



CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Adoption of the Vale of White Horse & South Oxfordshire District Council Model Code of Conduct

The Oxfordshire Secretaries and Monitoring Officers Group recently agreed a model Code of Conduct Appendix 1 to this document to be applied on a countywide basis and which is intended to provide consistency across all tiers of local government.

At their respective annual meetings in 2022, both the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire district councils adopted the Code with immediate effect. Vale of White Horse then formally commended the Code to this Council for adoption at the earliest possible opportunity. This will ensure that all Oxfordshire councillors are covered by the same Code.

Western Valley Parish Council therefore adopts the Code of Conduct as per Appendix 1 to this document.

2. Review

This document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 08th May 2025, it shall be reviewed periodically, in accordance with the Standing Orders.

Signed:

Dated: 09th May 2024

Cllr _____, Chair of the Council

Appendix 1 follows.

Oxfordshire Councils' Councillor Code of Conduct 2022

1.0 Introduction

The Council has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council, and formally adopt a code of conduct, in accordance with the *Localism Act 2011*.

2.0 Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a Councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow Councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all Councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of the Councillor and in Local Government.

3.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a "Councillor" means a member or co-opted member of the local authority. A "co-opted member" is defined in the *Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4)* as "a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- 3.1 is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- 3.2 is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee".

4.0 General Principles of Councillor Conduct

Everyone in public office and all who serve the public or deliver public services, including Councillors and local authority officers, should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles, (see Appendix A).

Building on these principles of selflessness, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and integrity and leadership, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of Councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in Councillors, on all occasions a Councillor shall:

- act with integrity and honesty
- act lawfully

- treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of Councillor.
- impartially exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- avoid conflicts of interest
- exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with the local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

These general principles have been incorporated into the obligations of the Code of Conduct as set out below.

5.0 Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of Councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a Councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a Councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a Councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a Councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including at face-to-face meetings, at online or telephone meetings, in written communication, in verbal communication, in non-verbal communication and in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish Councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

6.0 Standards of Councillor Conduct

This section sets out the obligations (in bold below), which are the minimum standards of conduct required of a Councillor. Should a Councillor's conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against them, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is also included below each obligation to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

6.1 Respect

A Councillor:

- 6.1.1 Shall treat everyone, including other Councillors and members of the public with respect.**
- 6.1.2 Shall treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.**

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a Councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in Councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from everyone. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the relevant social media provider and/or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

6.2 Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

A Councillor:

- 6.2.1 Shall not bully any person.**
- 6.2.2 Shall not harass any person.**
- 6.2.3 Shall promote equalities and not discriminate against any person.**

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as; conduct that causes

alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Legislation places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

6.3 Impartiality of Officers of the Council

A Councillor:

6.3.1 Shall not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral, (other than political assistants where applicable). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. A Councillor may question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, a Councillor must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

6.4 Confidentiality and access to information

A Councillor:

6.4.1 Shall not disclose information either given to them in confidence by anyone or acquired by them which they believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless

- i. They have received the consent of a person authorised to give it; or**
- ii. They are required by law to do so; or**
- iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
- iv. the disclosure is reasonable and in the public interest; and also made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority and consultation with the**

Monitoring Officer has taken place prior to its release.

- 6.4.2 Shall not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of their role as a Councillor for the advancement of themselves, their friends, family members, employer or business interests.**
- 6.4.3 Shall not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.**
- 6.4.4 When making decisions on behalf of, or as part of, the Council shall have due regard to any professional advice provided by the Council's Officers.**

6.5 Disrepute

A Councillor:

- 6.5.1 Shall not bring their role or local authority into disrepute.**

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other Councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions.

6.6 Use of position

A Councillor:

- 6.6.1 Shall not use, or attempt to use, their position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of anyone.**

A Councillor should not take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and privileges to further their own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

6.7 Local authority Resources and Facilities

A Councillor:

- 6.7.1 Shall not misuse council resources.**
- 6.7.2 Shall, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others, act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or**

of the office to which they have been elected or appointed.

A Councillor may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist them in carrying out their duties as a Councillor. Examples may include office support, stationery, equipment such as phones, computers and transport and access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

6.8 Compliance with the Code of Conduct

A Councillor:

- 6.8.1 Shall undertake Code of Conduct training as required by the local authority.**
- 6.8.2 Shall cooperate with any Code of Conduct assessment, investigation, hearing and/or determination.**
- 6.8.3 Shall not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.**
- 6.8.4 Shall comply with any sanction imposed on them following a finding that they have breached the Code of Conduct.**

It is extremely important for a Councillor to demonstrate high standards, to have your actions open to scrutiny and not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint, you should raise this with the Monitoring Officer.

7.0 Registering and Declaring Interests

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

7.1 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

A Councillor must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify the Council's Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State (see Appendix B), where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners. Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

You must disclose the interest at any meeting of the Council at which you are present, where you have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a 'sensitive interest'. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you must disclose the fact that you have an interest but do not have to disclose the nature of it. (A sensitive interest is an interest which, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, if disclosed, could lead to the Councillor, or a person connected with them, being subjected to violence or intimidation.) You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting.

Following any disclosure of an interest not on the Council's register, or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.

Unless dispensation has been granted, by the Monitoring Officer, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest. You must withdraw from the room or chamber when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter.

Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up to date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in Appendix B is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

7.2 Other Registerable Interests

You must also register your other registerable interests with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of taking office and ensure these are kept up to date by notifying any changes within 28 days.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in Appendix C), you must disclose the interest.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have an Other Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

7.3 Non-Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or wellbeing and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests at 7.1 above, or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a sensitive interest you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registerable Interests as set out at 7.2 above and appendix C you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants

of the ward affected by the decision and;

- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have a Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

8.0 Gifts and Hospitality

A Councillor:

- 8.1 Shall not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**
- 8.2 Shall register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**
- 8.3 Shall register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that they have been offered but have refused to accept.**

The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality but there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case, you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered.

You do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a Councillor.

It is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a Councillor.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in the table below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.

Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— ①) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or ② if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were
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* 'Director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Appendix C: Disclosure of Other Registrable Interests
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You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any Body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any Body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Appendix H

Title	Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks
Author	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Annual Parish Council Meeting – 08 th May 2025

The Schedule of cover is detailed on the following pages.

Lines of Cover applying

Part C – All risks

Table Headings

Contents (a)	Furniture, fixtures, fittings and tenants improvements
Contents (b)	Other Contents and consumable stock not specified below including printed books and unused stationery
Contents (c)	Computer Equipment, other office equipment and sports equipment
Contents (d)	Televisions, audio-visual and photographic equipment (excluding videos), beer, wine, spirits, tools and gardening equipment
Contents (e)	Tobacco
Contents (f)	Camcorders, videos and gaming machines
Contents (g)	Civic Regalia

Additional Items:

Where no premises address is shown, the item is not based at one location and cover is provided anywhere within the **territorial limits**.

Item Description	Sum Insured	Excess
2 x Books (Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration)	£274.00	£100
2 x Bus Stops	£6,480.00	£100
Lapton - Inspiration 16 7000	£623.50	£100
Mobile Phone	£199.17	£100

The excess stated applies to each and every loss.

Operative Endorsements: 1, 2, 3 & 7 (please refer to the Endorsement section of the policy wording)

Part D – Money

Limit any one loss

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Loss of Non-Negotiable Money in the situations specified in items 2(a), 2(b), 2(c)(i) and 2(c)(ii): | £250,000 |
| 2. Loss of other Money: | |
| (a) in transit in the custody of any member or employee or in transit by registered post (limit £250), or in a Bank Night Safe | £5,000 |
| (b) in the private residence of any member or employee | £250 |
| (c) in the premises | |
| (i) in the custody of or under the actual supervision of any member or employee | £5,000 |
| (ii) in locked safes or strongrooms | £5,000 |
| (iii) in locked receptacles other than safes or strongrooms | £250 |

Excess: £50 each and every loss

Personal Accident Assault Limits: Stated in Section 3(c) of the policy wording

Operative Endorsements:

1. In respect of **Section 1 – Special Definitions**, the definition of Person Insured is extended to include any person between the ages of 16 and 90.

Part E – Public liability

Limit of Indemnity:

£12,000,000

Excess: £100 each and every claim in respect of Section 2(d)(ii)

Operative Endorsements: None

1. Environmental Clean Up Costs. The following Special Definitions are added to Section 1:

Clean Up Costs

- a) Testing for or monitoring of Pollution or Contamination
- b) the costs of Remediation required by any Enforcing Authority to a standard reasonably achievable by the methods available at the time that such Remediation commences.

Remediation

Remedying the effects of Pollution or Contamination including primary, complementary and compensatory actions as specified in the Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) Regulations 2009.

