, Didcot**

**Years in existence:** 13 years

**Applicant:** South and Vale Carers, based in Lydells Road, Didcot

**Years in existence:** 13 years

**Type of organisation:** Charity constituted as a Company Limited by Guarantee and is governed by a Memorandum & Articles of Association

**Project, service or event details:** The South and Vale Carers Centre is seeking a grant towards the running costs of providing an Outreach Service for adults and young carers in 2007/08. The Outreach Service provides information, advice and support for anyone who is looking after a friend or relative who, because of age, illness or disability can not look after themselves. The Outreach Workers offer home visits to carers which reduces social exclusion. They offer benefit checks as one way of helping carers maximise their income. They also offer emotional support and give carers the opportunities to discuss their options.

According to the 2001 census there are around 11,000 people caring in the Vale with around 4,000 people becoming carers each year. In feedback from carers 97% thought the service was good or very good and would recommend the centre to a friend. Typical of the feedback is the following comment from one carer: "I can't tell you what a relief it is to speak to people like you who understand and are able to give concrete advice. At last I feel we're heading in the right direction"

**Supports following Vale Community Strategy strands:** Access to Services, Health & Wellbeing

**Area of the Vale covered:** Vale wide.

**Estimate of number of people the project/service/event will benefit:** Last financial year they supported 395 new carers; they have supported 4,079 clients in the Vale since the Centre was established.

**Charge to public for using the project/service/event?:** None

**Total estimated project cost:** £271,000.00 excl VAT (can not reclaim VAT)

**Balances:** £99,212.00 at 31 March 2006

**Running costs:** £244,075 for year ending 31/03/06

**Own contribution:** Unable to allocate money from reserves because expect that Carers Support Grant from government may no longer be ringfenced in next financial year which would have an impact on county council funding to the Centre

**Grant Sought:** £10,000.00

**Previous Awards (Vale):** £539.00 in 2006/07 towards the outreach service.

**Parish Council Support:** Applications are made to all town and parish

councils once a year. This has raised £710.00 to date and raised £5,000.00 last year.

**Other Support:** Carers Support grant from Oxfordshire County Council £218,000.00 (government funding)  
 South Oxfordshire District Council £20,000.00 (Service Level Agreement) towards running costs  
 Rayne Foundation – refused  
 Awards for All – refused  
 Divisional Youth Forum £1,595.00 for a sessional Youth Worker to support Young Carers.  
 Henry Smith – awaiting decision  
 Esmee Fairbairn Foundation – awaiting decision  
 Garfield Weston Foundation – awaiting decision

**Officer recommendation (Toby Warren, Head of Community Strategy):**

Recommend support	Yes
Amount recommended	
Reasons:	
Meets CG Scheme criteria	Yes
Supports Council priority(ies)	Cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment
Supports prospectus strand(s)	Access to Services, Health & Wellbeing
Remaining budget	£5,914
Remaining Committee meetings	None
Total amount recommended for other applications being considered	N/A
Recommended conditions to grant award	
Other comments	

**Lottery and Other Grants Support Fund**

(iii) **Applicant: Charney Hall & Field Trust, Charney Bassett**

**Years in existence:** 51 years

**Type of organisation:** Charity

**Project, service or event details:** Charney Hall and Field Trust (CHAFT) is seeking a grant towards redeveloping the hall as a central facility meeting the different demands of the varied user groups across all ages and needs. The Trust’s objectives include extending the main hall, adding an external terrace and replacing the kitchen to comply with Health and Safety regulations. This will improve the community activities space. By installing appropriate toilet, flooring, acoustic and sight facilities together with a baby changing unit the trustees will meet accessibility needs. They would like to deliver more attractive and eco-friendly premises by removing unsightly outbuildings and annexes, installing environmentally-efficient systems and improving storage for key community resources.

A past referendum in the village identified the villagers' preference for the existing premises as the village hall. CHAFT needs to address disability and health and safety requirements in order to meet its constitutional responsibility. Consultation with and feedback from regular user groups, statistics on patterns of demand and discussions with the wider community on redevelopment proposals have all provided evidence that the hall is used widely by the local community.

Currently the hall hosts a toddler group, a youth group, local area Village College adult education classes, various recreation, sport and exercise classes, a coffee group (serving mainly the over-60s), the Vale Islanders Dance Group (drawing members from across the Vale), as well as public and parish meetings.

**Supports following Vale Community Strategy strands:** Town & Village Vitality, Access to Services, Recreation, Culture and Leisure, Environment, Education and Lifelong Learning, Health and Wellbeing.

**Area of the Vale covered:** The facilities are available to organisations vale-wide but especially serve the local communities of Charney Bassett, Lyford, Cherbury and Gainfield Benefice.

**Estimate of number of people the project/service/event will benefit:** 279

**Charge to public for using the project/service/event?:** Yes £3.50 per hour for residents, £10.00 for others.

**Total estimated project cost:** £164,441.00 incl full VAT (some aspects of the project may be granted exemption from VAT); £139,950 excl VAT

**Balances:** £11,902.94 as at 31/03/07

**Own Contribution:** £5,000.00 from reserves plus nearly £11,000.00 from fundraising events and donations. (This represents an average of £100.00 per household in Charney Bassett to date). Fundraising will continue. In addition members of the community are providing in-kind support in terms of administration, financial management, temporary accommodation during construction, onsite volunteer help as needed.

**Grant Sought:** £5,000.00 third party funding to release TOE grant (The trust originally applied to TOE for £10,000.00 but subsequently raised it to £50,000.00 on TOE's advice)

**Previous Awards (Vale):** 1998/1999: £5,000.00 towards the structural assessment costs and essential wall and roof repairs to the original Victorian Chapel element of the hall. This generated increased use of the hall within the village.

**Parish Council Support:** £500.00 awarded

**Parish Precept:** £2,700 (Band 'D' £18.96)

**Other Support:**  
£500.00 Doris Field Trust awarded

Outcomes are awaited from the following applications:  
£50,000 TOE (Trust for Oxfordshire Environment)

£10,000 Government's Low Carbon Energy Programme  
 £7,500.00 Oxfordshire County Council (agreed in principle, to be ratified)  
 £10,000 Awards for All  
 £15,000 other local and national bodies  
 £8,000 donations (Local Charney Challenge target)  
 £7,000 projected from planned future events  
 £15,000 local business sponsorship

Big Lottery Community Fund – application commended but unsuccessful.

**Officer recommendation (Toby Warren, Head of Community Strategy):**

Recommend support	Yes
Amount recommended	£5,000
Reasons:	This modest sum will unlock a far larger grant which will make a significant difference to the fundraising effort.
Meets Scheme criteria	Yes
Supports Council priority(ies)	Cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment
Supports prospectus strand(s)	Town & Village Vitality, Access to Services, Recreation, Culture and Leisure, Environment, Education and Lifelong Learning, Health and Wellbeing.
Remaining budget	£22,500
Remaining Committee meetings	N/A
Total amount recommended for other applications being considered	£10,318.83
Recommended conditions to grant award	
Other comments	TOE requires 3 <sup>rd</sup> party funding of 10% of the sum sought, to unlock a grant. This amount goes direct to TOE and is not counted as part of the funds raised towards the total project cost.

**(iv) Applicant: Sutton Courtenay Parish Council**

**Years in existence:** 113 years

**Type of organisation:** Parish Council

**Project, service or event details:** Sutton Courtenay Parish Council is seeking a grant towards Phase 2 of the village hall refurbishment project. The projects aims are two-fold: to increase the flexibility of the facilities and make them more user-friendly; and to ensure that the facilities meet the current and proposed future standards of accessibility and fire, health and environmental safety. Whilst these outcomes will benefit the whole community, specific elements of the project will address the special needs of the young and elderly, issues of access and health and disability.

This work to be carried out will include rewiring the electrical installation to meet current safety standards, using energy-efficient heating and lighting; installing an audio and loop induction system; expanding the storage facilities and improving access to them; increasing the usable space in the hall; improving roof insulation to reduce heat loss; replacing worn out and unsafe chairs, tables, curtains and carpets; installing a secure cycle rack to encourage the use of cycles.

The village hall is managed on behalf of the Parish Council (Custodian Trustees) by Sutton Courtenay Village Hall Management Committee with income generated from hire charges, a Parish Council grant, fundraising events and grants for specific projects.

Currently over 2000 people make use of the village hall's facilities each year and it is hoped to increase this number as the hall's amenities are improved. Wide consultation with, and feedback from, users and the wider village community shows that the village hall is a valued facility, that the phase 1 improvements were long overdue and that the planned phase 2 refurbishment is essential.

**Supports the following Vale Community Strategy strands:** Town & Village Vitality, Access to Services, Recreation, Culture and Leisure, Safe and Supportive Communities

**Area of the Vale covered:** Sutton Courtenay and the surrounding villages. It also serves as a venue for one-off public information events organised by the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and Youth services for residents of the Vale area.

**Estimate of number of people the project/service/event will benefit:** The population of Sutton Courtenay (25,000) and surrounding towns and villages.

**Charge to public for using the project/service/event?:** Main hall £8 per hour, Kitchen £2 per hour, Committee Room £6 per hour

**Total estimated project cost:** £133,888.00 incl VAT, £113,947 excl VAT (VAT may be reclaimed)

**Balances:** £25,619 at 31 March 2007

**Own Contribution:** £5,604.00

**Grant Sought:** £5,318.83 as third party funding for the WREN grant application.

**Previous Awards (Vale):** In 2004/05 a grant of £4,759 was awarded (third party funding for a WREN application plus an element of direct funding for Phase 1 of this project).

**Parish Council Support:** £2,000. In addition, the Parish Council gives an annual grant (£2,000 in the current financial year) towards the running costs of the village hall.

**Parish Precept:** £34,513 (Band 'D' £34.53)

**Other Support:** Locally raised funds £5,604.00 (plus an amount to unlock TOE funding)  
Sutton Courtenay (National Power) Charity £4,000.00 awarded

Applications to WREN £48,353.00  
 COMMA (Community Aggregates Fund) £26,565.00,  
 TOE £19,425.00,  
 Awards for All £10,000.00.  
 Decisions on the above-listed applications expected by mid December.

**Officer recommendation (Toby Warren, Head of Community Strategy):**

Recommend support	Yes
Amount recommended	£5,318.83
Reasons:	This modest sum will unlock a far larger grant which will make a significant difference to the fundraising effort.
Meets Scheme criteria	Yes
Supports Council priority(ies)	Cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment
Supports prospectus strand(s)	Town & Village Vitality, Access to Services, Recreation, Culture and Leisure, Safe and Supportive Communities
Remaining budget	£22,500
Remaining Committee meetings	N/A
Total amount recommended for other applications being considered	£10,000
Recommended conditions to grant award	
Other comments	WREN requires 3 <sup>rd</sup> party funding of 11% of the sum sought, to unlock a grant. This amount goes direct to WREN and is not counted as part of the funds raised towards the total project cost.

**(v) Applicant: Wootton and Dry Sandford Community Centre, Besselsleigh Road, Wootton**

**Years in existence:** 60 years

**Type of organisation:** Not for profit company limited by guarantee and a charity

**Project, service or event details:** Wootton and Dry Sandford Community Centre is seeking third party funding to obtain a grant of £50,000 from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) towards the redevelopment of the community centre which is in need of major renovation. Internal modifications will make the facilities far more flexible enabling a combination of rooms to be used for larger functions and events. The modified structure will be based on high standards of disability access and facilities as well as energy efficiency. Particular attention will be paid to sustainability and environmental issues.

A wide range of groups catering for all ages currently use the community centre. Consultations with potential users have been held over a number of years starting with a village appraisal in the early 1990s. In the last year a survey of the whole community has

been undertaken. Responses to all surveys and consultations over the years have shown a strong degree of agreement about the facilities, space and appearance.

Besides increasing the number of regular user groups (currently around twenty) the enhanced facilities will be attractive to occasional users and the additional income will make a significant financial contribution to the running costs of the community centre.

**Supports following Vale Community Strategy strands:** Town and Village Vitality, Recreation, Culture and Leisure

**Area of the Vale covered:** Wootton village, Cothill, Dry Sandford, ward of St Helen Without Parish Council and surrounding areas.

**Estimate of number of people the project/service/event will benefit:** over 1,000 current regular users but potentially a much larger number of people.

**Charge to public for using the project/service/event?:** Small charge for use of facilities

**Total estimated project cost:** £596,000.00 excl VAT; £700,000.00 including VAT (VAT can not be reclaimed by the committee).

**Balances:** £196,108.00 as at 31 March 2007

**Own Contribution:** £5,000.00 plus outcome of public appeal fundraising at a later stage. A working party comprising about ten people has met on a regular basis over the last two years to plan this project.

**Grant Sought:** £5,000.00 as third party funding to secure a TOE grant

**Previous Awards (Vale):** None

**Parish Council Support:** Wootton Parish Council has committed £30,000.00; an additional £45,000.00 in section 106 income is designated for the project.

**Other Support:** BIG lottery fund: £25,000.00 development grant awarded following stage one submission to assist in preparing stage two submission for £470,000.00.

TOE, in addition to considering the application under their own grant scheme (£50,000.00 maximum), has offered assistance in applying to Biffaward for the same amount.

Oxfordshire County Council £10,000.00 from their Village Hall Support Scheme will be considered from next year's budget.

Discussions underway for funding through the Low Carbon Buildings Programme.

A pre-application has been submitted to the Football Association for a £70,000.00.

**Officer recommendation (Toby Warren, Head of Community Strategy):**

Recommend support	Yes
Amount recommended	£5,000
Reasons:	This modest sum will unlock a far larger grant which will make a significant difference to the fundraising effort.

Meets Scheme criteria	Yes
Supports Council priority(ies)	Cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment
Supports prospectus strand(s)	Town and Village Vitality, Recreation, Culture and Leisure
Remaining budget	£22,500
Remaining Committee meetings	N/A
Total amount recommended for other applications being considered	£10,318.83
Recommended conditions to grant award	
Other comments	TOE requires 3 <sup>rd</sup> party funding of 10% of the sum sought, to unlock a grant. This amount goes direct to TOE and is not counted as part of the funds raised towards the total project cost.



**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (CONTRACTS & PROCUREMENT)**  
**TO THE EXECUTIVE**  
**5 OCTOBER 2007**

**Draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy**

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

- 1.1 The title of this draft strategy reflects the fact that it derives from the work done to deliver objectives outlined in the Government's planning guidance PPG17 "Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation" (July 2002). This draft strategy is based on a wide-ranging assessment of provision established through a detailed physical audit of all facilities across the Vale (whether in District, Parish or other ownership), a Vale Voice Citizens Panel survey in 2006 and a survey of Town and Parish Councils.
- 1.2 Open spaces and sport and recreation facilities are fundamental to quality of life in the Vale and the Council needs a strategy to manage and develop these facilities. The strategy identifies the key issues facing the Council and provides a vision and plan for tackling these issues. It provides an evidence base to support policies for open space, sport and recreation in the Council's developing Local Development Framework. It also strengthens the Council's ability to justify and secure s106 contributions from developers. The strategy is supported by a detailed background document, including amongst other things the detailed survey documentation.
- 1.3 The contact officer for this report is Mike Mackay, Deputy Director (Contracts and Procurement), telephone 01235 540337. **Michael.mackay@whitehorsedc.co.uk**.

**2.0 Recommendation**

*That the Executive approves the draft strategy.*

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

- 3.1 This report relates to the Council's Vision in that it supports the Council's aims to improve the quality of life for residents and to protect the natural environment and the Council's priority to create a cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment. The report does not conflict with any Council Strategies.
- 3.2 Furthermore, the report complies with existing local planning policies and reflects the Council's policy with regard to equalities and diversity and the emerging sustainability strategy. The report supports the Vale's Community Strategy, Corporate and Performance Plans. (Full details are at section 2 of the Draft Strategy).

**4.0 Timetable**

- 4.1 Following approval of the draft strategy it is anticipated that consultation will commence for a period of 6 weeks on 1 November 2007. A consultation plan is being drawn up by officers from planning, leisure and corporate communications. It is intended that the strategy will be formally adopted no later than 01 April 2008.

## 5.0 Budget / Resource Implications

5.1 It should be recognised that implementation of this strategy through the Delivery Plan will be constrained by the Council's financial position and other resource constraints. Successful implementation will also require Parish Councils to play their part in partnership with the Vale. There are four potential resource implications consequent upon the implementation of this strategy.

- Maintaining the integrity of the survey data – it is recommended that 20% of facilities are re-audited every year. There may be costs in carrying out the surveys and maintaining the database. These are estimated to be £10k per annum.
- The majority of the open spaces in the District belong to the parish councils and it is these locations that are most in need of improvement. There are potential costs in supporting parish councils and local communities in managing and developing the quality of their open spaces, however the objective will be to provide this support through re-prioritising workload within the Leisure Services team and through community grants and / or charging for our services to ensure this support is cost neutral to the Council.
- It is likely that the Council will incur additional costs in enhancing existing poor quality open space, particularly with regard to access for the disabled, a provisional capital sum of £20k is suggested.
- Finally, the implementation of the strategy and the Planning SPD will enable the Council to improve it's performance in obtaining s106 contributions from developers but this will require additional resource in Leisure services, expected to be a part time s106 officer post. The annual cost of such a post is estimated at £20k per annum.

All of the above costs are provisional and will be finalised as part of the budget setting process for 2008/09. These costs will be far outweighed by the anticipated s106 contributions which will be made possible by the adoption of a robust strategy.

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STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

The Vale of White Horse  
**Open Space, Sport and Recreation  
Provision Strategy**

Draft for Consultation: September 2007

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# 1: Foreword

Open spaces and sport and recreation facilities are fundamental to the quality of life in the Vale. They provide opportunities for people to enjoy themselves in their spare time and to take part in a wide range of social or solitary, active or passive, indoor or outdoor activities. It is therefore entirely appropriate for the owners and managers of the main part of this hugely important resource – the District Council and its Town and Parish Council partners - to have a strategy to ensure concerted action to make the most of it in the both the short and long term..

The District Council has long recognised this, as has the Government. Accordingly this strategy is a direct response to policies set out by both of them. It covers:

- The **policy context** within which the strategy is set
- The **background information** on which the Council has based it and the **main issues** that implementation of the strategy will tackle
- A succinct **vision for the future** of open space, sport and recreation provision in the Vale, together with a **delivery plan** setting out what the Council and its partners should do in order to deliver the vision and the specific outcomes they aim to achieve
- How the Council and its partners will keep the strategy under **review**

The Council has based this draft strategy on a wide-ranging assessment of open space, sport and recreation provision across the Vale, summarised in a background report which:

- Describes the policy context within which the strategy is set
- Reviews and identifies local needs, based on a special Vale Voice Citizens' Panel survey and a survey of the District's Town and Parish Councils
- Summarises the results of a detailed audit of existing provision
- Derives provision standards for inclusion in the Council's Local Development Framework
- Identifies the key issues summarised in this strategy document



## 2: The Policy Context

### Introduction

This strategy links directly to a “cascade” of related policies and strategies that will help determine the future of the Vale. Nationally, the key element of this cascade is the Government’s guidance *Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation* (PPG17); locally, it supports policies set out in the Vale’s Community Strategy and the District Council’s Corporate and Performance Plans. It also provides an evidence base to support policies for open space, sport and recreation in the Council’s forthcoming Local Development Framework.

### National Policy: PPG17

In PPG17, *Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation* (July 2002), the Government sets out how well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broad objectives, specifically:

- Supporting an urban renaissance
- Supporting rural renewal
- Promoting social inclusion and community cohesion
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Promoting more sustainable development

These objectives can best be delivered locally, by local authorities and their partners. Accordingly, PPG17 states that

- Local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their community (paragraph 1)
- Local authorities should also undertake audits of existing open space, sport and recreational facilities (paragraph 3)
- Assessments and audits will allow local authorities to identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies or surpluses of open space, sport and recreation facilities in their areas. They form the starting point for establishing an effective strategy for open space, sport and recreation at the local level (tied to the local authority’s Community Strategy) and for effective planning through the development of appropriate policies in plans (paragraph 4)
- The Government expects all local authorities to carry assessments of needs and audits of open spaces and sports and recreation facilities (paragraph 5)
- Local authorities should use the information gained from

their assessments of needs and opportunities to set locally determined standards for the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities in their areas. Local standards should include:

- Quantitative elements (how much new provision may be needed)
- A qualitative component (against which to measure the need for enhancement of existing facilities) and
- Accessibility, including distance thresholds and consideration of the cost of using a facility (paragraph 7)

## Local Policy

### The Vale's Community Strategy 2004-8

The Community Strategy has a key objective of "improving the quality of life in the Vale", to be achieved through co-ordinated action in nine main areas. This strategy relates directly to four of them:

- **Recreation, Culture and Leisure:** expand the range of facilities/affordable venues
- **Community:** reduce the sense of isolation and alienation amongst older people; promote and support volunteering; foster a spirit of community by developing infrastructure and breaking down barriers between different groups; and encourage local issues groups
- **Environment:** promote greater engagement and education of communities on environmental issues; and ensure services are provided in a sustainable manner
- **Health and well-being:** maximise opportunities for older people to exercise; and increase use of local facilities

### The Council's Corporate Plan 2005-8

The Council's overall vision is "to build and safeguard a fair, open and compassionate community" and its aspiration is to protect and enhance the sustainability of the Vale through the economic, environmental and social vitality of its town and villages. In order to deliver its vision the Council has set aims relating to :

- Strengthening local democracy and public involvement
- Creating a safer community and improve the quality of life of Vale residents
- Protecting and improving the built and natural environment

In addition, the Council has made a commitment to devoting extra resources over the lifetime of the Plan towards three things, one of which is creating a cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment. Other commitments under this broad theme include:

- Develop a parks and green spaces strategy which includes playground provision
- Carry out a review to enable the Council as planning authority, to optimise contributions from new developments



towards leisure, culture and recreation facilities

### **Local Plan 2011**

The Adopted Local Plan 2011 sets out the Council's current planning policies for open space, sport and recreation. The most relevant are:

- **Policies L1 and L4**, which protect existing outdoor play space and allotments but allow development if the outcome will not be a deficiency in provision
- **Policy L2**, which protects all urban open spaces defined on the Proposals Map
- **Policy L7**, which protects local leisure facilities unless there is no longer a need for them or appropriate compensatory provision will result
- **Policy H23**, which requires residential developers proposing to build 15 or more dwellings, or to develop sites of over 0.5 ha, to lay out at least 15% of the site area for public open space and make suitable arrangements for its future management and maintenance
- **Policy DC8**, which seeks financial contributions from developers to meet the costs of the social and physical infrastructure needed to support their developments

The Local Development Framework will supersede the Local Plan within the next few years. As part of the process of preparing it, the Council will necessarily review its existing policies in the light of this strategy and the Corporate Plan objective of delivering a cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community.

### **Vale of White Horse District Council Performance Plan 2005-08**

The Council Performance Plan's overall aim is to seek the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the Vale by protecting and enhancing the vitality of its towns and villages, with a specific focus on creating a cleaner, greener, safer and healthier environment. As part of this it repeats the commitment in the Corporate Plan to "Develop a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy which includes playground provision".

