

## Vale Youth Development Strategy 2006 - 2009

### Foreword

For most parents our children are everything to us, our hopes, our ambitions and our future. Sadly some children are not so fortunate; some children's lives are different, dreadfully different.

The purpose of this Youth Development Strategy is to work towards our vision for the development of children and young people (aged from birth to 19 years) in the Vale.

Our vision is that every child and young person in the Vale can:

- Live a healthy life;
- Stay safe;
- Have the chance to fulfil their potential;
- Get the most out of life and develop the skills for adulthood.

We need to involve young people in the community; improving self esteem and building aspirations and helping to overcome anti-social or offending behaviour.

A strategy that works will be based on the following principles or standards:

- Achieving a better understanding of the needs of all young people in all areas of the Vale. This should result in services that more closely meet the needs of children and young people;
- A promise to consult and consider the views of young people in decisions about services provided by the Council and its partners;
- Making sure we are inclusive and help disadvantaged children and young people to realise their full potential;
- Working in partnership wherever possible to improve services for young people, avoid duplication and make better use of limited resources; **without the support of partners very little of the work set out in the strategy will actually happen.**

**Councillor Joyce Hutchinson - Executive Portfolio Holder for Youth Development**

**Contents** *(to be added once draft for consultation is finalised)*

### Introduction

### Case studies/illustrations column

*The design and layout of the document will not be finalised until consultation has been completed. It is intended that the final version will have a front cover and include case studies (in this column) about youth development in the Vale. The case studies will be illustrated with photographs.*

*This column will act as a 'strategy storyboard' An executive summary of the strategy which is visually appealing.*

**The purpose of this strategy is to shape the future support for the development of children and young people, from birth to age nineteen, who live in the Vale of White horse (the Vale). The District Council, with its partners, will lead on the overall delivery of this strategy on behalf of the Vale. This is a strategy that is important for all who have an interest in the successful development of our children and young people.**

## **Why does the Vale need a Youth Development Strategy?**

The Council recognizes the important contribution that children and young people already make and will make to our society. The Council has for many years been actively involved in supporting the development of children and young people who live in the Vale. We need to ensure that young people are given the legal and social importance and status they deserve. This new strategy will show how the Council's work to support the development of children and young people will contribute to the Oxfordshire Children and Young Peoples' Plan.

The Government wants services for children and young people to improve. The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Economic wellbeing/grow up independently (getting trained, having a job, leaving home)

In order to achieve an improvement the Childrens Act 2004 requires local agencies – country councils, district councils, primary care trusts, Connexions, police the voluntary sector and others to work in partnership to deliver better services and outcomes. 'Every child matters – change for children' was launched by the government in 2003 and followed by the Childrens Act 2004. This policy report sets out a challenging agenda for all agencies working with children and young people. 'Every Child Matters' has now been complemented by the 'Youth Matters' green paper on youth services.

Oxfordshire County Council has legal responsibility for the care and education of young people and is now required to produce a 'Children and Young Peoples' Plan'. This plan must show how the County Council,

working with other partners in Oxfordshire, will improve the wellbeing of children and young people aged 0-19. The first Oxfordshire Plan will cover the period 2006-2009 and in order to promote partnership working the first Vale Youth Development Strategy will cover the same three year period.

Most of the services that the Council provides for children and young people are not a legal requirement but they if they are to benefit children and young people it is important that they meet their needs. The Council welcomes the opportunity to make its aims for youth development much clearer. This strategy will help to make sure that the Council is using its limited resources for the maximum advantage of the Vale's young people.

*Before our councillors agree the final version of the strategy we would like your comments about what we are proposing to do for children and young people. At the end of the strategy you will find that there are some questions that we hope you will have time to answer.*

## **What kinds of youth services are already being provided by the Council?**

The Council already provides a range of services for children and young people.

### **Sport**

The Vale's Sports Development Strategy recognises that children and young people are the key to the future of sport within this country. Providing good quality sporting opportunities to children and young people, whilst they are growing up, will encourage life long participation in sport and active recreation, and will improve the health of our communities. Physical and social barriers to participation must therefore be removed to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to enjoy sporting activity, both in school and in their local community.

**A very popular sports programme is organised during the school holidays and the Council is a member** The Council and the Council is a member of the School Sports Partnership – working with all primary and secondary schools across the district to increase participation in physical activity, raise the standard of coaching, develop school/club links, widen access and improve health and well being. Included in this is the setting up and running of various tournaments and leagues. A sports equipment library also provides sports equipment for local schools and youth groups.

Term time activities include 'Locomotion' – a multi-skill programme developing co-ordination, agility, balance etc in primary school children, linking with healthy lifestyles. Support for the Oxfordshire Youth Games offers young people, aged eight to sixteen, that are currently below county standard, the opportunity to compete in an Olympic

style sports event.

The Council organises coaching/leadership opportunities for young people aged fourteen to nineteen to gain qualifications in coaching. These qualifications help to build self esteem and can help in gaining paid employment. It assists sports clubs in achieving “Club mark” accreditation making them “safe, effective and child friendly”.

As well as providing exercise and enjoyment for the majority sport is recognised as an important means of diverting a minority of young people from anti-social behaviour. Therefore the Council does not favour but seeks to include disaffected young people, both excluded from school and at risk of exclusion. When planning sports development activities the Council focuses on the need to make activities accessible to young people with disabilities.