Enforcing Authority

Any government or statutory authority or body implementing or enforcing environmental protection legislation within the territorial limits.

Cover

With effect from 01 July 2009 or the inception of the policy if later, the **insurer** will indemnify the **insured** in respect of all sums including statutory debts that the **insured** is legally liable to pay in respect of Clean Up Costs arising from environmental damage caused by Pollution or Contamination where such liability arises under an environmental directive, statute or statutory instrument.

Provided always that:

- a) liability arises from Pollution or Contamination caused by a sudden, identifiable, unintended and unexpected incident which takes place in its entirety at a specific time and place during the Period of Insurance. All Pollution or Contamination which arises out of one incident shall be deemed to have occurred at the same time such incident takes place
- b) the **insurer's** liability under this Extension shall not exceed £1,000,000 for any one occurrence and in the aggregate in any one Period of Insurance and will be the maximum the insurer will pay inclusive all costs and expenses. This limit will form part of and not be in addition to the Limit of Indemnity stated in the Schedule
- c) immediate loss prevention or salvage action is taken and the appropriate authorities are notified

Exclusions

The **insurer** shall be under no liability:

1. in respect of Clean up Costs for **damage** to the **Insured's** land, premises, watercourse or body of water whether owned, leased, hired, tenanted or otherwise in the **insured's** care, custody or control
2. for **damage** connected with pre-existing contaminated property
3. for **damage** caused by a succession of several events where such individual event would not warrant immediate action
4. in respect of removal of any risk of an adverse effect on human health on the Insured's land, premises, watercourse or body of water whether owned, leased, hired, tenanted or otherwise in the **insured's** care, custody or control
5. in respect of costs in achieving an improvement or alteration in the condition of the land, atmosphere or any watercourse or body of water beyond that required under any relevant and applicable law or statutory enactment at the time Remediation commences
6. in respect of costs for prevention of imminent threat of environmental damage where such costs are incurred without there being Pollution or Contamination caused by a sudden, identifiable, unintended and unexpected incident
7. for **damage** resulting from an alteration to subterranean stores of groundwater or to flow patterns
8. in respect of costs for the reinstatement or reintroduction of flora or fauna
9. for **damage** caused deliberately or intentionally by the **insured** or where they have knowingly deviated from environmental protection rulings or where the **insured** has knowingly omitted to inspect, maintain or perform necessary repairs to plant or machinery for which they are responsible
10. in respect of fines or penalties of any kind
11. for **damage** caused by the ownership or operation on behalf of the **insured** of any mining operations or storage, treatment or disposal of waste or waste products other than caused by composting, purification or pre-treatment of waste water
12. for **damage** which is covered by a more specific insurance policy
13. for **damage** caused by persons aware of the defectiveness or harmfulness of products they have placed on the market or works or other services they have performed
14. for **damage** caused by disease in animals belonging to or kept or sold by the **insured**.

Part G – Employers liability

Limit of Indemnity: £10,000,000

Operative Endorsements:

None

Part H – Libel and slander

Sum Insured

£250,000

Excess: 10% each and every claim or £1,000 whichever is the lower

Operative Endorsements

None

Part N – Fidelity guarantee

Persons Guaranteed:

All **members** and **employees**

Sum Guaranteed

£250,000

Excess: £100 each and every loss

Operative Endorsements:

None

Part O – Personal accident

Cover is limited to £500,000 any one person and £2,000,000 any one incident.

Persons Insured:

Employees

Capital Sum	£100,000.00
Weekly Sum	£500.00
Cover	Sections 2 and 3 - Accident and Assault Cover

Directors/Councillors

Capital Sum	£100,000.00
Weekly Sum	£500.00
Cover	Sections 2 and 3 - Accident and Assault Cover

Operative Endorsement:

1) Special Exclusion 2 of Section 3 is inoperative provided always that the **insurer** will not make any payment of any benefit or in respect of any expense or loss arising from any Person Insured who has attained the age of 90 years unless such expense or loss arises during the period of insurance during which the Person Insured attains the age of 90

Part P – Legal expenses

Section:

1. Employment Disputes and Compensation Awards	Operative
2. Legal Defence	Operative
5. Property Protection and Bodily Injury	Operative
6. Tax Protection	Operative
7. Contract Disputes	Not Operative
8. Statutory Licence Protection	Operative

Limit of Indemnity: £200,000

Operative Endorsements: None

None



COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints that a person other than a member of the council may have about Western Valley Parish Council's administration and procedures. It applies to Parish Council's employees. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council. Formal complaints of conduct by councillors should be made to and investigated by Vale of White Horse District Council.

2. Complaints on Policy Decisions

Complaints against policy decisions made by the council or any of its committees shall be referred back to council in accordance with Item 7 of the council's standing orders, which provides as follows:

- a Except where significant relevant new facts or an error come to light, a resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 4 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

3. Oral Complaints

If a complaint about procedures or administration as practised by the council's employees is notified orally to a councillor or the clerk to the council, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the clerk to the council and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.

If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the clerk of the council they should be advised to put it to the chair of the council.



4. Complaints Procedure

- a) On receipt of a written complaint the chair of the council or the clerk to the council (except where the complaint is about their own actions), shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving them an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.
- b) Where the clerk to the council receives a written complaint about the clerk to the council's own actions, they shall refer the complaint to the chair of council. The clerk to the council shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment.
- c) The clerk to the council or chair of council shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the council. The clerk to the council shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally. (Unless such a matter be related to grievance, disciplinary or standard board proceedings that are taking, or likely to take place when such a hearing may prejudice those hearings when the complaint will have to be heard under confidential business to exclude any member of the public or the press, or deferred on appropriate advice received).
- d) The council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
- e) As soon as practicable after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
- f) A council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law and practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received

5. Review

The Complaints Policy was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 08th May 2025, it shall be reviewed yearly, at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Signed:

Dated: 08th May 2025

Cllr , Chair of the Council



REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION POLICY

1. Introduction

Western Valley Parish Council is subject to the Data Protection Act 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. It complies with the requirements of all this legislation.

From 25 May 2018 the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 took effect (GDPR).

Many requests for information can be dealt with in the ordinary course of business and do not need to be processed under any of the above legislation. If the information can be provided immediately, or can be made available routinely, then we will do this. Please check our website, or noticeboards, first to see if the information is available before making any request. It is also worth looking at the Information Commissioner's website at www.ico.org.uk which has guidance for the public on making requests.

2. The contact details for making a request

Clerk to the Council,
Western Valley PC
PO Box 4311
READING
RG8 1DD

or email: Clerk@WesternValleyParish.gov.uk

3. Data Protection Act 2018

We will acknowledge receipt of a request for personal information as soon as possible. As long as the information is not subject to exemptions (or contains personal data relating to third parties) we will provide a written response within one month.

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act, we will provide you with a statement, or copies of data, as long as:

- it is "personal data" as defined by *Durant v Financial Services Authority* (2003) that is, truly personal, not merely incidental mention of a person, and within a structured, relevant filing system;
- it is not exempt from disclosure;
- we have been able to verify your identity; and
- you have not repeatedly requested the information in a short space of time.



4. Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the right of access under GDPR?

The GDPR clarifies that the reason for allowing individuals to access their personal data is so that they are aware of (and can verify the lawfulness of) the processing. It also allows them to check the accuracy of the data held and to challenge why it is necessary for the data to be held.

Is there a fee for dealing with a subject access request under GDPR?

No. A copy of the information will be provided free of charge. However, a 'reasonable fee' can be charged when a request is manifestly unfounded or excessive, particularly if it is repetitive.

A reasonable fee can also be charged to comply with requests for further copies of the same information. This does not mean that there can be charges for all subsequent access requests.

The fee will be based on the administrative cost of providing the information.

What is the timescale for responding to a request?

Under the GDPR the information should be provided without delay and at the latest within one month of receipt of the request.

The period of compliance can be extended by a further two months where requests are 'complex or numerous'. If this is the case, the individual will be informed within one month of the receipt of the request with an explanation as to why the extension is necessary.

What if the request is manifestly unfounded or excessive?

Where requests are manifestly unfounded or excessive, in particular because they are repetitive, we can:

- charge a reasonable fee taking into account the administrative costs of providing the information; or
- refuse to respond.

Where we refuse to respond to a request, we will explain why to the individual, informing them of their right to complain to the supervisory authority and to a judicial remedy without undue delay and at the latest within one month.

How will the information be provided?

We will verify the identity of the person making the request using 'reasonable means'.



If the request is made electronically, we will endeavour to provide the information in a commonly used electronic format.

