



Prepared for South Oxfordshire District Council

***Interim feedback report – issues  
and opportunities stage***

Berinsfield Community Investment Scheme

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Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016

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## Executive summary

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This document provides an interim summary of feedback from the issues and opportunities stage of engagement for the Berinsfield Community Improvement Scheme.

As part of this stage, more than 20 stakeholder groups have been engaged or interviewed, around 180 people attended a community event in September 2016, and over 360 written representations have been received – from feedback forms to comment labels on a map of the village.

The purpose of this report is to draw together this feedback to provide **a clear picture of local priorities**. The contents of the report will inform the development of a series of masterplan options for Berinsfield.

As such, the summary of feedback below is organised around key issues – those things people consider to be important or would like to see improved and addresses – and opportunities for positive change.

Because of the different type of feedback received, this report aims necessarily balances the views and priorities expressed by residents alongside those provided by stakeholders, many of whom are service providers in the village.

We recognise that while there are common themes in the feedback, there are a great many individual problems, concerns or reflections that residents have identified. These are summarised in full in the attached appendix.

### Key feedback themes

The five most prominent issues raised in the feedback from the village community are set out below. These reflect the issues most commonly raised in feedback from the public at or following the community events.

1. **Protection and improvement of green spaces** within the village, in particular the central green space, was the most common feedback topic. It is clear that the vast majority of respondents did not wish to see any development of the central green space. There were a variety of suggestions as to how the central green space and other green areas could be improved, including new sports facilities, more social spaces and more/better play facilities for younger children.
2. **Retail** is a key issue and there is a strong desire for improvement of the ‘bottom shops’ to the south of Fane Drive. Suggestions included improving the quality of Berinsfield’s retail offer, new larger shops, and a café or food and beverage offer. There was support for a new ‘village hub’ combining local services and potentially a café and/or shops in one place.
3. **Transport and parking** are important to village residents. A key suggestion was the introduction of a crossing over the A4074 to improve access to the bus stop and safety for pedestrians. Residents are unhappy about the cancellation of the T2 bus service and would like to see better public transport provision in the village. Car parking was a very common issue and residents would like to see parking improved in the village, but there were a range of diverse suggestions on where and how to do this.
4. **The need for more housing** was recognised and there was a range of suggestions on the type of housing that people would like to see delivered and where.

5. **Education** and improving local provision was also a commonly raised issue. There was some support for a secondary school in the village. Local people like having a primary school in Berinsfield, but there were suggestions that it needs to improve.

Local stakeholder groups reiterated many of these comments, but there were a number of further key themes which stakeholders highlighted as particularly important:

- **A number of local services are at risk.** The health centre, the Children’s Centre, the Employment Action Group and Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre are all – to some a greater or lesser extent – services which are at risk of closure in the future. For all of these services and potentially others, there are unresolved issues or uncertainties around their premises and future funding / viability.
- **Employment, skills and adult education** are particularly important to local stakeholder groups, many of whom encounter challenges in either employing local residents or supporting them into training or employment. Different stakeholders identified different challenges, and the range of issues included the level of qualifications, skills and experience among the local working population; levels of literacy and numeracy; and finding affordable childcare to allow residents to engage in training or work.
- **Stakeholder feedback on housing, transport, retail and school education** was broadly in line with feedback from residents.

It should be noted that from both stakeholder groups and the wider community, there was a wide range of individual perspectives, specific suggestions and new ideas. Full details of these are provided in the feedback appendix.

## Introduction and background

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The communications, consultation and engagement programme for the Berinsfield Community Investment Scheme is well underway. In line with the agreed strategy, the project team has been progressing the 'issues and opportunities' stage of consultation, now running July to October. The key activities in this stage have included:

- Stakeholder mapping
- Developing the messaging
- South Oxfordshire District Council briefings
- **Wide-ranging local stakeholder engagement**
- Initial communications to residents
- **The first community engagement event**
- Feedback analysis

After internal preparation and planning, the project team has successfully engaged with a wide range of stakeholders through meetings and conversations. These groups include:

- Berinsfield Parish Council
- Soha (South Oxfordshire Housing Association)
- Sovereign Housing Association
- Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) education
- Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Berinsfield Employment Action Group
- Berinsfield Information & Volunteer Centre
- Berinsfield Community Business
- Berinsfield Boxing Club
- Businesses based in Berinsfield including:
  - Williams Tenders
  - Knowles
  - Jennings
  - Pearce Private Hire
- The vicar of St Mary and St Berin Church
- Berinsfield Parochial Church Council
- Berinsfield Community Association and Social Club
- South Oxfordshire District Council leisure team
- South Oxfordshire District Council economic development team

Following these discussion, the first community engagement events for the Berinsfield Community Investment Scheme took place on **14, 15 and 16 September**. These events focused on involving local people in the scheme and seeking feedback on their ideas, aspirations and issues in Berinsfield – what local people like about the village and what they would like to see change.

