

## **Abingdon Neighbourhood Plan update for parish meeting** **28 April 2022**

Since Simon Hill's presentation at the Annual Parish meeting last year, we have been very busy! At the point that Simon spoke to you, we had just finished a round of online focus groups focusing on 8 different theme areas. From these, we chose three topic areas (green spaces, town centre and character areas) and split into three groups to work these topics up to present to the public. Each group had a different approach – for green spaces, for example, we devised a list of three core questions then contacted all the members of the public who had attended the online focus group looking at environmental issues and asked for their input. We also contacted some of the environmental groups across town to ask if they would be interested in participating.

At the same time that the working groups were finalising their topic areas, we ran a series of meet and greet sessions under the Museum arches during the summer holidays. We printed off flyers outlining our eight topic areas and spoke to members of the public very informally about their thoughts on these topic areas – did they represent the main concerns for people living and working in Abingdon? We also had individuals continuing to carry out PLACE assessments across Abingdon for areas which had not been mapped during the first round in October 2020. We were hoping to have an in-person engagement and consultation event running across three days in January to present the findings from our first three topic areas – however, the rise of the Omicron variant meant that we had to pivot to an online event. With that in mind, we had a dedicated website built [Abingdon Neighbourhood Plan \(abingdon-neighbourhood-plan.org\)](http://abingdon-neighbourhood-plan.org) to facilitate our first round of engagement. This went live on January 24<sup>th</sup> and I'm delighted to say that between then and our in-person engagement event on March 3<sup>rd</sup> we received 146 comments about the topics. Our March 3<sup>rd</sup> event also created more traffic to the website and further comments and suggestions.

So, where are we going next with all of this? Steering Group are currently working up a further three topic areas which will be added to our website for consultation before the summer – these are access and movement, families and young people and business and employment. These will form part of our formal six-week regulation 14 consultation which we hope to have kicked off by July.

If you would like to get involved with any of our work and contribute to the working groups, or would just like to find out more or comment on the emerging themes and findings, please head to our website where you can find a copy of the March 3<sup>rd</sup> presentation, PLACE findings and the original three theme area findings. In addition, there is a dedicated page about the Neighbourhood Plan on the Town Council website [Neighbourhood Plan – Abingdon on Thames Town Council](#)

Cllr Grace Clifton  
28 April 2022