The GDPR introduces a new best practice recommendation that, where possible, organisations should be able to provide remote access to a secure self-service system which provide the individual with direct access to his or her information. This is not appropriate for all organisations and we do not yet have this type of facility. The right to obtain a copy of information, or to access personal data through a remotely accessed secure system, must not adversely affect the rights and freedoms of others.

What about requests for large amounts of personal data?

The GDPR permits us to ask the individual to specify the information the request relates to.

The GDPR does not introduce an exemption for requests that relate to large amounts of data, but we can consider whether this makes the request manifestly unfounded or excessive.

5. Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOI”)

Timescales and ways of making requests

We will respond to an FOI request in 20 working days counting the first working day after the request is received as the first working day. An FOI request can be made by anyone, from anywhere, for any purpose. It must be in writing and there must be a return address to send the information to. We will confirm or deny whether we hold the information within the 20 days. If we do not hold the information we will explain why not. We will let you know if we need longer than 20 days to apply the public interest test and we will tell you at that point what exemptions we are looking at and how long we think we need. If we do need more time to apply the public interest test this will be up to a maximum of a further 20 working days so the total time will be a maximum of 40 working days.

Refusal

We may refuse a request if we consider that:

- it is vexatious (designed to cause disruption or annoyance rather than having a serious purpose, see below)
- to comply would exceed the statutory cost limit (£450 with staff time charged at £25 an hour which is the statutory rate). If we believe it will exceed the cost limit we will issue a refusal notice and invite the applicant, if possible, to revise the request to make it less expensive.
- it falls within an exemption under the legislation (see below)



Charging

We can charge for photocopying and disbursements and can request these fees in advance by issuing a fees notice within twenty working days of receipt of the request. When the fees notice is issued the time limit for responding stops. If we do not receive the fee within three months we are not obliged to comply with the request.

Clarification

We can seek clarification about what is being requested. The time limit for responding stops whilst we wait for a response to our request for clarification.

Exemptions

The most common exemptions are:

- Section 21 – information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. There is a duty to confirm or deny whether we hold it and to tell the requestor where they can find it. This is an absolute exemption which means the public interest test does not need to be applied, (see below).
- Section 22 – information intended for future publication. This means it is in draft, still being worked on but when completed, or approved, it will be published. The public interest test must be applied here.
- Section 31 – prejudicial to law enforcement (preventing crime, collecting tax)
- Section 36 – prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs
- Section 40 – personal data
- Section 42 – legal professional privilege
- Section 43 – commercial sensitivity

All except section 21 are qualified exemptions requiring the application of the public interest test. This means weighing up whether the public interest is best served by disclosing the information, or not disclosing it.

6. Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (“EIR”)

Environmental information broadly relates to:

- Air, atmosphere, water, soil, land, landscape, plants, animals, biological diversity and genetically modified organisms
- Emissions, discharges, noise, energy, radiation, waste, recycling, and pollution
- Measures and activities such as policies, plans and agreements
- Reports, cost benefit analysis and economic analysis
- The state of human health and safety, contamination of the food chain
- Cultural sites and built structures (the effect of the environment on the human world)



- Planning and development, building control, construction and renovation, floods and flooding issues, land use, traffic, parking, location of mobile phone masts and demolition of buildings

It covers documents, photos or maps. There is no distinction between formal approved documents, and anything else. The duty is to make the information **available**. This is not the same as the duty to disclose under FOI.

There are 20 working days to respond to the request. Unlike FOI there is no extension to the time limit for consideration of the public interest test. A further 20 days is permitted though if the request is complex, or there is a large amount of information involved. There is no right to charge for inspection. Cost recovery is permitted with reasonable charges published in advance.

Exceptions

There are exceptions to the requirement to disclose, these exceptions are subject to the public interest test like FOI. The exceptions are:

- personal data
- information not held when the request was made
- the request is manifestly unreasonable (similar to “vexatious” under FOI but with “manifestly unreasonable” used instead. The courts have treated both in the same way)
- the request is too general
- information is in draft or is unfinished
- information is an internal communication
- disclosure would adversely affect the course of justice or commercial confidentiality.

There is a lot of guidance, and case law, on the use of both FOI exemptions and EIR exceptions which can be found on the Information Commissioner’s website at www.ico.org.uk.

7. Publication Schemes

This is a scheme available via the website, setting out the classes of information that will be made routinely available and any charges. This includes policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, annual reports and financial information. This information is easily and quickly available.

8. Internal Review

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been dealt with you may request an internal review. This will be carried out within 20 working days of the request for a review being received. If you remain unhappy with the result of the review you can ask the



Information Commissioner to look at your concerns. We will provide you with details of the internal review process when you request it. The process will vary depending on the type of request and who is available to review the process within the timescales.

9. Vexatious Requests

Whilst Western Valley Parish Council wishes to be open and transparent and to provide as much information as possible about the work it does there are occasions when it might be necessary to decide that a request is “vexatious” within the meaning of the legislation. There have been a number of legal cases which have helped to clarify what is meant, legally, by “vexatious” and which have stated that parish councils have limited resources and that their obligations under the legislation must be proportionate to those resources.

Public authorities do not have to comply with vexatious requests. There is no requirement to carry out a public interest test or to confirm or deny whether the requested information is held.

The key question is whether the request is likely to cause **a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation or distress**. There is no exhaustive list of circumstances. Every case is unique and judged within the context and history of that specific situation.

“Vexatious” Indicators

- Abusive or aggressive language
- Burden on the authority
- Personal grudges
- Unreasonable persistence
- Unfounded accusations
- Intransigence
- Frequent/overlapping requests
- Deliberate intention to cause annoyance
- Scattergun approach
- No obvious intent to obtain information
- Futile requests

Process we will follow to determine if a request is vexatious

The parish clerk deals with all requests for information on behalf of the Parish Council. If a request is considered to be potentially vexatious the clerk will prepare a summary setting out the context and history to the request. This summary will be reviewed by the Parish Council.



The review

The following will be considered:

- The purpose and value of the request
- Whether the purpose and value justifies the impact on the public authority
- The context and history so, for example, if there has been a long and frequent series of requests the most recent request, though not obviously vexatious in itself, will contribute to the aggregated burden.
- Have there been numerous follow-up enquiries no matter what is supplied? This will be balanced against how clear our responses have been, has contradictory or inconsistent information been supplied or is a legitimate grievance being pursued?
- Whether there are alternatives to the vexatious route. If it is too expensive then section 12 (costs in excess of £450) will be used. The Information Commissioner permits the total costs for all requests from one person (or several acting in concert) to be aggregated during a period of sixty days so long as they are requests for similar information.
- Is this a round robin, a “fishing” expedition or part of an orchestrated campaign? None of these make it vexatious but are factors.

Final Warning

If, having considered all of the above, the Parish Council thinks there is a case for treating the request as vexatious then consideration will be given to a “final warning”. This is a letter, or email, to the person making the request explaining the impact the request(s) are having and asking that their behaviour be moderated. This “final” warning will not be appropriate in all cases but, if it is possible that the person making the request has not appreciated the impact of what they are doing, then it may assist.

Advice and Assistance

In addition the Parish Council may want to ask the person making the request whether advice and assistance would help in clarifying what exactly they wish the organisation to provide. Again this may not be appropriate in every circumstance but will be considered.

Report to the Parish Council

The history of the matter will go forward as part of a report to the Parish Council setting out the evidence and reasoning behind the recommendation to propose that the request be treated as vexatious.

The decision to declare a request vexatious will be taken by the Parish Council. This decision should be taken within 20 working days of receipt of the request. This time limit should be achievable in normal circumstances, however, if there is no meeting scheduled within that timescale then the decision will be formally delegated by the adoption of this policy to the Chair of the Council [in consultation with the vice Chair]. In a small parish it is not possible



for there to be an internal review process once the Parish Council has reached the decision that the request is vexatious.

Under section 14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act the refusal notice will set out our internal review procedure (if one is available) and the right of appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office. However, under section 17(6) if the authority has issued a previous refusal notice for a vexatious request (and it would be unreasonable to provide another one) it is not necessary to do so. This will be done where the complainant has already been warned that further requests on the same, or similar topics, will not receive any response.

Please note that if a request is found to be vexatious and further requests are received on the same topic no response will be provided.

10. Review

The Requests for Information Policy was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 08th May 2025, it shall be reviewed yearly, at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Signed:

Dated: 08th May 2025

Cllr , Chair of the Council



COMMUNICATION & MEDIA POLICY

1. Introduction

Each Parish Councillor has a duty to represent without bias the interests of the whole community.

They will always try and do their best and are available to help parishioners with regard to matters relating to the Civil Parish of Western Valley.

Parish Councillors may be contacted via the Clerk or using their Parish Council email addresses.

If it is felt by the villager that the matter is important, then a letter or email to the Parish Clerk will ensure that it is dealt with in a timely and professional manner (also see the Correspondence section below).