### **Play Areas**

The Council provides and maintains a number of play areas across the Vale. These provide a range of challenging experiences for children in a relatively safe environment where they can develop skills such as creativity, meet other children and become more independent and aware of their own abilities. Inspections are carried out regularly.

### **Arts**

The Vale's Art Development Strategy recognises that the arts have consistently played a valuable role in increasing children and young people's self-confidence, esteem and emotional maturity. The arts development team works with a number of partner organisations to encourage young people to express themselves through the arts and gain skills that can be transferred to other areas of life. Yearly programmes are devised in partnership with voluntary agencies and groups and include animation and writing workshops at the Abingdon Foyer, music programmes with the Grove and Wantage Area Youth Office, graffiti and music workshops with the Abingdon Bridge, and out reach youth arts activities as part of the Faringdon Arts Festival.

The Council is currently hosting the post of Community Arts Co-ordinator for the three arts status secondary schools in Abingdon. The Co-ordinator provides arts out reach and community development programmes on behalf of the schools.

### **Community Safety**

The Council's community safety team takes positive action to divert young people away from antisocial

behaviour and petty crime. It has been involved in providing youth shelters in Abingdon, Grove and Sutton Courtenay. Youth shelters provide a good place for young people to sit and talk. The team is also involved in training projects to raise awareness of the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse.

### **Voluntary Sector Work**

The Council supports a number of initiatives that are provided by the voluntary, community and faith sector and which reach out to disadvantaged young people.

The Abingdon Bridge works with young people aged 13-25, offering accurate, unbiased, relevant information and support on a whole range of issues. Support is free, confidential and non-judgemental. The Oxfordshire Playbus exists to offer 'play' opportunities to children and young people who lack them. The Vale's Foyer project provides supported accommodation for 16 to 25 year olds who are at risk of becoming homeless. The scheme provides a unique housing opportunity, within the Vale, to young people who are committed to a linked programme of training, education and employment which will lead to independence.

### **Vale Youth Forum**

The Council recognizes that it is very important to listen to and respect the views and opinions of young people and the Vale Youth Forum has had an important influence on the work of the Council.

The Vale Youth Forum was established in 1997 following a major Youth Conference in 1996. The Youth Conference was held as a result of concerns about drug issues in the Vale. Since then the Forum has broadened its agenda and has enjoyed continued and improved support from the Council, young people, the public and private sector, schools, MPs and MEPs. The Youth Forum now encourages participation in democratic processes by young people aged 14 to 18 from state and private schools that serve the Vale.

This age group was chosen following discussion with local head teachers as it is felt that it was important that young people preparing for further education or employment had a good idea of the work done by their local Council, MPs and MEPs. Forum programmes are prepared in consultation with young people and head teachers and past programmes have included visits to Parliaments in London and Brussels.

The Youth Forum has its own website ([www.spired.com/vale](http://www.spired.com/vale)). The web site was designed by young people for young people to make sure that it is relevant to their lives and it allows, and encourages, wider involvement in Youth Forum activities. Details of the Youth Forum programmes are also included on the Council's main web site.

Existing Council programmes to support the development of young people focus on staying safe, encouraging enjoyment and achievement (regardless of background and ability) and making a positive contribution.

