

## Faringdon Market Town Healthcheck – Initial Findings



### Social and Community

FINDINGS	COMMENTS	ISSUES	POTENTIAL ACTION
	<b>Population</b>		
6054 people live in Faringdon town as opposed to 5646 in the Hinterland (2001)			
19% of the population is of retirement age (1998) (National average 18.1%)			
21% of the population is under 16 (1998) (National average 20.4%)			
63.7% of employed people have professional and managerial jobs (1991) (National average 62.3%)			
36.33% of employed people have semi-skilled manual and unskilled jobs (1991) (National average 37.7%)			
9% of total households are single parent households (2000) (UK average 6.6% 1999)	This is higher than average. A strength is that a young community remains in the town but a weakness is that the situation necessitates increased service provision. The situation may also indicate elements of	A high percentage of lone-parent families with no adequate service provision  The Pre-School needs to raise £100,000 in 2	Development of a Credit Union.  Publicity surrounding the availability of affordable housing.  Improve access to family planning advice for

	social exclusion in terms of access and awareness of family planning services etc. Faringdon Re-School, ( a registered charity) currently provides affordable care for 80 children .	years to replace its current building which will have to close.	young people. Extend the work of Bodizone Undertake research to identify key issues surrounding the high % of single parent households Support Faringdon Pre-School in securing funds to replace its premises
30% of total households are elderly people living alone (2001)	Age Concern is currently reviewing its day care provision for older people in Faringdon and district		Support Age Concern in its long term aim to have a purpose built centre in Faringdon. Meanwhile help them to identify premises for the short to medium term to rationalise their provision
The total population has increased from 5,439 in 1991 to 6054 in 2001			
<b>Housing</b>			
The housing needs survey gives an accurate picture of housing needs for Faringdon town but not the hinterland.			

<p>Approx 5 properties are currently available for rent – 4 flats (town-centre) and 1 house (outskirts)</p> <p>Approx 144 properties are currently available for sale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6% are 1 bed-flats or houses</li> <li>25% are 2-bed flats or houses</li> <li>26% are 3-bed houses</li> <li>26% are 4-bed houses</li> <li>12% are 5-bed houses</li> <li>3% are 6-bed houses</li> <li>2% are 7-bed houses</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6% are apartments/flats</li> <li>9% are cottages</li> <li>18% are terraced</li> <li>18% are semi-detached</li> <li>49% are detached</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>31% are in the town-centre</li> <li>46% are on the outskirts</li> <li>23% are in the hinterland</li> </ul> <p>Average salary in Vale = £25,948 (National average £23,607)</p> <p>National average price of houses = 102,324</p> <p>Average in Faringdon = 215,391 (from snapshot)</p> <p>Market rent for flats approx £500 p month</p> <p>Supply of affordable housing = 21 units (housing needs survey 2000)</p>	<p>A strength is that there is fairly large amount of housing available and hence an opportunity to attract new people to the town. However, the average house price is very high. This may threaten business' potential to attract people to jobs in the town and may contribute to high staff turnover rates</p>	<p>The average house prices in Faringdon are very high as compared to the national average. This may detract people from moving to the town. However within the district they are relatively low</p>	<p>Work with VHHDC to promote key worker housing.</p> <p>Ensure that at new housing developments have at least 30% affordable housing</p> <p>Development of a Credit Union</p>
<p>In the District Council Local Plan there is one site that has been allocated for housing on Swan Lane – it is estimated the site could house about 25 dwellings (including some affordable)</p>			