It is the Parish Council's intention to meet the timescales detailed below but there could be occasions when this is not possible. When this happens the Parish Council will review their procedures and where necessary make changes to the policy or procedures.

2. Aims

To establish clear, easy to use channels of communication between the Parish Council and Parishioners, and the media, and vice versa.

To provide information on important matters in a timely manner to facilitate and encourage informed comment from interested individuals and groups.

3. Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council normally meets 6 times per year, starting at the May meeting, generally meeting every other month. Additional meetings may be scheduled as necessary.

The Parish Council will normally meet in a room at The District Centre, in the Civil Parish of Western Valley from 7.45pm.

Public participation will generally start at 7:45pm to enable discussion on agenda items, 10 minutes is reserved for this, with the meeting starting immediately after.

Members of the public wishing to address the Council during the formal meeting or wishing to record the meeting must make the Chair aware of their wish before the meeting starts.

The media are encouraged to attend Council meetings and seating and workspace will be made available. The Press may record meetings in accordance with the Openness of Local



Government Regulations 2014. This is set out in more detail in Standing Orders (section 3. L, m and n), and the Recording of Meetings Policy.

The Council's Committees are also open to the public. See the parish website for details of Committees, meeting locations and meeting times.

4. Notice Boards

The following items will be displayed on the Parish Council noticeboard(s):

- Contact details for the Clerk
- The Parish Council's meeting agenda - which will be posted at least 3 clear days in advance of each meeting.
- Agenda of other committee meetings of the Parish Council - which will be posted at least 3 clear days in advance of each meeting.
- Statutorily required notices such as Electors Rights, Notices of/for Elections etc.

Where possible, any other parish council notice boards around the village will also be kept up to date, however the board outside the District Centre the official noticeboard to meet statutory requirements.

5. Correspondence

All correspondence relating to the Parish should be addressed to the Parish Clerk in the first instance either via email at Clerk@WesternValleyParish.gov.uk or via post to Western Valley Parish Council, PO Box 4311 READING, RG8 1DD. This will ensure that the matter is recorded and passed to the relevant person or organisation as soon as practically possible. However, all Parish Councillors have their own Council email addresses which have the format firstname.lastname@WesternValleyParish.gov.uk.

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on anything relevant to Councillors or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk, and, if otherwise, will always be copied to the Clerk. All new email requiring data to be passed on may be followed up with a data consent request before action is taken with that correspondence. Individual Councillors are at liberty to communicate directly with villagers in relation to their own personal views, if appropriate, with a copy to the Clerk.

It is important to note that any emails sent to Parish Council email addresses will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act requirements.

These procedures will ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.



It is imperative that all correspondents never forward personal information on to other people or groups outside the Council, this includes names, addresses, email, IP addresses and cookie identifiers.

All correspondence to the Parish Clerk will be acknowledged within one week of receipt if possible. If email is used, then an acknowledgment will be sent via email.

Councillors will be notified of correspondence, but the addressee will not be named on minutes of meetings. Anonymous correspondence in any form will be recorded as received but not responded to.

Email should be thought of in the same way as a letter. A subject line, the sender's name and the content should be in the main body of the email, not as an attachment. Attachments will not be opened unless the Clerk has prior knowledge of the subject. The Council regrets that, for reasons of computer security and virus protection, anonymous emails, and those with no subject in the title will not be opened or actioned.

A parishioner may raise any issue directly with the Parish Clerk or any Councillor. If a satisfactory answer cannot be given immediately in line with the known policies of the council, the issue may be placed on the agenda for the attention of the full Council.

The Clerk will acknowledge all Freedom of Information requests within seven working days and will reply fully within 20 working days of receipt of the request. If this is not possible, a further holding letter/email will be sent with an expected completion date.

6. Website

The Parish Clerk will arrange for the agenda and associated papers to be posted on the Parish Council website (WesternValleyParish.gov.uk) at least three clear days before the meeting and for the draft Minutes to be posted as soon as possible, and no later than one month, after the meeting. The final Minutes will be posted as soon as possible after being confirmed by Council or the relevant committee.

In order to comply with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities, the Clerk will arrange for the annual publication of the following documents no later than 1 July each year:

- a) all items of expenditure above £100
- b) end of year accounts
- c) annual governance statement
- d) internal audit report
- e) list of councillor or member responsibilities
- f) the details of public land and building assets
- g) Minutes, agendas, and meeting papers of formal meetings.



The Parish Clerk is the Webmaster and Domain Administrator for the Parish Council website. The Parish Clerk will ensure that the Parish Council email address is publicised.

7. Social Media

The use of social media by the Clerk Team, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, does not replace existing forms of communication but is used to enhance interaction with a wider range of the population.

8. Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting is convened by the Chair of the Parish Council and is generally held in April each year to provide parishioners with a summary of the activities of the Parish Council over the previous year and the opportunity to debate local issues and celebrate local events and activities.

9. Related Policies and Procedures

Councillor Code of Conduct

Complaints Policy

Retention Policy

Policy on Requests for Information

Recording of Meetings Policy

10. Contact With the Media

The Clerk and Members should always have due regard for the long-term reputation of the Council in all their dealings with the media. Data Protection is of the highest priority. There are a number of personal privacy issues for the Clerk and Members that must be handled carefully and sensitively. These include the release of personal information, such as home address and telephone number (although Member contact details may be in the public domain); disciplinary procedures and long-term sickness absences that are affecting service provision. In all these and similar situations, advice must be taken from the Clerk before any response is made to the media.

Confidential documents, reports, papers and private correspondence should not be leaked to the media. If such leaks do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and appropriate action taken. When the media wish to discuss an issue that is, or is likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then advice should be taken from the Council's Solicitor before any response is made.



All formal requests for comment regarding policies on any matter should be directed to the Clerk in the first instance. If unavailable, the Chair should be contacted. When responding to approaches from the media, the Clerk or Chair are authorised to interact with the media.

All written responses to the Press should be drafted by the Clerk with the assistance of the Chair, or other appointed Councillor for accuracy and lawfulness.

If a member is contacted directly by the Press, Councillors are at liberty to communicate with the Press in their own right but must ensure that they always make it clear that they speak as individuals and not on behalf of the Parish Council. As stated above only the Clerk, can speak formally on behalf of the Council.

Members should not initiate contact with the media on Council related matters unless approved by the Council.

There are occasions when it is appropriate for the Council to submit a letter, for example, to explain important policies or to correct factual errors in letters submitted by other correspondents. Such letters should be kept brief and balanced in tone and correspondence should not be drawn out over several weeks. All correspondence must come from the Clerk.

11. Press Releases

The purpose of a press release is to make the media aware of a potential story, to provide important public information or to explain the Council's position on a particular issue. It is the responsibility of the Clerk and Members to look for opportunities where the issuing of a press release may be beneficial. The Clerk or any Member may draft a press release, however it must be issued by the Clerk or approved by the full Council for issue. This is to ensure that the principles outlined above are adhered to, that there is consistency of style across the Council and that the use of the press release can be monitored.

12. Review

This document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 08th May 2025 it shall be reviewed periodically, at least once per council term or if legislation dictates.

Signed:

Dated: 08th May 2025

Cllr _____, Chair of the Council

6. PREFERRED OPTION (ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE)



Preferred option – achieved schedule

- **Local Centre**
 - health centre –
 - 650m² ground floor area
 - additional commercial floorspace –
 - 400m² ground floor
 - prominent location
 - direct access to public transport
- **Public Realm**
 - attractive public spaces
 - slow vehicle speeds
 - street tree planting
 - upgraded surfaces
 - potential mobility hub / car club
- **Parking within Public Realm**
 - 62 spaces (non allocated)
 - space for cycle parking
- **Extra Care Housing**
 - 70 units
 - mix of 2,3 and 4 storeys
 - communal gardens
 - secure boundary
- **Specialist Housing**
 - up to 24 units at 2 storey
 - communal garden
- **Market Housing**
 - up to 30 units at 3 and 4 storey

March 2025

VALLEY PARK
HARWELL

LOCAL CENTRE (North)
Development Brief

Pre-application



Stantec Consulting Inc.
101 Victoria Street
Bristol

March 27, 2025

Attention:

Persimmon
Taylor Wimpey

Reference:

Masterplanning Services
Lead : Mark Luck

Landscape Services
Lead: Richard McWilliam

Architectural Services
Lead: Jacques Toerien

Planning Services
Lead: Robin Shepherd

Ref No.: 333101914

VALLEY PARK,DIDCOT

Local Centre (North) - Pre-application

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to be an initial assessment of the potential land uses and arrangements related to the provision the Local Centre (North) serving the Valley Park development on the eastern edge of Didcot. The contents of this report are intended to begin a conversation with officers and key stakeholders which will lead to the production of a development brief for the area as required under Condition 8 of the outline planning approval (P14/V2873/O)

An area of land equivalent to 0.85 hectares has been identified within the comprehensive masterplan and Section 106 of which 0.25 hectares is to be set aside for a health centre.

