

The Neighbourhood Plan

Abingdon Town Parish meeting report 2024

The Neighbourhood Plan allows us all to have their say on the future of our town and how it should develop.

The Abingdon Town Neighbourhood Plan's steering group has over the past couple of years conducted research, face-to-face engagement, community outreach via consultations (available on the town council's website), it is now in the writing up phase. Chapters include a greener Abingdon, Business and the Economy, Access and Movement, Families and Young People and the Town Centre.

An important component of the Neighbourhood Plan is setting a vision for the town. The working draft currently sets an aspiration that:

By 2035 Abingdon will be one of the most attractive towns on the Thames. Its rich historical heritage, place at the heart of a world class scientific technology hub and mix of residential, retail, commercial, leisure and tourist spaces will make it an attractive, sustainable place to live, work and visit.

So that businesses and people can thrive and be healthy, mixed residential and commercial buildings are woven into green spaces. Vibrant communities are people centric, linked by safe walking and cycling routes to public transport hubs reducing the impact of private vehicles.

The town centre is easy to get around and serves as the centre for retail, tourism and socialising but is better linked by a 'cultural corridor' to an arts, cultural and heritage quarter, on north bank of the Thames, with safer access to the other side of the river, connecting the town with surrounding countryside.

New developments respect the town's character but are well-designed, challenging, and regenerative to reduce their environmental impact. Abingdon is continually improving, making it even better for generations yet to come.

Thought is now being given to how to turn this vision and all the ideas we have generated together into tangible objectives. In this the group is being helped by the district council's expert full-time team that supports the creation of neighbourhood plans.

With their expert support the steering group will develop planning policies, which set expectations for developers and planners. These will help us realise our vision for the future of the different neighbourhoods that make up our town, making it even better than it is now.

This work has so far been led by a group of lay volunteers. I am very grateful for their commitment and enthusiasm. But, once they have completed this final phase of the work to develop the so called 'Reg 14' draft, the Neighbourhood Plan will be taken forward by the Town Council. It will arrange a formal consultation and eventually a referendum. I hope you will all take part in the next phase of the consultation to make the plan even better than it is now and support the final output in the referendum.

Simon Hills
Chair
Abingdon Town Neighbourhood Plan steering group
March 2024