This strategy therefore:

- Meets the requirements of PPG17 in relation to the things the Government requires local authorities to do in order to plan effectively for open space, sport and recreation provision
- Seeks to enhance the quality of life in the Vale, in accordance with specific aims in the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan
- Fulfils the commitments in the Council's Corporate and Performance Plans to prepare a greenspaces strategy and optimise contributions from developments towards leisure

provision

## 3: Background Information

### Introduction

This strategy is based on:

- The views of local residents, as established through a Vale Voice Citizens' Panel survey in 2006
- The views of the District's Town and Parish Councils
- Analysis of an audit of greenspaces and sports and recreation facilities across the District, undertaken in accordance with PPG17
- The derivation and application of locally determined provision standards, as required by PPG17; these standards will be included in a Supplementary Planning Document as part of the Council's Local Development Framework in due course
- A number of key issues, derived from the above context, that will affect the future of open space, sport and recreation provision across the Vale

Full information on all of these matters is set out in a background report which is too long to be included as an integral part of the strategy.

### Local Views

Overall, the views of the Vale Voice Citizens' Panel and the views expressed by the Town and Parish Councils were very similar. They identified the key local needs as (in alphabetical order):

#### More:

- Fitness areas
- Hard surfaced multi-sports areas
- Indoor tennis courts
- Nature conservation/wildlife areas
- Off-road cycleways
- Parks and public gardens
- Play facilities for 8-12 years
- Sports halls
- Squash courts
- Swimming pools
- Teenage facilities
- Water sports areas
- Youth centres

#### Better:

- Indoor tennis courts
- Sports halls
- Squash courts
- Swimming pools
- Teenage facilities
- Youth centres

## The Audit of Local Provision

The audit identified the quality and value of around 700 greenspaces and sport and recreation facilities across the District:

- **Quality** relates to the range of features or facilities on the site (eg trees, shrubs or seats), their basic characteristics (eg appropriate to the site or not), and their condition (eg on a spectrum from very good to very poor)
- **Value** is nothing to do with monetary value but refers to the value of a site to people and bio-diversity; to its cultural and heritage value; and to its strategic value - for example, by providing a sense of open-ness in a densely developed area.

The audit criteria were specific to the various types of spaces or facilities in the Vale, which made it possible to identify each space or facility as being of high or low quality and value in terms of their primary purpose. The various "primary purposes" used for the audit were:

- Allotments
- Amenity greenspaces: informal recreation spaces, mainly in and around housing areas
- Artificial turf pitches
- Bowling greens
- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Natural greenspaces: woodland and all land with a nature conservation value or designation
- Parks and gardens
- Playing fields, including recreation grounds
- Play areas and playgrounds: equipped play areas intended for children up to the age of about 12, split into areas for those aged below and above 8
- Teenage facilities: skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops and other informal areas intended primarily for teenagers
- Tennis and multi-courts: hard surfaced outdoor areas designed for sports such as tennis, netball and 5-a-side football
- Indoor sports facilities

Most greenspaces enhance the amenity of the area in which they are set, almost irrespective of their primary purpose. The strategy reflects this by referring to publicly accessible amenity greenspaces, cemeteries and churchyards, natural greenspaces, parks and gardens and playing fields as "multi-functional greenspaces". Taken together, they make up the District's

“green network”.

Appendix A summarises the quality and value scores from the audit.

## Provision Standards

The derivation of PPG17-compliant provision standards for the Vale’s Local Development Framework is set out in detail in the background report and accompanying appendices. These standards will be critically important in helping the District Council negotiate planning agreements and developer contributions to new or enhanced provision required as the direct result of new housing developments. As such they are intended to satisfy the Corporate Plan commitment to “carry out a review to enable the Council ... to optimise contributions from new developments towards leisure, culture and recreation facilities”, at least in relation to open spaces and sport and recreation facilities.

These standards take three forms:

- **Accessibility standards** in the form of “distance thresholds” derived from the results of the Vale Voice survey. They represent the distances that around three quarters of Vale residents are willing to walk, cycle or drive to use different forms of provision. Appendix B gives the proportion of properties readily accessible to different forms of provision using the recommended distance thresholds.
- **Quality standards**, derived from published guidance and good practice, which are an aspiration for existing spaces and facilities and a requirement for new spaces or facilities provided or funded by developers. The quality standards are set out in a Background Report but too long to be included in this strategy document.
- **Quantity standards**, or the amount of different forms of provision required per person across the Vale in order to meet local needs. The proposed quantity standards are also set out in a Background Report.

## Key Issues

This background work identified the issues summarised below.

### Policy Issue 1: Sustainability and Climate Change

#### Issue

The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) suggests the following changes to the UK climate are highly likely:

- Annual warming by the end of the century of between 1 and 5 degrees Celsius
- Greater summer warming
- Increase in the number of very hot days
- Decrease in the number of very cold days
- Generally wetter winters, with more periods of heavy rainfall
- Decreases in soil moisture in summer and autumn

These changes are likely to result in the UK having a warmer,

wetter future. They will almost certainly generate a number of potentially significant impacts for the Vale and other areas, including:

- Increased plant growth
- Earlier flowering and longer growing seasons for some species, leading to higher maintenance costs
- Later leafing in spring and leaf fall in autumn in some tree species
- Increased frost damage when less frequent frosts occur
- Curtailed flowering of hardy perennials
- Increased water stress on plants and trees in summer, leading to losses
- Increased virulence of pests and diseases
- Increased competition from weeds
- Grass swards will become more difficult to maintain owing to the effects of waterlogging in winter and drought in summer and more cuts will be needed in spring and autumn
- Increased need for watering, possibly coupled with hosepipe bans
- More winter depressions and gales, with the danger of losing trees
- Changes to habitats which are likely to result in the loss or migration of some currently common species
- Increased concerns over skin cancer and changes to when people will like to be outside, with fewer "heat of the day" and more early evening outdoor activities in summer
- More flooding of low lying areas
- Reduced need for the heating of buildings – but possibly a need for increased cooling - coupled with a need to enhance their energy performance

### **The Big Question**

What are the key implications of climate change for the Vale's greenspaces and sports facilities and how should it tackle them?

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Increase the composting of waste
- Provide more street trees to absorb pollution, provide shade and reduce the air temperature in urban areas
- Give priority to floodlit artificial pitches so as to minimise the disruption to football league programmes as a result of heavy rain and waterlogging of grass pitches in winter, with knock-on implications for cricket in the summer
- Promote the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage schemes as integral components of new developments
- Review and amend the selection of plants, trees and shrubs in new or when enhancing greenspaces
- Use earth bunds and greenspaces to help control or contain flooding
- Use easily retro-fitted measures to reduce the energy consumption of existing sports and leisure buildings, such as

rainwater harvesting, the use of grey water, ground source heat pumps and photo-voltaic systems

- Ensure new sports and leisure buildings incorporate measures to generate renewable energy on-site
- Reduce the use of water in swimming pools and leisure centres

Note: the Vale's Draft Climate Change Strategy includes a wide range of initiatives which will tackle this issue generally

## **Policy issue 2: Working with Partners**

### **Issue**

The District Council owns and manages only a relatively small proportion of the spaces and facilities in the Vale, with most the responsibility of one of the town or parish councils. Accordingly the District Council needs to work closely with them.

### **The Big Question**

How can the District, Town and Parish Councils best work together to deliver this strategy?

### **Possible Initiatives**

Some of the areas on which it will be desirable for the District, Town and Parish Councils to concentrate :

From the Vale Voice survey:

- Replacement of trees
- Speed of resolution of grounds maintenance problems
- Contacting the Council to report maintenance issues
- The clearing of leaves in autumn
- The maintenance of sports pitches
- The removal of litter from parks and play areas

Other possible changes:

- The nature of play and teenage facilities
- Signage
- Greenspace enhancements
- Maintenance specifications
- The creative use of development to deliver better spaces or facilities
- Britain in Bloom

This suggests it may be desirable to have something like a "Vale Greenspace Partnership" to discuss issues and agree common approaches in order to make the best use of resources.

## **Policy Issue 3: Promoting Local Pride**

### **Issue**

The Vale Voice survey identified that District residents are generally very satisfied with the quality of grounds maintenance. However, a majority of respondents expressed concerns relating

to:

- Litter (96%)
- Dog fouling in or near play areas (94%)
- Fly tipping (88%)
- Dog fouling on public land (84%)
- Abandoned vehicles (82)
- Graffiti (81%)
- Fly posting (62%)

While many respondents no doubt see these problems as a failure of whoever is responsible for management and maintenance, this is not the case. Their cause is the behaviour of some users of greenspaces. If local people didn't drop litter, for example, there would not be a litter problem. Therefore the greatest gains are to be made by changing individuals' behaviour, rather than changing management and maintenance regimes, and this should also free resources for other tasks and initiatives. In any case it would be unrealistic to increase the amount of litter picking that is possible in high use visitor facilities such as Disneyworld, where staff ensure that any litter dropped by visitors is picked up within a few minutes.

### **The Big Questions**

How can the District Council and its partners best bring home to the relatively small proportion of unthinking people the impact or consequences of their actions, and persuade them to change their behaviour? How can it best develop local pride?

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Work closely with and through the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership, which is managing the County Council's Local Area Agreement "Clean and Green" initiative
- A concerted campaign to highlight the results of the Vale Voice survey and cost to Council Tax payers of those who create the problems
- Working with schools to bring home to pupils the need not to drop litter or take part in anti-social activities
- "Clean-up" days
- The creation of Business Improvement Districts in the Vale's main towns
- A competition to find the Vale's cleanest, greenest town or village
- Publicity for the Play Strategy's proposed approach to the development of naturalistic play spaces rather than equipped play areas

## **Policy Issue 4: Planning Policy**

### **Issue**

The basic policy for open space, sport and recreation provision in the core strategy should be designed to help deliver the Community Strategy, the Council's Corporate Plan objective of a



cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment and the vision driving this strategy (see Section 4 below). They imply that the Council's broad priority across most of the District should be to enhance the overall quality of existing provision rather than to secure more of it. In areas where there will be significant housing developments, however, the best approach is likely to be a mix of new provision, to meet additional needs arising from population growth, coupled with enhancing existing spaces and facilities to increase their capacity to accommodate demand.

The Vale's current planning policy for open space, sport and recreation provision, however, takes a slightly different approach and has two main thrusts:

- To protect existing greenspaces and leisure facilities from development (policies L2 and L7), although Policies L1 and L4 allow development on allotment sites and outdoor play spaces (where there is, or will be as a result of the development, a local deficiency) if this will result in compensatory provision of equal or better value in terms of size, quality and accessibility
- To require developers generally to provide more playing space (as defined in the NPFA Six Acre Standard), although Policy H23 notes that developments of fewer than 15 dwellings, on sites of less than 0.5 ha or where on-site provision is not appropriate, the Council may seek contributions to new or improved off-site provision.

### **The Big Questions**

What policy approach will best help to deliver the Community Strategy and Council's Corporate Plan objectives? Will rolling the present policy approach forward into the LDF achieve this, or will it be better to adopt an approach more like Policy L4 that allows development on some existing spaces and facilities in return for better provision in a suitable location, while also placing a greater emphasis on the enhancement of existing spaces and facilities where there are clusters of poor quality or value provision?

### **Possible Initiatives**

An alternative policy approach might be something along the lines of:

*(a) Proposals which involve the loss of open space or sport and recreation provision*

The Council will allow proposals which will result in the loss of open spaces or sport and recreation facilities provided the site that will be lost is not significant in terms of nature conservation or amenity value, subject to the following policy tests:

- The site that will be lost is clearly surplus to requirements in terms of its current use and there is no foreseeable need for it to be used for a different form of open space or sport and recreation provision; or
- The development will result in the enhancement of other spaces or facilities and represent a greater benefit to the community served by the space or facilities that will be lost than retention of that provision; or
- The development will result in replacement provision which will be at least as accessible, at least equivalent in terms of attractiveness, visual amenity and quality and capable of accommodating and sustaining at least the same levels and types of use as the provision which will be lost; or
- The proposed development is ancillary to the use of land used for sport and physical recreation and will not adversely affect either the level of use it can sustain or the quality of provision

*(b) All Other Proposals*

Depending on the size of the proposed development, its location and likely impact in terms of increasing the demand pressures on open space and sport and recreation provision, the Council may require developers:

- To make on-site provision; or
- To fund off-site provision; or
- To fund the enhancement of off-site provision

*(c) Management and Maintenance*

The Council will require developers to make arrangements for the long term management and maintenance of all new or enhanced provision resulting from development. This may be achieved by:

- The developers making arrangements which are acceptable to the Council for the management and maintenance in perpetuity of on-site spaces or facilities intended predominantly for the benefit of the residents or users of the associated development
- The Council adopting new or enhanced off-site provision (assuming it does not already own it), at no cost to the Council, together with a commuted maintenance sum sufficient to fund management and maintenance for a period of 25 years

**Policy Issue 5:  
Capital and Revenue  
Funding**

**Issue**

Almost all the management and maintenance of publicly accessible greenspaces and public leisure facilities in the Vale is funded from taxation in one way or another. It is therefore vitally important to set realistic and affordable aspirations for the range of spaces and facilities and how the District Council and its

partners should manage and maintain them. At the same time, however, the Council's Corporate Plan makes a commitment that it will devote extra resources towards creating a cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment.

### **The Big Questions**

Is the Corporate Plan commitment to make available more resources deliverable and, if so, where should the Council's priorities lie and what level of resource will be needed? What information and arguments will best support a bid for increased resources? If not, where should the Council's priorities lie for the use of its existing resources and how can it best safeguard them for the future?

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Adopt a planning policy that allows the redevelopment of existing spaces or facilities which are poorly located or used in return for compensatory provision that will be of greater value to local communities (as suggested under Policy Issue 4 above)
- Encourage the pitch sports (but particularly football) to make greater use of artificial surfaces and spread fixtures through the week, so as to reduce the overall land area required for them and therefore maintenance costs
- Put more resources into the most used and most valued spaces and facilities and less into those that are poorly used or little valued
- Keep maintenance standards and budgets under constant review in relation to the quality standards suggested in this strategy

## **Specific Issue 1: New Residential Developments**

### **Issue**

Over the next decade, there is likely to be significant housing development both in the heart of the Vale and on its periphery. Major developments obviously create opportunities to secure significant additional or enhanced provision for the benefit of both new residents and, if carefully planned, existing communities. However, greenspaces and sport and recreation provision are only a part of the community infrastructure that new developments will need, albeit the elements that probably contribute most (apart from the dwellings themselves) to making high quality places in which to live.

### **The Big Questions**

How can the strategy best help to ensure that major new developments are sustainable and will be attractive places in which to live? What forms of greenspace or sport and recreation provision will do most to deliver the Council's corporate priorities?

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Develop more parks, or “park-like” spaces, that will appeal to a wide range of people in the larger settlements
- Ensure that greenspaces in new housing developments will meet residents’ needs for amenity, play and informal outdoor recreation
- Link new and existing greenspaces together as much as possible in order to create attractive routes for walking and cycling between houses and community infrastructure such as schools, shops and sports facilities
- Actively promote nature conservation and bio-diversity in the design and management of all appropriate greenspaces

## **Specific Issue 2: Provision for Young People**

### **Issue**

The County-wide vision underpinning the Vale’s District Play Strategy says that

*We want all play spaces to be easily accessible to all children and young people and we want more of them to be informal based on natural environments*

At present, provision for children and young people depends on traditional equipped provision, predominantly in the form of Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) designed broadly in accordance with the NPFA Six Acre Standard. In the Vale Voice survey 62% of those respondents that expressed an opinion identified a need for more play areas for older children (aged 8-12) and 36% more facilities for young ones (those aged below 8). Even more significantly, 76% identified a need for more facilities for teenagers.

### **The Big Questions**

How can the District Council and its partners best persuade local communities of the merits of a more naturalistic approach to play and less dependency on play equipment and then deliver a network of attractive play spaces? What provision will be most appropriate for teenagers and young people?

### **Possible Initiatives**

- Widespread publicity for the play strategy and the initial projects flowing from it
- Monitoring the success of the first few projects developed through the play strategy
- Providing help in kind to local communities or town and parish councils that want to develop naturalistic play spaces, for example by making available the services of the Council’s landscape team at cost
- Working with local communities and local children to design play spaces
- Sharing and disseminating experience through the

- Oxfordshire Play Partnership
- Working with local youth groups to identify teenagers' preferences for informal youth provision such as shelters, skateparks and ball courts
- Encourage the town and parish councils to ensure that each significant settlement in the Vale has appropriate provision for teenagers

### **Specific Issue 3: Sports Development**

#### **Issue**

The Vale's *Sports Development Strategy 2007-12* has seven key aims:

- To increase opportunities for participation in sport and active recreation
- To improve and widen access by reducing inequalities
- To improve health and wellbeing, using sport to be of benefit socially, physically and mentally
- To improve the infrastructure of sport and physical activity within the District
- To enhance and improve provision in the District
- To ensure effective partnership working to maximise use of resources
- To raise awareness of opportunities through effective communication and marketing

The objectives of the strategy include:

- Increase casual participation and healthy recreation through the development of recreational after school and community clubs
- Support community groups in developing and accessing facilities
- Identify significant gaps in provision and work with clubs, schools and leisure centres to maximise the use of existing facilities

#### **The Big Question**

How can the open space, sport and recreation provision strategy best support the sports development strategy and what should its priorities be?

#### **Possible Initiatives**

- The development of additional floodlit artificial turf pitches with good changing and social facilities, particularly on school sites, in order to maximise their use during the day as well as on weekday evenings and at the weekend
- The development of better quality floodlit multi-sport courts; most multi-courts in the Vale are of fairly poor quality and value and used mainly – although to only a limited extent – by teenagers as informal facilities
- The promotion of and support for multi-sport and multi-team

clubs

#### **Specific Issue 4: Wantage Leisure Centre**

##### **Issue**

Wantage Leisure Centre is rapidly approaching the time when it will require significant capital investment in order to keep it in a safe and usable condition. At the same time, the significant residential developments planned for the Grove/Wantage area will increase the demand for its facilities, although car parking is very limited.

##### **The Big Question**

What alterations will be needed to the centre in order to be able to accommodate additional demand?

##### **Possible Initiatives**

- Add a learner pool, ideally with a movable floor to maximise flexibility
- Expand the existing fitness gym into the adjacent snooker area
- Provide additional parking on the existing tennis courts area or to the south of Willow Lane

#### **Specific Issue 5: Grove Airfield**

##### **Issue**

The Grove Airfield development is likely to result in the construction of around 2,500 additional dwellings in the period to 2021, with approximately 6,250 residents.

##### **The Big Question**

What open space, sport and recreation provision will these new residents need?

##### **Possible Initiatives:**

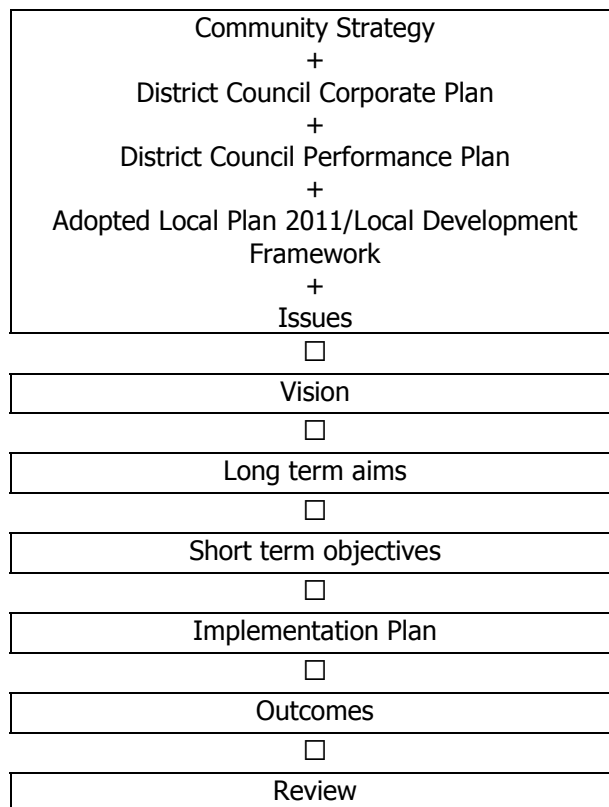
- Work with the County Council to ensure that the new school planned for Grove will have a good range of high quality indoor and/or outdoor sports facilities designed for school and community use
- Provide one or two artificial turf pitches at the new school in order to provide high capacity pitches for local clubs
- Use the provision standards developed as part of this strategy to identify future local needs for open space and sport and recreation facilities



## 4: Vision and Long Term Aims

### Introduction

A vision is a succinct statement of what the District Council and its partners intend to deliver in the long term in relation to the District's greenspaces and indoor sports facilities in order to help deliver the vision in the Community Strategy. However, a vision is of only limited use on its own; to be really useful it has to lead directly to suitable long term aims; specific, short-term objectives; and a clear delivery plan. The diagram below summarises this:



### A Vision for the Vale

Greenspaces and sport and recreation facilities that are accessible, high quality, valued and appreciated by local people and used by them can make a huge contribution to the delivery of the Council's aspirations. There is a growing body of research evidence that they:



- Are critically important in terms of “liveability”, the quality of life and individual well-being
- Help to promote economic development and attract inward investment
- Help to mitigate the impacts of pollution and climate change
- Provide important opportunities for physical activity of many kinds and not just sport

The Community Strategy and the Council’s Corporate and Performance Plans suggest a need for vision that focuses on:

- Expanding the range of leisure and recreation opportunities across the Vale
- Promoting greater use of spaces and facilities
- Promoting a sense of community and volunteering
- Engaging local communities over environmental issues

However, greenspaces and sports facilities must also be affordable, sustainable and make the most effective use of land possible. The vision that drives this strategy is therefore:

*The Vale’s towns and villages will have a sustainable network of high quality greenspaces and indoor and outdoor sports facilities that everyone will see as being of fundamental importance to their quality of life and want to use*

This vision is intended to make clear that:

- The strategy relates to spaces and facilities in or on the edge of settlements, rather than the wider countryside; the main reason for this is that most of the Vale’s countryside, while of high quality, is not owned or managed by a public body
- Spaces and facilities must be environmentally sustainable and affordable to both users and those who manage them
- The Vale’s spaces and facilities should be seen as a comprehensive network, rather than a collection of discrete sites; this means, for example, that it is not necessary to have every form of provision everywhere. In addition, however, wherever possible spaces and facilities should be linked by green corridors or other sustainable green routes.
- Run-down or neglected spaces and facilities can have a detrimental impact on the quality of life and public perceptions of community safety and the attractiveness of the Vale as a place to live. The higher quality and more attractive they are, the more likely it is that local people will want to use them and treat them with respect.
- Everyone in the Vale should value the District’s spaces and facilities. This means that they must be accessible and inclusive and of high value in terms of meeting local needs and supporting biodiversity and nature conservation
- The strategy relates to the full range of greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities across the Vale: allotments,

equipped play facilities, amenity greenspaces, natural greenspaces, churchyards and cemeteries, green corridors (including routes along rivers or canals), parks and gardens, bowling greens, cricket pitches, football pitches, rugby pitches, tennis courts, multi-sport courts, sports and other halls, tennis halls and swimming pools

- Although not everyone will want to use all of the Vale's greenspaces and sports facilities equally, the growing body of evidence in support of the health and wellbeing benefits of visiting and using them makes it highly desirable for the District Council and its partners to encourage everyone to make some use of them

By implication, the vision is also intended to make clear that:

- There is no automatic need to retain spaces that are not sustainable, cannot realistically be afforded or are clearly not valued by local people and cannot be enhanced in order to be appreciated more
- The District Council and its partners will concentrate on those spaces and facilities that are available for all to use, including voluntary sports clubs, provided they place no restrictions on membership other than those required by the nature of their facilities. For example, it is perfectly reasonable for golf or bowls clubs to limit the number of playing members to reflect the realistic capacity of their facilities but unacceptable for them to discriminate in any way against any particular group or groups in the community.