The current assessment includes consideration of the adjacent housing parcel covering approximately 0.3 hectares and lying directly to the south of the local centre as well as the green corridor to the north containing the NEAP. This aims to ensure the proper coordination of these neighbouring parcels and to optimise the potential of the broader local centre location.

Section 106 plan indicating 0.85 hectare local centre (north) area (RPS Planning)



2. DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

The preparation of a development brief for the Local Centre (North) is required under Condition 8 of the Outline Planning decision for the wider Valley Park development. It is linked to the determination of subsequent Reserve Matters applications for identified housing parcels. The condition requires that the brief is the subject to community engagement prior to formal submission.

The condition states that the Brief should include the following:

- (i) General layout and arrangement of all land uses and buildings within local centres;
- (ii) How the Local Centre interfaces with immediately adjoining areas;
- (iii) Design principles for the public realm, built development, civic and open spaces;
- (iv) Access, including road hierarchy type and standard, servicing and manoeuvring space, car and cycle parking, footpath and cycleway networks within and adjoining the Local Centre;
- (v) A strategy to accommodate public transport indicating, where appropriate, bus stops, bus lay-bys, bus shelters and bus turning facilities;
- (vi) A proposed landscape framework, including existing landscape features to be retained and new structural planting;
- (vii) A strategy for foul and sustainable surface water drainage in accordance with the site-wide strategy;
- (viii) Details of proposed housing within the Local Centre, including an indication of the amount and density;
- (ix) Details of haul routes, routing and parking for construction traffic;
- (x) Details of commercial recycling facilities including collection areas;
- (xi) Details of communal recycling facilities including parking/dropping off areas; and
- (xii) Details of noise attenuation measures.



Location of the local centre (north)

illustrative local centre (north) within Design and Access Statement (March 2020)



Landscape Strategy - Northern Hub

Planity EPM © Green Group Ltd. All rights reserved. License number: 001101002 (2017 to 2020)

Valley Park, Didcot, Oxfordshire



3. REQUIRED USES

The brief is to be informed by the illustrative design aspirations included within the Design and Access statement attached to the original application as well as the subsequent Strategic Design Guide. Further Specific requirements are included within the decision notice and associated Section 106 document.

Local Centre Uses

Type	Total Min. floorspace	Car Parking
Health Centre	643 m2	1 spaces per 4 staff members 1 space per consulting room
Commercial Units	not specified	1 spaces per 30m2
Recycling Centre	not specified	?

The Section 106 includes floorspace requirements for the health centre. Other uses are less defined by the outline approval. Condition 8 includes reference to commercial and community uses, however, it is understood that these broad definitions include facilities associated with the adjacent primary school and Common Park sports and community hall.

Typically a local centre may include convenience shopping, cafe and other retail or services to meet the day to day needs of the local residents. It is noted that supermarket provider Morrisons indicate that their local 'daily' stores need to be a minimum of 120m2. Other complementary local centre uses might include communal working spaces, worship spaces, nursery, cycle repairs, active travel hub or recycling facilities.

Local Centre Car Parking

Condition 8 indicates of the need for a parking and servicing strategy serving commercial, community and residential uses alongside the local centre, taking into account the

potential for facilities to share parking. Oxfordshire's *Parking Standards for New Developments* (July 2022) would indicate somewhere in the region of 20 -30 spaces to serve the local centre depending on final floorspace and uses.

Oxfordshire's *Local Transport and Connectivity Plan* (July 2022) outlines the broad approach to private parking as seeking to reduce the number of unnecessary private vehicle journeys, particularly where shorter journeys where residents could walk or cycle. It is based on the principle that assessing parking requirements will *decide and provide* rather than *predict and provide* helping to strike the right balance and work toward the broader objective of reducing car dependencies.

Residential Uses

Type	total units	2 bed	1 bed	Car Parking
Extra Care	70	30	40	40 spaces
Supported Living	14	0	14	10 spaces
Market housing (1/2 bed)	30	?	?	30 spaces

Oxfordshire County Council have provided a detailed outline specification for the provision of an extra care housing scheme for 70 units within the Valley Park development adjacent to the local centre. Likewise there is a requirement for 14 supported living apartments for people with low level learning disabilities together with communal and support facilities. This facility will be provided within 150m of the local centre, which does include some options outside of the development brief area.

In addition up to 31 market housing units can be provided within the local centre area.



4. VISION

The Local Centre (North) sits at the heart of the community where the main internal strategic routes meet, co-located with other community uses including a primary school, equipped play areas and leisure facility. This area will provide a central focus for the development incorporating community facilities and services and residential uses.



Local Centre

Qualities

- focal point for the community
- convenient for essential services
- identifiable with strong sense of place
- supports sustainable transport



Public Realm

Qualities

- welcoming with places to dwell and meet friends
- accessible and safe
- inclusive and attractive
- maintained and managed



Extra Care Housing

Qualities

- encourage interaction
- peaceful and relaxing
- proximity to local amenities
- communal gardens
- legible entrance areas



5. SPATIAL OPTIONS

Urban Design Aims and Assumptions

- The local centre will be identifiable, accessible and attractive to all members of the community.
- The design of the public realm should aim to foster social inclusiveness and be safe and welcoming.
- The local centre will be legible and clearly define areas of public and private space.
- The organisation of the site must accommodate vehicle access to the Common Park sports pitches.
- Vehicle access to the housing parcel directly to the north of the local centre should be accommodated within the design as an option.
- The provision of specialist and extra care housing will provide a high quality living environment for future residents.
- The existing landscape and vegetation is to be protected and enhanced.
- The design of the local centre should promote sustainable patterns of movement by increasing the attractiveness of active travel and public transport.
- The design will respond to the orientation of the site to optimise the benefits of sunlight to all buildings and public spaces.

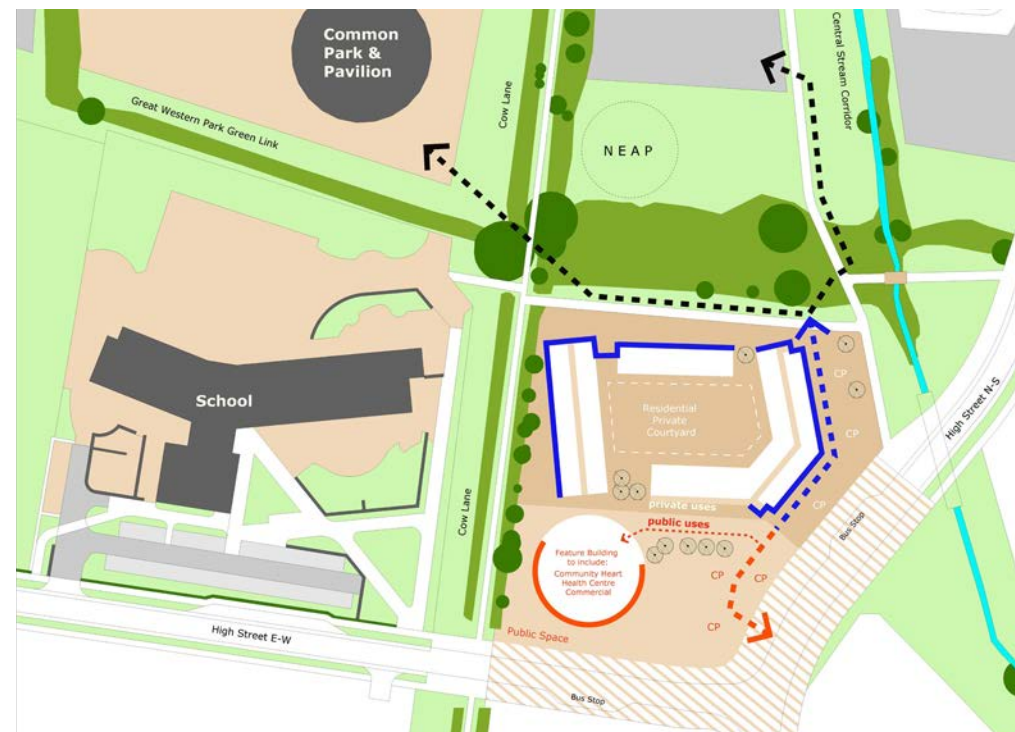
Option 1

Key Design Generators

- grouping public uses close to the Cow Lane axis
- efficient dual use/flexible parking within the public realm
- creation of generous public space at prominent location served by public transport
- creation of private communal space to serve extra care residential uses

