



Vale of White Horse District Council

# Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020





# Foreword

**Welcome to our corporate plan for 2016 – 2020 – our plan for what we want to achieve in the next four years. Over the years the council has achieved a reputation for good value, high quality services, and we want this to continue.**

Improvement and innovation are business as usual for us, and we know our residents would want us to continue to find ways to reduce costs and keep the council tax down.

We are facing some of our biggest challenges ever in terms of the growing population. Housing is our greatest challenge and it is no secret that we need to provide for many more homes. In doing so we need to ensure that young people and first time buyers who at present can't afford their own homes, get that vital step up onto the housing market. Each of our communities is unique and it is appropriate that local people should have a say on where development happens, whilst preserving what is good about their area – we will support them to do this through neighbourhood development plans.

We need to provide for the future of

our district, by building on the good work we have done to date to create an even stronger economy. To provide the infrastructure that businesses need to grow and succeed in our district. This way we attract more inward investment and create more jobs for local people.

We will continue to work with our market towns to make them thriving places where people want to live and to visit, and have pledged to continue to provide free parking to help.

We will help to keep communities clean and attractive by introducing a district-wide deep clean of pavements and public footpaths, and taking action against environmental crimes such as flytipping. And we will encourage residents to be more healthy by improving parks and gardens, including Abbey Gardens and Wantage Park.

We realise that flooding can devastate communities and have invested heavily with other agencies to tackle those areas worst hit. Other big projects include: realising plans for redevelopment of West Way, Botley, a new leisure centre in Grove, and looking at the potential to redevelop the Charter area in Abingdon.

I think these are exciting times and I look forward to making this plan happen.



**Matthew Barber**  
Leader of the council

# Housing & Infrastructure

## Through an ambitious housing strategy we will:

- Deliver the right balance of types and tenure of new homes to meet housing need and support economic growth.
- Develop a range of starter home and low cost home ownership initiatives, that provide entry points to home ownership.
- Ensure a good supply of affordable rented homes for those unable to buy.
- Promote self-build and custom build initiatives, ensuring land is made available for this purpose.
- Promote exemplars of housing design through our planning policies.
- Work with developers and other partners to develop a protocol that will ensure high quality, sympathetic design appropriate to all areas of our district.
- Actively work to bring forward development where we see gaps in provision, using council resources and delivery mechanisms as appropriate.



## We will reduce homelessness by:

- Assisting households to remain in their home through mediation and enforcement of their rights to occupy.
- Providing a holistic housing advice service, in partnership with other agencies, to maximise the housing options for all households.
- Helping low income families to access affordable rented accommodation through deposit bonds, rent-in-advance loans and tenancy support.

## We will tackle infrastructure challenges by:

- Providing funding towards work on temporary flood barriers in South Hinksey and for the investigation of options to manage flood risks at sites in Abingdon, including Hillview Road on the River Stort; St Helen's Mill on the River Ock, and a more comprehensive scheme for the River Ock, as well as the major Oxford and Abingdon Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- Working with infrastructure partners to find solutions to flooding problems across the district.
- Maximising contributions from housing development towards road improvements, public transport, health, education and other infrastructure, ensuring that funding is directed towards the most effective schemes.
- Seeking to maximise the amount of business rates income from our two Enterprise Zones towards infrastructure projects in the Vale.



# Sustainable Communities & Wellbeing

## We will facilitate sustainable communities by:

- Supporting and resourcing the development of neighbourhood plans for our towns and villages.
- Supporting community groups and community events through our grants scheme.
- Assisting voluntary and community groups that provide important services to residents, to attract volunteers.
- Working with partners as part of the South and Vale Community Safety Partnership to deliver the annual plan aimed at reducing crime, tackling antisocial behaviour and supporting vulnerable people.
- Maintaining the number of people who say they feel safe during the day and at night.