## **Long Term Aims**

Related to this vision, the strategy has six long term aims – broad statements of intent - to guide the work of the Council and its partners for a number of years.

### **Aim 1: Accessibility and Inclusiveness**

- Progressively to increase the proportion of properties in the district within the appropriate distance thresholds of inclusively designed and managed spaces and facilities

Accessibility can be defined in two ways: in terms of people being able to get to spaces or facilities, and being able to use them once they are there. Both are obviously important and for clarity it is sensible to refer to them as accessibility and inclusiveness respectively. The proportion of properties in the District within the appropriate distance threshold of different types of spaces and facilities is an easily measured and monitored way measuring accessibility. Inclusiveness, on the other hand, relates to other, less easily measured factors such as price, provision for people with disabilities and social issues such as making everyone feel welcome.

### **Aim 2: Quality and Value**

- Progressively to improve the number and proportion of spaces of Green Flag standard and the average quality and value of the Vale's greenspaces and sports facilities

Two of the many indicators the Government is using to measure the performance of local authorities are:

- **Choice and Opportunity:** this measures the percentage of the population living within 20 minutes walk (in urban areas) or 20 minutes drive (in rural areas) of a pool, sports hall, health and fitness facility, grass pitch, artificial turf pitch or golf course with either a Quest, Green Flag, ISO 9001:2000 or Charter Mark quality award. The Sport England website gives the percentage of Vale residents meeting this requirement as just over 26%, placing it around the middle of English authorities.
- **Green Flag spaces:** the total area and proportion of greenspace of Green Flag standard. The Green Flag Award is a national quality award scheme for parks promoted by the Civic Trust. At present English local authorities have 448 Awards, none of them in the Vale.

It follows that the District Council should be seeking continuously to improve the Vale's rating against these two indicators. However, the District Council shares responsibility for design, management and maintenance with a wide range of agencies, including the County Council, the Town and Parish Councils, developers, the state and independent schools, the Ministry of Defence, housing associations, sports clubs, wildlife trusts and local residents. It is therefore clearly desirable that they should work as much as possible to common standards and an agreed agenda.

### **Aim 3: Climate Change**

- To mitigate the effects of climate change through the appropriate design and management of the Vale's greenspaces and indoor and outdoor sports facilities

The last chapter set out some of the likely significant consequences of climate change in order to make clear that climate change is a serious issue. The Council's Climate Change Strategy highlights the need for this strategy to support its efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change.

### **Aim 4: Planning Policy**

- To use planning policy to help deliver the vision

As the local planning authority, the District Council has the power to protect spaces and sports facilities or allow their redevelopment for some other use. Local Plan Policy DC8 allows it to require developers either to provide or contribute to the provision or enhancement of spaces and facilities. As a result,

planning policy can have a major impact on helping to deliver the vision.

#### **Aim 5: Use of the Vale's Greenspaces and Sports Facilities**

- Actively to promote the use of the Vale's greenspaces and sports facilities

The best way to protect spaces and facilities from development is to ensure that they meet local needs and are well used; this is also the best way to ensure they are seen as safe by local people. Well used greenspaces and sports facilities therefore contribute to local perceptions of community safety. However, it would be unrealistic to expect that all of the Vale's spaces and facilities will be equally well used.

#### **Aim 6: Capital Funding**

- Constantly to seek to maximise investment in the Vale's greenspaces from sources other than the District Council

The Vale needs to do all it can to maximise capital funding for greenspace and sport and recreation facility provision and enhancement from development, sponsorship and other sources of external funding. This said, as a prosperous community with very low levels of individual disadvantage, the Vale will rate only a low priority amongst most grant aiding bodies unless it can put forward very persuasive proposals and arguments to demonstrate that highly desirable and cost-effective benefits will follow. Therefore the District Council must itself give a lead by making a sufficient commitment to persuade external agencies to provide additional support.

#### **Aim 7: Revenue Funding**

- To ensure adequate guaranteed long term revenue funding of the management and maintenance of the Vale's greenspaces and sports facilities

The District Council's corporate plan highlights its intention to increase the resources it allocates to greenspace management and maintenance. This welcome commitment must generate real benefits for the Vale's communities. Without adequate revenue funding for management and maintenance there is a very real danger that capital expenditure on new or enhanced greenspace provision and outdoor sports facilities will be wasted. The quality of spaces and facilities will decline and the District Council will run the risk of being penalised by the Government. However, rather than increase the general revenue funding for greenspaces and sports facilities generally, it will be sensible to concentrate additional funding on a limited number of spaces in order to make a real difference to them. This suggests the need for a hierarchy of provision, with spaces and facilities of District-

wide, area and local significance.

## 5: Delivery Plan

### Introduction

The next step in the “policy cascade” is to set more specific objectives for say the next five years, linked to the long term aims suggested above, in order to set the framework for a detailed delivery plan. The Council will then be able to measure progress against its objectives and review and if necessary amend them as appropriate towards the end of this period.

### Strategy Objectives

The aims set out in the last chapter are deliberately long term and the means the Council and its partners will use to achieve them may well change over time. However, the objectives below set the framework for what they should do over the next five years in order to implement the strategy.

#### **Objectives linked to Aim 1: Accessibility and Inclusiveness**

- To increase the proportion of properties in the District within the appropriate distance threshold of all forms of greenspace and outdoor sport and recreation provision by 5% by the end of financial year 2012-13
- Progressively to increase the proportion of properties in the Vale within the appropriate distance thresholds of greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities that are at least wheelchair accessible

**Note:** there is no “scientific” way of setting a measurable target for these objectives. However, a 5% improvement in overall accessibility is probably the minimum that will make a worthwhile difference and future reviews of the strategy can use the experience gained in the first few years of implementing it to set realistic future targets. In terms of inclusiveness, it is obviously desirable that all spaces and facilities should be at least wheelchair accessible and ideally fully inclusive but unrealistic to expect this to be achievable within only five years.

#### **Objectives linked to Aim 2: Quality and Value**

- Steadily to improve the total number and area of greenspaces meeting the Green Flag standard and gain at least one Green Flag Award by the end of financial year 2012-13
- To increase the average quality and value audit scores for all forms of greenspace and outdoor sports facilities across the Vale by 5% by the end of financial year 2012-13

- To deliver and foster cost effective and consistently high standards of greenspace and sports facility management and maintenance
- To deliver and encourage consistently high standards in the design of new or enhanced greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities across the Vale

**Note:** there is no “scientific” way of setting a measurable target for the second of these objectives. However, a 5% improvement in overall quality and value is probably the minimum that will make a worthwhile difference and future reviews of the strategy can use the experience gained in the first few years of implementing it to set realistic future targets.

### **Objectives linked to Aim 3: Climate Change**

- To develop and implement a long term programme of changes to the Vale’s greenspaces that will mitigate the impact of climate change on the Vale’s communities, flora and fauna
- To reduce the carbon footprint of the Vale’s indoor sports facilities

### **Objectives linked to Aim 4: Planning Policy**

- To ensure that all new residential developments contribute appropriately to the provision or enhancement of greenspaces and sport and recreation facilities
- To promote the development of “child-friendly” greenspaces and appropriate provision for teenagers in addition to children’s equipped play areas

### **Objectives linked to Aim 5: Use of the Vale’s Greenspaces**

- To develop a programme of community events and activities in the Vale’s District-wide greenspaces and facilities, in partnership with the town and parish councils and appropriate local organisations such as Lions Clubs, youth groups, schools and charities

### **Objectives linked to Aim 6: Capital Funding**

- To develop and seek external funding for specific projects that will help to deliver the vision
- To re-invest the proceeds arising from any disposals of existing greenspaces or sports facilities in other spaces or facilities in the same general area as the space(s) or facilities lost

### **Objectives linked to Aim 7: Revenue Funding**

- To ensure that the District Council’s revenue funding of greenspace management and maintenance is sufficient to deliver continuous steady improvement in the quality and value of those spaces and facilities managed by the Council and thereby set the standard for other providers to emulate

- To encourage all providers in the District to allocate sufficient resources to the management and maintenance of greenspaces and facilities to deliver continuous improvement in their quality and value
- To encourage local communities to become involved in helping to look after greenspaces
- To reduce the revenue cost to the District Council of the Vale's indoor sports facilities

## **Delivery Plan**

The Delivery Plan in Appendix C sets out the actions the Council intends to pursue over the next five in order to deliver these objectives. For concision, it is in table form, using standard headings, with a separate table for each objective. The standard headings are:

- Tasks
- Comments/notes on the task
- The years in which the action is to be progressed
- Key partners
- Budget implications by year
- Lead officer within the District Council





## 6: Review of the Strategy

### Introduction

No strategy lasts for ever. Accordingly the Council will monitor the extent which the strategy delivers against the objectives and targets set out above.

### The Context for the Strategy

The Council will:

- Conduct a brief annual review of relevant changes in government policy to ensure that the strategy still conforms to Government policy
- Feed the results of implementing this strategy into the updating process for the Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate and Performance Plans
- Review the continuing relevance of the strategy whenever the Council updates the Community Strategy or its Corporate or Performance Plans

### Local Views

The Council will monitor changes in local views and fine tune the priorities in the strategy by means of:

- Bi-annual questions in Vale Voice surveys
- A bi-annual survey of the views of the District's town and parish councils

### Audit Information

The Council should aim to repeat approximately 20% of the audit of local provision each year, with the intention that this will update the whole audit on a five-year rolling programme. As the original audit covered around 700 sites, this implies re-auditing around 140 sites per year or an average of just under three per week. It should be possible for those staff who visit sites in the normal course of their work to undertake these re-audits.

### Analysis

The above reviews will generate the basic information needed to review the strategy. It will then be necessary to undertake some additional analysis. For example:

- By entering the new audit information to derive updated average quality and value scores in the updated audit; this will give a measure of the extent to which the Council and its partners are delivering higher quality spaces across the Vale
- By mapping the updated audit information and calculating the percentage of Vale properties within the various distance

thresholds

# Appendix A: Summary Audit Scores

## Introduction

This appendix summarises the audit of provision using charts of the quality and value scores, by typology. It also gives the average scores for each form of provision. In all, the audit encompassed around 700 spaces and facilities as follows:

### Greenspaces



### Outdoor sports facilities

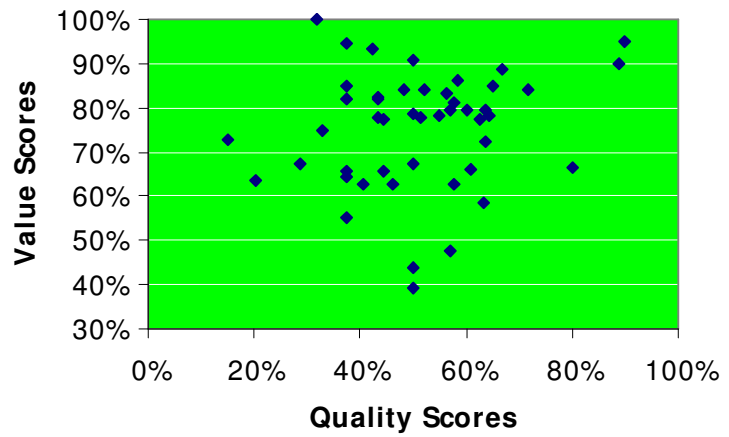


Note: the audit also encompassed the Vale's artificial turf pitches, athletics tracks, golf courses and indoor sports facilities, but the number of each of these types of provision is too low to allow meaningful comparisons or policy conclusions

The audit evaluated each site using specific criteria appropriate to its primary purpose, as defined in Section 3 above. Accordingly it is possible to compare sites within a typology, but not valid to assume that a site with a score of X% in one typology is of equal quality or value to a site with a score of X% in another. However, the closer the clustering of scores within a specific typology the more consistent the quality and value of the sites, and vice versa. Ideally, all scores should be clustered fairly closely well with scores of over 75%.

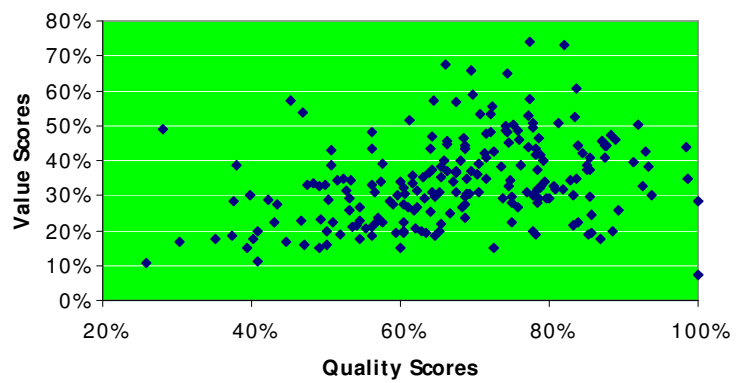
## Greenspaces

### Allotments: Quality and Value



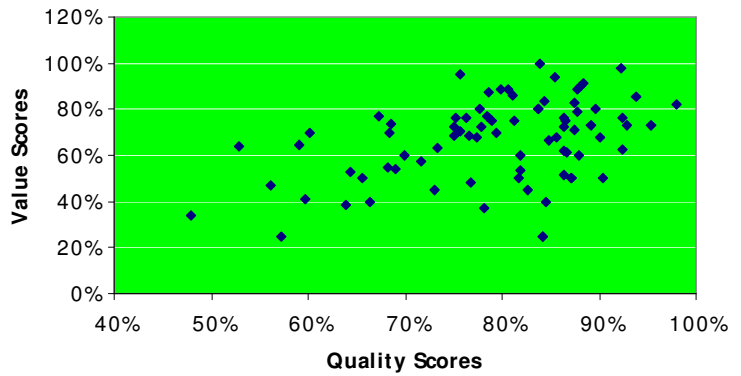
The average quality and value scores for allotments were 51% and 75% respectively.

### Amenity Greenspaces - Quality and Value



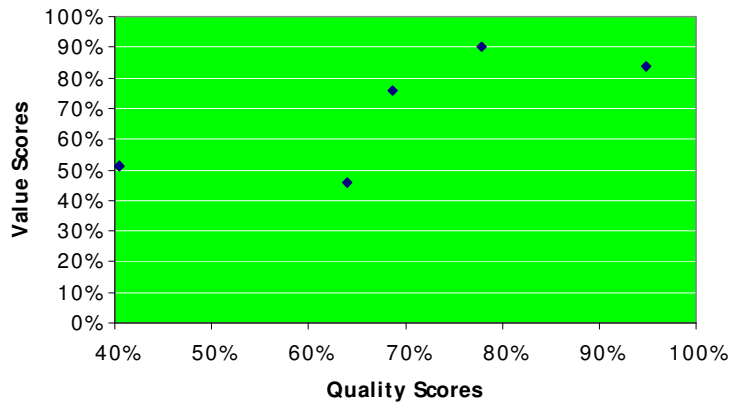
The average quality and value scores for amenity greenspaces were 67% and 34% respectively.

### Churchyards and Cemeteries - Quality and Value



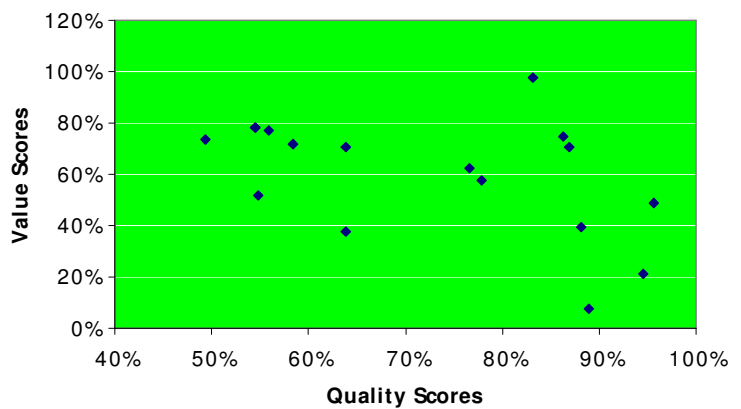
The average quality and value scores for churchyards and cemeteries were 79% and 66% respectively.

### Green Corridors - Quality and Value



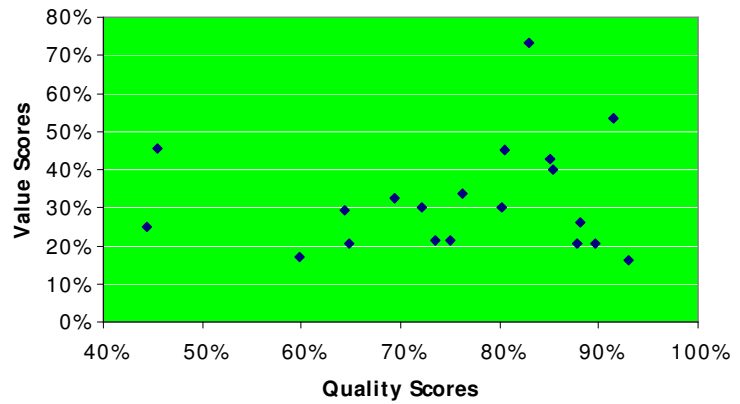
The average quality and value scores for green corridors were 64% and 66% respectively.

### Natural Greenspaces - Quality and Value



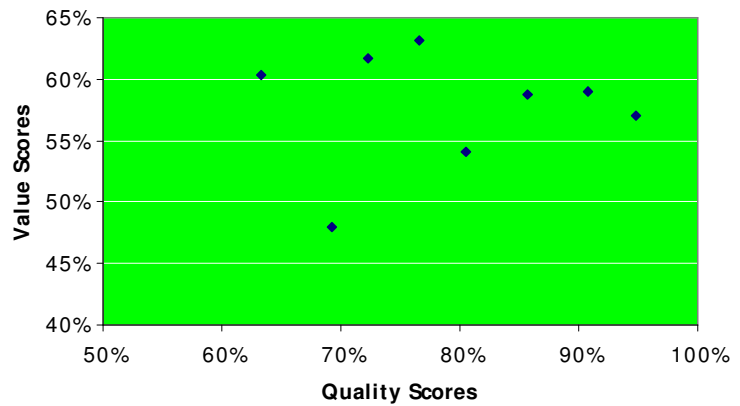
The average quality and value scores for natural greenspaces were 73% and 60% respectively.

**Open Access Playing Fields - Quality and Value**



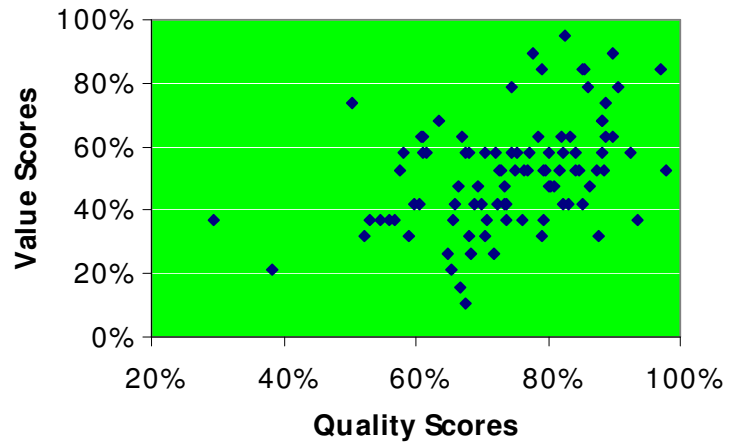
The average quality and value scores for open access playing fields and recreation grounds were 73% and 60% respectively.

**Parks and Gardens - Quality and Value**



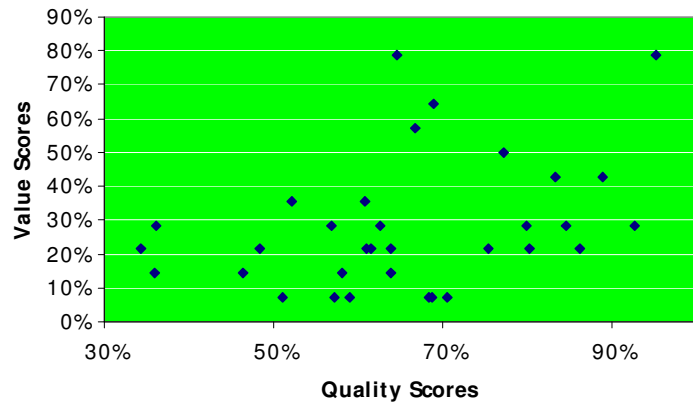
The average quality and value scores for parks and gardens were 78% and 58% respectively.

### Children's Play Areas: Quality and Value



The average quality and value scores for children's equipped play areas were 74% and 52% respectively.

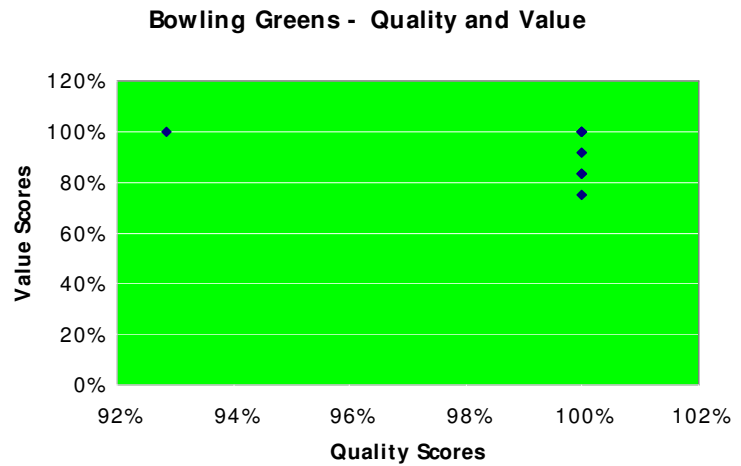
### Teenage Facilities - Quality and Value



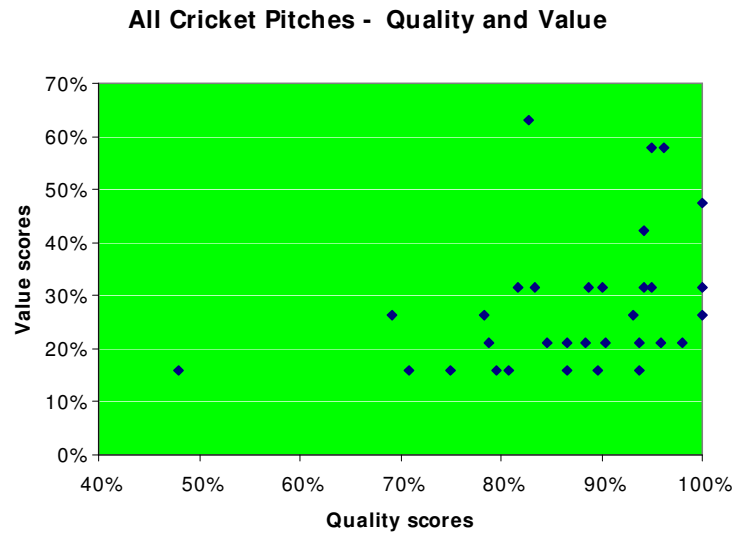
The average quality and value scores for teenage facilities were 65% and 28% respectively.