Design Challenges

- access point close to main junction with sharp turn into site
- road access to northern parcel tortuous and impacts upon walking and cycle route
- public space potentially dominated by parking areas
- development close to the Cow Lane corridor potentially intrusive to the retention of the country lane





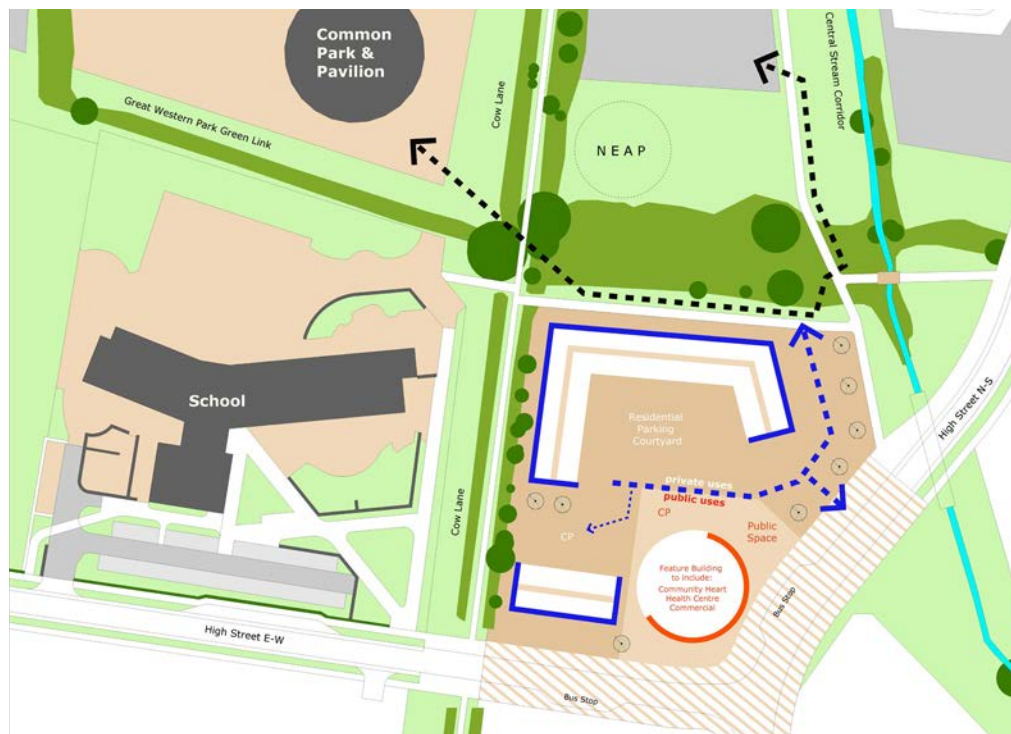
Option 2

Key Design Generators

- provides the main access into the site away from the main spine road junction
- moves the public uses to the most prominent location, with direct access to public transport stop
- reinforces the edges of the site with outward facing perimeter block

Design Challenges

- site access point closer to stream culvert
- road access to northern parcel tortuous and impacts upon walking and cycle route
- less efficient park parking arrangements in single use parking courtyards
- more intensive development scale of extra care housing block potentially impacting on the Cow Lane corridor



Option 3

Key Design Generators

- moves site access further away from the stream culvert
- strong development edge to the main spine road
- less tortuous road connection to northern housing parcel

Design Challenges

- extra care housing includes single aspect units overlooking main spine road
- less efficient park parking arrangements in single use parking courtyards
- more limited provision of communal and public space much of which is overshadowed
- local centre has poorer relationship with Cow Lane and the primary school





Option 4

Key Design Generators

- Access into the site provided away from stream and spine road junction with more convenient access to Common Park
- strong development edge to the main spine road
- extra care housing located to more tranquil part of the site
- housing areas benefit from better site orientation.

Design Challenges

- road arrangement within site to closely aligned and potentially detrimental to retained Cow Lane corridor
- road access to northern parcel reduces existing planting area
- less efficient park parking arrangements in single use parking courtyards
- limited communal garden space for residential uses



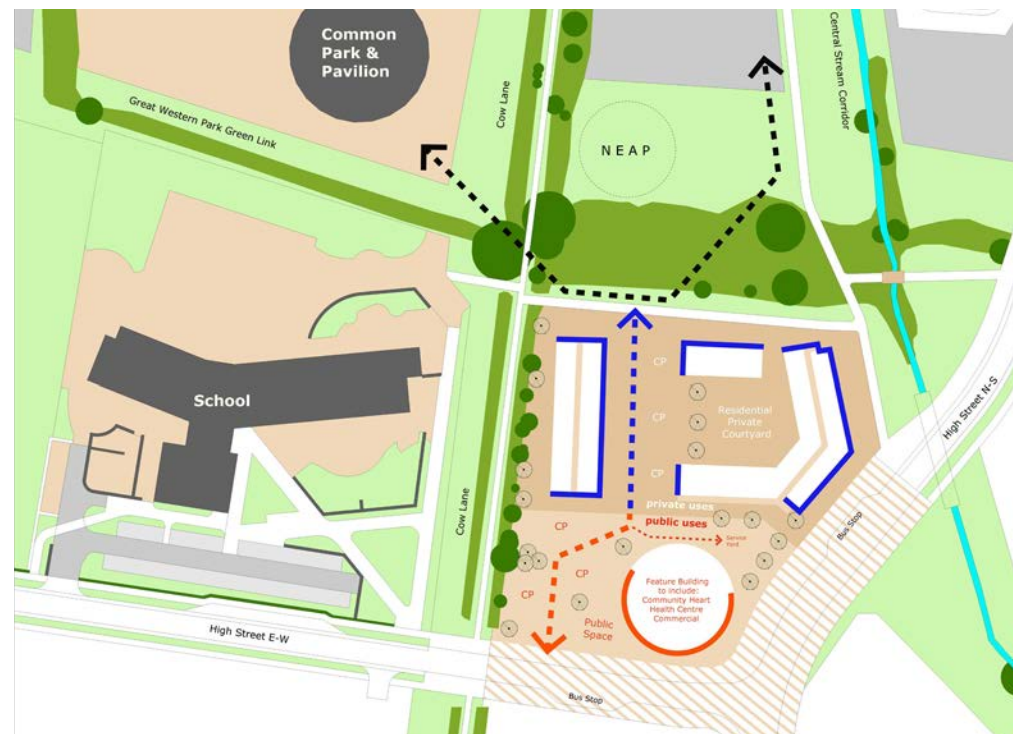
Option 5

Key Design Generators

- Access road taken away from the Cow Lane corridor maintaining convenient access to Common Park
- public uses at the most prominent location, with direct access to public transport stop
- public spaces and more generous communal gardens benefit from good orientation

