



## NEWS RELEASE

### **New partnership: working together to boost Abingdon town centre**

A new business-councils partnership is being created to help boost Abingdon town centre.

Talks are underway on a plan to create a town partnership which will bring together representatives of the town, district and county councils with senior business leaders. The partnership will set out an action plan to boost the town's economy and bring together funding to deliver the priorities it agrees. A newly-created 'partnership officer' role will help to drive the project forward.

The partnership aims to build on the work done by Abingdon's Joint Economic Forum (JEF) which has brought together town and district council representatives with members of Abingdon's Chamber. Earlier this year JEF commissioned a study by Iain Nicholson of Oxfordshire Town Chambers Network Ltd that is being used as a blueprint for the new partnership project. The JEF has set up a working party to take the partnership project forward and make a start on some of the recommendations set out in the study report. These include: focussing on the town centre 'street scene', how it looks and what improvements can be made; examining the town centre parking regime to see where changes can be made to help boost trade; looking at signage, both into and around the town centre, to make sure everything that can be is done, to guide visitors and shoppers.

Working party member, and leader of Abingdon Town Council, Lesley Legge says: "This gives Abingdon a new impetus – a partnership which we hope will work together to achieve far greater outcomes than individuals and organisations can achieve on their own. The voice, which will be able to champion and support Abingdon in maintaining and developing its unique identity and economic welfare, will be stronger and more united than ever before. We all want the best for Abingdon and the people in it - residents, businesses or visitors. Our target is to ensure Abingdon's vitality and viability for many years to come."

Fellow member, Richard Webber, an executive portfolio holder at the Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC), says: "This partnership will really achieve things for the town. VWHDC will be giving it strong support."

Chamber representative on the working party, Jill Carver says: "I see this as an extremely positive move. Everyone round the table agreed that we need action as soon as possible and the setting up of this working party should enable us to keep things moving forward."

Oxfordshire Town Chambers Network Ltd ([www.otcn.co.uk](http://www.otcn.co.uk)) drives a communications network for town chambers and similar business groups. It covers 20 business groups with 1,400+ member businesses between them plus eight events networks.

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