<p>Council has also resolved to permit housing on the Coxwell Pit area in Faringdon. Another site that the District Council has looked at is the old health centre. Now the centre has moved the site would be ideal for housing (approx 10 dwellings)</p>	<p>£35,000 will be available to the school £20,000 will be available to develop the SSSI</p>	<p>There is scepticism about the implementation of agreements relating to planning gain</p>	
<p>There is 1 homeless household in Faringdon</p>	<p>There may be higher rates of hidden homelessness</p>		
<p>Local people do have priority for affordable housing. People who can demonstrate a local connection get 10 points under the Allocations Scheme</p>			
<p>6.6% of the Vales unsuitable housing is in Faringdon</p>			
<p>In terms of supply issues, in general the Council does have difficulties letting elderly designated accommodation which may demonstrate excess supply. Those properties which are more difficult to let are bedsits and flats, bungalows are more easy to let.</p>			
<p>There are 52 shops with living space above and 11 pubs/restaurants. All available – ie non-storage or office accommodation is occupied with two exceptions where the shops themselves are empty.</p>	<p>This is a strength as it means there is more vitality in the town centre.</p>		
<p>675 people are currently on the housing waiting list for Faringdon. According to the housing needs survey there will be a shortfall of housing. It is planned that 40% of housing will be affordable. Estimated supply of affordable housing per annum is 21 dwellings.</p>	<p>A large number of people are on the housing waiting list which is a great opportunity to create a dynamic population. However the list may be large because of a perception that more affordable housing is available in Faringdon. A weakness however, is that all of these people are unlikely to be catered for.</p>	<p>There is likely to be a shortfall of affordable housing in the coming years.</p>	<p>Publicity about key worker housing. Development of a Credit Union Consider development of the old health centre as housing/ a homeless foyer.</p>
<b>Health and Public Safety</b>			

<p>The Thames Valley Police aim is to attend 85% of immediate incidents within 15 minutes. The latest figures for the force show that 72% of incidents were attended in 15 minutes and 84% were attended in 20 minutes.</p> <p>Immediate response rates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 minutes – Faringdon town – North (68.7%), Faringdon Town – South (54.8%), Faringdon Sub-Sector (42.5%)</li> <li>20 minutes – Faringdon Town – North (82.5%), Faringdon Town – South (73.8%), Faringdon Sub-sector (65.3%)</li> </ul> <p>During the 2001 audit year the ward of Faringdon and Littleworth experienced 5.6% of all reported crimes within the Vale and 7% of all calls to the police that were classed as disorder. This equates to 8 calls per 1,000 population – the average for the Vale being 6 calls per 1,000 population (national average 9.9) There has been a 3.5% decrease in the number of disorder calls in comparison to the 1998 Audit Year.</p> <p>The percentage of crimes in each category for the 2001 audit year is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Theft of pedal cycle – 3% (Vale – 5%)</li> <li>◆ Shoplifting – 5% - (Vale – 5%)</li> <li>◆ Other theft and handling – 17% - (Vale – 16%)</li> <li>◆ Other crimes – 1% - (Vale – 4%)</li> <li>◆ Fraud and forgery – 5% - (Vale – 6%)</li> <li>◆ Criminal damage – 22% - (Vale – 22%)</li> <li>◆ Drugs offences – 1% - (Vale – 1%)</li> <li>◆ Violent crime – 12% - (Vale – 11%)</li> <li>◆ Residential burglary – 7% - (Vale – 6%)</li> <li>◆ Non-residential burglary – 10% - (Vale – 8%)</li> <li>◆ Theft of motor vehicle – 5% - (Vale –</li> </ul>	<p>There is a potential threat to public safety if the police are not meeting their response targets. In fact the detection response has considerably decreased over the last five years. However, crime levels are still comparatively low and the number of police has increased.</p> <p>Poor response times can increase the fear of crime.</p> <p>There is anecdotal evidence of an above average use of illegal soft drugs.</p>	<p>Police are not meeting all of their response targets yet major crime is still fairly insignificant.</p> <p>There is significant fear of crime.</p> <p>Difficulties have been experienced in reporting crime due to the opening hours of the Police Station</p>	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ 6% Theft from motor vehicle – 12% - (Vale – 10%)</li> </ul> <p>There are no plans for CCTV</p>			
<p>The fear of crime is not significantly worse than actual crime rates. The most recent questionnaire survey conducted by the Thames Valley Police in Southern Oxfordshire Police Area revealed the following findings;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ When asked about the change in crime rate in their locality over the past 12 months, 81% of people believed that there had been either 'a little more crime' or that crime had stayed 'about the same'. In this respect people's perceptions reflect the true picture.</li> <li>◆ When asked whether the fear of crime ever prevented them doing what they wanted to do, 43% said never, 51% said occasionally and 6% said often.</li> <li>◆ 96% of respondents indicated that they felt very safe or fairly safe when walking alone in their locality during daylight. This number reduced to 56% when asked how they felt about walking in their locality after dark.</li> </ul>		<p>There is a need to provide facilities for young people</p>	
<p>There is evidence of vandalism and litter but it is minimal and only in certain areas.</p>	<p>See report of audit at app??</p>		<p>Ensure litter picking is carried out</p>
<p>Faringdon until recently was served by ambulances from Wantage. Changes have been made and ambulances come to Faringdon from all over, usually Newbury.</p>	<p>It is approx 35 miles from Newbury to Faringdon. Thus there is a threat that the ambulance service may not meet their response targets. This is an indication of rural social exclusion from key services. The blatantly long distance does present an opportunity for advocacy work.</p>	<p>Faringdon is usually served by ambulances from Newbury which is too far away to be considered reasonable.</p>	<p>Ensure that ambulance service always available in west of Vale.</p>