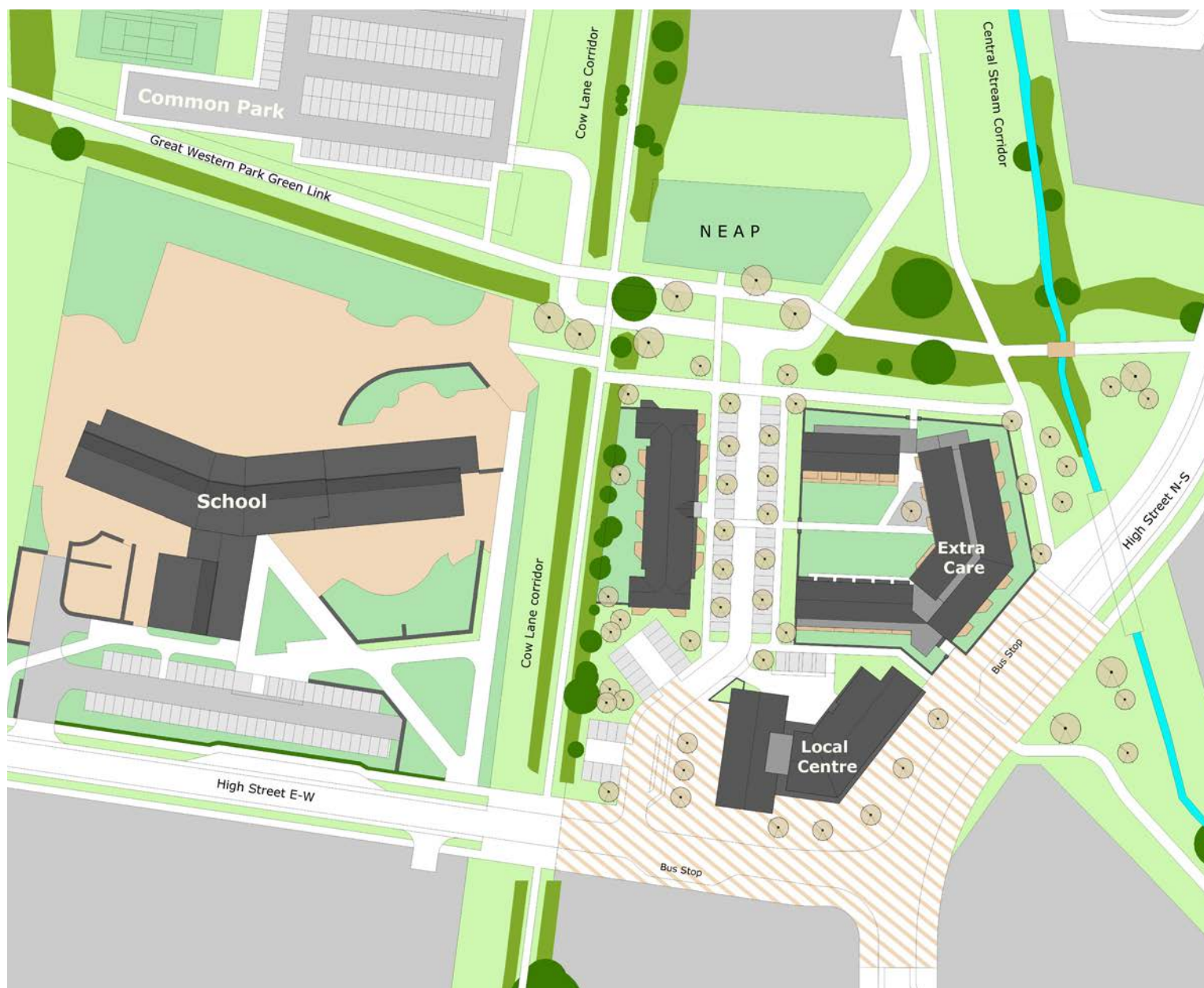
Design Challenges

- road access to northern parcel reduces existing planting area
- public space potentially dominated by parking areas





6. PREFERRED OPTION (ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE)



Preferred option – achieved schedule

- **Local Centre**
 - health centre –
 - 650m² ground floor area
 - additional commercial floorspace –
 - 400m² ground floor
 - prominent location
 - direct access to public transport
- **Public Realm**
 - attractive public spaces
 - slow vehicle speeds
 - street tree planting
 - upgraded surfaces
 - potential mobility hub / car club
- **Parking within Public Realm**
 - 62 spaces (non allocated)
 - space for cycle parking
- **Extra Care Housing**
 - 70 units
 - mix of 2,3 and 4 storeys
 - communal gardens
 - secure boundary
- **Specialist Housing**
 - up to 24 units at 2 storey
 - communal garden
- **Market Housing**
 - up to 30 units at 3 and 4 storey



7. DESIGN MATTERS - SCALE & MASSING TESTING



Preferred option – massing

Notes:

This is an initial massing study to gain a better understanding about the potential for establishing a vibrant and distinctive local centre that is legible within the wider townscape.

The study includes the following assumptions:

- Development in this location can be up to 4 storeys in height and conforms with the approved scale and massing parameter plan.
- The environment of Cow Lane as a rural thoroughfare has been reinforced by additional planting and a lower scale of development that echoes the relationship established by the primary school.
- Building scale, has been arranged to reduce overshadowing of public spaces and communal gardens
- Building scale has been used to reinforce the main spine road as an active and vibrant corridor and to give a presence to the local centre location.





8. LANDSCAPE & PUBLIC REALM DESIGN CONCEPT



Preferred option - landscape

Notes:

Considerations:

- The plan includes the area required for the NEAP and the required 30m buffer from the residential parcel to the North

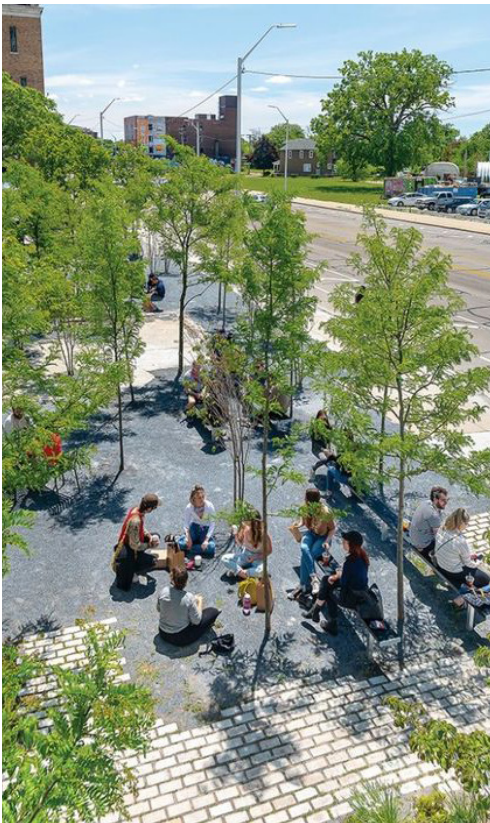
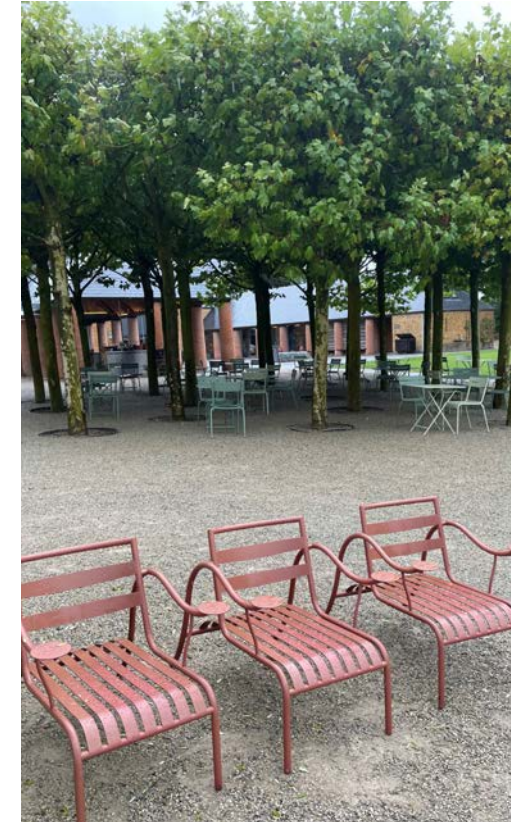
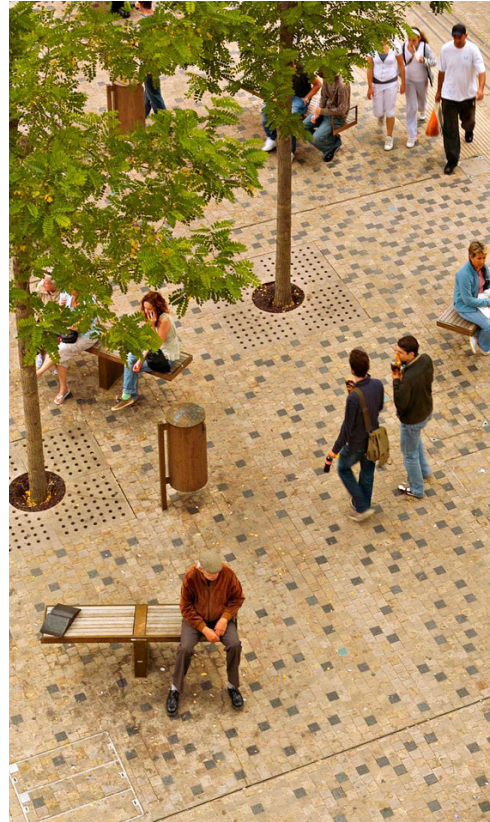
8.1 LANDSCAPE PRECEDENT- EXTRA CARE WELLBEING GARDENS

