

“At the Heart of the Vale” - Our Plan for The Vale 2024-28

Introduction

At the heart of the Vale of White Horse, the Council is making a place that our residents feel proud they can call home. It's not just our mission and value for today. We want to secure a vibrant, inclusive and happy place for this generation and generations to come. This clear purpose guides how we serve our residents and the Vale today to ensure this prosperous future.

Due to cuts in national spending, we live in a time of very constrained finances, but have shown over the last four years, even with taking on a deficit, how we can achieve value whilst building the Council's finances. That is why this Plan is titled “at the Heart of the Vale” It is important to us that our plans must put our people and our place at the heart of its goals.

The following themes outline our existing and aspirational plans within the Vale. This is separated into - our three core themes and how we will approach achieving them.

What we will do

Theme 1. Providing the homes people need

All our residents deserve a place they can call home. To this end, we are working towards a new Joint Local Plan (with South Oxfordshire District Council) and we hope to include more genuinely affordable housing and high environmental standards across a range of tenures and a wide housing mix. We will seek to ensure this is matched with the infrastructure needed to support these new homes – not just roads, but schools, community centres, health facilities and sports facilities

Example existing projects to continue

- Housing delivery strategy and action plan
- Supporting infrastructure in development

Aspirational projects

- Higher targets for Affordable Housing (in JLP)
- The Vale's own stock of genuinely affordable housing
- Consider developing a framework for engaging with Community Land Trusts

Theme 2: Supporting climate and nature recovery

We are committed to helping our residents to prepare for the impact of climate change, as well as reducing our own carbon footprint and doing our own part in reducing our carbon emissions, while supporting nature recovery across the Vale.

Example existing projects to continue

- Progressing with the Council's carbon neutral strategy
- Supporting the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Partnership

Aspirational projects

- Influencing carbon reduction in communities

Theme 3: Creating healthy, sustainable & inclusive communities

Our communities are far more than simply where we live. We are committed to encouraging and sustaining communities where our residents live healthy lives, work, exercise and travel.

Example existing projects to continue

- Supporting our most vulnerable residents.
- Implementing the Food Action Plan arising from Oxfordshire Food Strategy

Aspirational projects

- Encourage active travel enhancements
- Celebrating our communities through a council run awards scheme

How we will do it

By working responsibly and in partnership

For example

- Providing timely responses to consultations by surrounding local authorities and public bodies in line with our residents' needs
- Working with partners when it is purposeful

And looking ahead

- Enable more collaborative ways of working, including continuing to pursue a new shared HQ with South Oxfordshire District Council.
- Strengthening communications to Town & Parish Councils

Supporting thriving local businesses

For example

- Strengthening our partnership with the organisations and businesses within Science Vale

Looking ahead

- Developing our partnership with green skills providers
- Utilising Local Development Orders where applicable
- Promoting the rural economy and agriculture

Building a council for the future

For example

- Maintaining stable finances
- Using developer contributions effectively

Looking ahead

- "Business as usual done better" – continuing to assess areas for improvement within the Council's operations, through the transformation programme.