## Outdoor Sports Facilities

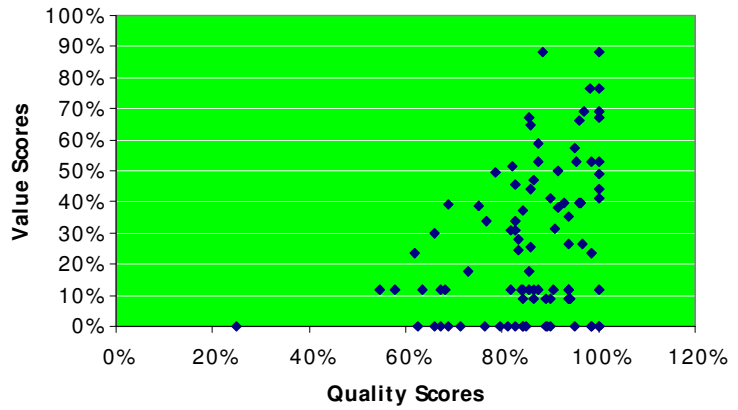


The average quality and value scores for bowling greens were 99% and 92% respectively. Although the chart makes it appear as though only five greens were included in the audit, in fact there were eight but some had the same scores.



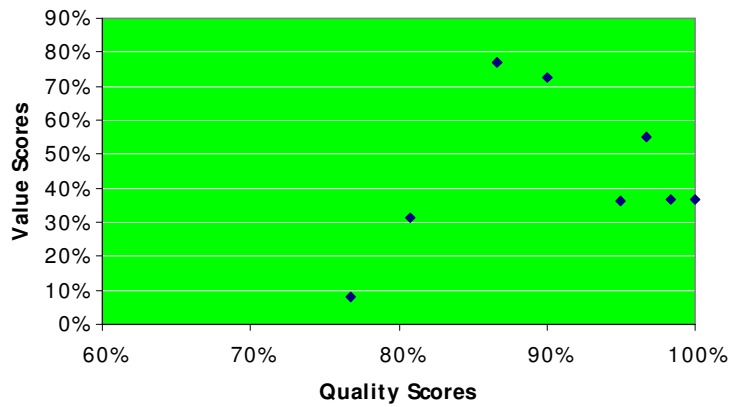
The average quality and value scores for cricket pitches were 99% and 92% respectively.

### Football Pitches - Quality and Value



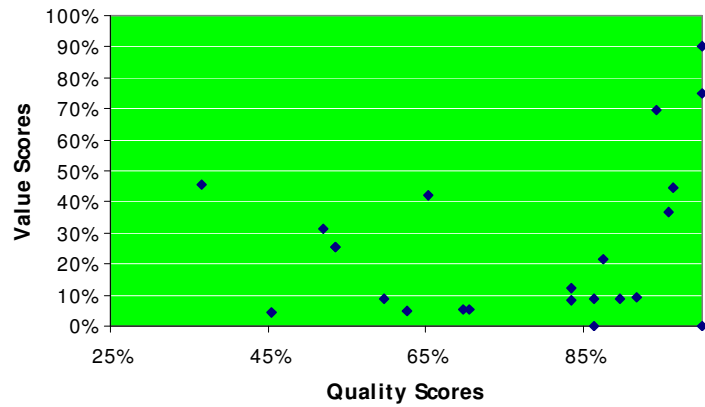
The average quality and value scores for football pitches were 86% and 27% respectively. The value scores relate to sporting value for the community as a whole and so school pitches with no community use received a value score of 0. The average quality and value scores for non-school pitches were 85% and 38% respectively.

### Rugby Pitches - Quality and Value



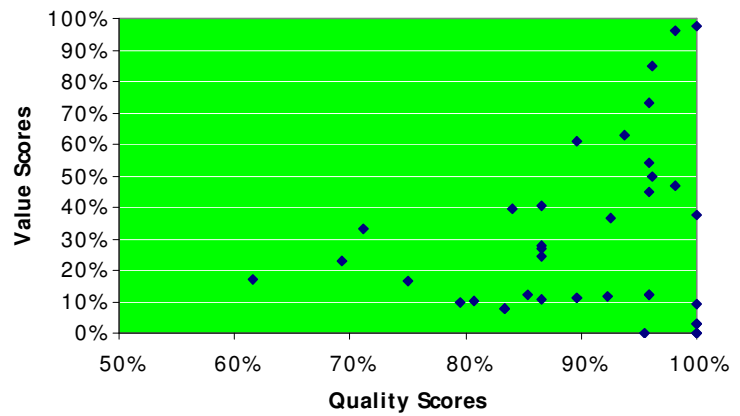
The average quality and value scores for rugby pitches were 92% and 39% respectively.

### All Multi- courts - Quality and Value



The average quality and value scores for multi-sport courts were 77% and 25% respectively.

### All Tennis Courts - Quality and Value



The average quality and value scores for tennis courts were 88% and 29% respectively. The average quality and value scores for courts with community use were 92% and 30% respectively.

## Appendix B: Accessibility Assessment

### Introduction

The table below summarises the percentage of properties across the District that lie within the appropriate walking distance threshold of each form of provision and also the percentage lying within this distance of a space or facility that the audit assessed as being of high quality and high value (HQHV).

### Spaces for Informal Outdoor Activities

Walking time (in minutes)		5	10	15
Allotments	HQHV		10%	
	All		31%	
Multi-functional greenspaces	HQHV	38%	65%	
	All	71%	80%	
Amenity greenspaces	HQHV	21%		
	All	60%		
Churchyards and cemeteries	HQHV			50%
	All			55%
Natural greenspaces	HQHV			5%
	All			23%
Parks and Gardens	HQHV			14%
	All			19%
Equipped Play Areas - Under 8s	HQHV		48%	
	All		70%	
Equipped Play Areas - 8-12 year olds	HQHV			58%
	All			68%
Teenage Facilities	HQHV			19%
	All			58%

## Facilities for Outdoor Sport and Recreation

Walking time (in minutes)		5	10	15
Artificial turf pitches (ATPs) with public access	All			4%
Bowling greens	All		21%	
Cricket pitches (Club or Council owned)	HQHV		0%	
	All		29%	
Cricket pitches (all owners)	HQHV		0%	
	All		45%	
Football pitches - adults (Club or Council owned)	HQHV		0%	
	All		61%	
Football pitches - adults (all owners)	HQHV		0%	
	All		67%	
Football pitches - junior (Club or Council owned)	HQHV		0%	
	All		0%	
Football pitches - junior (all owners)	HQHV		0%	
	All		0%	
Football pitches - mini-soccer (Club or Council owned)	HQHV		0%	
	All		42%	
Football pitches - mini-soccer (all owners)	HQHV		0%	
	All		62%	
Rugby pitches (all owners)	HQHV		0%	
	All		0%	
Rugby pitches (Club or Council owned)	HQHV		0%	
	All		0%	
Multi-sport courts (club or Council owned)	HQHV			7%
	All			34%
Multi-sport courts (all owners)	HQHV			18%
	All			52%
Tennis courts (Club or Council owned)	HQHV			15%
	All			39%
Tennis courts (all courts)	HQHV			30%
	All			51%

## Facilities for Indoor Sport and Recreation

Walking time (in minutes)		5	10	15
Indoor bowls halls	All			0%
Indoor tennis halls	All			3%
Pay and play sports halls	All			16%
All sports halls with some public use	All			26%
Pay and play swimming pools	All			12%
All swimming pools with community use	All			19%
Ice rinks	All			1%

## **Appendix C: Delivery Plan**

### **Introduction**

This appendix sets out a draft delivery plan for the strategy. As this is a draft strategy for consultation, it does not seek to estimate the potential budget implications of each of the proposed actions. The Council and its partners will have to determine what resources they can apply to deliver the strategy once they have agreed the vision, aims, objectives and actions they will seek to initiate. They will then be able to set out when they will aim to progress each of the actions in the delivery plan and the resources required to do so.

The delivery plan includes initial suggestions for the years when it will be desirable to aim to progress the various actions. However, whether they are realistic will depend on the resources available to the Council and its partners.

Vale of White Horse Greenspace Strategy  
**Delivery Plan: Issue 1, August 2007**

**Long Term Aim 1: Accessibility and Inclusiveness:** Progressively to increase the proportion of properties in the district within the appropriate distance thresholds of inclusively designed and managed spaces and facilities, irrespective of ownership

**Objective 1.1:** To increase the proportion of properties in the District within the appropriate distance threshold of all forms of greenspace and outdoor sports provision by 5% by the end of financial year 2012-13

**Base Position:** see Appendix B

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Council lead officer			
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals		
Identify those areas in which Vale residents lack ready accessibility to each of the various forms of greenspace or outdoor sports provision	Already done as part of the preparation of the strategy															
Identify the approximate number of properties not served by existing provision	The number currently served is given in Appendix B. By extension, it also gives the number and percentage not served.															
Identify spatial priorities for the provision of additional greenspaces or outdoor sports facilities	This will depend on where there is an identified deficiency in provision and where additional provision will be most cost-effective in terms of increasing the proportion of properties within distance thresholds	<input type="checkbox"/>					Town and Parish Councils									
Determine whether there are suitable sites for additional provision in each of the priority areas	If there are not available sites there is no point in wasting time and effort; instead the Council should concentrate on those areas where it will be possible to effect change.	<input type="checkbox"/>					Town and Parish Councils									

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Council lead officer		
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals	
Draw up a costed action plan, with priorities, for the creation of additional greenspaces or facilities designed to deliver the objective	An increase of 5% in average audit scores does not mean, for example, from 50% to 60% (ie +10%), but from 50% to 52.5% (ie + 5% of 50%)	<input type="checkbox"/>					Town and Parish Councils								
Deliver the action plan		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town and Parish Councils								
Ensure that all new residential developments are either located within the distance threshold of all forms of provision or require the developer either to make on-site provision or contribute to off-site provision	See Objective 4.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Developers								
Monitor and review the proportion of properties with the distance threshold of different forms of provision on an annual basis and review the target after five years	Monitoring can be done easily and quickly using GIS provided the database of spaces and facilities is kept up to date.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									



Vale of White Horse Greenspace Strategy  
**Delivery Plan: Issue 1, August 2007**

**Long Term Aim 1: Accessibility and Inclusiveness:** Progressively to increase the proportion of properties in the district within the appropriate distance thresholds of inclusively designed and managed spaces and facilities

**Objective 1.2:** Progressively to increase the proportion of in the Vale within the appropriate distance thresholds of greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities that are at least wheelchair accessible

**Base position:**

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer			
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals		
Identify those spaces and facilities which are not wheelchair accessible to an acceptable standard	Already done as part of the preparation of the strategy															
Identify spatial priorities for enhancing wheelchair accessibility	This will depend on where enhancements to improve wheelchair accessibility will be most cost-effective in terms of increasing the proportion of properties within distance thresholds	<input type="checkbox"/>														
Draw up a costed action plan, with priorities, for the enhancement of wheelchair accessibility		<input type="checkbox"/>														
Deliver the action plan, making community grants available to the town and parish councils responsible for those spaces where upgrading will make the greatest contribution to achieving the objective		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town and Parish Councils									

<p>Ensure that all new greenspaces or sports facilities provided as part of or funded by new residential developments are designed to be fully inclusive</p>																	
<p>Monitor the achievement of the target annually and review its relevance after five years</p>	<p>This can be done quickly and easily using the accessibility component of audit information</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Developers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Vale of White Horse Greenspace Strategy  
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**Long Term Aim 2: Quality and Value:** Progressively to improve the number and proportion of spaces of Green Flag standard and the average quality and value of the Vale's greenspaces and sports facilities

**Objective 2.1:** Steadily to improve the total number and area of greenspaces meeting the Green Flag standard and gain at least one Green Flag Award by the end of financial year 2011-2012

**Base position:** the Vale currently has no Green Flag Awards. However, the audit identified that around 6 spaces across the Vale, making up 0.6% of multi-functional greenspaces by area, are potentially of Green Flag standard.

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer			
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals		
Provide support for at least one District Council officer in order to help him or her become a Green Flag judge	This is the most cost-effective way of getting an insight into how the Awards Scheme works and will provide the District Council with considerable useful "intelligence" to help it prepare and apply for a Green Flag Award	<input type="checkbox"/>														
Identify those spaces that Council wishes to see of Green Flag Standard and the site or sites for which it will seek Green Flag Awards	The suggested initial sites are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abbey Meadows/Gardens, Abingdon</li> <li>Memorial Park, Wantage</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>														
Identify, plan, cost and programme the improvements needed to bring the selected spaces up to Green Flag standard		<input type="checkbox"/>														
Seek budget approval for the required improvements and progress them		<input type="checkbox"/>														

Prepare and submit Green Flag application(s)					<input type="checkbox"/>													
Monitor the achievement of the objective, adjust the delivery plan as necessary on an annual basis and conduct a review after five years	It will be simple to audit the achievement of the objective using audit information provide it is kept up to date	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>											

Note: there is no need for a similar objective for indoor sports facilities as the White Horse Tennis and Leisure Centre already has a Quest quality assurance award.

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**Long Term Aim 2: Quality and Value:** Progressively to improve the number and proportion of spaces of Green Flag standard and the average quality and value of the Vale's greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities

**Objective 2.2:** To increase the average quality and value audit scores for all forms of greenspace and outdoor sports facilities across the Vale by 5% by the end of financial year 2012-13

**Base position:** see Appendix A

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer		
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals	
Review those spaces and facilities with low audit scores for quality and value and identify those it will be most desirable to enhance	Enhancing the spaces with the lowest scores, provided there is a need to retain them, will inevitably increase the average scores. The priority spaces should be selected in order to try to ensure that all of the Vale's communities will have access to a range of high quality, high value spaces.  Some priority areas are already identified in the background report accompanying this strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>					Town and parish councils BTCV, Wildlife Trusts								
Draw up a costed 5-year programme of desirable enhancements to District Council owned spaces and facilities, including increasing biodiversity	The chapters of the strategy reviewing each form of provision identify the main general improvements that will be desirable, such as better signage and the promotion of biodiversity and nature conservation. Note that an increase of 5% in average audit scores does not mean, for example, from 50% to 55% (ie	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town and parish councils, BBOWT								



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**Long Term Aim 2: Quality and Value:** Progressively to improve the number and proportion of spaces of Green Flag standard and the average quality and value of the Vale's greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities

**Objective 2.3:** To foster and deliver cost effective and consistently high standards of greenspace and outdoor sports facility management and maintenance

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer		
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals	
Work with the Town and Parish Councils to prepare a Vale-wide specification for the maintenance of greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities		<input type="checkbox"/>					Town and Parish Councils								
Adopt the Vale-wide specification when grounds maintenance contracts are renewed		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town and Parish Councils								
Review the success of the initial round of new maintenance contracts to ensure they are delivering high quality spaces and facilities and amend them as necessary before using them in other areas		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town and Parish Councils								





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**Long Term Aim 2: Quality and Value:** Progressively to improve the number and proportion of spaces of Green Flag standard and the average quality and value of the Vale's greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities

**Objective 2.4:** To foster and deliver consistently high standards in the design of greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities across the Vale

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer		
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals	
Adopt the quality standards suggested in this strategy for District-Council owned spaces, and persuade the town and parish councils also to adopt them for those spaces managed by them	This will help to ensure consistent standards of design and foster a partnership with the town and parish councils	<input type="checkbox"/>					Town and Parish Councils								
Require developers to follow the quality standards for any new spaces or facilities they provide or fund		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Developers								
Review the applicability of the quality standards annually, for example in the light of climate change, and update them as and when necessary		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Make the District Council's landscape design team available, at cost, to the Town and Parish Councils and local community groups to help them enhance spaces and facilities	This will also help to ensure consistent standards of design and emphasise how important the District Council regards both a partnership with the town and parish councils and the enhancement of spaces and facilities. It will also allow the landscape team to generate income. If this form of support for town and parish councils is successful, there may be a need	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town and Parish Councils, local community groups, BBOWT and Oxford Preservation Trust								

Monitor the achievement of the objective	to strengthen the landscape team, but this could be self-financing.																
	This can be done using the Vale Voice panel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									

**Vale of White Horse Greenspace Strategy  
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**Long Term Aim 3: Climate Change:** To mitigate the effects of climate change through the appropriate design and management of the Vale's greenspaces and sports facilities

**Objective 3.1:** To develop and implement a long term programme of changes to the Vale's greenspaces that will mitigate the impact of climate change on the Vale's communities, flora and fauna

**Base position:** to be identified

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Totals	Lead officer	
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13			
Monitor the condition of the Vale's greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities in relation to the risks and potential impacts identified by UKCLP and plan and undertake such actions as may be necessary to ensure the Vale's greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities remain in a good condition and promote biodiversity	This will entail, for example, monitoring the condition of trees and other vegetation; reviewing the range of sensible species for inclusion in new greenspaces and monitoring the extent to which grass sports pitches and bowling greens are unplayable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town and Parish Councils BBOWT Local community groups								
Monitor the continuing appropriateness of the quality standards and amend them as and when necessary		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town and Parish Council								
Ensure that local communities are kept informed of why changes to greenspace are made	Many people will criticise or oppose change, almost on principle. There is likely to be a need to explain specific initiatives: eg managing spaces in order to enhance nature conservation is not the same as neglecting them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town and Parish Councils BBOWT Local community groups								
Maximise the connections	With climate change, the effects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Council,								

<p>between and accessibility of greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities by walking and cycling</p>	<p>of traffic pollution will become more obvious. Therefore it makes sense to encourage as many users as possible to walk to greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities.</p>							<p>especially through the Local Transport Plan; Town and Parish Councils</p>							
<p>Monitor the achievement of the objective</p>	<p>This can be done by noting the number of trees or shrubs that have to be replaced each year and through user surveys at major sports facilities</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								

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**Long Term Aim 3: Climate Change:** To mitigate the effects of climate change through the appropriate design and management of the Vale's greenspaces and sports facilities

**Objective 3.2:** To reduce the carbon footprint of the Vale's indoor sports facilities

**Base position:** to be identified

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer	
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals
Implement the Councils Climate Change Strategy insofar as it relates to sports and leisure facilities		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vale Energy Team							
Establish the current energy use and performance of the Vale's indoor sports and leisure facilities	This will provide the base position for monitoring achievement of the objective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Vale Energy Team							
Compare energy consumption per square meter the Vale's different facilities in order to determine which facilities should be the priority for energy reduction measures	Total energy consumption is fairly meaningless unless it is related to floor area. This also allow direct comparison of different facilities of the same broad type eg Wantage and Faringdon Leisure Centres		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		Vale Energy Team							
With the Vale Energy team, review operating temperatures and all operating procedures that may affect energy consumption against industry standards		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>			Vale Energy Team							
Introduce "low tech" initiatives that will reduce energy consumption as they can	For example, simple "good housekeeping" measures can sometimes reduce energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vale Energy Team							

consume rapid and low cost results	consumption by as much as 10%. The heaviest users of energy are heating and ventilation so it makes sense to investigate the impact of turning down thermostats and reducing ventilation rates slightly. However, other measures, such as minimising the use of artificial light, can also be effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Check that all facilities have access to the most advantageous energy tariffs		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vale Energy Team					
Identify ways of reducing water usage	For example, timed spray taps use much less water than normal ones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vale Energy Team					
Whenever plant or other energy-using equipment is replaced, specify equipment that will require less energy than the existing plant or equipment		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vale Energy Team					
Investigate the potential in "invest to save" projects and implement those that will be cost-effective and reduce the carbon footprint of leisure facilities		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vale Energy Team					
Promote walking and cycling to indoor sports facilities, partly by ensuring there is adequate bicycle parking at them and safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes to them		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Council/Local Transport Plan Developers					

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**Long Term Aim 4: Planning Policy:** To use planning policy to help deliver the vision

**Objective 4.1:** To ensure that all new residential developments contribute appropriately to the provision or enhancement of greenspaces and sport and recreation facilities

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Totals	Lead officer	
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13			
Adopt the provision standards suggested in this strategy and related background report and set them out in a Supplementary Planning Document	These standards cover quality (including biodiversity), quantity and accessibility														
Adopt a planning policy that will allow the District Council to seek contributions from single dwelling developments	X single dwelling developments have the same overall impact as one development of X dwellings		<input type="checkbox"/>	*											
Identify the number of residential developments likely to be progressed over the next five years	This information should be available from the work leading up the Vale's Local Development Framework	<input type="checkbox"/>													
Calculate the potential level of developer contributions from these developments for all forms of provision		<input type="checkbox"/>													
Where appropriate, consider "forward funding" community infrastructure using the District Council's capital programme and then recover the capital cost through developer contributions	Paragraph B23 of ODPM (now DCLG) Circular 5/2005, Planning Obligations, allows local authorities to forward fund infrastructure and seek contributions towards the cost from developments that come forward later, provided the need for contributions is clearly set out in advance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									

<p>Consider appointing a planning obligations officer to be responsible for co-ordinating the negotiation and monitoring of planning obligations and maximising the extent to which they help deliver appropriate community infrastructure</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>It should be possible to recover at least a large part of the cost of this post through a levy on developer contributions</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Draw up a formal protocol for assessing the Council's requirements in relation to new residential developments and set this out in a Supplementary Planning Document</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>This should cover both pre-application and post-application stages</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Monitor the achievement of the objective</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>This can be done using the database of planning obligations the Council is required to maintain Provided it is designed to provide the necessary information</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

\* Note: this assumes the Vale will adopt its Local Development Framework in 2011.



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**Long Term Aim 4: Planning Policy:** To use planning policy to help deliver the vision

**Objective 4.2:** To promote the development of "child-friendly" greenspaces and appropriate provision for teenagers in addition to children's equipped play areas

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer			
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals		
Require developers of residential developments that do not require on-site provision: (a) to help implement the District Council's play strategy (b) to contribute to the costs of making greenspaces in and around their developments "child-friendly" and designed to encourage play in natural surroundings; and (c) to contribute towards the cost of appropriate provision for teenagers		<input type="checkbox"/> *	<input type="checkbox"/> *													
Adopt a planning policy for major sites that requires developers (a) to help implement the District Council's play strategy (b) to make any new greenspaces "child-friendly" and designed to encourage play in natural surroundings; and (c) to make or fund appropriate	The District Council will have to work within its existing policy until its first LDF development control policies are in place. However, it should seek to persuade developers to take an alternative approach that is consistent with this strategy and the Council's emerging play strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/> *		<input type="checkbox"/> *												

provision for teenagers																				
Monitor the success of the policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\* Note: this assumes the Vale will adopt its Local Development Framework in 2011.

