

Vale of White Horse District Council

CORPORATE PLAN 2012-2016: CONSULTATION DRAFT

SECTION ONE - SCRUTINY COMMENTS ON PROPOSED OBJECTIVES

Excellent delivery of key services	
What we will do	Scrutiny member comments
Put residents at the heart of service delivery and seek to provide an excellent customer experience	Need to define which are the 'key' services
Keep residents and other stakeholders informed about our services, activities and spending and ensure we take their views into account before making key decisions	Provision of housing advice to keep the housing list as low as possible Not sure how keeping residents informed can be achieved, especially now that Unvaled is 'canned'
Deliver high performing services with particular emphasis on achieving excellent levels of recycling, keeping streets and public spaces clean and attractive and ensuring good quality sports and leisure provision	With some communities hardly using the internet and email how can the vale contact these people and determine the percentage of all people who feel they are well informed? Need to distinguish between statutory and non-statutory services – Leisure is the latter. Surely all statutory services are key? Measure the amount of money raised/value of capital projects undertaken Benefits – maintain accuracy and speed criteria Elections run well

Effective management of resources	
What we will do	Scrutiny member comments
Keep council tax low	<p>This has to be smarter – not just low council tax, good value service is worth it!</p> <p>Nothing in about staff – our most important resource</p> <p>Reduce empty offices – use resources more effectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sublet • share SODC/Vale HQ <p>The most effective way of reducing operating costs is for both councils to be in one building, preferably Abbey House</p> <p>Ensure best return on investments – property and cash</p> <p>Be transparent about resources and spending</p> <p>Monitor joint service to ensure there is no inbalance of service provision between the councils</p> <p>Better financial prediction – not just MTFP</p>
Agree prudent and sustainable medium term financial plans	
Reduce energy usage throughout the council's operations	
Continue to work in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council to reduce operating costs and enhance services	

Meeting housing need	
INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF MARKET AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING	
What we will do	Scrutiny member comments
Set housing targets and identify land supply to meet future housing need	Add interim housing supply policy
Process planning applications for housing promptly	<p>The housing need is for smaller market swellings – there is no aim to deliver this</p> <p>Who will deliver the housing? Setting the numbers is just the start</p> <p>Preventing homelessness is a MUST</p> <p>Public confidence that promised infrastructure will be delivered is low in many areas, this is understandable as money has run out before it has been delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suggest six-monthly report • suggest make these publicly/easily available • suggest look at potential sanctions/enforcement and make this transparent <p>It would be a good idea if a planning officer could attend a parish council meeting to explain these plans to the whole community – it would eliminate the fear of developments 'on my back door' and hopefully get the community on board. When asked for this because my parish council was up in arms was told that there wasn't enough resources for someone to attend – this is surely important enough to make the resources available?</p> <p>Encourage parishes to bring forward brownfield and town centre sites for development</p>
Secure sufficient financial contributions from development to deliver essential infrastructure	
Ensure that new developments include a range of different types of affordable housing to meet local needs	
Work with developers to overcome obstacles to development	
Work with local communities to identify suitable sites for community led housing schemes	

Building the local economy	
TO PROMOTE BUSINESS IN ALL PARTS OF THE VALE	
What we will do	Scrutiny member comments
Continue to invest to improve the viability and attractiveness of our towns	We should proactively encourage retailers/businesses to open in the Vale
Develop and implement local development orders to stimulate business growth at Milton Park and Harwell Science Campus	Measure the number of people in market squares
Enter into a commercial partnership to secure redevelopment of Abingdon town centre	Aren't we already in a commercial partnership/agreement for Abingdon precinct/Charter?
Enter into a commercial partnership to secure new retail development at Botley and use some of the proceeds to improve Westway shopping centre	Wantage/Grove is not one town – yet! Re-word to 'as they expand'
Review the potential for building a new leisure centre in Wantage/Grove as the town expands	The enterprise zone itself is already delivered
Roll out faster broadband across the district	Include a Wantage loyalty card too
Deliver the Science Vale UK enterprise zone	Promote BIDS schemes in the three major towns
Improve Infrastructure to support business growth	
Maintain low levels of crime and anti social behaviour	
Promote the River Thames at Abingdon as a visitor and leisure attraction	
Build on the 'Choose Abingdon' partnership to create a district-wide business partnership	