<p>All the Fire service response times have been met (10 minutes within Faringdon, 20 minutes outside Faringdon)</p>			<p>Publicise the need for more volunteers</p>
<p>Faringdon is poorly served for NHS dentists</p>	<p>This is a particular weakness, particularly for those on low incomes. It runs the risk of further exacerbating the exclusion of these people from core service provision.</p>	<p>Lack of free/subsidised dental services in Faringdon</p>	<p>More research needs to be conducted before a recommendation is made.</p>
<p>In terms of mortality rates, generally Oxon is better than national average for Coronary Heart Disease and stroke and some cancers, worse for skin cancers (although the actual figures are low) and not good for suicides, especially males in rural communities. There are 9 respite beds in Faringdon, but two are blocked by Social Services shortage of funds. The main hospitals are in Oxford, Swindon or Witney. Buses take 45 mins to Oxford and are not regular. Would need another one once you reach the city centre.</p>	<p>The hospital in Swindon is not on the bus route.</p>	<p>There is a need to find out why 2 respite beds are blocked</p>	<p>Lobby for an emergency car scheme to Swindon hospital</p>
<p>Drugs and drink advice are available at the Fernhill Practice through the practice nurse, but they do not offer family planning. Family planning is offered by the White Horse Practice who do not offer drink and drugs advice and tend to refer people to the mental health clinic in Littlemore.</p>	<p>A strength is that both drug and drinks and family planning advice exist in Faringdon, but there is no co-ordinated approach. People may also be more likely to approach a non-statutory body, especially due to the size of the town and the need for confidentiality. There is a potential threat that the underlying youth drug/drink problem could worsen as well as the large number of lone-parent families.</p>	<p>No co-ordinated approach to family planning/drink/drugs advice in Faringdon High percentage of lone-parent families Underlying youth drug/drink problem.</p>	<p>Locate premises for affordable/non-statutory family planning advice/ drugs awareness – could be combined with increased leisure provision. Young peoples' advice centre should not be attached to a medical practice. Encourage co-ordination between practices.</p>
<p>There is a shortage of district nurses. They manage by using bank nurses – which is more expensive and tends to lower the quality of service through loss of consistency and continuity of care. It is hard to retain staff with the salary, the unsociable hours and the cost of housing in the area – and equally hard to attract them</p>	<p>Need for key worker accommodation</p>		

<p>Occupational Therapy has been in short supply and the situation is further complicated by Faringdon being served by both Oxford and Swindon hospitals – the latter is nearer but as it is in Wiltshire equipment cannot be supplied and relies on needs being identified by the community occupational therapist. Provision of equipment is currently subject to the budget restrictions of Social Services so only essential aids are now supplied</p> <p>The intensive care Community Services have just started in Faringdon are able to compensate in the delay in carrying out initial need assessments. There are three good care agencies in the area. Social Services feel that the elderly are well-served as there is a day hospital, two day centres (Oakwood and Bromsgrove). Ferendune also provides some day care, Hinton Waldrist has a day centre and Cromwell day centre caters for clients with learning disabilities.</p> <p>Disabled children fare less well. The local schools are not really equipped for children with severe disabilities, so children are bussed to Oxford (for physical disabilities) and Wantage or Abingdon (for learning difficulties). Respite for the parents of these children is a politically sensitive current issue.</p>	<p>Strength is that there are three good care agencies in the area, and there is adequate provision for the elderly. However, only essential occupational therapy aids are now supplied and there is lack of provision for disabled children – again a social exclusion issue. There is an opportunity to rectify this situation when the requirements of the DDA come into force in 2004.</p> <p>A real threat is the political contention surrounding respite for the parents of disabled children.</p>	<p>Lack of health-care services for disabled children.</p> <p>Local schools are not really equipped for children with severe disabilities.</p>	<p>Recruit health-care adviser with disabilities expertise – or incorporate disability awareness training in to standard training modules?</p> <p>Find out what preparations schools are making to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.</p>
<p>Background levels of noise are not monitored but air quality and water quality do meet national standards.</p>			
<p>The local health clinics, doctors and dentists do not operate mobile service units.</p>			
<b>Local Government and Community Organisations</b>			
<p>Faringdon residents have access to Town,</p>			