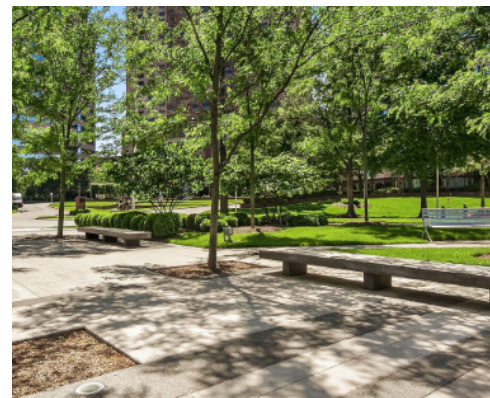
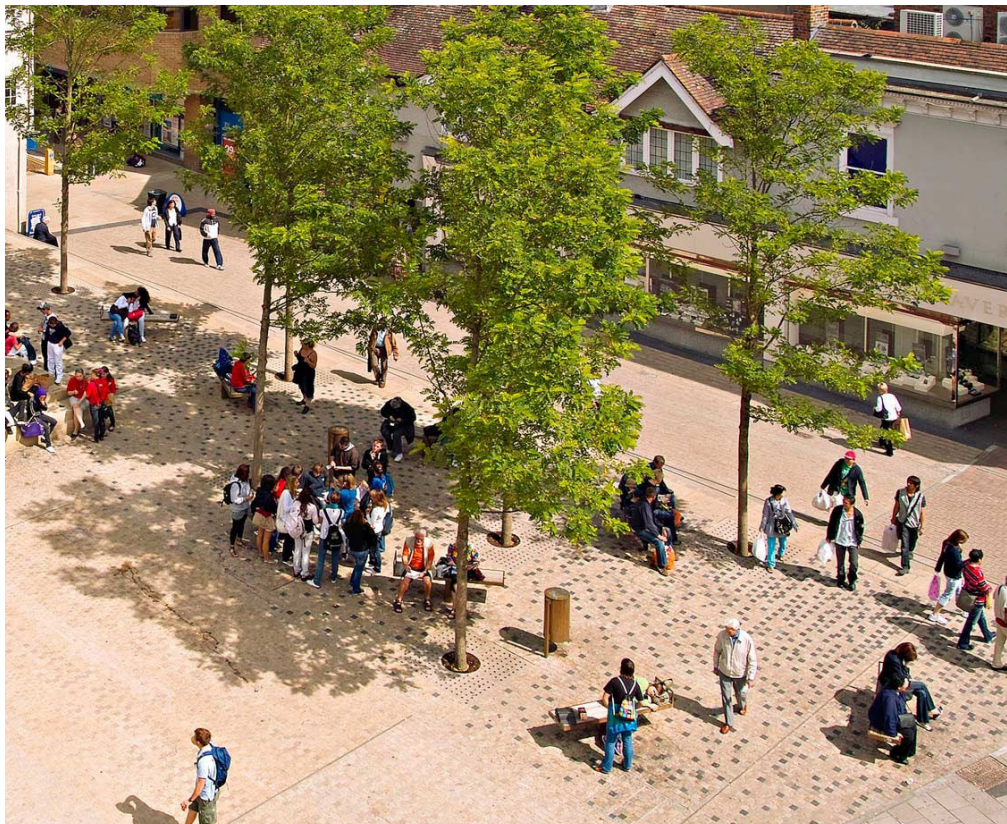
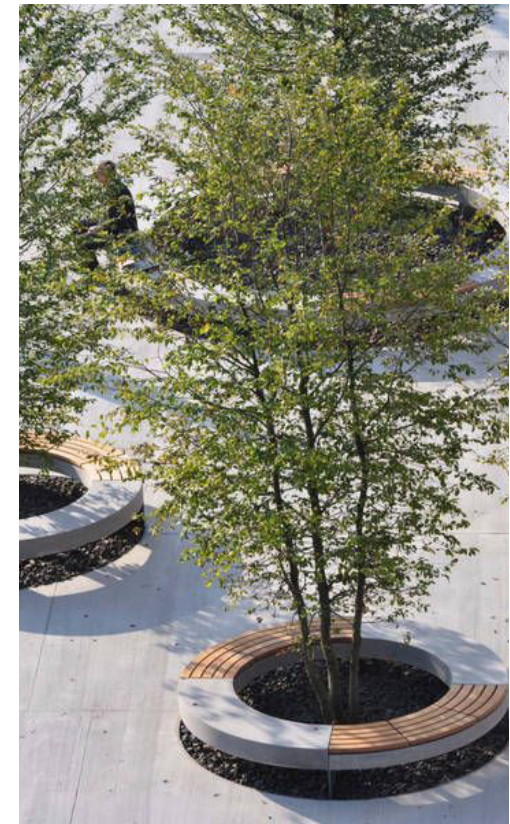






8.2 LANDSCAPE PRECEDENT - LOCAL CENTRE PUBLIC SPACE







8.3 LANDSCAPE PRECEDENT - NEAP





9. CONSIDERATIONS & NEXT STEPS

A number of issues have arisen when considering the aspirations outlined within the planning conditions and Section 106. These include the following:

- **What local centre uses should be prioritised?**

With the exception of the health centre the local centre uses are only broadly defined in the documentation. What should be included recognising that community facilities are intended to be provided at Common Park?

- **What quantum of housing is deliverable?**

Whilst the wider aspiration for extra care, supported and market housing could be delivered on site, this may be limited by the amount of parking required on the site and whether this needs to be allocated or unallocated, or fully utilising initiatives such as mobility hubs or car clubs. Taking into account the suggested parking standards for each use generates a significant area of surface parking which would limit space available for public realm, local centre and transportation requirements and aspirations. There needs to be a balance established between overall housing numbers and parking land-take, taking into account the ambition to share parking serving the local centre and promoting active travel.

Title	Finance 2025-2026
Author	Responsible Financial Officer
Meeting	Western Valley Annual Parish Council Meeting – 08 th May 2025

26.1. To approve payments for May 2025

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Supplier
9	31/05/2025	£ 6.00	£ -	£ 6.00	Bank Fees	Unity Trust
11	15/05/2025	£ 26.00	£ -	£ 26.00	WFH Allowance	Laura White
12	15/05/2025	£ 10.30	£ 2.06	£ 12.36	Microsoft 365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd
14	15/05/2025	£ 9.99	£ 1.99	£ 11.98	Hosting	Cloud Next Ltd
4	08/05/2025	£ 68.80	£ -	£ 68.80	PAYE Deductions	HMRC
	Various	£ 445.42	£ -	£ 445.42	Total Staff Costs	
	Total	£ 566.51	£ 4.05	£ 570.56		

26.2. To approve list of payments to be paid by standing order for FY 2025-2026.

- Microsoft 365, £12.36 per month, refunded to L White
- Work From Home Allowance, £26 per month, paid to L White
- CloudNext, website hosting, £11.98 per month, refunded to L White

To note the reconciled bank balances, up to 30th April 2025.

A	Bank Reconciliation at 30/04/2025		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025		91,350.57
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 30/04/2025		25,094.00
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 30/04/2025		116,444.57 736.67
	Cash in Hand 30/04/2025 (per Cash Book)		115,707.90
B	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 30/04/2025	0.00	
	Unity Trust Current 30/04/2025	5,061.89	
	Unity Trust Reserve 30/04/2025	110,646.01	
			115,707.90
B	Less unrepresented payments		
			115,707.90
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
	Adjusted Bank Balance		115,707.90
	A = B Checks out OK		

Current Account: £5,061.89

Reserve Account: £110,646.01

26.4. To approve salaries and hours for the year ahead – deferred to July, after Staffing Committee have completed the appraisal process..

Currently:

- Clerk, up to 8 hours per week, SCP 25.

Title	Upcoming Training Courses
Author	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Annual Parish Council Meeting – 05 th May 2025

MANAGING PEOPLE PERFORMANCE £35 11th June, Zoom

How to overcome common employee performance problems, such as poor standard of work, attendance and absenteeism and misconduct. Includes informal counselling approaches, as well as how to conduct Formal Disciplinary action in accordance with current legal obligations..

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES £115 24th June, Benson Parish Hall

Parish and town councils play a vital role in representing the interests of the communities they serve and improving the quality of life for local people. This one-day course, aimed at newly elected councillors and also suitable for new clerks, will outline the roles and responsibilities of clerks and councillors so that they can work together effectively.

TALKING TABLES TRAINING DAY £30 Thurs 18th July – Wootton & Dry Sandford

Due to the success of the 2024 'Talking Tables' Training Day for Clerks and Councils in Oxfordshire, we are pleased to announce the date for 2025! This year's theme will be Resilience - further details of topics and speakers will be announced soon.

A networking lunch break will provide an opportunity to speak with our exhibitors and sponsors as well as meet fellow councillors and clerks. Please indicate when booking if you have any dietary requirements.

The day will start with registration and coffee at 9.00am for a 9.30am start and finish by 3.30pm.

ESSENTIALS OF EMPLOYING PEOPLE £35 08th October, Zoom

The session run by Chris Moses, OALC Employment Consultant, is aimed at Councillors and Clerks who want to avoid the numerous legal and practical pitfalls associated with being an Employer. It will provide an overview of the essentials of getting it right when employing a Clerk or other members of staff.

COUNCILLOR FUNDAMENTALS £65 09th October, Zoom

An online training session run by Kim Bedford, experienced trainer. In this session we will set the scene of local government;-Roles and responsibilities concerning the five main components of the council - Council, Councillor, Chairman, Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) The importance of the law in meetings with an effective agenda and accurate minutes.