

Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Consultation Plan



**Vale
of White Horse**
District Council

This consultation plan outlines the various methods of engagement that will be utilised for the production of this supplementary planning document. It is in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Regulations as amended in 2008, Regulation 17. The plan also complies with our adopted Statement of Community Involvement adopted December 2009.

Introduction

1. The Abbey Shopping Centre (formerly the Bury Street Precinct) and Charter Area SPD, is a policy document that originates from the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2009. The SPD will assist in the delivery of some of the main objectives for Abingdon, as set out in the Core Strategy Preferred Options.
2. The Core Strategy Preferred Options (the document that sets out how the district will develop up until 2027) identified the need for the area to be looked at, stating a need for a 'comprehensive development and environmental improvements including new shops and town centre uses, such as restaurants and commercial leisure uses.'
3. The SPD goes on to look at several different themes. These include:
 - Urban design context
 - Urban design principles
 - Assessment of the existing retail offer
 - Development options and viability work

Previous consultation

4. The Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area redevelopment was identified in the initial Preferred Options consultation that took place in January 2009. This was later re-emphasised through the Additional Preferred Options consultation that took place in January 2010. The consultation document asked for feedback on the following points:
 - The refurbishment of the shopping centre to improve its appearance (including Queen Street) and enable the gradual replacement and enlargement of the existing shops,

- The redevelopment of the Cargo and Somerfield stores for more modern shopping units on the ground floor with a new library and health centre above, with the possibility of space for a hotel, offices and flats,
 - A major new store in the Charter area with car parking above it.
5. The consultation received a fairly good response, with approximately 200 responses to that section, as part of the wider consultation.

Current consultation and timescale

6. This consultation is effectively the third on this subject matter, but the first as the main consultation on the SPD itself. Only one period of consultation is needed for the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area SPD. According to regulations set by the Government the consultation length must fall between a time length of 4-6 weeks. We have opted for a six week consultation period, as part of the SPD consultation runs into the summer holiday period. This additional two week consultation length, taken the closing date outside of the summer holiday period, should provide adequate compensation.
7. The potential consultation periods we have identified are **12.08.11 – 23.09.11**. A breakdown of the overall timescale follows:
- Councillor call in period (is a 5 day period from when scrutiny committee receive the documentation): 22.07.11 – 29.07.11 (if 5 working day period)
 - Press adverts submitted 29.07.11 (end of day)
 - Formal consultation period: 12.08.11 – 23.09.11 (6 weeks)
 - Processing of responses: 23.09.11 – 28.10.11 (May vary dependent on the amount of responses)
8. As stated in our Statement of Community Involvement, where ‘practicable’ we will look to avoid consulting over known holiday periods. However, due to time constraints, we have been unable to avoid this consultation running into the summer holiday period. We have extended the consultation period accordingly.
9. The following table highlights the various consultation methods that will be used. The shaded boxes denote regulatory minimum requirements of consultation. The boxes without shading identify methods over and above the minimum requirements, which we will use. We feel that these additional methods are an appropriate level of consultation for this subject.

Principal methods of consultation

10. The table below outlines the methods of consultation that we will look to use for the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area SPD. The table provides further information on the main aim that we are looking to achieve with each identified consultation activity. We have provided specific dates for some events, but also date ranges for some activities, where appropriate.

Proposed method of Consultation	Description and Aim	Date
Councillor and staff workshop or drop in session	To inform internal staff and councillors about the latest options contained within the SPD and provides an opportunity to test consultation material before public displays. The session will also allow for further discussions with key officers.	Preferably in advance of the main consultation period or near to the start w/c 11.08.11 TBC (dependent on interest)
Letters and e-mails to statutory consultees	Correspondence sent out to statutory consultees to notify them of the consultation period and meet regulatory requirements. Also provides opportunity to notify consultees of any associated consultation events. Statutory consultation list will be tailored from the prescribed list set out in the regulations, to those that we see as most suitable for this consultation.	10 – 12.08.11
Letters and e-mails to non statutory consultees	Correspondence sent out to non statutory consultees to notify them of the consultation period and meet regulatory requirements. Also provides opportunity to notify consultees of any associated consultation events. We identify non-statutory consultees through the use of our stakeholder consultation database.	10 – 12.08.11
Press advert and SPD matters statement online and local newspaper (Herald series & Oxford Times)	To set out formal requirements of the consultation (both local newspapers and online), as identified in the regulations. This will also provide an opportunity to promote the consultation period and associated activities. The press advert will cover the formal requirements of the SPD matters.	Adverts to run: Herald on 10.08.11 and Oxford Times on 11.08.11 (deadline for submission 05.08.11)
Hard copy documents to be held in the council office, local libraries	To allow access to consultation information for those without online facilities. Reference copies of the draft SPD will be held at various locations across the district, including those previously mentioned.	10.08.11. – 12.08.11