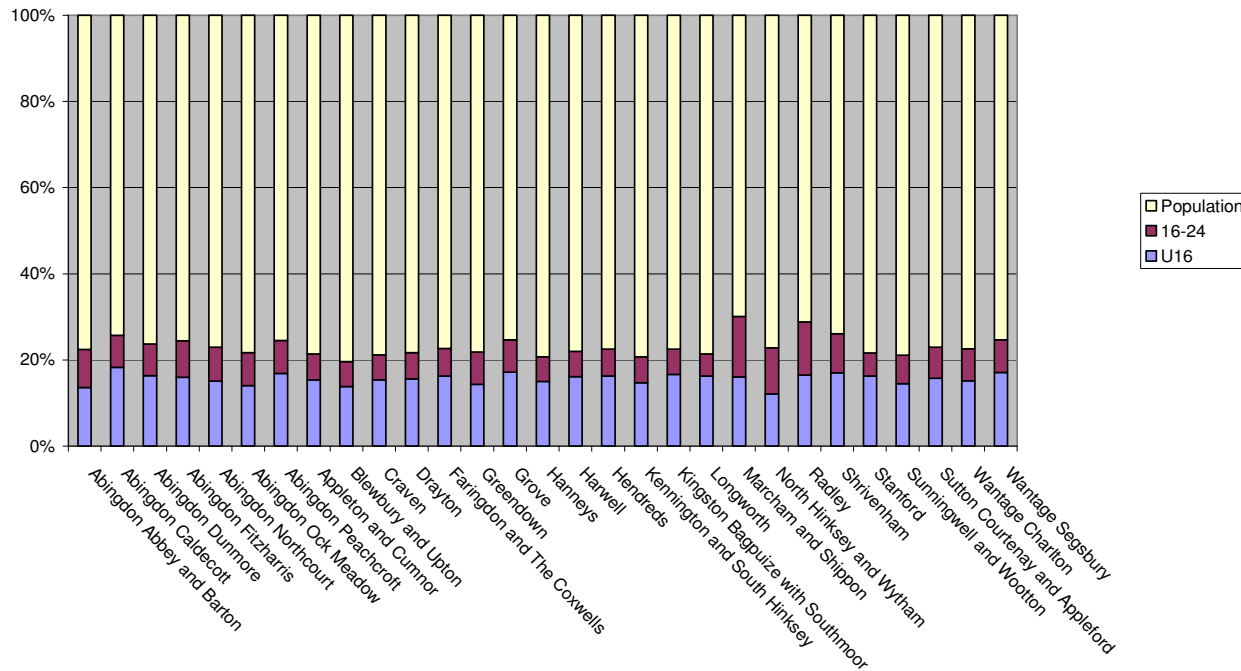
## Young People in the Vale

There are slightly higher percentages of children and young people in the Vale than in the rest of England and Wales:

<b>Resident population (percentage)</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>Vale of White Horse</b>	<b>England &amp; Wales</b>
<b>Under 16</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>20.2</b>
<b>16 to 19</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>4.9</b>
<b>20 to 29</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>12.6</b>
<b>30 to 59</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>41.5</b>
<b>60 to 74</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>13.3</b>
<b>75 and over</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>7.6</b>
<b>Average age</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>38.6</b>
<b>Source: 2001 Census, ONS</b>		

Despite an ageing population children and young people remain a significant proportion of the total population. There are 30 wards in the Vale of White Horse and the information below gives a breakdown of where young people live.

Young People in the Vale - Census 2001

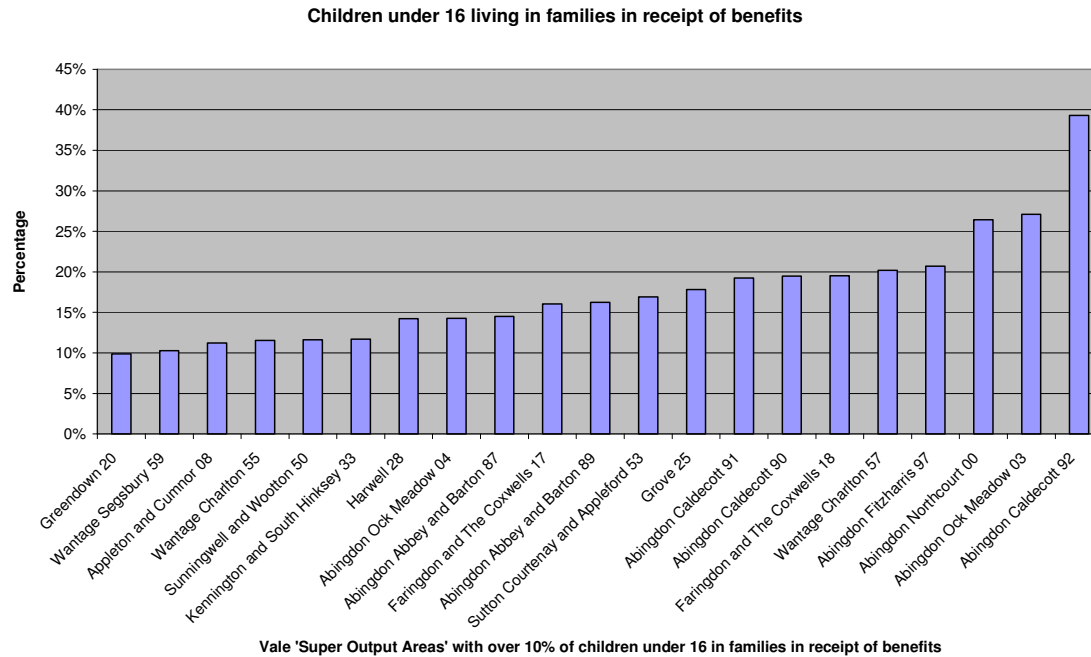


At the time of the 2001 Census 96.8% of the Vale's population classified themselves as 'white', 1% classified themselves as Asian or Asian British, 0.5% classified themselves as Black or Black British and 0.6% as Chinese or another ethnic group. Most ethnic minority families live in the Vale's towns or the area bordering Oxford City. It should be recognized that since the time of the 2001 Census there has been an increase, across the UK, in the number of asylum seekers and refugees from ethnic minority groups and migrant workers (many of whom come from Eastern Europe and would be classified as 'white'). Many asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers are single or without their families but research suggests that many hope that, in time, they will be able to bring their families to the UK.

There are three sites for gypsies and travellers within or near the Vale. Two sites are run by Oxfordshire County Council and the other is privately run.

**Getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood**

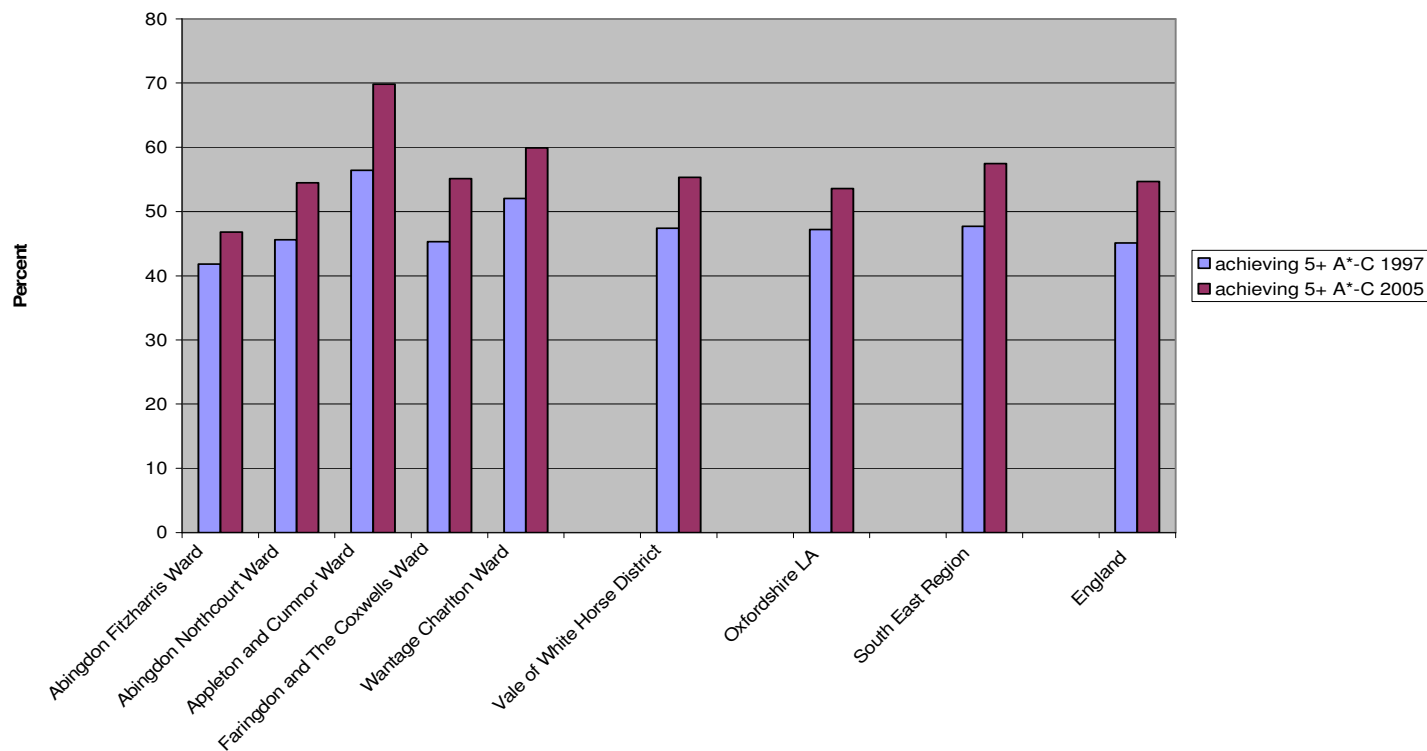
The Vale is a prosperous area with high employment levels and a good quality of life. However there are still areas of social and economic deprivation. The Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 shows the areas in the Vale where many children live in households that are reliant on state benefits. This issue is particularly significant in areas of the Vale's three towns. Part of Abingdon Caldecott is amongst the 20% of areas in England where households with children are the most reliant on state benefits.



Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004

Many young people in the Vale are not achieving 5 A to C GCSE passes. This level of qualification is increasingly been seen by employers as a minimum level of qualification. Oxfordshire County Council recognizes the need to improve GCSE results but there will always be some young people who prefer practical learning to academic learning. This means that they may not want to stay on at school and help is needed to give them the skills they need to build a worthwhile and rewarding career.





Source: Department for Education & Skills

### Staying safe

The Vale is a relatively safe place in which to live but staying safe is an issue for many children and young people. In 2004 70 members of The Vale of White Horse Youth Forum received a presentation that looked at the ten main crime issues identified by the recent Vale Community Safety Audit. The Forum was asked to highlight the priorities for young people. The overall priorities were:

- Violent crime
- Alcohol related crime

Drug related crime  
Hate crime  
Acquisitive crime like burglary  
Anti-social behaviour

The priorities of young people appear to differ from those of residents in general. Focus group meetings involving residents in general came up with the following list of priorities:

Anti-social behaviour  
Alcohol related crime  
Environmental crime  
Road Safety  
Rural Crime

### **Living a healthy life**

Statistics suggest that children and young people in the Vale are generally healthier than the national average. Infant mortality rates are lower but there are national concerns about childhood obesity which are shared locally. Also, although they may not affect the majority of children and young people, mental health issues, sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancy and drug and alcohol misuse are concerns.

### **Having the chance to fulfil their potential**

The Vale Youth Forum has been very successful in allowing young people to participate, express views and influence decisions.

A consultation about the draft Oxfordshire Children & Young People's Plan with the Vale Youth Forum in December 2005 suggests that young people realise the way in which services are provided is just as important as the range of services provided.

Forum members recognised that partnership working is very important ('co-operation is the key') and that school could be the best place for new activities ('could be at school and therefore it is free and less stressful for parents who need to take their children to the club after school to a different place'). However school is not always the best place ('...best fun things out of school with mates doing whatever you like, but without causing trouble.')

## **What influences the Council's strategy?**

Two key factors will influence the Council's youth development strategy; having a clear understanding of the problems and issues that affect children and young people; and the powers and resources that are available to tackle these problems.

