



FARINGDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Since 2012 the people of Faringdon have been working together on a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Great Faringdon. This has involved a great deal of consultation and debate, with contributions from all parts of the community.

One of the reasons why the plan has taken as long as it has to reach this stage was a decision, taken by a public meeting in 2014, to include formal protection against development for the town's green spaces - Tucker Park, the Town Park, Faringdon Country Park and the woodland surrounding Faringdon Folly amongst others. This meant that the whole Plan had to be reviewed and resubmitted, first to public consultation, then to the District Council and, finally, to another Independent Examiner.

INFLUENCING FARINGDON'S FUTURE

The Plan sets out a vision of the town and its surroundings up to 2031 and makes important suggestions for the future shape of Faringdon. Not only does it look at ways of enhancing the retail offer, addressing its traffic, transport and parking issues, and improving cycling and walking links in the town, it also seeks to protect its historical heritage, conservation areas and green spaces. It contains policies aimed at ensuring that new housing meets the needs of local people and that infrastructure - roads, schools and health provision, social amenities - are improved to cater for and support a planned increase in population from about 8000 at present to around 11,000 within a few years.

When adopted, the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan will become a part of the Vale of White Horse District Council's Local Plan and act as a template when determining all future planning applications in our parish. Because Faringdon's Plan has been created from views expressed by the residents of the parish, it is expected to provide greater local influence over the factors that the Vale's Officers and Planning Committee members must take it into consideration when deciding whether an application should be approved.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

As the homes to be built in those major housing developments destined for Faringdon are determined by the District Council's Strategic Housing Allocations, their numbers were not subject to debate locally and, therefore do not form part of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Plan does include policies covering both the need for a broad mix of housing, from social rented accommodation to larger homes for private sale, and the appearance and density of the houses to be built. It also makes clear that all minor and infill developments should certainly adhere to the policies contained in it.

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

One of the Neighbourhood Plan's more important elements is that it recognises the need for a greater number of local jobs, recognised to be of particular importance in view of the anticipated population increase. The policies in this section are aimed at creating the conditions to attract employers to the town thus reducing the proportion of people who have to commute to jobs out of Faringdon. One of the ways they do this is by identifying

land specifically for employment purposes, identifying additional sites as well as existing designated land.

Apart from the current development of the 4&20 business site, the Plan looks to identify other potential sites for employment land, including part of the Rogers' Concrete site on Sands Hill, the land north-west of Gloucester Street car park, and the Wicklesham Quarry site, now that quarrying has come to an end. As this latter site is a sensitive and important geological area, the Plan recognises that any development here would have to observe strict conditions to protect the valuable fossils in the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and provide public access to them. It is accepted that any future planning application to build on this land would be subjected to close examination by the planners of the District Council and one outcome of any approved development would require the provision of a safe crossing over the A420 for walkers and cyclists.

AND OTHER AREAS COVERED IN THE PLAN INCLUDE:

- Retail offer - support to the town centre as a hub for shops, services, etc
- Education - appropriate increases in number of school places to cope with the increased population
- Health - expanded provision of GP services
- Leisure Facilities – expansion of community and leisure activities
- Tourism – promoting and enhancing tourist attractions.
- Transport & Traffic Issues - more off street parking including providing a coach park; improving cycling routes both within town and without; developing bus routes linking with other towns; improving the experience of the pedestrian.
- Conservation - conserving the town's historic buildings within the historic centre and potentially expanding the Conservation Area
- Landscape - controlled growth, not letting the town grow too big too quickly; connections with neighbouring parishes; developing Faringdon Country Park

THE WAY FORWARD

There have been many delays along the way, but finally the revised plan has been passed by an Independent Examiner and accepted by both Faringdon Town Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council, and can now be put before the voters of Faringdon in a referendum, the date of which has been set for 24 November 2016.

If accepted by a simple majority of the votes cast, the plan will become part of the District Council's Local Plan, which also extends to 2031 and has itself recently been submitted for examination.

The Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan in full, all 104 pages of it, is available for anyone to read as a pdf document on the [Vale of White Horse District Council referendum page](#), or in hard copy at either the Town Council offices, The Pump House, Market Place, Faringdon SN7 7HL, tel 01367 240281 or the Faringdon Library, The Elms, Gloucester St, Faringdon SN7 7HY. Tel 01367 240311.