



# Abingdon-on-Thames Neighbourhood Plan

A report to the Town Council's Infrastructure Committee

The [Abingdon-on-Thames Neighbourhood Plan](#) is an important Town Council Initiative.

It enables the people of Abingdon to set a future vision for the town, looking forward 10 to 15 years, identifying the things we want to keep and the things to change about our town.

When finalised and agreed at a referendum the VoWH must take the Neighbourhood Plan into account as it considers planning applications.

A lay-led steering group (ATNP SG) was established in early 2021, drawing on volunteers that had taken part in the [PLACE assessment](#) process the autumn before.

The steering group has very much welcomed the active support of Councillor Grace Clifton, who sadly has recently stepped down from the steering group.

The ATNP SG has met, almost exclusively virtually, and been well supported by Feria Urbanism, the consultancy appointed by the town council to support development of the NP plan.

It has developed ideas based on 6 themes:

- Families and Young People
- Business and Employment
- Travel, access and Movement
- Town Centre
- Character areas
- Green spaces

Wide engagement has tested thematic ideas through, variously, summer 2021 Saturday mornings outreach sessions held under the County Hall, online consultations, a public meeting and engagement with primary and secondary schools and youth groups. The chair of the ATNP SG made a presentation to the virtual town meeting in spring 2021.

Articles have been provided to the Crier, Abingdon Herald and a TV interview given to publicise the ATNP initiative more widely.

The next important step will be finalising the 'Reg 14' consultation, after which the town council will submit the draft neighbourhood plan to the VoWH. This requires a 'pre-consultation' which will last 6 weeks and provide a further opportunity to for all interested parties to make representations.

Once these comments have been taken into account via any revision to the draft consultation the draft plan will be submitted to the VoWH, for further consultation before being subject to independent scrutiny.

It is hoped that the ATNP will be finalised for pre-consultation by mid-February. To achieve this a number of remaining activities must be completed:

#### **Character assessment**

Identification of the defining characteristics of each of 50 distinct areas of Abingdon is being undertaken by a small group of Civic Society enthusiasts. Completion of this task will require enlargement of this group of volunteers.

#### **Arts & Culture**

Specific Arts and Culture policies remain to be developed.

#### **Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework**

The ATNPSG is discussing with the Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework (CARF) team about which elements of their CARF proposals could be incorporated into the Neighbourhood plan.

#### **Questions for infrastructure Committee members**

- Can you identify others - ward councillors perhaps - who could support development of the Character Assessments?
- Can you identify specific individuals who can work with the ATNPSG to develop the Arts and Culture policy recommendations?

Simon Hills  
Chair  
Abingdon-on-Thames Neighbourhood Steering Group  
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