Proposed method of Consultation	Description and Aim	Date
across the district and Abingdon Town Council		
Letters to businesses/property adjoining the development area	To provide access to consultation information for those in or adjoining the potential development area. (Need to ensure that that library, day centre and health centre are included in this information)	10.08.11 – 12.08.11
Questionnaire and standard comment forms	To capture both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis. Survey and comment forms will be available online on, libraries, town council and exhibition venue.	10.08.11 – 12.08.11
Press release	To increase publicity and maximise opportunity for those not viewing the consultation electronically. Press releases also provide an improved method of presenting the consultation information compared to the more formal press adverts.	Press releases to run: Herald 10.08.11 and Oxford Times 12.08.11
Unvalued article (the council's own magazine)	To increase wider publicity and coverage across the district. This is the most effective way to reach all residents in the district through the council's subscription. The article will be designed in a way that will sign post residents to the consultation, as the definitive consultation dates will not have been identified at the time of writing.	Quarterly meeting, the distribution starts on 4 July (Article produced)
Choose Abingdon	To engage and promote the consultation to businesses with an Abingdon focus. Board members will be used a primary method of wider distribution. Additional key contacts have also been provided by the Choose Abingdon project leader.	TBC
Information pack to South Abingdon residents' group	To promote the consultation and engage with established residents' group, who have a significant interest within the Abingdon area and who have felt disengaged with previous consultation processes. Consultation pack may include special invitations to exhibition, hard copy of consultation document, questionnaire forms etc.	10.08.11 – 12.08.11
Exhibition/ static display	To promote consultation to residents and users of the town centre area. Exhibition will provide an opportunity for members of the public to talk to members of staff. Unmanned exhibitions will allow continued promotion of the consultation with main users of the town centre area.	Probable location of exhibition (Unit 33, Abbey Shopping Centre) 3 exhibition dates 18, 19 and 20.08.11 (static displays

Proposed method of Consultation	Description and Aim	Date
	Special early admittance for Abingdon Town Council 30 mins before official exhibition starts.	will be left outside of the timeframe for the staffed exhibition dates) Breakdown of viewing time on exhibition dates Thur & Fri 12 – 7pm Sat – 10 – 3pm TBC
Consultation posters	To raise awareness of consultation and main consultation activities. Coverage around the town centre will help to increase consultation participation rates.	03-05.08.11
Key Messages Article	Quarterly subscription run by the Embrace partnership. The magazine will allow us to target/raise awareness within ethnic minority groups covering the district.	Subscription is a quarterly run magazine, 27.05.11 Article produced
Consultation pack to Ethnicity Panel	Tailored consultation information sent to representatives from the council's ethnicity panel. The representatives selected were individuals that live in or adjacent to Abingdon.	10.08.11 – 12.08.11
Disability Access Group session through exhibition	Session with the Disability Access Group to look at specific concerns related to design principles etc. The format will mainly take the shape of a discussion based session around the display boards. This can be tied to one of the exhibition dates, as all the display material will already be up and available.	Quarterly meeting scheduled dates on the following (18, 19 or 20.08.11)TBC
Youth Executive session through exhibition	Session with the Youth Executive looking at the principles of the town centre SPD. The format will primarily be discussion based, centring around key themes identified by the policy team. This can be tied to one of the exhibition dates, as all the display material will already be up and available.	Youth Executive can be convened at the convenient time. (18, 19 or 20.08.11) Date TBC. – will need to look into whether the summer holidays creates an issue for this.
Online survey/questionnaire/comment forms	Online survey and standard response forms will help to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on the consultation issues. Response forms can be distributed to town council, library and made available on the exhibition days.	10.08.11 – 12.08.11