A key part of the approach was to reiterate previous feedback from previous local engagement exercises, for example, the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015, the Community-Led Plan 2013 and the Parish Plan 2009. We asked the community to confirm where this previous feedback reflected their views and what additional issues and opportunities they wished to see considered.

The September events were supported by a programme of publicity and creative activities to encourage as many people as possible to participate in the events. Over the three days of the events, more than 180 people attended.

## Feedback channels and response

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### Feedback channels

Stakeholder interviews: Feedback from the **19 stakeholder interviews** was captured in meeting notes, prepared by the project team.

Community comment forms: Two types of comment form were available at the community events. A short form asked four questions:

- 1) Do you agree with the issues and challenges presented at the community drop-in events?  
Are there any others you want to add to the list?
- 2) What do you think are the top three priorities for Berinsfield?
- 3) What do you think we should do about them?
- 4) Do you have any other comments?

A second, extended form asked a wider range of questions, reflecting the issues and questions posed on the display materials at the events.

**27 comment forms** were returned during the three days of the events (26 short forms and one extended form).

The Berinsfield Map: A large map of Berinsfield was available at the community events for attendees to attach pins and labels providing their feedback. Different coloured pins were provided for different types of comment: green pins to identify aspects that attendees liked, red pins to identify aspects that attendees did not like, and blue pins for general comments or ideas.

A total of **337 labels** were attached over the three days of the events.

Website: A project website was launched at [www.southoxon.gov.uk/berinsfield](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/berinsfield) to provide information about the Community Investment Scheme and to allow people to give their feedback, either via an online survey or a downloadable form (asking the same questions as the community comment forms available at the events).

To date (13 October), the website has had 27 unique visits and no online forms have been completed.

# Community and stakeholder feedback summary

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The section summarises the comments received from the community through the different feedback channels. Specific comments raised by stakeholders are also included where relevant, in particular where the stakeholder has specific knowledge or operational responsibilities. The summaries are organised thematically and are not ranked by importance or number of comments.

## **Green space, development and new homes**

### **Green space**

Eight-eight map labels and six comment forms provided feedback on green space and open public areas. There was **widespread agreement that the village's central green space should not be developed**. There was mixed feedback on the development of smaller green spaces within the village – interventions in these smaller green spaces may need to be the subject of individual 'micro consultations'.

Eight labels requested more sports facilities in the central green space and there was a wide range of other suggestions for improvement. Most of these attracted fewer than five comments and, by way of example, included: more social space, play facilities, improvements to the skate park, wildlife walks and increased litter picking.

Full details are provided in the feedback appendices, including the full list of individual suggestions from the community.

Stakeholder comments: The vicar of St Mary and St Berin Church emphasised that the central green space in the village should remain undeveloped.

### **Housing and supporting infrastructure**

Housing was raised on 12 labels, in 16 comment forms and by seven local stakeholders. Only five of these responses raised concerns about new housing and among the other respondents there was **consensus that Berinsfield needs to deliver new homes**.

However, there was a range of varied views on what type of housing would be appropriate and where new housing should be located. Previous local consultations have also reflected this mixed feedback on whether the village needs more small homes (in particular two-bedroom houses) or large homes (four-bedroom houses), and more affordable or more private housing. There was no specific written feedback on how many new homes would be appropriate for Berinsfield.

Stakeholder comments: In general, all stakeholders interviewed were supportive of positive change in the village, including the delivery of new homes.

Members of Berinsfield Parish Council have emphasised the need to **review the village's current sewerage and drainage infrastructure**. Sewerage was also mentioned in three map labels. A number of stakeholders highlighted that housing can be a challenge for young people and families who wish to buy a home in the village, but there are currently limited opportunities to do so. The Parish Council and Berinsfield Community Association stated that they would like to see development to the east of the existing village.