<p>District and County Councillors through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Information Boards for Agendas</li> <li>◆ All minutes of meetings posted on town notice board</li> <li>◆ District Councillors surgery monthly</li> <li>◆ County Councillors surgery monthly</li> <li>◆ Town mayors surgery weekly</li> </ul> <p>Access to all information can be made at the Town clerks office open Mon to Fri 9.20am to 12.30pm, email or fax.</p>			
<p>Local people do have an interest in national and local politics. In the Parliamentary Election/County Council Elections 2001 the percentage turnout by polling District was; TD01 = 65.5% TE01 = 55.2% and TF01 = 60.4% (national average = 59.12%)</p>	<p>However the Town Council did not have enough candidates to call an election, and there are still vacancies</p>		
<p>In terms of developing community involvement, the Vale of White Horse is divided into five areas geographically. The following issues each have an officer solely responsible for them, so they could be said to devote 1/5<sup>th</sup> of their time to the Faringdon area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Development</li> <li>Community Safety</li> <li>Social Inclusion</li> <li>Community Strategy</li> </ul> <p>Oxfordshire Rural Community Council has two generic community development officers, one covering the half of the county that Faringdon and its hinterland fall into.</p>	<p>Strength is that townspeople have both access to decision-making processes and confidence to articulate their opinions and satisfaction</p>	<p>Lack of fully inclusive community consultation</p>	<p>New plan coming up – recommend consultation/input from local community</p>
<p>Faringdon has a tradition of consultation and involvement of community groups and individual Townspeople. In recent years a</p>			

<p>number of decisions have been influenced directly by pressure from lay townspeople:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Faringdon swimming pool.</li> <li>◆ The move of Faringdon Post office to a local newsagent.</li> <li>◆ The proposed skate board park.</li> <li>◆ Annual Precept</li> </ul> <p>The Town Council calls a Town meeting each year at which the proposed precept is discussed and suggestions are sought from the Townspeople.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Joint Committees and Trusts</li> <li>◆ Tucker Recreation Ground Trust.</li> <li>◆ Joint Environmental Trust.</li> <li>◆ Joint Economic Forum for Faringdon</li> <li>◆ Traffic Advisory Committee</li> </ul> <p>The main consultation vehicle used by the Town Council is the statutory Town Meeting. In the last three years FTC has called 6 such meetings to discuss and receive suggestions from the Townspeople on issues of importance to the Town. It would be regarded as very unusual in the Town if a major decision was made without such consultation taking place.</p> <p>Additionally the District Council has carried out a series of consultation exercises mostly concerning the development of the Market Square.</p> <p>Local community representatives are present on partnership committees, council committees and sub-committees</p>	<p>levels. Weakness is that we do not have an accurate breakdown of the type of people who participate and the general view is that it generally tends to be the well-healed, educated townspeople who are consistently present on committees. There is a noticeable lack of participation from both the working and the artisan class which again threatens community cohesion and also may potentially indicate that consultation does not necessarily reflect the views of all sectors of the community.</p>	<p>Encourage involvement of all townspeople on committees – need to develop a strategy for targeting and consulting with so-called ‘hard to reach groups’</p>