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**Long Term Aim 5: Use of the Vale's Greenspaces and Outdoor Sports Facilities:** Actively to promote the use of the Vale's greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities

**Objective 5.1:** To develop a programme of community events and activities in the Vale's District-wide greenspaces and facilities, in partnership with the town and parish councils and appropriate local organisations such as Lions Clubs, youth groups, schools and charities

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer		
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals	
Work with the relevant Town or Parish Council to review the suitability of these spaces for community events and plan and deliver any improvements needed	Suitability will depend on things like ease of road and pedestrian access, disabled accessibility and parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Town and Parish Councils								
Work with the relevant town or Parish Council and appropriate local organisations to develop and deliver a programme of community events	These events will be an excellent opportunity to promote community involvement in local greenspaces and provide information and publicity for progress with implementing the strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town and Parish Councils Local groups Charities Vale Sports Development Team								
Monitor the achievement of the objective	This can be done through the Vale Voice panel and by keeping a record of events and the approximate number of people attending them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									

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**Long Term Aim 6: Capital Funding:** Constantly to seek to maximise investment in the Vale's greenspaces from sources other than the District Council

**Objective 6.1:** To develop and seek external funding for specific projects that will help to deliver the vision

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications						Lead officer		
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Totals			
Monitor the various sources of external funding to identify opportunities for the Vale to benefit from them	This monitoring should cover all forms of external funding and not only those sources willing to accept applications from local authorities. The District Council will then be in a position to advise and help local communities access funding. There is a listing of resources for parks in the community section at <a href="http://www.green-space.org.uk">www.green-space.org.uk</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Monitor the achievement of the objective	This can be done by keeping a record of all external funding achieved by the Vale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										

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**Long Term Aim 6: Capital Funding:** Constantly to seek to maximise investment in the Vale's greenspaces from sources other than the District Council

**Objective 6.2:** To re-invest the proceeds arising from any disposals of existing greenspaces or sports facilities in other spaces or facilities in the same general area as the space(s) or facilities lost

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer		
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals	
Make a policy decision to re-invest the proceeds of any disposal of poorly used and low quality, low value spaces in the same community as the spaces that will be lost	The greatest opposition to any proposals to develop or otherwise dispose of a greenspace or sports facility arises when the local community will see no direct benefit	<input type="checkbox"/>					Town and Parish Councils								
Initiative discussion with local communities and the relevant Town or Parish Council whenever there is a possibility of the loss of an existing greenspace															
Monitor the achievement of the objective	This can be done using the Council's financial records, supplemented by information from the Town and Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									

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**Long Term Aim 7: Revenue Funding:** To ensure adequate guaranteed long term revenue funding for management and maintenance

**Objective 7.1:** To ensure that the District Council's revenue funding of greenspace management and maintenance is sufficient to deliver continuous steady improvement in the quality and value of those spaces and facilities managed by the Council and thereby set the standard for other providers to emulate

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer			
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals		
Identify the resources needed to deliver Objectives 2.2 and 2.4 and make the case for them		<input type="checkbox"/>														
Use any additional resources where they will have the greatest impact, rather than in an "across the board" manner																
Monitor the achievement of the objective	This can be done using updated audit scores as set out under Objective 2.2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>										

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**Long Term Aim 7: Revenue Funding:** To ensure adequate guaranteed long term revenue funding for management and maintenance

**Objective 7.2:** To encourage all providers in the District to allocate sufficient resources to the management and maintenance of greenspaces and facilities to deliver continuous improvement in their quality and value

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer		
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals	
Circulate a summary of this strategy to all providers in the District for comment		<input type="checkbox"/>					Town and Parish Councils, County Council, BBOWT, Oxford Preservation Trust, Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum, housing associations and other land owners as appropriate								
With those partners willing to "sign up" to the strategy, consider the need for, potential composition and remit of a "Greenspace Partnership" for the Vale	Without some sort of co-ordinating mechanism, it is unlikely that all land owners will sign up to the strategy. Therefore it will be desirable to have some sort of "Vale Greenspace Partnership" as a co-ordinating and persuading mechanism.	<input type="checkbox"/>					As above								
Assuming the District Council's partners agree to the creation of a Vale Greenspace Partnership, review its effectiveness annually and make whatever changes may be needed															
Monitor the achievement of the objective	This can be monitored using audit data, provided the audit is	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									

	kept up to date																		
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**Long Term Aim 7: Revenue Funding:** To ensure adequate guaranteed long term revenue funding for management and maintenance

**Objective 7.3:** To encourage local communities to become involved in helping to look after greenspaces

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer		
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals	
Publicise this strategy, together with a commitment from the District Council to implement it, and use this as a mechanism for raising the profile of the Vale's greenspaces	Raising the profile of the importance of greenspace provision is a necessary precursor to getting local people involved in spaces on their doorstep, reducing anti-social behaviour and developing local pride. Money spent on unnecessary litter picking or removing graffiti and the effects of vandalism merely maintains the status quo: it does not deliver any long term improvements. In addition, the Government is promoting "localism", in which local people will have more say over the services they want and the way that they want them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									
After identifying the spaces and facilities of District-wide significance, and those for which the District Council will seek to make a Green Flag application, create and work with Friends Groups for these spaces.	A Friends group is almost essential for a successful Green Flag application	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									
With partners (and the Vale Greenspace Partnership, if formed) ways of involving local communities more in local greenspace management and		<input type="checkbox"/>													

maintenance and enabling them to access funding which may not be available to the District Council				
Arrange regular "voluntary clean ups" at any spaces in which there is a litter problem and publicise the amount of litter collected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage schools to "adopt a greenspace" and look after it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitor the achievement of the objective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This can be done by keeping a record of the number and membership of Friends and other greenspace-related local groups

**Delivery Plan: Issue 1, August 2007**

**Long Term Aim 7: Revenue Funding:** To ensure adequate guaranteed long term revenue funding for management and maintenance

**Objective 7.4:** To reduce the revenue cost to the District Council of the Vale's indoor sports facilities

Tasks	Comments/notes	Action in					Key partners	Budget implications					Lead officer		
		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		Totals	
In partnership with the District Council's leisure management contractors, review the operation of each of the District's indoor sports and leisure facilities to identify ways of driving up income	The most effective of reducing net revenue costs is to increase income. While some limited savings may also be possible, and should not be ignored, the potential for them reduces with every saving that is made and there is a danger that the process becomes one of managing decline.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure management contractors								
Ensure that prices are set at market rates, with suitable concessions available for those who need them	Research for <b>sportscotland</b> identified that low prices are not nearly as effective in terms of maximising use and income as other measures such as active promotion and clever programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure management contractors								
Encourage users to become members of the facilities they use and pay by direct debit	This is a proven method of maximising income; it also reduces cash handling which can be time consuming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure management contractors								
In partnership with the District Council's leisure management contractors, identify ways of generating additional revenue at the Vale's indoor sports facilities, paying particular attention to the potential to benefit from planned housing developments in the District.	Examples of possible initiatives include expanding the fitness area at the Wantage Leisure Centre, covering additional courts or providing additional dance studios at the White Horse Tennis and Leisure Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure management contractors								

Prepare the business case for the identified enhancements, encompassing capital and revenue costs and throughput estimates	It should be possible to part fund some extensions or improvements from a mixture of "spend to save" funding and developer contributions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure management contractors									
Investigate ways of forward funding the most desirable and viable projects	Paragraph B23 of ODPM (now DCLG) Circular 5/2005, Planning Obligations, allows local authorities to forward fund infrastructure and seek contributions towards the cost from developments that come forward later, provided the need for contributions is clearly set out in advance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure management contractors									
Commission design team to design the proposed alterations or extensions, obtain tenders and progress the proposed works		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure management contractors									

**REPORT OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM  
TO THE EXECUTIVE  
5 OCTOBER 2007**

**Corporate Governance Report: First Quarter 2007/8 (April, May and June)**

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

1.1 The Corporate Governance Report looks at the key areas of:

- Corporate Priorities
- Best Value Performance Indicators
- Progress against Service Prioritisation Plans
- Key staffing data (sickness levels and turnover)
- Financial commentary

Corporate Governance reporting to the Executive during 2006/7 included the full versions of all of the individual reports. For 2007/8 the Executive have asked that only exceptions be included in the quarterly report to the Executive. The Senior Management Team (SMT) now has a standard quarterly agenda item for their meetings (which are held monthly) which considers all aspects of corporate governance. At its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> August SMT agreed the exceptions to be reported to the Executive and the appropriate comments / actions proposed have been included in this report. In addition, a number of areas of good performance have been highlighted. These have been included in section 4.

This new style of reporting has significantly reduced the length of the Quarterly Corporate Governance report. Previous versions were up to 40 pages long and contained too much detail. However, the full versions of the individual reports will be still available on the Council's website. They can be accessed through the performance section of the Council and Democracy area of the website.

1.2 The contact officer for this report is Tim Sadler, Strategic Director, telephone (01235 540360). **Email address: [tim.sadler@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:tim.sadler@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)**.

**2.0 Recommendation**

*That the Senior Management Team's Corporate Governance exception report and proposals be noted;*

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

This report relates to the Council's Vision in that it supports all of its objectives and does not conflict with any Council Strategies. It supports all of the strands of the Vale Community Strategy.

**4.0 Exception Reports**

4.1 Corporate Priorities Report.

SMT decided that only one action needed to be highlighted from this report. This relates to action 4.2 – Transform Human Resource service into a Strategic Business Partner. Full

details of this action for improvement and progress against the milestones are included in Appendix A.

#### 4.2 Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) Report.

SMT agreed that there are five BVPIs which need to be reported to the Executive as exceptions. These are:

- BVPI 8 - % of invoices paid on time.
- BVPIs 82ai and ii - % and total tonnage of waste recycled
- BVPIs 84a a and b – household waste collected

Full details of performance during the first quarter and the appropriate comments are included in appendix A.

In addition SMT acknowledged the following areas of good performance:

- BVPI 82bi and ii - % and tonnage of Household waste composted (note that performance for this indicator is interlinked with that of BVPIs 82 and 84 referred to above). Performance was significantly above target during the first quarter and reflects the continued success of the 'Brown Bin' scheme
- BVPI 109 a-c – % of planning applications processed within specified time limits. There was a further significant improvement in performance during the first quarter and is significantly above target for all 3 parts of this indicator

The full version of the BVPI report has now been organised in a different way. Those that relate to Council priorities are included under the appropriate priority. The remainder are included under the heading 'General – non priority'.

#### 4.3 Service Prioritisation Plan (SPP) Progress Report

This is a new report and enables SMT to track progress against all of the SPPs agreed in the 2007/8 budget. Of the 24 SPPs agreed for 2007/8, 17 have already been implemented and a further 5 do not require any savings to be realised during 2007/8. There are no specific issues which need to be considered by the Executive.

#### 4.4 Summary of Sickness and Turnover Report

**Sickness:** Sickness is slightly up this quarter compared to the same quarter last year. There is no obvious trend, it appears to be a random variation. The totals for 2006/07 were significantly better than target. The new absence policy and procedure will be launched next month and should improve performance.

**Turnover:** Turnover is higher this quarter compared to the same quarter last year. This represents 11 staff leaving compared to 8 the previous year. There is no obvious trend, it appears to be a random variation. The totals for 2006/07 were significantly better than target.

#### 4.5 Financial Commentary to the end of July 2007

The commentary relates to the revenue budget only and the full version of the report (see section 1.1) follows the approved budget in style as it appears in "Yellow Pages". The variance shows a corporate underspend of £1,030,392.

Explanations of the main items are provided below. Detailed explanations should be discussed in the monthly performance management meetings held by Portfolio Holders and Deputy / Assistant Directors. Any significant variances which will impact the year-end position should continue to be reported by the appropriate Portfolio Holder to the Executive meeting.

#### Contracts and Procurement Underspent by £860,000

The underspend is primarily due to outstanding supplier invoices from Veolia in respect of recycling, refuse collection and street cleansing. These three items account for £571,000 of the underspend. Accurate profiling is somewhat difficult due to the uncertainty of the timing of receipt of monthly invoices from the contractor for these services.

There is also an underspend on the three Leisure Centres amounting to £143,000, again due to awaiting receipt of invoices and to a lesser extent accruals brought forward into 2007-08.

#### Housing and Community Safety Underspent by £246,000

A payment (income) of £423,000 has been received for renovation grants. This is for the whole of 2007-08 and will require the profile to be adjusted. This is currently producing an underspend of £420,000 on this service alone. This is somewhat offset by an 'overspend' on Temporary Accommodation of £140,000 due to no income being posted to the account. This has now been done in August and is up to date.

#### Organisational Development and Support Underspent by £227,000

The main underspend here is £82,000 by ICT where accruals brought forward into 2007-08 have not yet been matched by a payment to a supplier. Likewise under printing there is an unmatched accrual of £23,000. Abingdon LSP is underspent by some £43,000 due to some projects being done later in the financial year rather than earlier. The profile will be adjusted accordingly.

#### Planning and Community Strategy Overspent by £356,000

This is due to incorrect profiling on Development Control (over by £350,000). This will be corrected in time for the August budget monitoring report.

A large part of the Council's income is in the form of investment income and property income. Although there is some turbulence in the money market at present, it is anticipated that these two items will be on budget at year end.

Members will be aware that the Council has recently installed a new financial information system. This will provide better information to both the finance department and budget holders. The data provided by the new system is improving month by month as the initial transaction backlog is cleared and errors are corrected.

From September Members will be provided with not only the actuals to budget for the half year, but a projected outturn, and this will be featured until the year end.

TIM SADLER  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

#### Background Papers:

All of the background reports detailed below can be viewed on the council's website as explained in section 1.1 of the report:

- Corporate Priorities Report
- Best Value Performance Indicator Report
- Service Prioritisation Plan Progress Report
- Summary of Sickness and Turnover Report
- Financial Commentary



**Appendix A - Senior Management Team Exceptions Report**

**Corporate Priorities Report**

	<b>Action for Improvement</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Comments / Progress</b>	<b>Officer</b>
4.2	Transform HR Service into Strategic Business Partner	Review HR Service Update HR Service Plan with actions Deliver action plan	June 2007 July 2007  July to March 2008	Completed.  Completed.  Action plan agreed to develop the strategic business partner role of HR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the HR Team as individuals and as a group, to gain a greater understanding of each other's styles and job roles;</li> <li>• Review HR processes and associated tasks to "free up" time to focus on the business partner role;</li> <li>• Conduct a customer survey to help shape the delivery of the HR business partner role;</li> <li>• Identify key competencies for all managers, develop those skills and enable the line to manage better through greater clarity of responsibility and understanding.</li> </ul>	Tim Barnett
	Review People Strategy, develop and implement action plan		August 2007	In view of the actions to develop the Strategic Partner role of HR, agreement to be obtained to review the People Strategy by 31.03.08	

**Best Value Performance Indicators (see section 4.2)**

BVPI	Indicator Description	Tgt/ Ind	TQ 05/06	BQ 05/06	Actual 06/07	Quartile 06/07	Target 07/08	Actual Q1	Actual Q2	Actual Q3	Actual Q4	on/off Tgt	Comments	Trend
	<i>Cleaner, Greener, Healthier and Safer Priority</i>													
82ai	% of household waste recycled	T	20.87	14.22	22.81	T	25.00	22.47	0	0	0		While the tonnage collected for recycling is on target for the quarter, the green waste collected for composting has increased the waste arisings, thus reducing the percentage of recycled material	↓
82aii	Total tonnage of waste recycled	T	15126	6086	9689	M	10750	2494	0	0.0	0		The tonnage is only marginally below target for the first quarter	↓
82bi	% of household waste composted	T	13.05	3.54	6.3	M	6.00	10.17	0	0	0		(included to show overall picture)	↑
82bii	Total tonnage of waste composted	T	8770	1802	2665	M	3750	1128	0	0.0	0		(included to show overall picture)	↑
84a	Household waste collected (Kg per head of population)	I	393	478	366	T	369	94.9	0	0	0		Worse than target due to high growth in green waste. Unlikely to achieve target.	↓
84b	% change (from previous year) in the waste collected (KG per head per annum)	T	-3.74	1.31	4.2	B	1.20	3.04	0	0	0		See 84a	↓

BVPI	Indicator Description	Tgt/ Ind	TQ 05/06	BQ 05/06	Actual 06/07	Quartile 06/07	Target 07/08	Actual Q1	Actual Q2	Actual Q3	Actual Q4	on/ off Tgt	Comments	Trend
	<b>General - Non Priority</b>													
8	% Invoices paid on time	T	96.71	89.24	94.76	M	95.94	84.08	0	0	0		Below target performance linked to Agresso implementation issues. The Council and Capita are working to resolve the problems. Performance is improving and for the month of August it was 91.33%. It is not expected that the cumulative target will be met at the end of the year.	↓

**Revenue Budget Monitoring 2007/08**

**July 2007**

	Original Budget (full year) (i)		Original Budget inc Budget Changes (full year) (ii)		Latest Budget (Full Year) (iii)		Profilled Working Budget (iv)		Actuals		Commitments		Variance £ From Profilled Working Budget		Variance %	
	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08	2007/08
<b>Service Costs</b>																
Commercial Services	538,560	1,048,940	1,025,160	251,285	206,873	88,652	44,241	17.6%								
Contracts & Procurement	6,631,070	6,497,120	6,472,010	1,527,157	645,790	20,954	(860,413)	-56.3%								
Environmental Health	1,155,670	1,163,510	1,160,350	265,518	204,475	3,752	(57,291)	-21.6%								
Estates (Now part of Commercial Services)	505,960						0	--								
Housing & Community Safety	1,556,720	1,712,050	1,709,900	393,990	137,687	10,106	(246,197)	-62.5%								
Legal & Democratic Services	964,780	1,043,640	1,040,790	332,468	370,328	10,345	48,205	14.5%								
Organisational Development & Support	116,330	438,470	418,120	932,485	691,734	14,024	(226,728)	-24.3%								
Planning & Community Strategy	2,285,430	2,028,770	2,026,140	4,611	344,952	15,397	355,738	7715.4%								
Ridgeway - financial services	2,092,630	2,331,160	2,328,700	(990,816)	(1,034,545)	50	(43,679)	-4.4%								
Strategy (Chief Executive)	55,970	55,670	55,670	14,060	4	0	(14,056)	-100.0%								
Strategy (SB)	1,155,100	981,920	977,540	219,600	190,177	0	(29,423)	-13.4%								
Strategy (TS)	8,230	7,380	7,250	3,930	3,141	0	(789)	-20.1%								
Contingency	274,300	177,300	264,300	0	0	0	0	--								
Service investment & other budget changes	511,980	0	0	0	0	0	0	--								
2007 Service Prioritisation Plans	(366,800)	0	0	0	0	0	0	--								
<b>Total service costs</b>	<b>17,485,930</b>	<b>17,485,930</b>	<b>17,485,930</b>	<b>2,954,289</b>	<b>1,760,618</b>	<b>163,279</b>	<b>(1,030,392)</b>	<b>-34.9%</b>								

**Notes**

- (i) Original Budget as approved by Council 22 February 2007
- (ii) Original Budget after allocation of budget changes and Service Prioritisation Plans
- (iii) Budget showing effects of virements in-year
- (iv) Working Budget profilled to reflect expected pattern of expenditure

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE**  
**TO THE EXECUTIVE**  
**5 OCTOBER 2007**

**Budget setting process 2008/09**

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

- 1.1 Following the creation of the finance shared services partnership there is a need to develop common practices across the Council's and South Oxfordshire District Council's (SODC) finance function to ensure operational efficiencies are realised. This report proposes a harmonised approach to budget setting.
- 1.2 The report sets out the four stages the budget setting process will follow.
- 1.3 The contact officer for this report is William Jacobs (Head of Finance) telephone (01235 540455). **Email address William.jacobs@ridgeway-ssp.gov.uk.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- (a) *That the budget setting process as detailed in this report and summarised in the timetable at appendix 1 is approved by the Executive.*
- (b) *That the Executive delegate authority to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to develop virement and supplementary estimate procedures appropriate to the budget setting process.*

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

Sound financial management underpins the delivery of all the Council's Vision, strategies and policies. A robust and timely budget setting process contributes towards this.

**4.0 Budget setting**

- 4.1 Following the creation of the finance shared services partnership there is a need to ensure common practices across the VWHDC's and SODC's finance function. This is of particular importance within accountancy where robust, effective and logical processes are needed across a range of tasks where staff will be working on behalf of both councils on potentially complex issues.
- 4.2 Currently the two authorities have distinctly different budget setting processes. It is proposed that for the 2008/09 budget build exercise as carried out by officers will be harmonised. This will result in standard outputs. The political decision making process however will be unique to each authority.
- 4.3 There is a need for a wide range of people across two authorities to understand the process and so it is proposed that terminology used is kept as simple and self explanatory as possible.

- 4.4 At VWHDC the future year's budget setting process is intrinsically linked to the revision of the current year's budget. This is not a common practice across local government where it is more usual to build both a revised estimate and the future year's estimate from a starting position of the current year's original budget.
- 4.5 Additionally, the value of the current year's revised estimate has been significantly reduced with the introduction of a more regular budget monitoring regime. In the past the revised estimate was the main indication of the likely year end outturn position, but now such an estimate is produced monthly as a result of budget monitoring. The production of a revised estimate is not a legal requirement and it has no legal standing. The Council's constitution allows for budget virements and it is the resulting budget, known as the latest budget (the original budget plus approved changes), that officers have authority to spend against. It is proposed therefore to no longer prepare a revised budget.

## **5.0 Budget setting timetable**

- 5.1 The proposed budget setting timetable divides the budget setting process into four distinct phases as follows:
- i) Stage 1 – gathering of base data and the production of a standstill budget.
  - ii) Stage 2 – consolidate the standstill budget and share with the Executive.
  - iii) Stage 3 – budget proposals issued for consultation.
  - iv) Stage 4 – Final budget proposed and approved.
- 5.2 **Stage 1 (ends 12 October 2007)** – Officers prepare a standstill budget. A standstill budget is an estimate of the cost of providing the current level of service at the current standards in 2008/09. It will also include all savings that can be realised and any growth that officers believe is unavoidable, i.e. new expenditure over which members have no discretion. During this period deputy directors will be asked to identify other cost reduction ideas (CRI) and discretionary growth.
- 5.3 **Stage 2 (15 October – early December 2007)** – During this stage the process of informing members starts. The standstill budget, CRIs and growth bids are shared with the directors group and Executive members to prompt a discussion about the issues to be faced. The Executive member for Finance will work through the higher level detail to gain a thorough understanding of the overall need for further savings or scope for growth.
- 5.4 **Stage 3 (mid December 2007 – Mid January 2008)** – The Executive will issue its budget proposals for consultation. The report will include details of the standstill budget, expenditure added as unavoidable growth, CRI and discretionary growth bids. It will also include the Government's initial estimate of the grant support the council is likely to receive in 2008/09 (known as the 'provisional settlement'). Non-Executive Members will be able to question the Executive on its proposal either informally, by lobbying, or formally, by way of a Scrutiny committee.
- 5.5 Also during this stage a business breakfast meeting will be held to allow the business community to be consulted on the Executive budget proposals.
- 5.6 **Stage 4 (February 2008)** – The Executive will propose its final budget to Council. Council sets a budget.