Support for communities	
What we will do	Scrutiny member comments
Improve the way we work with local communities and their representative bodies to create opportunities to localise service delivery	<p>Don't understand the concept of 'localise service delivery'</p> <p>Grants are probably the best and most effective way of stimulating localism</p> <p>What about the costs to parishes of developing neighbourhood plans?</p> <p>Are we obliged to encourage neighbourhood plans?</p> <p>Examples of devolved services must be helpful – presumably this does not apply to statutory services?</p>
Offer grants to voluntary and community organisations who are delivering projects and services that support our objectives or those in need	
Explore options for the further development of Wantage Civic Hall as a successful community facility	
Support rural communities to retain or provide facilities where there is local support to do so	
Encourage communities to develop neighbourhood plans	
Devolve responsibility for delivery of services to parish councils, community groups and others where it makes sense to do so	

SECTION TWO - SCRUTINY COMMENTS ON PROPOSED MEASURES

Excellent delivery of key services	
How we will measure success	Scrutiny member comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> percentage of people very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way the council runs things percentage of people who agree with the statement that the council does a good job for people like me percentage of people satisfied with the way the council dealt with their enquiry (all methods of contact) 	<p>Number of people surveyed and how will be critical – needs to be representative</p> <p>Are we saying to use various methods to do these surveys – phone, letter, email, street survey? We need to be sure we get the most number of people to respond</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> percentage of people who say they feel well or fairly well informed by the council about the services it provides 	<p>How often do we measure – annually or after four years?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> percentage of people who are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the waste and recycling collection service, keeping the area clean and litter free, and sports and leisure facilities recycling rate one of the top ten councils nationally for recycling reduce the number of fly tips (rolling six month average) time taken to clear fly-tipping sports centre users satisfaction survey 	<p>How do we survey vale residents to get an accurate measure of satisfaction?</p> <p>Should measure the number of people fairly or very satisfied</p> <p>All measures must be SMART</p>

Effective management of resources	
How we will measure success	Scrutiny member comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to keep council tax for district services in the lowest 20 nationally and work towards being in the lowest 10 	<p>Examples of services improving through joint working is not a measure</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no adverse comment from external auditors in annual 	<p>Savings target – clarify – is that £100,000 p.a. Or £100,000 in year one and a further £100,000 in year two etc?</p>

governance report	<p>Aim to be in lowest 10 nationally is not within the Vales control as depends on performance of the other 19!</p> <p>Do we mean keeping council tax low for its own sake or providing the best quality services for what our customers can afford?</p> <p>When will energy targets be agreed?</p> <p>No adverse Audit report – are we worth it?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X per cent reduction in gas usage and x per cent reduction in electricity usage in council offices and civic buildings • X per cent reduction in gas usage and x per cent reduction in electricity usage in council sports centres¹ • reduce business mileage by x 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieve joint savings with South Oxfordshire District Council of at least £100,000 per year throughout the corporate plan • examples of services improving through joint working 	

¹ We are currently reviewing possible targets for this to ensure that we align with national targets and county carbon dioxide targets. We are also looking into different options for measuring energy use reduction for example, maintaining combined gas and electricity usage measures or possibly splitting these, cost measures, and the need for weather adjusted targets.

Meeting housing need	
INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF MARKET AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING	
How we will measure success	Scrutiny member comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • core strategy approved • core strategy targets agreed • regular monitoring of performance against targets 	S106 – percentage of what? Also some s106 are related to 10 year plans e.g. new sports pitches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 per cent major planning applications determined within 13 weeks • 75 per cent minor planning applications agreed within eight weeks 	Core strategy – measure needs a date Should measure how many houses delivered each year, not just agreeing the targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • percentage of contributions secured in s106 agreements received by the council at year end • annual report of facilities and infrastructure provided with contribution from developers • Community infrastructure levy (CIL) implemented² 	Annual report on infrastructure not sufficient – needs to be more frequent – six monthly? Contributions secured/infrastructure delivered – these are not measures and cannot be used to calibrate success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new developments deliver the levels of affordable housing stipulated in the core strategy 	Ensure that villages doing neighbourhood plans getting plenty of good housing advice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sites with potential problems identified and action plans to overcome these agreed • quarterly report on progress achieved against action plan • number of new developments started 	Ensure that interim housing policy developments all include some affordable housing and not just a few large executive homes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual report setting out the council’s contribution towards bringing development sites forward in response to community led and neighbourhood plans³ 	Developers/overcoming obstacles – make sure this is about delivery of approved schemes/those in the strategy