### **Understanding the Issues**

Many children and young people feel that some of the services provided by the Council and other organisations do not reflect their needs and provide very little to help them to overcome the issues that they face as they grow up. There are other services that are highly valued by children and young people and there would be a great deal of concern if they were not provided.

The value that children and young people place on services is influenced by the type of issues that they face. In the Vale the issues faced are mainly about staying safe, enjoyment and achievement (at school and out of school) and making a positive contribution (and been respected for making the contribution). Being healthy and achieving economic well being (growing up independently) are not seen as such big issues but that does not mean that they can be entirely overlooked.

It is important to remember that some children and young people require more support if they are going to be able to benefit from the services that are made available.

Children and young people can face problems because of lack of self confidence and low expectations. This feeling of being worthless can have a number of causes; income, family conflict, school problems, mental health problems, disability or being in care. There are also 'institutional' barriers (factors which are nothing to do with individual background or life experience) that are equally relevant in town or country areas. For example finding the right job, services that are supposed to be talking to each other not talking to each other, prejudice based on out of date ideas, problems in getting the attention of the people who make the decisions that affect young people.

The Council will continue to develop its understanding of the issues; using the Vale Youth Forum to consult with and listen to young people; and working in partnership with other organizations that provide services for children and young people.

### **What can the Council do about the issues?**

The Vale of White Horse District Council's vision is to 'build and safeguard a fair, open and compassionate community'. However the Council does not have unlimited money and its first priority is to provide the services that are its legal duty. These include household rubbish collection, planning permission for buildings and making sure that people, whatever their circumstances, have somewhere to live.

The Council feels the best way it can help the residents of the Vale is to concentrate on doing what it is best equipped to do and not try and do things that other organizations are better equipped to do.

In order to do more for residents of the Vale the Council has taken the lead in bringing together the large organisations that provide services in the Vale. It believes that if they work more closely together there will be bigger improvements in the quality of life of everyone who lives in, works in or visits the Vale. These organisations are known collectively as the Vale Strategic Partnership. The Partnership has developed a Community Strategy for the Vale The Vale Community Strategy is based on partnership working and widespread local involvement.

The Vale Community Strategy does not have a separate children and young people strand or theme but all its nine strands (as set out below) are important for children and young people as well as everyone else in the Vale:

Transport  
Access to Services  
Recreation, Culture & Leisure  
Safe and Supportive Communities  
Town & Village Vitality  
Environment  
Housing  
Education and Lifelong Learning  
Health and Wellbeing

The Council's own priorities for additional focus, resources and improvement for the next three years (2005 to 2008) are:

- To help facilitate the provision of affordable housing
- To create a cleaner, greener, safer and healthier environment

- To improve and modernise access to our services

When planning how the Council will provide services to achieve these priorities the Council wants to take into account the needs of children and young people. The Council also understands that because of its limited resources it can not itself properly tackle all the issues that influence the development of children and young people in the Vale. This is why working in partnership (through the Vale Strategic Partnership) with other organisations, that have wider responsibilities for children and young peoples' issues (like Oxfordshire County Council) is so important.

### **What's happening across Oxfordshire?**

#### **The Children & Young People's Plan**

Oxfordshire County Council has been given overall responsibility by the Government to design a Children & Young People's Plan to improve the lives of all Oxfordshire's young people ([The Vale of White Horse District now has a legal duty to show how its children and young peoples' services contribute to this overall Oxfordshire Plan.](#)).

The starting point for developing the Plan has been a comprehensive assessment of performance in relation to outcomes for children and young people in Oxfordshire. The aim is for Oxfordshire to be a place where every child and young person receives the help they need to:

- enjoy good physical and mental health;
- be protected from harm and neglect and grow up able to look after themselves;
- achieve educational success and develop self-confidence and life skills for a creative and positive adulthood;
- make a positive contribution to the community and society;
- achieve their potential and make the most of their lives.

A wide range of agencies working with children have put the Plan together including Health Services, District Councils (like the Vale of White Horse), Police, the Early Years Development and Childcare partnership, the Learning and Skills Council, Connexions, Youth Offending Team, Drugs and Alcohol Action Team, the Children's Fund and voluntary sector organisations.

#### **The Local Area Agreement**

Oxfordshire County Council will also be working in partnership to make sure that the work that is listed in the

Plan actually happens and that there is real benefit for children and young people in Oxfordshire.

The main way that the partnership working will continue is through the Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a central government initiative which is designed to improve public services across Oxfordshire. Better partnership working, within the public sector, and with the private and voluntary and community sector is very important if services are going to improve.