<p>There are active tenants associations such as the VHA tenants group and the Vale Housing Associations' Tenants Forum</p>			
<p>The District Council has undertaken community consultations. Vale-wide external consultations over the last five years have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1995 – Residents attitude survey</li> <li>1999 – Your Say consultation</li> <li>2000 – Residents attitude survey</li> <li>2000 (Dec) – Best Value Corporate Health Survey</li> <li>2001 (Jan) – Vale Voice Panel – parks and open spaces, leisure, planning, waste management</li> <li>2001 (Nov/Dec) – Vale Voice Panel – satisfaction with the local area, priorities for the future, views on the council</li> <li>2002 (Feb/March) – Waste management survey Best Value Review – to identify priorities and areas for improvement.</li> </ul> <p>Distributed via parish magazines, Herald series and sent to local businesses</p> <p>2002 (April) – Leisure Survey Best Value review – open spaces, arts development etc</p>			
<b>Sport, Leisure and open space</b>			
<p>A survey was conducted to discover if local sports and leisure facilities were in good condition and in demand. 45% of the respondents felt the leisure facilities were in good condition.</p> <p>Areas highlighted as having problems were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Dog mess in and around Faringdon parks and walkways</li> <li>2 Graffiti and vandalism in parks</li> <li>3 Broken glass in play areas</li> </ul>	<p>There are local sports and leisure facilities which is a strength and there could be opportunities to further enhance these services. Most of the survey respondents did use the facilities. However, there are still concerns about the quality of the provision, especially the maintenance. This could potentially threaten uptake and participation.</p>	<p>Significant litter/dog mess in public areas and parks.</p>	<p>Publicity (or support for publicity) around dog mess/littering</p> <p>Dog-bins – top and bottom of footpath up to Folly Hill, Southampton Street car-park, Gloucester Street (Town Park), Tucker Park</p> <p>Put pressure on District Council to ensure dog-bins emptied regularly.</p>

<p>4 Leisure centre changing rooms dirty/ broken lockers</p> <p>5 Leisure centre sports hall floor dirty</p> <p>94% of the respondents reported using the leisure facilities in Faringdon suggesting that there is a good demand for them.</p>	<p>According to the survey 51% would like to see other leisure facilities. These included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Skate Park</li> <li>2. More cycle paths and walkways</li> <li>3. Picnic area</li> <li>4. More exercise classes</li> <li>5. Public football pitch</li> <li>6. Gardening projects</li> <li>7. Snooker tables</li> </ol> <p>There are 4 main parks in Faringdon, but none of them are well-maintained and not all of them have public toilets</p>	<p>Despite the considerable provision available there is still considerable demand for more, and again for better quality public areas. The key weaknesses appear to be a lack of good quality free/affordable public areas and the lack of facilities for young people. There is the danger that people will start travelling away during their leisure-time. Also, there is a threat to the environmental agenda if more cycle paths and walkways are not established.</p>	<p>The Leys is a potentially dangerous area</p> <p>Lack of cycle-paths/ walkways</p> <p>Lack of 'decent/affordable' leisure facilities for young people.</p>	<p>A part-time town park keeper – town council to take on board.</p> <p>Development of Tucker Park as multi-use facility (Country Park) with pitches, lighting, picnic areas, cycle paths/walkways etc</p> <p>Development of a Skate Park (could potentially be incorporated into above)</p> <p>Promotion of free/concessionary swimming for young people at leisure centre</p> <p>Develop the Folly Country Park</p>
<p>In terms of space there is a potential threat to the cricket ground.</p> <p>Housing plans could also potentially have an impact on loss of open space.</p> <p>The only outdoor sporting activity available within Faringdon is horseriding. In the survey when asked what other leisure facilities the community would like to see in Faringdon a large proportion of responses included outdoor opportunities.</p>	<p>This is a potential opportunity as under planning Act any builder would have to find ground for Cricket Club elsewhere. The case could only be strengthened if a viable development proposal for the cricket ground was put forward which was then rejected.</p>	<p>Potential loss of Cricket Ground</p>	<p>Develop full potential of Cricket Ground – this could be part of a Sports Ground Development Programme – more of a multi-use facility (linked to the Tucker Park)</p>	
<p>In terms of having to travel outside the town to take part in certain sports, 14% of survey responses reported to be a member of a sports club outside Faringdon. There were a range of responses to explain this figure but there does</p>				