Two stakeholders reflected on the challenges that new housing could pose to integration of the village community, highlighting that steps should be taken to prevent new housing from dividing the village in two, between new and old. As noted above, the vicar of St Mary and St Berin emphasised that the

central green space in the village should remain undeveloped. The vicar also stated his view that the number of homes planned for Berinsfield would depend on those planned for the sites at Chalgrove and Grenoble Road.

Two stakeholders noted the challenge of homelessness in the village, something that particularly affects young men. Williams Performance Tenders noted concerns that new housing may impact its business, if it continues to operate from the northern industrial site, Vogue Business Park (owing to service vehicles passing through the village).

## **Flooding**

Flooding is a key issue for Berinsfield Parish Council and this was also raised in 10 map labels and two comment forms. Most of the labels were placed at the south of Fane Drive, close to the junction with Burcot Lane.

## **Highways, transport and parking**

### **Local buses**

Ten feedback forms, eight map labels and eight stakeholder groups provided comments on bus services, with all comments noting that **public transport provision was poor / requires improvement or requesting that local services should be re-provided** (specifically the recently cancelled T2 service). A number of other individual suggestions on public transport are captured in the appendices.

Stakeholder comments: Of the eight stakeholder groups which mentioned bus services, several noted that the cancellation of the T2 has been a major loss and has left the village “isolated”. Stakeholders including Soha, the EAG, BIVC and Berinsfield Community Association stated that the impact of the cancellation had been under-estimated and would exacerbate a number of social problems including mental health (see below), employment and isolation of younger people (eg students and children), single parents, and older people (some of whom used the T2 service to travel within the village, including to the doctor’s surgery).

### **Crossing at the A4074**

Twenty map labels, three feedback forms and one stakeholder group provided comments on road crossings and safety, with 22 of these comments requesting a crossing on the A4074 to provide **access to the northbound bus stop**. This is clearly a priority for respondents, especially in the context of the cancellation of the T2 service.

### **Parking**

Twenty map labels and two feedback forms referenced the need for **improved parking in Berinsfield** (in particular off-street parking). Generally, comments referenced the need for more parking spaces and the problems that current parking arrangements can cause for the movement of vehicles.

While there was no single ‘hotspot’ identified by respondents, a range of individual locations were highlighted as presenting challenges or requiring improvement, ranging from Colwell Road to Wey Road. Full details of individual locations are provided in the appendix.

### **Highways**

Thirteen labels and one comment form provided feedback on highways, identifying a range of individual comments and issues. These issues are provided in full in the appendix, but include, for example, concerns about industrial traffic passing through the village, the need for traffic calming measures along Fane Drive, and a suggestion to provide roundabout access to Drayton Road.

## **Cycling**

Nine map labels and one comment form referenced cycling, offering various suggestions made on cycling infrastructure which respondents would like to see introduced and one complaint about cyclists' speed in the village. These suggestions are provided in full in the appendix, but include, for example, introducing cycle racks in the village or at A4704 bus stop and providing an east/west cycle route through the village.

## **Retail, community facilities and local services**

### **Retail**

Retail was the second most common issue raised by respondents, with 28 map labels, nine comment forms and one stakeholder group providing feedback. The vast majority of this feedback focused on **improving Berinsfield's retail offer and in particular the 'bottom shops'** at the south of Fane Drive, with individual suggestions including comprehensive improvement or demolition of these shops.

Five respondents suggested that Berinsfield should have a café or new food and beverage outlet. Five respondents also suggested that Berinsfield needs greater retail choice in the village, while examples of individual suggestions – listed in full in the appendix – included larger shops, a Tesco, and a charity shop.

Stakeholder comments: The idea of a 'village hub' was supported by a number of stakeholder groups, including, Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre, Soha, the Children's Centre and Williams Performance Tenders – though it was not discussed with all stakeholders. Berinsfield Community Association noted that more retail choice was important. Williams also noted that a new 'entrance' or gateway to the village would be positive.

### **Local services**

Most respondents – both stakeholders and other members of the community – considered local services in the context of several existing organisations and feedback is categorised as such below. Two map labels supported the idea of a 'village hub'.

- Berinsfield Children's Centre

Nine comment forms and four labels referenced the Children's Centre. All were supportive of its work and ten respondents wanted to see the Children's Centre receive support or funding from the Council. Three comments were in favour of providing new premises for the Children's Centre while two wanted to see the existing facility remain.