The Oxfordshire LAA will run from 2006 to 2009. The part of the LAA that covers children and young people involves the setting up of an 'Oxfordshire Children's Trust' which will bring together the key organizations (including the Vale of White Horse District Council) who need to work together in a more permanent partnership so that they can improve results for children and young people in Oxfordshire. The Children's Trust will work together to improve results in the five key areas identified in the government document in 'Every Child Matters' with a particular focus on what matters in Oxfordshire

- **Achievement** - Educational achievement at secondary school level needs improvement. Whilst achievement is in line with national levels it is not as good as in other parts of the country that are similar to Oxfordshire. The achievement of vulnerable groups of children is a particular concern. There is a need for a big effort to promote educational success and enjoyment from the earliest stages and ensure that young people leave school with the skills required for further education, employment or training. Action will focus on:
  - a public campaign aimed at raising standards of educational achievement and enjoyment at all key stages.
  - targeted support for schools where educational achievement is a concern
  - targeted support for vulnerable groups of children and young people
- **Healthy and active lifestyles** with a particular emphasis on action to:
  - tackle childhood obesity
  - increase access to sport, play and leisure activities
  - reduce the use of harmful drugs and alcohol
  - reduce teenage pregnancy
  - improve services for children who are anxious or depressed.
- **Positive Contribution** -The vast majority of young people are making a positive contribution in their schools and communities. The incidence of youth offending has reduced for the last four years. However there are still areas, for example in Oxford City and Banbury, where youth offending levels are high. Schools continue to express concern about behaviour difficulties in schools and young people express

concern about bullying. We plan to:

- increase the effective participation of young people in our services and ensure that it is well co-ordinated;
  - develop a new integrated Youth Support Service;
  - support schools and parents in promoting positive behaviour and wellbeing;
  - work with young people to tackle bullying;
  - provide better and more co-ordinated information for young people
- **Stay Safe** - Feedback from families indicates that there is a need to strengthen the early, practical support for families to prevent problems from escalating. The Children's Trust plans to:
- provide better and more co-ordinated information to families about services;
  - increase the support available to families through Children's Centres, Extended Schools and local youth worker teams;
  - strengthen the involvement of the voluntary sector in family support services.
- **Economic Well-being** - Unemployment rates in Oxfordshire are about half the average for England, but there are wards in Oxford City with jobless rates of over 10%; more than double the Oxfordshire average. About one in ten children in Oxfordshire live in low-income households. Oxford City has a rate of child poverty 0-4 years (24%) and 5-19 (19%) that is double that for any other district and higher than the national average. The Children's Trust plans to target partnership support to these areas in order to:
- reduce the proportion of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training;
  - increase the proportion of 19 year olds who achieve at least level 2;
  - increase the take-up of childcare;
  - increase accommodation for care leavers;
  - reduce the rate of child poverty.

## The Council's Strategy

**The Vale of White Horse District Council will work to achieve its vision for the development of children and young people (aged from birth to 19 years) in the Vale by making a significant contribution to the Oxfordshire Children & Young People's Plan.**

The desired outcomes identified in the Government's green (discussion) paper 'Every Child Matters' and the Oxfordshire Children & Young People's Plan fit well with the Council's vision:.

- Be healthy (part of the Council's vision)
- Stay safe (part of the Council's vision)
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution (the Council's vision wants children and young people to ' have the chance to fulfil their potential')
- Achieve economic well-being (the Council's vision wants children and young people to ' Get the most out of life and develop the skills for adulthood')

The strategy must be achievable and the strategy will concentrate on the work that the Council is best equipped to do using its existing resources. Some of the work it does will achieve more than one result. If you enjoy sport you are normally healthier. Arts activity is not only enjoyable but also provides a sense of achievement and may help young people make decisions about future employment.

The strategy is also based on the following principles or standards:

- Achieving a better understanding of the needs of all children and young people in all areas of the Vale. This should result in services that more closely meet the needs of children and young people;
- Consulting and considering the views of children and young people in decisions about services provided by the Council and its partners;
- Making sure we are inclusive and help disadvantaged children and young people to realise their full potential;
- Working in partnership wherever possible to improve services for children and young people and avoiding duplication in order to save money; **without the support of partners very little of the work set out in the strategy will actually happen.**

## ***Be Healthy***

### ***Our Aims***

***Improving the physical health of children and young people.***



*This will be achieved by providing high quality sporting opportunities such as the sports holiday programmes and the Locomotion project so that more children and young people across the Vale can enter, participate and progress in their chosen sport.*

*These activities will also help children and young people to **enjoy and achieve***

*The Council's sports development team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Vale schools*
- *Vale town and parish councils*
- *Oxfordshire Sports Partnership*
- *Vale leisure centres (managed by SOLL and CLS)*

***Our target** will be a 1% annual increase in the number of children and young people participating in sport and physical activity.*

***Encouraging healthy lifestyles by helping young people to make the decision not to take illegal drugs or get involved in substance misuse or underage drinking.***

*This will be achieved through education programmes at secondary schools in the Vale **and debates at the Youth Forum meetings.***

*The Council's community safety team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Vale schools*
- *Oxfordshire County Council*

***Our target** will be to make sure that drug and substance misuse awareness programmes are regularly organised at all secondary schools in the Vale.*

## ***Stay Safe***

### ***Our Aims***

#### ***Reducing accidental injury and death amongst children and young people***

*This will be achieved through education programmes focusing on road safety.*

*The Council's community safety team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Oxfordshire County Council*

***Our target** will be to reduce the number of accidental injuries and deaths involving children and young people.*

### **Reducing crime & anti-social behaviour in and out of school**

*This will be achieved using mentoring (advice and support) schemes to steer young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour.*

*The Council's community safety team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Thames Valley Police*
- *Oxfordshire Youth Mentoring Scheme*

***Our target** will be to increase the number of young people taking part in a mentoring scheme.*

## **Enjoy and Achieve**

### **Our Aims**

#### **Helping children and young people make friends and achieve personal or team success**

*This will be achieved in a number of different ways;*

1. *through sports activities such as the sports holiday programmes, the Locomotion project and the Oxfordshire Youth Games;*

*These activities will also help children and young people to **be healthy***

*The Council's sports development team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Vale schools*
- *Vale town and parish councils*
- *Oxfordshire Sports Partnership*
- *Vale leisure centres (managed by SOLL and CLS)*

**Our target** will be a 1% annual increase in the number of children and young people participating in sport and physical activity.