5.7 The timetable attached at appendix 1 provides further details.

WILLIAM JACOBS  
HEAD OF FINANCE

STEVE BISHOP  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

**Vale of White Horse DC Draft Budget Timetable 2008/09**

<b><u>INDICATIVE DATE</u></b>	<b><u>FORUM/RELEVANT PERSONS</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
<p><b>STAGE 1 - Base Data</b> <i>Up to 12 October 2007</i></p>	Deputy Directors (DDs) and Finance support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With support from finance using the Template Working Papers, prepare detailed draft revenue estimates (standstill budget) and capital programme for review at officer level</li> <li>• Develop Cash Reduction Ideas and discretionary growth bids</li> </ul>
<p><b>STAGE 2 - Consolidate the standstill budget and share with the Executive</b> <i>15 October 2007 – early December 2007</i></p>	Meetings of the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Strategic Management Group (SMG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Head of Finance briefs SMT and SMG</li> <li>• SMT/SMG consider and challenge the standstill budget, CRI and growth bids</li> <li>• The Executive formulates its initial budget proposal</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 3 - Budget proposals issued for consultation</b> <i>Early December 2007 – Mid January 2008</i></p>	Members/Business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Executive issues its initial budget proposals</li> <li>• Political lobbying</li> <li>• Business breakfast</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 4 - Final budget proposed and approved</b> <i>February 2008</i></p>	Executive/Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Executive proposes its final budget to Council</li> <li>• Council approve a budget for 2008/09</li> </ul>



REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR  
TO THE EXECUTIVE  
5 OCTOBER 2007

**Communications Strategy**

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

- 1.1 This report proposes the adoption of the communications strategy for the Vale as part of the Corporate Priority “Improving internal and external communications”. The strategy needs to be adopted to move the priority forwards.
- 1.2 The strategy is based on information from the Senior Management Team and their service areas, the staff and Member survey and the public general satisfaction survey completed last financial year by polling company Ipsos MORI as part of the Best Value Performance Indicator requirement.
- 1.3 The strategy is built from the position of where we are now and what we aim to achieve over the next three years. The communications policy is an inherent part of this.
- 1.4 The contact officer for this report is Nikki Malin, Head of Communications, telephone (01235 540376). **Email address [nikki.malin@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:nikki.malin@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- (a) *that the Executive approve in principle the draft strategy to implement the Communications policy to be recommended to Council;*
- (b) *that the following policy which underpins the communications strategy is recommended for adoption by Council:*

*“The Council will adopt and implement a Communications Strategy which aims to safeguard and continuously improve:*

- *Customer satisfaction*
- *Involvement, engagement and information flow with staff and the community*
- *The Vale’s reputation*
- *The Vale’s website”*

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

This report is related to the Corporate Priority “Improving both internal and external communications”.

HELEN BISHOP  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT)

TIM SADLER  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

# You heard it here first

– A communications strategy for The Vale of White Horse District Council

“There is no greater impediment to the advancement of knowledge than the ambiguity of words” Thomas Reid, Scottish philosopher

## **1. Why do we need a communications strategy?**

As a public sector organisation what we do, why we do it and how we do it are all subject to scrutiny. Not just in the formal committee or inspection sense, but also informally by the public, the press, our staff and the partner organisations we work with.

People find out what we are doing in a variety of ways, but the most popular and trusted source is information from the Council itself. This puts us in an enviable position because it means we have a clear channel of communication with the people we work for.

The reason we need a communications strategy, which sums up where we are now, where we want to be and how we are going to get there, is to ensure we value and protect this asset while at the same time working with other communication channels like the media to ensure consistency. We need to be sure we are saying the right things at the right time to the right people in the right way and to ensure the service is complementary to business objectives and helps to deliver those objectives.

## **2. Doing it in style – how we communicate**

Putting out information is not enough, we need to do it with style. Communicating with our staff, the public and our other stakeholders is not something that should be done grudgingly or with suspicion and it should certainly not be done as a last resort because our hand is forced. Every opportunity to get our message across should be embraced and welcomed. In order to safeguard our reputation and credibility when we communicate we should do so with the following values and aspirations uppermost in our minds:

**Open and honest** – tell it like it is

**Timely** – at the right time and on time

**Accurate** – get it right

**Clear** – no jargon

**Proactive** – get there first

**Involving** – get it out there or get them in here

**Innovative** – do it differently

## **3. What we say – key messages**

These should reflect what the Vale wants to be famous for, the issues and concerns that the Vale believes are a priority. These are shaped by the Vale's vision and corporate aims.

**Valuing the Vale by:**

- a) Working together to provide an affordable home for all
- b) Keeping the Vale clean, green and safe by tackling offenders and protecting our towns and countryside.
  - Protecting the environment by reducing waste and saving energy
  - Helping communities stay healthy by providing leisure facilities and sports coaching
  - Working in partnership to promote and enhance neighbourhood safety
- c) Helping our residents get in touch with us in a way that is quick and convenient
- d) Delivering the best deal for the Vale residents
- e) Being open and honest about the Council's work, providing accurate information at the right time and in the right way.

**4. Where are we now?**

- a) We now have a communications team in place comprising a Head of Communications, Communications Officer, Assistant Communications Officer and Web Developer. The Web Developer was transferred from ICT and the communications roles were created from existing resources. The corporate admin team also sits with Communications.
- b) Staff publications "The Horse's Mouth" and "Team Brief" have been transferred to the communications team and have been improved.
- c) The residents' newsletter "Vale Views" has improved content and layout and is produced and distributed house-to-house to 55,000 homes three times a year.
- d) The website has increased accessibility and is undergoing further transformation.
- e) The Local Government Association "Reputations" programme has been adopted and now needs to be implemented
- f) Media coverage has increased by 187 per cent from 2005-06 and neutral/positive coverage has increased by 214 per cent. Negative coverage has dropped from 17.5 per cent to 11.5 per cent.

- g) The Vale is currently dealing with a number of “hot issues” including the proposed reservoir, the sale of the Old Gaol and improvements to Bury Street.
- h) Publications including the Council Tax leaflet, EMBRACE newsletter and community safety newsletter are produced
- i) Printing and advertising budgets have been centralised under the communications budget.
- j) Partnership working through EMBRACE (working with ethnic minority businesses), Oxweb (Oxfordshire public sector web managers), Oxfordshire PR Group, Oxfordshire Consultation Group and Oxfordshire Waste Partnership Project Group.
- k) The communications team played a key part in the Council’s response to the summer floods including keeping residents informed, organising a Ministerial visit, supporting the grant process and dealing with both local, national and international media queries.

### **Best Value Residents Survey**

The three-yearly Best Value Performance Indicator General Satisfaction survey was completed last financial year (06/07) and includes a wealth of information about perceptions of the Vale. Specifically related to communications:

- Only 50 per cent believed the council keeps them informed (similar to Oxfordshire Consortium average and polling expert Ipsos MORI’s district average).
- The most common source of information was the Council itself (44 per cent). 23 per cent from the local media and 12 per cent from the website.
- It is worth noting that residents who thought the Council’s performance had got worse were also more likely to favour the local media as a source of information (33 per cent).
- Of those who made contact with the Council 71 per cent were satisfied with the outcome.
- The most common reason was to ask for advice or information (43 per cent).

### **Staff Survey**

This was conducted in June last year.

- 33 per cent of staff were prepared to act as advocates of Council services but advocacy of the Council as an employer was only 15 per cent
- 78 per cent of staff disagreed that morale was good
- Staff did not feel they were working for a successful organisation (-19 per cent net agreement) or could develop a career (-27 per cent)
- Only two in five said they understood the Council’s corporate plan
- Work life balance was positive – 57 per cent successfully balanced commitments

- Trust and confidence in directors and senior management was low even though they had good knowledge and access to them
- Staff did not feel the SMT had a clear vision of the future and were not being kept up to date
- Staff did not feel they were recognised for good performance (-47 per cent)
- Preferred sources of information were email (71 per cent), line manager (58 per cent) and team meetings (54 per cent)
- 55 per cent did not feel informed, particularly with regard to corporate and strategic decisions, and did not feel information was credible
- 61 per cent did not feel there was enough opportunity to let management know how they felt
- Change management was also an issue

A staff action planning group was set up after the survey and continues to make recommendations to improve issues raised in the survey.

## **5. Where do we want to be – what are we aiming for?**

To safeguard and continuously improve:

- Customer Satisfaction
- Involvement, engagement and information flow with staff and the community
- The Vale's reputation
- The Vale's website

## **6. How are we going to get there? – Objectives and milestones**

**A. We want our staff to feel well informed and that they are getting information at the right time, so in turn they become advocates for the Vale, not just their service area**

**Actions:**

- I. Develop an internal communications framework with minimum standards so managers and their staff understand how they can expect to be kept informed. To be completed by December 2007
- II. Develop quality internal publications which include relevant information at the right time. Ongoing
- III. Promote the work of the Senior Management Team and Senior Management Group so staff understand the role of the strategic groups. Ongoing.
- IV. Develop the staff intranet so it includes all relevant information to enable staff to do their jobs and understand others. To be completed by August 2008.

**Measurement:** Staff Survey.

**B. We want the website to be the first point of contact for people with internet access seeking information about the Council**

Review and rewrite web content and structure from a customer perspective and encourage public engagement with the website

**Actions:**

- I. Identify the most common queries and concerns from the public to shape content and structure. To be completed by December 2008 but then continuously reviewed.
- II. Write a new A to Z for the website. To be completed by April 2008.
- III. Compile a frequently asked questions searchable database. To be completed by April 2008.
- IV. Develop a public relations campaign promoting the website. Promotion campaign to start in January 2008.

**Measurement:** Website monitoring reports.

**C. We want to implement the Reputations programme in full, as agreed by the Executive. This should be achieved by September 2008.**

**Actions:**

**Cleaner, Safer, Greener:**

- I. Branded cleaning operation: ensure a visible cleaning presence with a strong link to the Council
- II. No gaps in cleaning and maintenance contracts: Integrate services and simplify boundaries eg to avoid grounds maintenance teams walking past litter because street cleaning will deal with it.
- III. One number for public contact: ensure a single number contact to avoid people being passed around.
- IV. Deal with "grot spots": Know where they are and why in order to take preventative action. Areas which attract fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles, graffiti etc.
- V. Abandoned cars/fly-tipping: Set a target for their removal within 24 hours of being reported/sighted and make it easy for people to report it.
- VI. Green flag award: Aim to have one for at least one park, indicating it is clean, safe and green.
- VII. Educate and enforce: Make it clear to the public that littering, dog fouling and fly-tipping are crimes that will be prosecuted and that offenders will be named and shamed.

**Communications:**

- I. Manage the media: Develop a positive relationship with the media through a pro-active approach, honest evaluation and leadership from senior officers and members in order to better inform residents of the Council's actions and decisions.
- II. Provide an A-Z guide: A good quality guide which explains the council's services in a simple, jargon-free way to help people understand the breadth of services offered.
- III. Publish a regular newspaper: A good quality product which demonstrates an understanding of the readership and contains useful, compelling and entertaining content.
- IV. Council branding: Effective and consistent linkage of the council brand to community services.
- V. Internal communications: Based on honest and open dialogue to help staff deliver better services, understand the council's goals and understand their customers' needs.

**Measurement:** Achieving sign off from LGA.

**D. We want to maintain our high profile press coverage while minimising negative stories**

Develop a media protocol so that media queries will be dealt with according to the relevant principles of the communications style ie Open and honest; accurate; clear and timely.

**Actions:**

- I. Conduct a media survey to identify perceptions of the service and areas for development. Complete by March 2008.
- II. Write the media protocol. Complete by September 2008.
- III. Circulate to the media and include it on a communications section of the website. Complete by September 2008.
- IV. Include information about the protocol in staff and Member training. Ongoing.

Identify media opportunities throughout service areas to ensure a consistent flow of positive stories to the media

**Actions:**

- I. Collate a media plan and calendar to secure at least four proactive releases a month. Ongoing.
- II. Identify opportunities through quarterly DD meetings. Ongoing.

Keep staff informed of media activity

**Actions:**

- I. Regular updates in Horse's Mouth on media activity for the month. Ongoing.
- II. Reactive media queries log on the intranet. To be achieved by August 2008.
- III. Circulate cuttings to DDs for wider circulation among their team. Service to start by January 2008.
- IV. Have cuttings on display on at least one board per floor. In place by January 2008.

Increase awareness of media role and requirements through a training programme

**Actions:**

- Training programme for all staff. To be developed for 2008/09.
- Specific media interview training for Exec/Shadow Exec and key officers. To be developed for 2008/09.
- Compose and circulate media guidelines for all officers and Members. By September 2008.

**Measurement:** media coverage and annual media surveys.

**E. We want to increase Vale Views to four editions a year (by incorporating the Council Tax leaflet as a way of minimising costs) and include advertising**

**Actions:**

- I. Use the Vale Voice Citizen's Panel to review Vale Views specifically in terms of value for money, frequency, content, design and advertising. Complete by October 2007.

- II. Seek permission to convert the Council Tax leaflet to a special fourth edition of Vale Views and review the schedule for the remaining three editions. Complete by December 2007.
- III. Write a detailed specification for agencies to include design, print and advertising, incorporating the views of the Panel. Complete by December 2007.

**Measurement:** Increased customer satisfaction.

**F. We want to get people more involved in the Vale through consultation and participation**

**Actions:**

- I. Develop a separate consultation and engagement strategy incorporating the Community Call For Action recommendations from the Government White Paper. To be presented to the December Executive.
- II. Develop a Value your Vale campaign to encourage citizenship and participation through actions. For 2008/09.

**Measurement:** Customer satisfaction survey.

**G. We want people (including our staff) to understand what the Vale stands for and want properly resourced and planned campaigns to help achieve this**

**Actions:**

- I. Continually refine and develop the Council's vision.
- II. Continually review the Council's corporate priorities and action plans.
- III. Develop the Vale logo and corporate style guide. To be complete by March 2008.
- IV. Develop annual campaigns which incorporate corporate priorities and objectives across all service area activities. For 2008/09.
- V. Manage the printing and advertising for the Vale. Ongoing.
- VI. Monitor letters and correspondence to the public. Ongoing.

**Measurement:** Staff and customer satisfaction surveys.



### South East Plan: Headlines from the Panel's Report

#### Regional Policies

##### **Growth Levels**

- The Panel recommends that housing numbers be increased by 10% to 32,000 dwellings a year in the region. 640,160 new dwellings will be required in total over the plan period, an increase of 62,000. The Panel believes too much weight has been given to the views of existing residents and not enough to demographic and economic factors. However, it is lower than alternatives put forward by SEEDA and GOSE, and is lower than the latest demographic forecasts.

##### **Spatial Approach**

- Most of the additional housing is recommended to be focussed in the Inner South East – the London Fringe, Western Corridor/Blackwater Valley and Central Oxon – where there is the greatest economic potential.
- The urban focus of Plan is supported as are regional hubs which the Panel considers should more clearly be a focus for housing growth. The Diamonds for Growth and Investment in the Regional Economic Strategy are seen as important mechanisms for delivery.
- 6 strategic development areas are proposed each with 4-5000 dwellings – one of the six is **south of Oxford**.
- The Panel supports the new growth points - including **Didcot**.
- In order to accommodate higher housing levels proposed, the Panel recommends selective reviews of the Green Belts around **Oxford**, Woking and Guildford where the new boundaries should endure to at least 2031.

##### **Infrastructure**

- The Panel agrees with the 'manage and invest' approach and the Regional Assembly's work on infrastructure is praised. However, it does not agree that housing levels can be made contingent upon the delivery of particular pieces of infrastructure; but rather the policies should reinforce the importance of timely delivery.

##### **Inter- Regional Issues**

- The Panel is concerned that the Plan does not adequately take into account functional inter-connectivity between regions and recommends the deletion of policy CC7. Inter-regional issues should be dealt with in the Implementation, Monitoring and Review Section of the Plan.

##### **Employment**

- The Panel recommends an early partial review of the Plan to provide a clearer framework for economic development and employment land once employment land reviews are completed.
- The Panel does not agree that restricting growth in the more buoyant parts of the South East will encourage growth in the areas where regeneration is priority.

## Housing

- The Panel considers that the housing figures should not be treated as ceilings and there should not be any attempt to ration permissions to avoid out-performing them.
- While recognising the problem of districts having two or more housing figures, the Panel considers they are integral to the 'sharper focus' concept in the plan.
- The Plan's emphasis on significantly increasing the affordable housing provision is strongly supported. The Panel acknowledges that the only way to tackle genuine need is to increase substantially the level of investment: it is not a case of building our way out of the problem. The Panel supports the region wide target of 35% but accept higher targets in some regions – including Central Oxfordshire.
- The target of 40 dwellings per hectare is supported, but the Panel states this should not be pursued at the expense of other objectives.
- The Panel supports the 60% target for housing development on brownfield land and acknowledges that delivery will vary across the region.

## Transport

- The Panel considers that while there are some transport corridors where highway improvements are required, part of the answer to worsening congestion must be that dependency on car travel has to be reduced. However, it believes it unrealistic to achieve an absolute reduction during the life of the Plan.
- The Assembly's position on demand management is supported and the Panel recommends that policy T5 should require sub regional strategies to indicate a mix of demand management measures.
- The Panel is concerned that insufficient leadership is given on road user charging, and recommends that local authorities be encouraged to test new charging initiatives.
- The East West Rail Link is accepted by the Panel for inclusion as one of the region's priority transport infrastructure projects.

## Natural Resource Management

- The Panel recommends that policy NRM2 should identify reservoir schemes with a geographic reference to provide greater clarity and the policy should be amended so there is a firmer steer to LDDs to facilitate their delivery if they are shown to be necessary.

## Small Market Towns

- The Panel considers that the Plan should identify those towns (up to about 20,000 people) in the "rest of county" areas that are expected to make a wider contribution to the spatial strategy, such as Winchester and Banbury.
- Also recommended is policy guidance on criteria that would help local authorities identify villages where additional development would be appropriate.

## Town Centres

- The Panel recommends that Oxford be identified as one of a number of "centres for significant change".

## The Central Oxfordshire Sub-Region

## Overview

- The Panel concludes there is sufficient justification for the choice of Central Oxfordshire as a sub-region on its proposed boundaries, but takes the view that insufficient support has been given for economic growth and alternative options for higher levels of growth have not been adequately tested.

### **Housing (policy H1 and CO2)**

- The Panel recommends increasing the number of houses to be built in Central Oxfordshire between 2006 and 2026 from 34,000 to 40,100. The reasons for the increase are:
  - insufficient weight has been given to economic factors – particularly the internationally important science base and the initiatives through the diamond for growth and investment in the Regional Economic Strategy;
  - too much weight has been given to the setting of Oxford and the Green Belt;
  - the proposed figure is less than the Government's population projections. Only small allowances have been made to meet the backlog of unmet housing need and some in-migration;
  - there are 34,000 more jobs than resident workers and while it may not worsen significantly to 2016 it is forecast to worsen after then. It adjoins the western corridor, Milton Keynes and Swindon areas, all of which experience net in commuting.
- The Panel recommends the increase in housing numbers be accommodated as follows:
  - a strategic development area south of Oxford of some 4,000 dwellings;
  - increasing the dwellings in Oxford City by 1,000 and South Oxfordshire by 750 to take account of the new growth points for the West End and Didcot;
  - increasing West Oxfordshire by 600 dwellings to reflect the potential at Witney;
  - decreasing the Vale's part of Central Oxfordshire by 250 dwellings.

### **Housing in the Vale**

- The Panel supports the figure of 3,400 dwellings for Wantage & Grove primarily because of its inter-linkages with Didcot and areas of potential for employment growth. It sees no case for increasing the figure particularly as it is the only named settlement without a rail station – a situation which appears unlikely to change.
- The Vale is recommended to take on additional 750 dwellings on the edge of Didcot; and most additional development will take place after 2016. It recommends that these phasing assumptions and the intention to pool development contributions to fund the Harwell by-pass and its northern extension be referred to in the text accompanying Policy CO2.
- For the rest of the Vale part of Central Oxfordshire, the Panel supports the Council's request for a decrease of 1000 dwellings given the difficulties of finding land around the other main settlements (Abingdon and Botley). It acknowledges this would create unsustainable pressures to extend small rural settlements. (Taken with the increase of Didcot, this gives a net reduction for Central Oxfordshire of 250 dwellings).
- For the area of the Vale outside Central Oxfordshire the Panel supports the Council's request for an increase of 300 dwellings to enable some flexibility to provide homes beyond the sites already identified and likely to be built on sites within existing settlements.

### **The Core Strategy (policy CO1)**

- The Panel recommends that Policy CO1 be revised to reflect:
  - an aspiration to maintain the world class status of the sub-region;
  - incorporate growth on the edge of Oxford; and
  - make explicit the aim to improve the self-containment of the surrounding country towns.
- The text should be expanded to acknowledge:
  - cross boundary inter-relationships; and
  - the aim of fostering a development axis between Didcot and Wantage & Grove based on its economic strengths and improving public transport between houses and jobs.

### **The Green Belt (policy CO3)**

- The Panel concludes that an urban extension to Oxford will be required in the longer term and there are exceptional circumstances to justify a review of the Green Belt including:
  - significant potential in science, technology and education sectors
  - significant excess of jobs over working population
  - problems of staff retention and recruitment
  - housing affordability ratios in excess of the regional average
  - some of the highest house prices in the region
  - large back log of housing need
  - worsening traffic congestion
  - limits to where development could be accommodated within the city without damaging its special character
  - limits to providing family homes on infill and redevelopment sites
  - longer journeys to work from residents in the country towns compared to Oxford.
- Of the two locations considered for an urban extension in the draft Structure Plan 2016, the Panel favours development south of Grenoble Road (rather than between Kidlington and Yarnton) because:
  - it could be more easily integrated into public transport systems
  - it is closer to key employment areas
  - any new employment would provide less competition with Bicester
  - less risk of coalescence with surrounding settlements
  - it was the selected location in the deposit structure plan
  - the owners of the land between Kidlington and Yarnton are no longer pursuing their proposal.
- Rather than advocating a strategic review of the Green Belt, which could lead to delay and risk the whole of the Green Belt becoming vulnerable, the Panel recommends a selective review on the southern edge of Oxford to be undertaken through a coordinated local development document. This could be in the form of a joint area action plan between South Oxfordshire and Oxford City. It should identify the most appropriate land for development with least harm to Green Belt functions and additional safeguarded land to ensure the Green Belt boundaries endure over the long term. Because of the sensitivity of the matter the Panel urges GOSE to stimulate and monitor progress on the area action plan.