Stakeholder comments: The project team receive feedback from the Children's Centre manager, as well as other stakeholders involved in the future of this local service. The Children's Centre confirmed that Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is cutting funding for children's services and **the centre is scheduled to close at the end of March**. A local steering group – comprising the centre, Employment Action Group (EAG), Soha, Oxfordshire Communities Foundation and a representative of the Parish Council – is working together to develop a strategy for the future of the centre and its funding.

The Children's Centre building is owned by OCC and some stakeholder believe that the Council may wish to dispose of the asset. Any new centre would need to provide facilities that are appropriate to the centre's services and continuity of service is desirable. The Children's Centre supports a potential new community hub, describing it as a "dream" and "the way forward".

The steering group is currently working on a plan to bring the centre under the remit of the EAG, potential re-launching the centre as a Family Centre. The steering group may run consultation on this potential change. The group is applying to OCC for funding from a limited transitional fund.

Full details of this feedback – and more information about the Children’s Centre and its services – are provided in the stakeholder contact minutes.

- Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre (BIVC)

Five map labels referenced BIVC, all of which supported the organisation and wanted to see it continue operating in the future, with one respondent noting that it may benefit from a larger facility.

Stakeholder comments: Detailed comments about BIVC were received directly from the organisation’s manager and treasurer, as well as from Soha and the EAG. Other stakeholders gave more limited comments. BIVC provides support to residents in a similar way to the Citizens Advice Bureau – the most common issues its clients face include literacy challenges, accessing benefits, housing, tax, bills, debt and pensions. It runs coffee morning and organises the village fête and *Village Voice* magazine.

**BIVC has concerns about its future funding and believes that it may be at risk of closure.** Its current building is owned by OCC and the county provides funding to BIVC which covers its rent. Its principal funding comes from South Oxfordshire District Council.

Discussing whether BIVC should relocate or become part of a potential ‘village hub’, BIVC noted that there are different views within the organisation. Other stakeholder groups support the ‘hub’ approach and BIVC’s involvement.

Full details of this feedback – and more information about BIVC and its services – are provided in the stakeholder contact minutes.

- Berinsfield Employment Action Group (EAG)

Stakeholder comments: No labels or comment forms referred specifically to the EAG, but its work was considered important by a number of stakeholders. The project team received feedback directly from the EAG, as well as from other service providers and partners, such as Williams Performance Tenders. The EAG provides a range of services to support residents into employment, including a job club, computing support, training opportunities (provided largely by Abingdon and Witney College, which runs Berinsfield Adult Learning Centre) and other advice and support. It has recently had a management change and this has led to a number of initiatives being re-started. The EAG also works with a number of local employers.

**There is uncertainty about the future of the EAG.** Currently, its principal funding stream is rent paid by fellow occupiers of Dorchester House. When Dorchester House is redeveloped, there will be uncertainty about both the EAG’s future premises and its funding. It is developing a strategy for its future and may consider expanding its remit to include Benson and Stadhampton. The EAG may bring the Children’s Centre into its remit as a Family Centre and this could create opportunities for more joined-up services (eg child-minding courses which provide employment, childcare and enable people to go to work).

## **Health care**

Eight labels and eight comment forms discussed health care in Berinsfield. Generally, residents were supportive and protective of the services provided from the health centre in the village and raised a variety of individual comments on how they could be improved. The most common concern about healthcare – raised in seven comments – was that the doctor’s surgery is at risk of closure. Individual

comments are detailed in full in the appendix and these included that the health centre was short staffed, that health care was expensive, and that the health centre is under-staffed.

Stakeholder comments: A representative of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), who is also a former partner and part-time GP at Fane Drive Health Centre, provided comments on health care in the Berinsfield.

The CCG representative confirmed that **the continued operation of the existing surgery is at risk**. This is partly due to the impending expiry of the lease on the premises (through NHS Property Services) but also because the practice is struggling to recruit additional partners to run and manage it. This is a problem that is not specific to Berinsfield and is being seen across the county particularly in smaller practices. These comments were reiterated by two other stakeholder groups.

Over the years, a number of specialist services have been withdrawn from the practice, owing to either a lack of viability or purpose-built facilities. The CCG representative highlighted that in terms of the physical condition of the practice there are some concerns and shortcomings, a number of which were flagged up in the recent Care Quality Commission inspection. However, the representative states that these are not major problems and they could be resolved through refurbishment rather than wholesale re-provision of the premises.

There may be challenges for the health centre in the near future because of plans among the current three GPs to retire or relocate. There has been no interest from external parties in managing the facility remotely. Several other local practices are facing similar challenges. A merger approach would be unpopular but may prove necessary. One alternative is for a GP federation to take over the practice, but this is a very complex process.