<p>not seem to be a particular activity or reason. 16% were members of a sports club in Faringdon.</p>			
<p>There are residential areas in Faringdon that are over 400 metres from an area of open space, and the provision of open space does not meet the National Playing Fields Association Standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population.</p>			
<p>There are 32 allocated spaces for allotments and 25 are currently being used. The advertising is by word of mouth.</p>			
<b>Culture and Heritage</b>			
<p>Faringdon has a library but does not have a theatre, art gallery, museum or concert hall. The nearest facilities are to be found in either Swindon or Oxford. An active theatrical society uses ad hoc premises The Old Town Hall has the facilities to operate as an art gallery as well as a meeting room. The very successful singing groups in the Town use poor acoustic buildings  There are 8 community venues in Faringdon. All hinterland villages have church halls, community halls or local schools have areas which are used for community meetings. The quantity is fine for numbers. The quality is varied – around 60% have good heating systems. There are 64 community groups in Faringdon, covering a wide range of issues, interests and age groups Folly Singers – 12 to 16 members</p>	<p>There appears to be lack of cultural leisure facilities in Faringdon, although the Old Town Hall can be utilised for a number of functions. There is a potential threat to singing groups if no suitable buildings are found. The Drama group also needs a home now there is no longer a community centre. A strength is that a large number of people are involved in arts groups, but these are all under threat if adequate facilities are not found. This is a potential threat to community cohesion. Noticeable is the lack of provision for young people. This is a considerable weakness if considered alongside issues of petty crime and vandalism and the underlying youth drug/drinks problem.</p>	<p>Facilities for arts and cultural activities do not meet the need of the local arts groups.  Lack of provision for young people, especially during the evenings  Lack of venues for community group use (with good acoustic standards)</p>	<p>Ensure pump-room developed as a facility. This would provide young-people with a place to go in the evenings which would not be alcohol-related. Two aspects of development:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Drop-in centre for young people</li> <li>◆ Cinema/theatre</li> </ul> <p>The facility could be used as a confidential and impartial advice centre during the day. Alternatively the old health-centre could potentially be developed as this facility.</p> <p>Development of a community venue with adequate acoustic arrangements – this could be the old health-centre which could become an arts centre or the proposed theatre/cinema space in the pump-room outlined above (could be open for use for cultural groups at specified times)</p> </p>

<p>Faringdon Singers – approx 40 singers  Faringdon art group – 45 to 50 members and covers the entire perspective.  Stanford in the Vale Art Group – more than 50 members.  Five to Six Dance classes are held on a Friday afternoon/evening with 10-15 children in each class, five classes on a Saturday morning with similar numbers – held at the Faringdon Community College Drama area who would like it back for college use.  The Drama group has 54 paid-up adult members – although no permanent home since the demise of the Community Centre.  Faringdon and District Museum Group – a committee of members, and a large group of supporters.</p>			
<p>There are few regular events which have the potential to draw the whole community together. Those that do exist are:  Switching on the Christmas lights  Remembrance Sunday  Cavalier Christmas  The Faringdon Twinning Association ran a ten-year celebration day for the links between Faringdon and its French counterpart, Le Mele-Sur-Sarthe. The evening party with a disco in the market Place was a chance for the town to come together and it did.</p>	<p>The lack of regular events is a weakness as it potentially threatens community cohesion. A strength is that an annual festival has taken place in the past but unfortunately fell apart due to lack of commitment. The Christmas events already in place do present a potential opportunity.</p>	<p>Lack of regular events which have the potential to draw the whole community together.</p>	<p>Regular festival (annual or every two or three years?)</p>
<p>Regarding local reporting mechanisms there are three Town based newspapers:  ◆ The Faringdon Folly  A monthly commercial newspaper reporting events and opinions from Faringdon and its hinterland. There is a reporter employed to cover all relevant local events and Council</p>	<p>There are a significant number of reporting mechanisms which is a strength and the opportunities for local people to report and comment is there. However, a weakness is that these mechanisms tend to be under-utilised as they focus predominantly on advertising. This threatens the strength of the public ‘voice’. This may be due to lack of</p>	<p>Lack of opportunity for local people to report and comment on local events and issues</p>	<p>Ensure website has interactive webpage for comment  Promote participation in community meetings  Provide a public comment/notice board</p>