### **Affordable Housing (policy CO4)**

- The Panel considers that a level of affordable housing above the regional target of 35% is justifiable, but the figure of 'at least 50%' in the draft plan is too high. It

recommends that for Central Oxfordshire the target should be 'at least 40%' acknowledging that a higher percentage would need to be achieved on some qualifying sites to offset the lack of provision on small sites. This would not weaken the negotiating position in Oxford City and the rural areas of West Oxfordshire where the target is currently 50%.

### **Employment (policy CO5)**

- The Panel suggests that policy CO5 should be reworded to indicate the positive objectives being sought in each location: the emphasis should be on stimulating growth at the established research and business parks between Didcot and Wantage & Grove.
- For Oxford city the policy should acknowledge that some new employment land (other than brownfield sites) may be needed, but the objective should be to avoid worsening the jobs/housing imbalance.
- The job growth estimate for 2006-16 in Central Oxfordshire should be 18,000 in Central Oxfordshire.

### **Transport (policy CO6)**

- The lower case text should contain references to traffic management measures on the A34. There should be a cross reference to initiatives to improve rail freight capacity in policy T11
- The text should refer to the objective of improving multi-modal transport links in the corridor between Didcot and Wantage & Grove to improve access between jobs and homes.

### **Infrastructure (policy CO7)**

- The policy which stipulates that development will be contingent on the timely provision of infrastructure is recommended for deletion.
- The text should cross refer to policy NRM2 on the possible need for an Upper Thames reservoir.

### **Implementation**

- This section should stress the need for joint working at LDF level between SODC and the Vale on Didcot and SODC and the City Council on the South Oxford strategic development area.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR PLANNING AND COMMUNITY STRATEGY  
TO EXECUTIVE  
5 OCTOBER 2007

**Partial Review of the South East Plan - Provision of Caravan Sites for Gypsies and Travellers**

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

- 1.1 SEERA is undertaking a partial review of the South East Plan relating to the provision of sites for gypsies and travellers in the south east. The first stage of the review is an opportunity for councils to submit their advice on the expected numbers and distribution of sites in their areas. In Oxfordshire a steering group of Councillors representing the County Council and the five District Councils has worked with the support of an officer working group to provide a response.
- 1.2 This work has involved consultation with stakeholders, a recalculation of the expected need as set out in the Association of Councils of the Thames Valley Regions (ACTVaR) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and an alternative disaggregation of the County figure down to District level. The recalculated need for the County to 2016 is 42 pitches in comparison to the original GTAA figure of 98 to 2016.
- 1.3 Advice on travelling showpeople was also requested but it was not considered that it was advisable to carry out a survey in the summer so the intention is that a survey will be carried out this winter. In line with other areas it was considered that advice could not be submitted to SEERA on transit provision and detailed costings.
- 1.4 Following submission of the advice to SEERA there will be public consultation on draft preferred option document and Sustainability Appraisal by SEERA May to July 2008, followed by submission of a draft Partial Review document and Sustainability Appraisal to Government in December 2008 and then an Examination in May 2009.
- 1.5 The Contact Officer for this report is Peter Williams, Principal Planning Officer, (01235 520202)

**2.0 Recommendations**

- (a) *that the Executive, in accordance with the agreed process approves the suggested overall provision of 42 pitches in Oxfordshire and provision for the Vale of either 1 pitch under option A or 8 pitches under option B and that a preference for option A be recorded by Executive for reference in future consultations;*
- (b) *that the participation in a joint study on travelling showpeople in winter 07/08 is approved by Executive, and*
- (c) *that the Executive approves no response being made to the request for transit site provision, as this should be considered by SEERA, or to the request for detailed implementation costs.*

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

- (a) The report relates to the provision of high quality public services which are effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of people within the Vale, opposing all prejudice and discrimination, protecting and improving our environment and improving the quality of life for all members of the community.
- (b) this report principally relates to the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

### 4.0 **Background and Supporting Information**

- 4.1 ODPM Circular 1/2006 was published two months before the submission of the South East Plan (SEP) requiring such plans to include a strategic review of needs and provision for gypsies and travellers. A partial review of the SEP was therefore needed to meet this new Government requirement. SEERA subsequently published a brief setting out the work required. This involved councils acting in partnership, either sub-regionally or within counties, to develop two options for the distribution of the new pitches arising from a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). A pitch can accommodate between two to five caravans. Option A would utilise the distribution arising from the GTAA and option B would develop an alternative distribution which would seek to protect and enhance the natural environment, including its biodiversity and landscape character, make best use of previously developed land and existing or planned infrastructure and facilitate access to employment/services. An officer working group under a Member steering group was then set up to carry out this work for Oxfordshire.
- 4.2 The SEERA brief was published in December 2006 and as well as the two options for distributing the required number of pitches the brief also required councils to: assess the need for transit provision for gypsies and travellers, supply information on existing provision for gypsies and travellers, assess the need for accommodation for travelling showpeople, advise on additional implementation and delivery issues and explain the involvement of stakeholders in the GTAA and subsequent work. The deadline for responses was originally June 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 but this was revised to October 15<sup>th</sup> 2007.
- 4.3 Once SEERA has considered and audited the submissions it will carry out a public consultation on a draft Preferred Option document and a Sustainability Appraisal from May to July 2008. The results of this consultation will then be considered by SEERA before producing a draft Partial Review document and Sustainability Appraisal which will be submitted to Government in December 2008. Formal objections can then be made. This will then be followed by an Examination in May 2009 to consider objections. There will therefore be a number of other opportunities to make inputs to the process. At the same time it should be noted that this Council will have to consider the issue of gypsy and traveller accommodation as part of its Local Development Framework.
- 4.4 The partial review has to be based on a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) as required by the 2004 Housing Act. Many areas of the country had still to complete their GTAAs when the SEERA brief was published but one had already been completed in the ACTVaR area, including the Vale, in September 2006. The ACTVaR GTAA concluded that the overall need for Oxfordshire was 58 pitches

for the period 2006-2011. A distribution based on current provision led to a suggested provision of just 2 pitches for the period 2006 to 2011 in the Vale. South Oxfordshire by contrast had a suggested provision of 28 pitches. Work to extend the GTAA figure to 2016 led to an overall suggested provision of 98 pitches in Oxfordshire for the period 2006 to 2016.

- 4.5 During the preparation of the response to the SEERA brief revised Government guidance on the conduct of GTAAs was produced in March 2007. This led to a need to benchmark any studies which had already been undertaken to ensure overall uniformity between studies. The outcome of a benchmarking process led to concerns being expressed by officers regarding some of the assumptions used in the ACTVaR GTAA and some of the approaches used in relation to Oxfordshire in comparison to those suggested in national guidance. This related to assumptions about concealed households, unauthorised encampments and developments, housing to site migration, population growth and migration and supply from annual turnover. Following detailed consideration of the GTAA it was apparent that a re-examination of these assumptions led to a significantly revised figure for Oxfordshire of 42 pitches for 2006 to 2016 and this is the basis for the Oxfordshire submission to SEERA.
- 4.6 As set out above SEERA required two options to be suggested for the distribution of the overall figure between the city and the four districts. Option A was to be on the basis of the distribution in the ACTVaR GTAA and option B was to be on the basis of a sustainable distribution utilising a range of criteria as described in paragraph 4.1. Distribution of the 42 pitches according to option A would result in the Vale needing one new pitch but would lead to a requirement for 17 pitches in South Oxfordshire. However, given the small size of the predicted need and the requirement in Government guidance that each district should make some provision, it was recommended by officers that the total should be divided up as evenly as possible between the districts for option B on a basis of shared responsibility instead of the approach suggested in the SEERA brief and this was accepted by the majority of the Member Steering Group. The brief makes provision for councils to suggest alternatives to the option B distribution. This leaves the Vale with a suggested requirement of 8 pitches to 2016 amounting to one new site. Expanding the one site in the Vale by this amount would lead to an unmanageable site as advised by Oxfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Services.
- 4.7 The Member Steering Group further considered that should SEERA not accept the revised overall requirement of 42 pitches, then a criteria based approach would need to be developed to distribute a higher number of pitches between the districts. The relative distribution of pitches is set out in the following table. At this stage SEERA have advised no preference is to be expressed about the distributions in responses.

<i>District</i>	<i>Option A level of pitches 2006 to 2016</i>	<i>Option B level of pitches 2006 to 2016</i>
<i>Cherwell</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Oxford City</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>South Oxfordshire</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Vale of White Horse</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>West Oxfordshire</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Oxfordshire Total</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>42</i>



- 4.8 The SEERA brief for the review also required the response to be prepared in consultation with stakeholders and the gypsy and traveller community. A consultation exercise was therefore undertaken about where new sites should be provided in July 2007 involving the distribution of a questionnaire. The results did not inform the distribution under option B but the information is to be submitted to SEERA for them to consider and could be used if a higher figure needs to be distributed. The information will also be useful for the districts in determining locations for allocations in their Local Development Frameworks.
- 4.9 The ACTVaR GTAA did not include any examination of the requirements of travelling show people. The SEERA brief however required there to be a figure based on a consultation of travelling showpeople. Given the difficulty of carrying out such a consultation in the summer SEERA initially removed this requirement, but later requested that some form of response should be made on the topic. Given the low number of sites in Oxfordshire, the lack of evidence for any demand and the probability that most site occupants would be away anyway, it was considered that a study would be better undertaken during the coming winter and this is the response that the Member Steering Group has agreed.
- 4.10 The SEERA brief also requested joint responses on the need for transit provision and detailed implementation costs. However, in common with most other councils in the south east, it was not considered that the transit question can be answered at a sub regional level and this was regarded as a regional matter which SEERA must consider. As a result it is considered by the Member Steering Group that no response should be made on this matter. In relation to implementation costs it is considered that this is a matter which cannot be properly addressed until specific sites are being examined. It is therefore considered by the Member Steering Group that this aspect should be left for councils to consider during the preparation of their Local Development Frameworks.

RODGER HOOD  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (Planning and Community Strategy)

TIM SADLER  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

### **Background Papers:**

The South East Plan

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment for the Thames Valley Region  
(September 2005)

ODPM Circular 1/2006 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites (February 2006)

Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy Reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by Regional  
Planning Bodies (March 2007)

**REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**  
**TO THE EXECUTIVE**  
**5 OCTOBER 2007**

**Joint Procurement of Waste Collection Services – Memorandum of Understanding**

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

- 1.1 The Vale has been working for a year with West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) with a view to jointly procuring the next contract for waste collection services. A recent report produced for the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership indicated that this was the lowest risk / best option for Oxfordshire Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) in terms of achieving financial efficiencies within the time frame of placing new contract(s) in 2009/10.
- 1.2 The Vale's Deputy Director for Contracts and Procurement is currently exploring two options for delivering the new contract(s) – a tri-partite approach by WODC, SODC and the Vale; or support for the South East Centre of Excellence, who are aiming to put in place Regional Framework Agreements for use by WCAs in the South East.
- 1.3 Joint working between the three authorities would be greatly facilitated by a Memorandum of Understanding committing each authority to the joint procurement exercise, to be signed by each participating authority as part of the governance arrangements.
- 1.4 The contact officer for this report is Steve Bishop, Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer) 01235 540332. [steve.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:steve.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk).

**2.0 Recommendations**

- (a) *The Executive approves that the Council should sign a Memorandum of Understanding committing the Council to a joint procurement exercise for waste collection services; and,*
- (b) *The Executive delegates authority to the Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer) in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Portfolio Holder for Waste Procurement to agree and sign a suitably worded Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Waste Procurement.*

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

- 3.1 This report relates to the Council's Vision in that it supports the Council's aim to provide and support high quality public services and the priority to create a cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment. The report does not conflict with any Council Strategies or policies.

**4.0 Budget / Resource Implications**

- 4.1 There are no budget or resource implications directly consequent to the signing of a

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

- 4.2 The purpose of the joint procurement exercise is to obtain the best value solution, including substantial savings in waste collection costs. By partnering with other authorities in Oxfordshire and/or by collaborating with other authorities in the South East, we will attract greater market interest and will secure bulk purchase discounted rates.
- 4.3 The primary purpose of the MOU is to provide mutual assurance that each partner is fully committed to the joint procurement and joint client team. Officers are therefore exploring whether legally binding commitments can emanate from the MOU. This would provide all partners, particularly the partner facing the highest risks caused by any procurement delay (SODC), with a higher level of confidence than a non-legally binding agreement.
- 4.4 If legally binding commitments do arise, the Council would become legally responsible for financially compensating its partner authority(s) for any costs falling on them, due to the action or inaction of this Council causing the delay or failure of the joint procurement process. The compensation could amount to hundreds of thousands of pounds. Given this risk, the Council needs to be fully committed to the joint procurement and must ensure that every effort is made to ensure it is successfully completed.

STEVE BISHOP  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (COMMERCIAL SERVICES)  
TO THE EXECUTIVE  
5 OCTOBER 2007

**BUILDING REGULATION CHARGES 2007-08**

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

- 1.1 This report contains proposals to update this Council's Scheme of Charges for Building Regulations.
- 1.2 The changes are intended to ensure that the Charges:
- (a) do not fall below the "proper costs" of the service provided
  - (b) are maintained at competitive and reasonable levels
  - (c) are presented in a simple and logical format and
  - (d) continue represent best value and the provision of a quality service
- 1.3 The contact officer for this report is Richard Beel, Head of Building Control. Tel: 01235 540355.

**2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 *The Executive recommends to the Council that:  
The Council adopts the revised "Scheme for the Recovery of Building Regulation Costs and Associated Matters" as its formal scheme, made under the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998, and to take effect from 1 October 2007.*

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

- 3.1 This report complies with the following Council's Vision and Aims:
- Provide and support high quality services which are effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of people within the Vale.
  - Protect and to improve our built and natural environment.
- 3.2 This report supports the Council's strategy for sound financial management.
- 3.3 This report does not directly conflict with any existing Council policies.

**4.1 Background**

- 4.2 Local Authority Building Control has been subject to competition since the inception of Approved Inspectors in 1985. The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998 gave power to Local Authorities to set their own charges for Building Regulation work.
- 4.3 The Charges are intended to provide a flexible method of recovering the costs generated by Building Regulation work only, which is separate from the other additional responsibilities of local authority building control.

- 4.4 The Regulations require the Council to make a Scheme of Charges for their Building Control function. Local Authorities are required to fix and publicise their Charges each financial year. In addition, they must produce, within its annual accounts, a "Building Control Statement" in which the income and "proper costs" relating to Building Regulations are clearly set out.
- 4.5 Although the Regulations require the level of Charges to be not less than the "proper costs" there is an expectation that they should not be too great either. The former is to prevent the occurrence of "unfair competition" with private sector building control whilst the latter is to ensure best value to customers.
- 4.6 The Department for Community and Local Government has expressed its wish for local authorities to "balance" their accounts annually within a three-year rolling accounting period. The scheme is intended to be simple, self-regulating and accountable and such that this Council may follow accepted procedures laid down by CIPFA.
- 4.7 An increase in charges within Schedules 1 and 2 is proposed to take account of annual inflation costs. Schedule 3 remains unaltered as income will increase in line with construction costs. The Service Area continues to monitor its income and expenditure and expects its 2007-08 accounts to show a small surplus.
- 4.8 The Service Area continues to comply with the ODPM guidelines in setting Building Regulation Charges at appropriate levels ensuring that they are
- (a) in line generally with most other Councils policies and rates
  - (b) in accordance with local groups, such as the Oxfordshire Local Authority Building Control
  - (c) not set, over a 3-year period, lower than the proper costs
  - (d) not set too high and
  - (e) balanced, over a 3-year period, within a modest accounting margin
- 5.0 **Future Actions and Timescales**
- 5.1 A fundamental review of the Building Control system in England and Wales is underway. Major procedural and technological changes in Building Regulations and Building Control continue to impact on resources. In order to maintain a viable trading position in the building control market and to meet statutory requirements this Council will need to continue to keep its Charges under review.
- 5.2 In reviewing the Service Area's Building Regulation Charging Account the Council is advised that proper consideration must be given to the levels of investment required to maintain and develop the quality service needed to successfully compete against private sector building control.
- 5.3 The Council will be advised of any future changes that would significantly affect the service and will be the subject of a separate report from the Deputy Director (Commercial Services).
- 6.0 **Alternatives and Options**
- 6.1 The proposed Charges will continue to be in line with the majority of local authority building control bodies both nationally and locally.

6.2 If the Charges were to remain at the same levels the Service Area's quality of service and its ability to compete in a commercial market could be severely affected.

RICHARD BEEL  
HEAD OF BUILDING CONTROL

BILL FARRAR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (COMMERCIAL SERVICES)

**THE SCHEME FOR THE RECOVERY OF  
BUILDING REGULATION COSTS  
AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS**

**FOR**

**THE VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

*To Be Read In Conjunction With*

**The Building [Local Authority Charges] Regulations 1998**

**This Scheme is effective as of 1 October 2007**

# SCHEME FOR THE RECOVERY OF COSTS

## Principles of this Scheme

1. This Authority has set a range of Charges for functions relating to Building Regulations as prescribed in **Regulation 4** of the **Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998**:
  - **Plan Charge**: payable when Full Plans of the building work are deposited with this Authority.
  - **Inspection Charge**: payable after the first inspection is made by this Authority.
  - **Building Notice Charge**: payable when a Building Notice is given to this Authority.
  - **Reversion Charge**: payable for building work in relation to buildings
    - that have been substantially completed before plans are first deposited with this Authority in accordance with Regulation 20 of the Approved Inspectors Regulations, or
    - in respect of which plans for further building work have been deposited with this Authority in accordance with Regulation 20 of the Approved Inspectors Regulations,
    - on the first occasion on which those plans have been deposited.
  - **Regularisation Charge**: payable at the time of making an application to this Authority.
2. All Charges, other than the Regularisation Charge, which are payable to this Authority shall be subject to Value Added Tax at the standard rate.
3. The sum of the Plan Charge and the Inspection Charge shall be equal to the Building Notice Charge.
4. The Reversion Charge shall be equal to the Building Notice Charge.
5. The Regularisation Charge in respect of any work shall be 20% greater than the respective Building Notice Charge.
6. In the case of a Full Plans application the Inspection Charge is payable as a single payment.
7. In the case of an extension to a dwelling, which has a floor area exceeding 60m<sup>2</sup> and is based on the estimated cost of the work (in accordance with Schedule 3), the Building Notice Charge or the sum of the Plan Charge and the Inspection Charge payable to this Authority shall be not less than that specified in Band D in Schedule 2 (i.e. £536.17).
8. In the case of an extension or alteration to a dwelling consisting of one or more rooms in a roof space the Charge payable to this Authority shall be not less than that specified in Band C in Schedule 2 (i.e. £400.00).
9. Where a Plan Charge has been paid and not refunded, this Authority may, in any case they consider reasonable, decide not to make a further Plan Charge in respect of plans subsequently deposited for substantially the same building work.
10. Any Plan Charge, Inspection Charge, Reversion Charge, or Building Notice Charge is to be payable by the person who carries out the building work, or on whose behalf the building work is carried out, and any Regularisation Charge is to be payable by the owner of the building.



11. Where for any reason notice of passing or rejection of plans is not given within the period required by Section 16 of the Act, the Plan Charge paid shall be refunded;
12. Non-Payment of a Charge - in accordance with Regulation 10(2) of the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998, Full Plans are not treated as deposited for the purposes of Section 16 of the 1984 Act or Building Notices given unless this Authority has received the correct Charge.
13. Charges are not payable in respect of work, which is carried out for the benefit of a disabled person in accordance with Regulation 9 of the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998, which states:

*"A Local Authority is not authorised to fix by means of a scheme and recover a Charge*

- a. *where they are satisfied that the whole of the building works in question consists of an alteration and*
- b. *where the building work is*
  - i. *solely for the purpose of providing means of access to enable disabled persons to get into or out of an existing building and to or from any part of it or of providing facilities designed to secure the greater health, safety, welfare or convenience of such persons; and*
  - ii. *is to be carried out in relation to*
    - a) *an existing building to which members of the public are admitted (whether on payment or otherwise) or*
    - b) *an existing dwelling which is, or is to be, occupied by a disabled person".*

*"A Local Authority is not authorised to fix by means of a scheme and recover a charge which consists solely of a Charge in respect of building work for the provision or extension of a room in a dwelling where they are satisfied that the sole use of the room is or will be*

- a. *for the carrying out of medical treatment of a disabled person which cannot reasonably be carried out in any other room in the dwelling or*
- b. *for the storage of medical equipment for the use of a disabled person or*
- c. *to provide necessary accommodation or a necessary facility by adapting or replacing accommodation or a facility which already existed within the building which was incapable of being used, or used without assistance, by the disabled person.*

In this regulation, "disabled person" means a person who is within any of the descriptions of persons to whom section 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948 applied, as that section was extended by virtue of section 8(2) of the Mental Health Act 1959, but not taking into account amendments made to section 29(1) by paragraph 11 of Schedule 13 to the Children Act 1989".

### **Transitional Provisions**

The Council's scheme for the recovery of Charges dated 1st April 2002 continues to apply in relation to building work for which plans were first deposited or a building or initial notice given between 1st April 2002 and 31st March 2003 (inclusive).

### **Estimates**

In order to determine the correct Charge, this Authority requires a written estimate of the cost of the building work to be submitted together with the any application for Building Regulations

A written estimate is also required when building work reverts to this Authority in accordance with Regulation 11(2) of the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998.

The "estimate" is required to be an amount as would be reasonably charged by a person in business carrying out such building work (excluding value-added tax)

## **Reductions**

1. Except as detailed in paragraph 2 below, where one application for Building Regulations is in respect of two or more buildings, or building works, all of which are substantially the same as each other a reduction in the Charge may be applied by this Authority.
2. Where an application for Building Regulations relates to the replacement of windows, roof lights, roof windows and external doors and the building work is substantially the same a reduction in the relevant Charge may be applied by this Authority.
3. In accordance with Regulation 8b of the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998, a reduction in the relevant Charge may be applied by this Authority provided
  - (a) an application for Building Regulations relates to building work that is substantially the same as:
    - i. plans that have previously been approved by this Authority or
    - ii. building works that have previously been inspected by this Authority, and
  - (b) this Authority is satisfied that the applicant is the same person who submitted the original application

## **Charges for New Dwellings or Conversions into Dwellings**

Where building work relates to new buildings of houses, flats or maisonettes not exceeding 3 storeys in height or 300 m<sup>2</sup> in total floor area the Charges for that building work are detailed in Schedule 1.

1. The Plan Charge payable in respect of the erection, or creation, of one or more dwellings is shown in column (2) of Schedule 1
2. The Inspection Charge payable in respect of the erection, or creation, of one or more dwellings is shown in column (3) of Schedule 1.
3. The Building Notice Charge payable in respect of the erection, or creation, of one or more dwellings is shown in column (4) of Schedule 1.
4. The Reversion Charge payable in respect of the erection, or creation, of one or more dwellings is shown in column (4) of Schedule 1.
5. The Regularisation Charge payable in respect of the erection, or creation, of one or more dwellings is an amount equal to 120 percent of the relevant Building Notice Charge and as shown in column (5) of Schedule 1.
6. Interpretation of Schedule 1.

For the purposes of the Schedule, the reference in the heading to column (1) is a reference to the number of dwellings in the building or buildings referred to.