2. *through arts activities such as youth dance, animation, writing, music technology and mural projects;*

*These activities will also help children and young people **make a positive contribution** and achieve **economic wellbeing**.*

*The Council's arts development team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Vale schools*
- *Vale town and parish councils*
- *Oxfordshire County Council*
- *The voluntary and community sector*

**Our target** will be to increase the number of children and young people involved in the Vale's leisure arts projects.

3. *through the building of a skate park for children and young people in Abingdon*

- *The Council's landscape team will co-ordinate this work*

**Our target** will be to provide an Abingdon skate park by the end of 2007.

4. *through the availability of good quality play areas across the Vale*

*The Council's parks team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Vale town and parish councils*

**Our target** will be to produce a Parks & Open Spaces Strategy which will include plans for improved play areas. This strategy will help the Council in obtaining funding from the Big Lottery Fund .

5. through partnership working with organisations like Oxfordshire Playbus which provides play opportunities for families who can not easily access them for a variety of reasons.

The Council's innovation and enterprise team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:

- Oxfordshire Playbus

**Our target** will be to make sure that more parents, children and young people know about and use these services

## **Make a Positive Contribution**

### **Our Aims**

#### **Allowing young people to be involved in decision making**

This will be achieved through the Vale Youth Forum which allows for the active involvement of young people in the work of the Council and its partners. The Council will involve the Forum in the shaping of all the Council's services not just those that are specifically for children and young people.

The Council's innovation & enterprise team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:

- Vale schools
- Other public sector organisations

**Our target** will be to have all the Vale secondary schools participating in Forum meetings on a regular basis and that at least 90% of the delegates at each meeting confirm that the meeting was interesting and worthwhile.

#### **Helping children and young people to successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges**

*This will be achieved through partnership working with organisations like Seesaw which provides help to children and young people who have suffered the death of a close relative or friend and Abingdon Bridge which provides non judgemental advice for young people*

*The Council's innovation & enterprise team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *SeeSaw*
- *Abingdon Bridge*

***Our target*** will be to make sure that more parents, children and young people know about and use these services

### ***Encouraging enterprising (ambitious) behaviour***

*This will be achieved in a number of different ways;*

1. *through the continual development and education of sports coaches, sports leaders and volunteers.*

*The Council's sports development team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Oxfordshire Sports Partnership*
- *Vale schools*
- *Vale sports clubs*

***Our target*** will be an increase in the number of young people gaining sports coaching qualifications.

2. *through the project in the Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement that will help children and young people develop enterprise skills that can be used for work*

*This project will also contribute to **economic well being** as it will help young people become **ready for work**.*

*The Council's innovation and enterprise team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Vale schools*
- *Young Enterprise*

**Our target** will be an increase in the number of children and young people being involved in Young Enterprise projects.

## **Economic Well Being**

### **Our Aims**

#### ***Helping young people prepare for the world of work***

*This will be achieved through the Council, as an employer, offering work experience placements and encouraging other employers to do the same.*

*This project will also contribute to making a **positive contribution** as it will help children and young people to become enterprising and ambitious.*

*The Council's innovation and enterprise team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Vale schools*
- *Oxfordshire Business Education Partnership*
- *Vale employers*

**Our target** will be an increase in the number of work experience placements offered by the Council.

#### ***Helping children and young people to live in decent homes and communities***

*This will be achieved in a number of different ways;*

1. *encouraging community based sports clubs to raise standards through 'Clubmark' so that they provide good opportunities for children and young people to participate in their chosen sport at their chosen level.*

*The Council's sports development team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Vale sports clubs*
- *Oxfordshire Sports Partnership*

***Our target*** will be an increase in the number of sports clubs in the Vale with 'Clubmark'.

2. *providing energy saving advice to householders*

*The Council's energy team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Thames Valley Energy*

***Our target*** will be an increase in the number of householders receiving energy saving advice.

3. *providing information for children and young people to show them how to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste*

*The Council's waste team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Oxfordshire County Council*
- *Vale schools*

***Our target*** will be an increase in the number of schools with green boxes for recycling.

***Helping children and young people to live in households free of low income***

*This will be achieved through partnership working with organisations like the Citizens Advice Bureau which provides advice about claiming state benefits and dealing with debt*

*The Council's innovation & enterprise team will co-ordinate this work but the Council will need the support of the following partners:*

- *Abingdon Citizens Advice Bureau*
- *Wantage Independent Advice Centre*
- *Chinese Community & Advice Centre*

***Our target** will be to support advice services that provide a high level of satisfaction for the people that use them*

## **How are we consulting with young people about this strategy?**

- Young people are being consulted through the Vale's Youth Forum about what they think the Council's priorities should be over the next three years. They are also being asked for their views on the services that are already provided and which services they would like in future.
- The Vale Youth website [www.spired.com/vale](http://www.spired.com/vale) (which was set up by young people for young people) is carrying information about the strategy.
- Meetings are being held with groups of young people from the Abingdon Bridge, the Foyer in Abingdon the Sweat Box in Wantage and Faringdon Youth Project.
- The Divisional Young Peoples Forum for the Vale are also being consulted.

