

Report to Town Infrastructure Committee November 24th 2022

Neighbourhood Plan report

1. As indicated at our July meeting, the final three topics for our public engagement website (Access and Movement, Business and Employment, Families and Young People) went live the week beginning 18th July. The following activity was carried out to promote engagement: Andy Crick promoted the activity via the Council's social media platforms; we proactively emailed anyone who had contributed to the first round of public engagement in January and/or attended our focus groups back in early 2021; an article appeared in the Abingdon Herald at the end of July; an article appeared in the early summer edition of the Town Crier. My thanks to Town Council officers for assisting in all of the above.
2. By 7 September (just before the consultation closed), we had received 25 comments in relation to business and employment and 19 comments in relation to families and young people. We have also received a detailed response in relation to all three topics from the Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework team. At this stage, we identified a broken link on the website which was not allowing responses in relation to access and movement to be pulled through. We emailed all respondents to apologise for this error and ask them to revisit the website again, extending the consultation for this one topic to 23 September. I also contacted members of local active travel groups to alert them to this.
3. Steering Group met on 20th September to review the headline consultation findings for the last three topics and Richard Eastham (Feria) outlined the next steps to move the Plan towards reg 14 consultation. In total, we had received 34 responses for families and young people, 33 responses for business and employment and 26 comments in relation to access and movement.
4. We organised a follow up working group on 29th October (led by Richard and attended by some members of Steering Group and other interested individuals brought in for their expertise in particular areas). Prior to this meeting, Feria had taken the findings from both sets of public consultation and used these to populate a draft Neighbourhood Plan. We are grateful to the CARF team who also shared their draft report with us. At the working group, therefore, we reviewed the emerging draft, adding in comments and identifying issues where appropriate. At the time of writing this report, we are awaiting the finalised draft plan to be circulated around Steering Group members for sign off at our next meeting on November 22nd.
5. Parallel to this activity have been various engagement tasks with different stakeholders. For example, I have been in touch with the Leadership at Vale to seek clarification in relation to the extent to which the CARF findings can/should be incorporated into the Town Centre chapter of the plan. Richard has been working on the Strategic Environmental Assessment screening paperwork, which will need to be submitted to Vale alongside the draft plan. In addition, I have been liaising with the Town Clerk and Richard regarding the mechanism for formal sign-off of the plan by the Town Council.
6. The Town Clerk and I have liaised with Richard to produce an updated timeline of activities.

Cllr Grace Clifton

10th November