### Schedule 1 - Charges for New or Converted Dwellings

Number of Dwellings (1)	Plan Charge £ (2)	Inspection Charge £ (3)	Building Notice or Reversion Charge £ (4)	Regularisation Charge £ (5)
1	150	410	560	672
2	200	510	710	852
3	250	610	860	1,032
4	300	710	1,010	1,212
5	350	810	1,160	1,392
6	400	910	1,310	1,572
7	450	1,010	1,460	1,752
8	500	1,110	1,610	1,932
9	550	1,210	1,760	2,112
10	600	1,310	1,910	2,292
11	650	1,410	2,060	2,472
12	700	1,510	2,210	2,652
13	750	1,610	2,360	2,832
14	800	1,710	2,510	3,012
15	850	1,810	2,660	3,192
16	900	1,910	2,810	3,372
17	950	2,010	2,960	3,552
18	1,000	2,110	3,110	3,732
19	1,050	2,210	3,260	3,912
20	1,100	2,310	3,410	4,092
21	1,150	2,410	3,560	4,272
22	1,200	2,510	3,710	4,452
23	1,250	2,610	3,860	4,632
24	1,300	2,710	4,010	4,812
25	1,350	2,810	4,160	4,992
26	1,400	2,910	4,310	5,172
27	1,450	3,010	4,460	5,352
28	1,500	3,110	4,610	5,532
29	1,550	3,210	4,760	5,712
30	1,600	3,310	4,910	5,892
31 and over	1,600+	3,310+	4,910+	5,892+
Add for every dwelling more than 30 no.	30	70	100	108

## **Charges For Garages, Carports and Domestic Extensions and Alterations**

### 1. Where building work comprises:

- (a) the erection of a detached or attached building consisting of a garage or carport (or both) having a total floor area not exceeding 40m<sup>2</sup>, is intended only to accommodate vehicles and is used in common with an existing dwelling or
- (b) the extension of any dwelling by a floor area not exceeding 60m<sup>2</sup>.

the Charges for that building work are set by reference to the floor area of the building or extension.

### 2. In the case of 1(c) above,

- where there is more than one extension to a building used (or intended to be used) for the purposes of a single dwelling, the floor area of all such extensions shall be aggregated to determine the relevant Charge payable
- where the aggregate of the floor area of all extensions does not exceed 60m<sup>2</sup>, the relevant Charge is based on the total floor area of the extensions.
- where the aggregate of the floor area of the extension(s) exceeds 60m<sup>2</sup>, the relevant Charge is based on the estimated cost of the building work as prescribed in Regulation 6 of the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998 and shall be determined in accordance with Schedule 3.

### 3. Details of Charges are given in Schedule 2 in respect of extensions of any dwelling by a floor area not exceeding 60m<sup>2</sup> and of the erection of a detached or attached building which consists of a garage or car port or both with a total floor area not exceeding 40m<sup>2</sup> and intended for use with an existing dwelling.

### 4. **Calculation of Charges**

For work specified in column (1) of Schedule 2:

- (a) the Plan Charge payable is the amount shown in column (2) of the Schedule
- (b) the Inspection Charge payable is the amount shown in column (3) of the Schedule
- (c) the Building Notice Charge payable is the amount shown in column (4) of the Schedule
- (d) the Reversion Charge payable is the amount shown in column (4) of the Schedule
- (e) the Regularisation Charge payable is the amount shown in column (5) of the Schedule

### 5. **Interpretation of Schedule 2**

- (a) Where the work comprises, or includes, the erection of more than one extension to a building, used or intended to be used for the purposes of a single private dwelling, the total floor areas of all such extensions shall be aggregated in determining the Charge payable in accordance with Schedule 2.
- (b) Where the aggregated floor area is greater than 60m<sup>2</sup> the Charge payable is calculated in accordance with Schedule 3.
- (c) In the Schedule below an extension is defined as having no more than three storeys, each basement level counting as one storey.

## Schedule 2 - Garages, Carports and Domestic Extensions

Band	Type of Work  (1)	Plan Charge  £  (2)	Inspection Charge  £  (3)	Building Notice or Reversion Charge  £  (4)	Regularisation Charge  £  (5)
A	Erection or extension of a detached or attached building which consists of a garage or carport having a floor area not exceeding 40m <sup>2</sup> and is intended to only accommodate vehicles	136.17	-	136.17	163.40
B	Extension of a dwelling the total floor area of which does not exceed 10m <sup>2</sup>	136.17	144.68	280.85	337.02
C	Extension of a dwelling the total floor area of which exceeds 10m <sup>2</sup> but does not exceed 40m <sup>2</sup>	144.68	255.32	400.00	480.00
D	Extension of a dwelling the total floor area of which exceeds 40m <sup>2</sup> but does not exceed 60m <sup>2</sup>	153.19	382.98	536.17	643.40

### **Work Other Than To Which Schedules 1 and 2 Apply (i.e. Schedule 3)**

1. All Charges other than those referred to above are determined by reference to the estimated cost of the building work and are detailed in Schedule 3 (*Estimated Cost*).
2. Where building work relates to:
  - (a) new buildings of houses, flats or maisonettes exceeding 3 storeys in height 300 m<sup>2</sup> in total floor area, or
  - (b) existing buildings which are to be extended or altered and converted into dwelling units
 the Charges for that building work are detailed in Schedule 3.
3. Where building work consists of alterations to a dwelling to form a room (or rooms) in a roof space the Charge payable shall be determined in accordance with Schedule 3.
4. Charges relating to cavity wall insulation, unvented hot water systems or any extension or alteration of a dwelling creating one or more rooms in a roof space, are subject to Schedule 3
5. The Plan Charge is payable in respect of any work is shown in Schedule 3 based on the estimated cost of that work.
6. The Inspection Charge is payable in respect of any work is shown in Schedule 3 based on the estimated cost of that work.
7. The Building Notice Charge and Reversion Charge
  - (a) Subject to (b) below, the Building Notice Charge or Reversion Charge in respect of any work is shown in Schedule 3 based on the estimated cost of that work.
  - (b) Where building work is carried out to an existing dwelling and the work consists of the provision or replacement or extension of windows, roof lights, roof windows or external doors the Building Notice Charge shall be £70.00 and the Regularisation Charge shall be £72.00.

### Schedule 3 - Charges for All Other Building Work

Band	Type of Work		Plan Charge £ (2)	Inspection Charge £ (3)	Building Notice or Reversion Charge £ (4)	Regularisation Charge £ (5)
	(1)					
A	£1,000	or less	90	-	90	108
B	£1,001	to £2,000	150	-	150	180
C	£2,001	to £4,000	190	-	190	228
D	£4,001	to £5,000	55	145	200	240
E	£5,001	to £6,000	60	150	210	252
F	£6,001	to £7,000	65	155	220	264
G	£7,001	to £8,000	70	160	230	276
H	£8,001	to £9,000	75	165	240	288
I	£9,001	to £10,000	80	170	250	300
J	£10,001	to £11,000	85	175	260	312
K	£11,001	to £12,000	90	180	270	324
L	£12,001	to £13,000	95	185	280	336
M	£13,001	to £14,000	100	190	290	348
N	£14,001	to £15,000	105	195	300	360
O	£15,001	to £16,000	110	200	310	372
P	£16,001	to £17,000	115	205	320	384
Q	£17,001	to £18,000	120	210	330	396
R	£18,001	to £19,000	125	215	340	408
S	£19,001	to £20,000	130	220	350	420
T	£20,001	to £100,000	130	220	350	420
		Base				
		Add for every £1,000 (or part) over £20,000	3	7	10	12
U	£100,001	to £1million	2,830	6,520	9,350	11,220
		Base				
		Add for every £1,000 (or part) over £100,000	1.50	3.00	4.50	5.40

Where estimated costs exceed £1 million please contact the office for a quote

**Review of the Comments,  
Complaints and Suggestions  
Received During 2006/07**

**August 2007**

## **REVIEW OF COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS RECEIVED DURING 2006/07**

### **Introduction**

The Council's Vision stresses our commitment to providing high quality services, which meet the needs of those who live or work in the Vale or who visit the district to use the facilities or enjoy the countryside. The Council takes seriously comments and complaints made about the quality, nature or delivery of the services provided. Comments and suggestions are also used to review the effectiveness of the provision of these services. Compliments and thank-you letters are also recorded.

In 1993 the Council introduced a Comments and Complaints Procedure to ensure complaints are handled in a fair, objective and consistent way and that views expressed about the quality of services provided are acknowledged and acted upon.

Leaflets explaining the procedure are available from all Council offices, the Council's Website, local libraries, the Wantage Independent Advice Centre, the Abingdon & District Citizens Advice Bureau and Oxford Citizen's Advice Bureau. The leaflet explains how to make a comment, complaint or suggestion and how it is handled by the Authority.

Complaints are dealt with at two levels. The first level is for operational complaints i.e. minor issues reported to departments which are recorded and dealt with on a daily basis. The second level of complaint, which constitutes a more serious comment or complaint to the Council, is dealt with under the Comments and Complaints procedure. There are three stages to this procedure which also sets out the distinction between the two levels.

Although it is hoped that the Council's management can resolve complaints at the first stage within their directorates, complainants can request the Chief Executive to investigate their complaint under Stage 2 of the procedure. The third and final stage is when a complaint is referred to the Local Government Ombudsman. All other comments, suggestions and compliments are recorded and responded to, if applicable, at the first stage of the procedure.

This is the thirteenth year a report on the comments, complaints, compliments and suggestions has been produced. This report covers those received in the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007. It gives information about the comments and complaints handled under the procedure.

### **Results for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007**

125 comments and complaints were monitored under the procedure during the period (including 8 complaints which went to Stage 2 of the procedure). This is slightly more than the same period last year where we received 115 complaints. We received 99 recorded compliments during the year.

Table 1 at the end of this report provides the split of the types of communication received by the Council within service areas.

The communications received are recorded according to the following categories:

**Policy** This category is used if a comment, complaint or compliment is about the Council's policies, commitments and intentions for individual services. For example, the Council has a No Smoking Policy for its headquarters in Abingdon. Staff, Councillors and the public alike are not permitted to smoke whilst attending a meeting there.

**Procedure** This category is used if a comment, complaint or compliment is about working practices. For example, comments regarding despatch of Council Tax reminders when an applicant has submitted a Council Tax Benefit claim.



**Legislation** Much of what the Council does is governed by law, government direction or guidance. An example of a complaint which falls into this category is that the Council wastes money publicising the Best Vale Performance Indicators General Satisfaction Survey. The Council is, in fact, required to do so under Section 4 of the Local Government Act 1999.

**Technical/ Professional** This category covers comments, complaints or compliments about the way in which officers interpret policies, procedures or legislation and their professional judgements. A complaint made by Mr A N Other's neighbour that we should not have permitted Mr A N Other to build his conservatory would fall into this category.

**Staff Attitude** This category is used when recording compliments paid to staff about their work and/or attitude or complaints about staff being rude or discourteous.

**Contractors** The Council employs contractors to run several of its services, such as refuse collection and park maintenance. This category covers any comment, complaint or compliment about the way the Authority's contractors carry out services on behalf of the Council e.g. complaints about failing to cut a grass verge.

**Discrimination** The Council is governed by legal codes on discrimination (including racial, disability and sexual) when employing staff and the attitude of staff to people with whom they come into contact with. A complaint about the lack of facilities provided for young people would fall into this category.

**Out of Jurisdiction** Some comments and complaints received are about matters over which the Council has no responsibility: most highway matters and the banding of a property for Council Tax purposes for example. In these cases the complaints are passed on to the appropriate authority/agency.

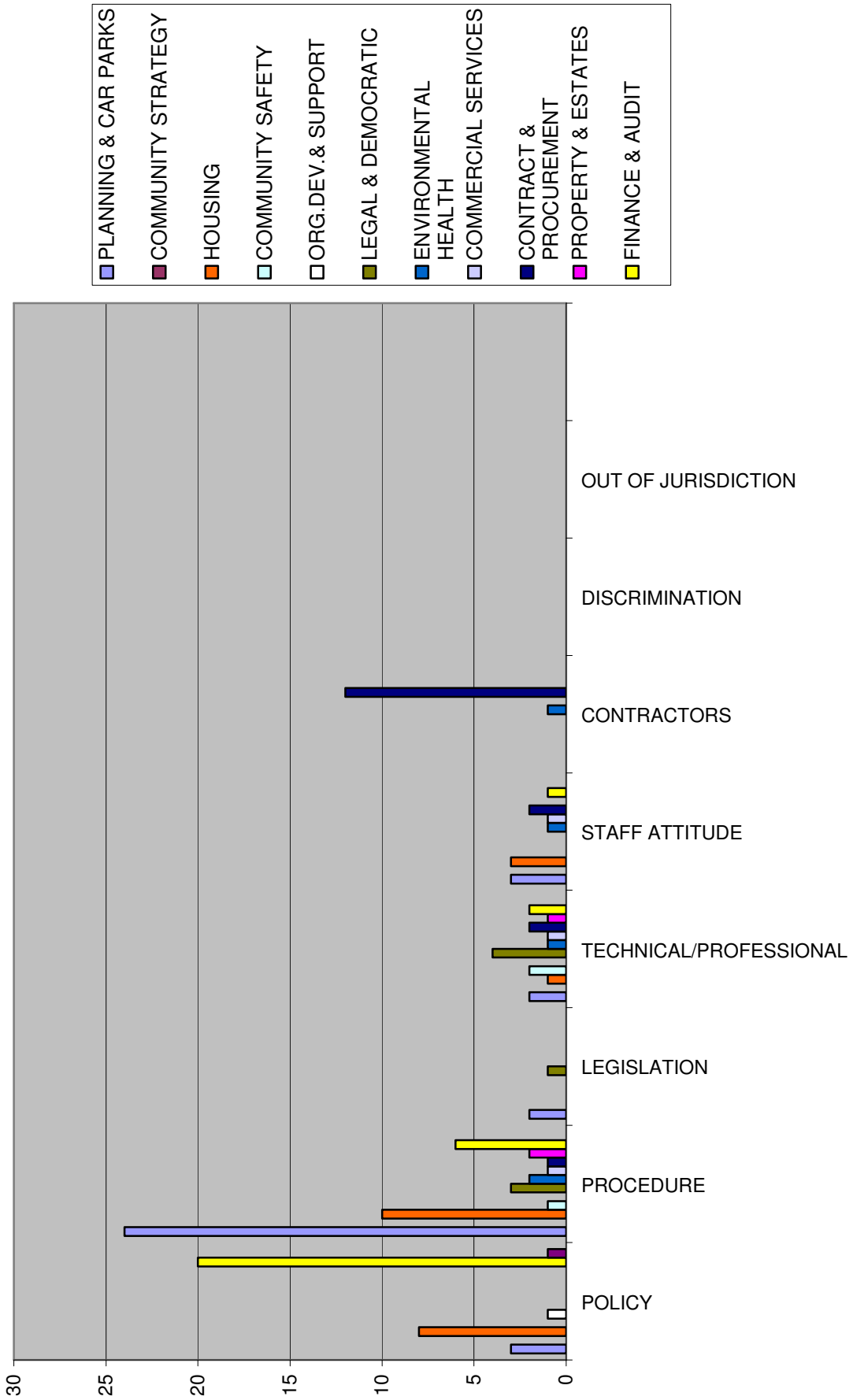
During the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 125 comments and complaints were recorded. In the majority of cases complaints were resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at Stage 1 of the procedure. The Chief Executive investigated 8 complaints at stage 2.

The majority of complaints related to the policies Council employees have to follow and the procedures that cover the way services are provided or decisions are taken. Table 3 shows a breakdown of the different types of complaints received across the Council.

In 2006/07 the Council received 74 compliments praising specific members of staff for the quality of their work and for advice and help provided.

The Comments and Complaints Procedure aims to respond to all complaints within seven working days. If, however, the matter is complex the procedure allows for an acknowledgement letter to be sent within two days and a full reply within seven days, or if the matter is very complex an interim report, sent within twenty eight days.

**NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ITEMISED BY TYPE FOR EACH SERVICE AREA FOR 2006/07**



## **The Chief Executive's Office**

The Chief Executive's Office is responsible for a number of corporate activities, setting policy and giving advice. No complaints were received about the Chief Executive's Office. 17 compliments were received, 6 for the Chief Executive's office and 11 for the Chair of the Council

The Office is also responsible for conducting investigations under stage 2 of the complaints process. This year 8 investigations were conducted, the same number as last year.

The Office is also responsible for conducting investigations as required by the Local Government Ombudsman. This year 10 investigations were conducted, compared to 12 last year.

## **Planning & Car Parks**

There were a total of 34 complaints received in Planning and Car Parks. 30 complaints were for the planning department of which 24 were concerned with planning procedures including lateness of responses to letters, lack of notification of planning applications and retrospective planning permissions.

The administration procedures are currently being re-assessed which will ensure better response times and it is proposed to introduce a leaflet in neighbour notifications of planning applications giving guidance on the procedures for objections.

The 4 complaints received by the car parks section were mainly about the enforcement of excess charges on parking.

8 written compliments were received by these service areas during the year.

## **Community Strategy**

There were no reported complaints within the Community Strategy service area during the year, however 4 compliments were received

## **Housing**

22 complaints were received in the Housing department including complaints about the Choice Based Lettings system, homelessness advice, the choice of a rural exception site in Shrivenham and the consistency of advice given by housing staff. One complaint went to Stage 2 in the process but it was, in fact, a complaint concerning an issue which the Vale Housing Association were responsible for.

3 written compliments were received by housing staff during the year.

## **Community Safety**

3 complaints were received in the Community Safety service area. One was in connection with anti-social behaviour in Grove Street Wantage close to the new Sainsburys store, one was about the lack of CCTV cameras in an area in Abingdon experiencing anti-social behaviour and one was concerning advertising about domestic violence on local transport.

1 written compliment was received.

## **Organisational Development and Support**

1 complaint was received in the Organisational Development and Support area concerning misleading information given in a job application pack.

25 written compliments were received by Contact Services staff in Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage during the year.

### **Legal and Democratic**

8 complaints were received in the Legal Services department mainly in connection with poor response times. 3 of these complaints went to Stage 2 in the procedures. A Head of Legal Services officer has been appointed which will alleviate the problem of the excessive workload being handled by an under-staffed department in the last two years.

### **Environmental Health**

In 2006/07 5 complaints were received in Environmental Health. 2 of these related to Council procedure, 1 on the performance of the Council's contractor for Pest Control, 1 concerning the attitude of a member of staff and 1 to do with a piece of dilapidated ground thought to belong to the Council.

Environmental Health also received 5 compliments during the year which related to noise complaints, pest control problems, licensing and environmental protection.

### **Finance**

In 2006/07 29 complaints were received by Financial Services. 20 of these related to the Council's Corporate Debt Recovery Strategy and the reduction in the amount of time for debts to be paid. 6 were about the Council's procedure and the way that tasks were undertaken within Benefits, Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates and 3 were concerned with the way staff dealt with customers.

5 compliments were also received.

### **Contract and Procurement**

In 2006/07 17 complaints were received in Contract and Procurement, 12 of which related to the operation of the waste management contract run by Veolia (formerly Cleanaway).

25 compliments were also received of which 11 related to work of the Waste Team, 7 for Parks and Grounds Maintenance and 5 in respect of the Civic Halls.

### **Commercial Services (including Property & Estates)**

In 2006/07 6 complaints were received by Commercial Services, 3 related to the work of Property & Estates and 3 the work of Building Control and the DSO.

3 compliments were also received, 2 relating to the work of the DSO and 1 dealing with a land drainage issue.

### **Ombudsman Cases**

During 2006/07 10 complaints were determined by the Local Government Ombudsman, compared to 12 in the previous year.

Of these 10 decisions, 2 were considered to be premature, 5 were no maladministration and 3 were outside jurisdiction. The Ombudsman did not find it necessary to ask the Council to provide any local settlements.

The Council responded to enquiries within 21 days, compared to 18 days last year, which is well within the 28 calendar days target.

The Ombudsman's office produces an Annual Letter to each Council. This letter confirmed "I did not issue any reports against your Council in 2006-07 or recommend that any complaints should be locally settled. This has now been the case for more than 3 years and I congratulate the Council on its exemplary

performance in this area. The figure for premature complaints is low and is below the national average for Councils as a whole. This suggests that the Council publicises and operates its complaints procedure effectively.

Table 2 at the end of this report gives details of the cases determined by the Local Government Ombudsman between 1998/99 and 2006/07. In the last 10 years of reporting no maladministration has ever been found against the Council

The table below provides details by directorate of the complaints determined by the Ombudsman during the current year.

Service Area	Number of Cases Determined	Determination Reason
Planning	5	3 outside jurisdiction 2 No maladministration
Building Control	1	1 No maladministration
Property and Estates	1	1 No maladministration
Housing	3	1 No maladministration 2 Premature

**TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS RECEIVED BY DIRECTORATES FOR 2006/07**

Service Area	Comments		Complaints		Compliments
	2006/07	2006/07	Stage 1 2006/07	Stage 2 2006/07	
Chief Executive's Office					17
Planning & Car Parks			34	1	8
Community Strategy			0	0	4
Housing			22	1*	3
Community Safety			3	0	1
Organisational Dev. & Support			1	0	25
Legal & Democratic			8	3	0
Strategic Management			0	0	2
Environmental Health			5	1	5
Commercial Services, Property & Estates			6	1	3
Contract & Procurement			17	1	25
Finance			29		5
Audit			0		
<b>Total</b>			<b>125</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>98</b>

\* This Stage 2 complaint related to an issue with the Vale Housing Association

**TABLE 2: DETAILS OF THE CASES DETERMINED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN FROM 1997/98 TO 2005/06**

	Premature Complaints	Local Settlement	No Mal-administration	Mal-administration	Out of Jurisdiction	Ombudsman Discretion	Total Complaints Determined
No. of cases determined in 1998/99	5	0	2	0	2	3	12
No. of cases determined in 1999/00	0*	0	3	0	1	2	6
No. of cases determined in 2000/01	-	0	7	0	1	0	8
No. of cases determined in 2001/02	-	1	9	0	0	5	15
No. of cases determined in 2002/03	6	1	2	0	0	2	11
No. of cases determined in 2003/04	0	0	6	0	2	5	16
No. of cases determined in 2004/05	3	0	4	0	2	1	10
No. of cases determined in 2005/06	4	0	4	0	1	3	12
No. of cases determined in 2006/07	2	0	5	0	3	0	10

**TABLE 3: COMPARISON OF STAGE 1 COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS BY SERVICE AREA & CATEGORY**

Service Area	Policy	Procedure	Legislation	Technical/ Professional	Staff Attitude	Contractors	Discrimination	Out of Jurisdiction	Totals
Planning	1	24	2	1	2	0	0	0	30
Car Parks	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
Housing	8	10	0	1	3	0	0	0	22
Community Safety	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
Org.Dev. & Support	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Legal & Democratic	0	3	1	4	0	0	0	0	8
Environ. Health	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	4
Commercial Services	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
Contract & Procurement	0	1	0	2	2	12	0	0	17
Property & Estates	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Finance	20	6	0	2	1	0	0	0	29
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>125</b>



By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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