## **Who else we are consulting**

- Councillors and staff of the Vale of White Horse District Council
- Vale town and parish councils
- Neighbouring district councils
  
- The Vale Strategic Partnership - Abingdon and Witney College, Thames Valley Police, Environment Agency, Learning & Skills Councils, Government Office for the South East, Age Concern Oxfordshire, South West Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust, Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Water, Vale Housing Association, Diocese of Oxford, Business Link, Oxfordshire Primary Head Teachers' Association and Oxfordshire Secondary Schools' Head Teachers' Association.
  
- Abingdon Bridge
- Abingdon Citizens Advice Bureau
- Army Welfare Service
- Chinese Community & Advice Centre
- CLS
- Connexions
- Faringdon Area Project
- Faringdon Family Centre
- Faringdon Youth Centre



- Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire
- Oxfordshire Association for Young People
- Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action
- Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services
- Oxfordshire Education Business Partnership
- Oxfordshire Learning Partnership
- Oxfordshire Play Association
- Oxfordshire Playbus
- Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council
- Oxfordshire Rural Community Council
- Oxfordshire Youth Arts Partnership
- Oxfordshire Youth Mentoring Scheme
- Parents And Children Together
- SeeSaw
- SOLL
- South Abingdon Youth Centre
- Sweat Box Wantage
- The Foyer
- The Net Abingdon
- Wantage Independent Advice Centre
- Young Enterprise

We have put a copy of the draft strategy on the Council's website for a period of twelve weeks and sent a press release to local newspapers and radio asking them to inform their readers and listeners that we welcomed comments about the draft strategy.

## **Consultation Questions**

Once you have read the draft Youth Development Strategy please can you answer the following questions:

1. Bearing in mind the kind of services that the Council is best equipped to provide do you think that the strategy shows effective ways of tackling some of the important issues affecting children and young people in the Vale today?
2. Do you think that there are other issues that the Council should be tackling (and if so why are these

issues important)?

3. How can you or your organisation work with the Council to help with its contribution to 'Every Child Matters and the Oxfordshire Children and Young Peoples' Plan?
- 4.
4. Do you have any other comments about the draft strategy?

Please reply by Monday 5th June 2006

By email to:

[toby.warren@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:toby.warren@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

By letter to:

Toby Warren  
Head of Innovation & Enterprise  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
Abbey House  
Abingdon  
Oxfordshire  
OX14 3JE

Your response will be carefully considered and will help us to prepare the final version of the strategy. The final version will need to be approved by the Council and should be available in Autumn 2006. When it is ready we will send you a copy.

Please can you let us know if you would like the final copy sent by

Email (please give address):

Post (please give address):

## **What did they say about the strategy?**

*To follow after consultation has been completed*

## **How will we make sure that this strategy makes a difference?**

The Council will monitor the success of the projects which will make the strategy happen. Once the consultation has been completed and the final version of the strategy has been agreed a plan will be prepared. The plan will have targets to measure the success of all the children and young peoples' services that the Council is going to provide. The plan will also have dates that show when things will happen between 2006 and 2009.

The Council will report both successes and failures to the Vale Youth Forum and Vale Strategic Partnership. We will also review the strategy on an annual basis to make sure that we are still on track to make a real and positive difference to the lives of children and young people in the Vale. An annual review will also provide the opportunity to change the strategy if there are changes in the powers and resources of the Council and its partners.

## **Appendices**

### **Documents that were used when writing this strategy**

Vale Community Strategy 2004-2008 ([www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk))  
Vale of White Horse District Council Corporate Plan 2005-2008 ([www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk))  
Draft Oxfordshire Children & Young People's Plan 2006-2009 ([www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk))  
Draft Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement 2006-2009  
Vale Arts Development Strategy ([www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk))  
Vale Sports Development Strategy ([www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk))  
Vale Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008 ([www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk))  
The Government's 'Every Child Matters' web site ([www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk))

### **Child Protection**

The Council has a Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused

regardless of their age, racial origin, social class, gender, culture, religious belief, disability or sexual identity. Most abuse is committed by those who are known to the child or vulnerable adult and who are trusted by that person.

The Council is committed to providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults. The purpose of the policy is to safeguard children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with representatives of the Council and to facilitate the best possible professional practice from the Council, its staff, contractors, partners and volunteers.

The aims of the policy are:

- a) To create a safe and healthy environment for those children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with the Council's elected members, staff and volunteers in all circumstances.
- b) To ensure children and vulnerable adults are listened to, and kept safe from harm.
- c) To support and encourage parents and guardians to voice their opinions regarding the welfare of their children and vulnerable adults and to raise their awareness of the importance of asking questions about such issues.
- d) To ensure members, staff and volunteers, who work with children and vulnerable adults, are well informed, supported and enabled to provide the best possible practice.

**Notes about the draft for consultation**

*The design and layout of the document will not be finalised until consultation has been completed. It is intended that the final version will have a front cover and include case studies about youth development in the Vale. The case studies will be illustrated with photographs.*