<p>activities. The letters column is actively used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ “What’s On in Faringdon”.</li> </ul> <p>Free newspaper primarily used as an advertising medium.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Faringdon Focus</li> </ul> <p>Quarterly newsletter from the Town Council delivered free to every home. No current facility for feedback from the Townspeople.</p> <p>Two local radio stations cover Faringdon news. The BBC Radio Oxford and Fox F.M. from Swindon. Radio Oxford is the most heavily involved in the Town.</p> <p>Central News (Television) is based in Abingdon (15 miles) and occasionally covers Faringdon events.</p>	<p>awareness.</p>	<p>The cultural and historical associations are a key strength of the town but they are not utilised to their full potential which is a weakness. There is a good opportunity to build on these associations to promote both tourism and a sense of civic pride. This would in turn promote community cohesion.</p>	<p>Lots of cultural and historical associations which could be better utilised for tourism potential</p>	<p>Improve and develop the Faringdon Focus</p>
<p>There are a number of cultural associations with the area.</p> <p>Sir Marmaduke Rawdon, royalist commander during the civil war, is buried in All Saints Church.</p> <p>Henry James Pye, Poet Laureate, built the present Faringdon House, is buried in the Pye Chapel of All Saints Church.</p> <p>Coleshill House – The National Trust owns all Coleshill houses.</p> <p>The Sealed Knot, a Cavalier/Roundhead group, meets regularly in the town to ensure that Faringdon’s part in the Civil War is not forgotten.</p>				<p>Seek funding for production of s definitive history of Faringdon – as tourism project.</p> <p>Develop and extend tour guides of Faringdon and the surrounding area. Promote them more widely</p>
<p>There are also a number of historical associations.</p>				

<p>1066 – King Harold owned the manor of Faringdon. After the Battle of Hastings ownership passed to the Norman Kings and later to the Cistercian order of monks. As coaches developed, Faringdon became a major crossroads. The Crown, Bell Hotel and Salutation Hotel were all coaching inns.</p> <p>Civil War – Faringdon became a garrison town for the Royalists.</p> <p>1644 – Cromwell attacked unsuccessfully Faringdon House base for the Royalist Garrison.</p> <p>1646 – Last battle of civil war was fought in Faringdon. Eventually the town surrendered to Parliamentarian forces but it suffered very severe damage losing the church steeple. The town was one of two towns distinguished for receiving the greatest damage during the civil war. Much of the town, especially the Market Place, Church Street and London Street was destroyed by fire to provide a smokescreen for a Roundhead attack.</p> <p>In 1690 Faringdon was the subject of debate in Parliament as more than 300 families were still homeless. The fore damage can still be seen in the Faringdon conservation area where there are medieval stone cellars and Tudor sized ground floor rooms.</p> <p>In the market, dairy produce was sold in the Old Town Hall which was built in the late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The Town Hall had also served as a magistrate court with a lock-up for prisoners. Stocks were placed on the ground outside the lock-up.</p> <p>Lord Berners built the Faringdon Folly in 1935 for his son's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. It was the last folly to be built in England.</p> <p>Of special note is the number of churches in Faringdon – five:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All Saints Church was present in 1086,</li> </ol>		
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<p>and was extended in the following centuries</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The Anabaptists were founded in Faringdon in 1576; the Baptists have had a church here since 1657.</li> <li>3. The United Reform Church brought together the congregational church (started in 1779), The Wesleyan Church (1837) and The Methodists (1896)</li> <li>4. The Quakers started in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and have had a meeting house in the town since 1696.</li> <li>5. The Catholics took over the former congregational chapel.</li> </ol>			
<p>Churches of virtually all denominations are active in the community. There are five places of worship in Faringdon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) All Saints Parish Church (Church of England)</li> <li>(ii) United Church (Methodist and United Reform)</li> <li>(iii) Baptist Church</li> <li>(iv) Blessed Hugh Catholic Church</li> <li>(v) Friends meeting House</li> </ul> <p>As to membership, (i) – (iv) are thriving communities with well-attended regular Sunday services. (v) is a small group of regular attendees. All 5 are active members of ‘Churches Together in and around Faringdon’ which organises monthly joint worship and other events especially at major Church Festivals, promotes Christian Aid, runs the ‘Mustard Seed’ in the town centre which sells Christian books and Traidcraft goods, joins with other local churches in organising youthwork throughout the Vale,</p>			

<p>and has recently opened a Family Centre to meet local social needs. In the hinterland, most villages have Church of England churches with regular services, and there is a Catholic Church in Buckland and a United Reform church in Stanford. Other religions are little represented in the area. There are no non-Christian places of worship. The nearest synagogue is in Oxford, and Muslims tend to go to the Mosque in Swindon,</p>			
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