² Section 106 agreements and CIL are subject to emerging legislation. Until we are clear about how they will work in the future we do not plan to set a specific target for how much we hope to secure.

³ At this stage we do not think it appropriate to identify a specific number of schemes or sites

Building the local economy

TO PROMOTE BUSINESS IN ALL PARTS OF THE VALE

How we will measure success	Scrutiny member comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two hour free car parking introduced in market towns by end of 2011 • annual town centre vitality survey, including footfall and vacant shop surveys • impact of public wi-fi scheme piloted in Wantage • market town strategy reviewed and annual action plans developed • progress against annual action plans 	<p>Wi fi in Wantage – how will the impact be measured?</p> <p>Having a wi fi scheme might result in more people comparing prices and buying from the internet</p> <p>Introducing two hours free parking isn't a measure – should include other measures here such as increase in footfall</p> <p>Vitality should include numbers of people in cafes, restaurants, visiting craft fair/guildhall, Folly tower etc etc.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development orders in place by June 2012 • annual report on the number and square metres of new business units developed under provisions of the development order 	<p>New business units/jobs created – should be a net figure, taking account of square metres lost to change of use etc.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refurbishment of Abbey Centre completed by (date tbc) • redevelopment of the Charter substantially completed by end of plan period 	<p>Will there be a report on how many people get higher speed broadband and in what areas so that we can track progress?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new retail development built and operating by end of corporate plan period • improvements to Westway shopping centre agreed and implemented 	<p>Fear of crime – monitor the feel good factor generated by CCTV in Wantage and Abingdon via the citizens' panel</p> <p>Business partnership – this measure is vague and not a measure of success, what is needed are active members not just those subscribing or joining</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • options study produced by end 2012 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) funding spend secured for Vale of White Horse • all parts of the district to have access to improved broadband and mobile phone coverage by the end of the corporate plan period 	<p>Westway – will the council be consulting residents of Botley (in north Hinksey and Cumnor)?</p> <p>Increase in business rates – need to re-word as businesses in the enterprise zone won't pay business rates (rateable value not money collected?)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of jobs created, number of and square metres of new business units developed • increase in business rates 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategy for investment for enterprise zone business 	

<p>rates growth agreed with Oxfordshire Local Economic Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• strategy implemented and progress confirmed in annual report	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• at least 97 per cent of people feel safe walking alone in their community in daytime• at least 79 per cent of people feel safe walking alone in their community after dark• monitor performance against priority crime targets in community safety strategy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of businesses that are member of the district-wide partnership	

Support for communities	
How we will measure success	Scrutiny member comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examples of localised service delivery 	<p>Wantage civic hall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make objectives SMART • should include a date for development plan • should measure 'increase in net income' • make civic hall self supporting through a programme of events, cinema showings etc. <p>Examples of localised service delivery, grant projects awarded and devolved services are not measures</p> <p>Neighbourhood planning – this measure is about informing not encouraging – need some sweeteners?</p> <p>Vale should produce a guidebook on how we can help with Neighbourhood plans</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grants criteria aligned with council's priorities • amount of grant awarded and number of projects funded and number of projects completed. • annual report on key grant aided projects setting out benefits to local community and how they have helped to deliver council priorities 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan agreed for developing Wantage Civic Hall • increase in the number of bookings and users of the Civic Hall • decrease in net expenditure 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examples of localised service delivery 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support development of community-led plans • number of actions in community-led plans progressed with the support of the council each year 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all local councils provided with information about developing neighbourhood plans and sources of advice and support • number of communities engaged in developing neighbourhood plans 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific examples of devolved services in place 	