## We will increase participation in sport and leisure through:

- Continuous improvement programmes for our leisure centres, facilities and schemes.
- Investing in our parks and gardens across the Vale, including Abbey Gardens and Wantage Park.
- Building a new leisure centre at Grove.
- Expanding the range and quality of activities at The Beacon in Wantage.

## We will continue to improve our environment by:

- Maintaining our position as a top-performing council on waste collection and recycling.
- Improving street cleaning through carrying out district-wide deep cleans of pavements and public footpaths.
- Tackling fly tipping and graffiti by clearing fly tips quickly and taking tough action against the perpetrators.
- Working positively with developers and applicants through the planning process to minimise breaches of planning control that could otherwise lead to enforcement action.





# Building an even stronger economy

**We will create the right conditions for economic growth, so that businesses, residents and workers can prosper.**

- We will directly address matters within our control that hold back growth, such as housing supply and provision of affordable housing. We will work with partners to seek to overcome infrastructure bottlenecks that impact adversely on business competitiveness
- We will support enterprising small and medium sized businesses to grow, ensuring the right package of initiatives is available on demand, including the potential for business rate discounts.
- We will work with UKTI, the Local Enterprise Partnership, business parks and others to ensure inward investment is maximised.
- We will take a strong lead on delivery of our two Enterprise Zones in Science Vale, to maximise growth and inward investment and create high value jobs for residents. We will seek to capture the business rates growth from the Enterprise Zones for reinvestment in Vale.
- We will invest in land and property where appropriate to achieve our corporate objectives.



## We will ensure the success of our town centres by:

- Improving car parking facilities by increasing the number of parking spaces where possible, refurbishing the Charter multi-storey car park in Abingdon, and maintaining the two hour free parking period.
- Working with providers and partners to improve broadband access, mobile phone reception and public access to wi-fi in our town centres.
- Securing the redevelopment of the West Way shopping centre area in Botley.
- Exploring the potential for redevelopment of the Charter area in Abingdon, building on the success of the Bury Street redevelopment.
- Expanding our Town Teams to support our thriving town centres of Wantage and Faringdon.
- Supporting the successful operation of the Abingdon Business Improvement District.

## We will optimise employment opportunities by:

- Working with delivery partners to ensure a good supply of appropriate business premises for start-ups and small and medium enterprises.
- Ensuring the skills needs of our employers are identified and that training programmes are in place to provide a skilled labour force.
- Working with developers to introduce local apprenticeship and local workforce schemes that benefit our residents.
- Looking for opportunities to extend local development orders which simplify and speed up the planning process to encourage business growth in Vale.
- Supporting and encouraging business collaboration through promoting the Vale4Business brand.

## We will support tourism in the Vale by:

- Promoting the Vale as a must-see visitor and cultural destination, providing up to date information on amenities and events.
- Enabling the development of additional hotel accommodation to encourage more overnight visitors.



# Running an efficient council

We will maintain high levels of resident satisfaction with how the council runs things by:

- Keeping the district council tax low.
- Continuing to work in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council and others to develop new ideas for improving service delivery, including pursuing a proposal to seek a new structure of local government for Oxfordshire.
- Continuing to reduce our operational costs, particularly energy costs, through efficiency measures.





# The Council's equality objectives

**In delivering on the commitments in this Corporate Plan we will provide fair and accessible services and employment opportunities that meet the needs of everyone, and positively promote inclusion in line with the Equality Act.**

## **The Council's equality objectives are to:**

- Continue to improve physical access to council owned or leased buildings or land.
- Ensure new projects, policies or strategies, changes to services, and communication take account of the needs of all users.
- Increase our understanding of the communities we serve, through consultation, engagement and using existing evidence (e.g. census data) to inform the decisions we make.
- Continue to monitor the impact of our employment policies and practices to ensure all groups have access to employment opportunities.
- Support communities to deliver better outcomes for disadvantaged groups and encourage community cohesion.
- Seek to improve access to major new developments and town centres in the Vale for people with disabilities, carers and older people.





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