The representative noted that the health centre is important because the village has a large elderly population and high levels of social deprivation. Key health problems include diabetes, obesity, cardio-vascular disease and respiratory diseases. The village also has a high number of children on child protection registers. The Berinsfield practice also looks after residents of a nursing home in Burcot and also a home which provides accommodation for young disabled people.

Mental health was raised by just two community respondents, but emphasised as a significant challenge by four stakeholder groups (not including the CCG representative). Some of the stakeholder groups provide services to support people suffering with mental health challenges, but recognise that additional or improved support would be valuable.

### **Leisure and sport**

Eleven map labels referred to local leisure and sport facilities. Five respondents reflected positively on the existing facilities, while five respondents suggested that local facilities need to be improved (four of whom referred to the swimming pool).

Stakeholder comments: The project team has not yet been able to hold a meeting with the operator of Abbey Sports Centre and this is a priority in the next stage of work. The OCC leisure team provided detailed information on the nature of the facility and its history in Berinsfield. It confirmed that there is political will to retain a leisure centre in Didcot, though there are plans for substantial new centre in Didcot and a longstanding desire for a public swimming pool in Wallingford.

OCC confirmed that there are concerns about the quality of some of the existing facilities. It was confirmed that plans to redevelop and improve the existing centre had been explored previously in some detail, but ultimately stalled. These plans included the potential co-location of other village facilities and services, though OCC noted that it would prefer to see these co-located facilities in adjacent buildings, rather than within the leisure centre.

Other stakeholders – in particular Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre – also noted that Berinsfield residents has previously been consulted on plans for improvements / redevelopment of the sports centre and were disappointed that this had never been progressed. OCC provided outline details of what it saw a desire

The OCC meeting notes provide initial details of OCC's aspirations should a new facility be delivered – this broadly focuses on re-providing existing facilities, but improving the quality. Its external appearance should also be improved. The county is assembling a Local Plan evidence base which will include looking at usage patterns for the existing leisure centre. Another stakeholder noted that while the leisure centre was popular, it was not necessarily viewed as a facility for people living in the village and, for some, any cost for activity was prohibitive.

Specific comments in relation to Abingdon Gymnastics Club can be found in the notes of the conversation with a director of Jennings. These provide background to the club's history in Berinsfield.

### **Education and young people**

Fifteen map labels and five comment forms discussed education and a variety of feedback was provided by stakeholder groups. Nine comments supported provision of a secondary school in the village, though two opposed this. Seven comments were provided on the primary school, providing a mix of positive and negative feedback and, overall, suggesting that improvements would be supported.

While it was an important issue for stakeholders, only three comments were received from the community on adult education in Berinsfield. Two of these suggested improving the quality of the centre and one suggested that it should be relocated.

Stakeholder comments: The project team has not yet been able to hold a meeting with Abbey Woods Academy and this is a priority in the next stage of work. OCC's education team confirmed that the school is currently in special measures. Despite the school operating under its 1.5 FE capacity, there is there is significant pupil leakage from the village and many children leave Berinsfield to go to school. The roll fluctuation causes problems for staffing and other resourcing. The school has requested to reduce its intake to 1 FE. According to forecasts, pupil numbers in Berinsfield are expected to decline significantly in future years and this could have an impact on funding for the school and therefore its ability to address performance issues.

OCC is not aware of any major issues with the buildings at Abbey Woods Academy. The site is considered large enough to accommodate a 2 FE school. OCC were open to the idea of an 'all-through' school.

Literacy and numeracy levels, alongside other adult education issues, were highlighted as challenges by the Children's Centre, BIVC and Soha.

Four stakeholder groups – BIVC, the Boxing Club, Williams Performance Tenders and Berinsfield Community Association – commented that the village does not provide sufficient facilities or activities for young people. A number of stakeholder noted that the cancellation of the T2 services would impact young people, in particular students attending college outside the village.

### **Library**

Four labels and one comment form provided feedback about Berinsfield Library. Four reflected positively on the service, stating that it was important and should remain open. One respondent noted that it was important to ensure a 'quality service'.

## **Business, employment and training**

### **Commercial space**

Seven labels provided comments on commercial uses within the village. Five respondents recommended developing land to the south west of the village, across the A4074, for commercial use. There were also individual suggestions that the telephone exchange site be improved and that the employment site to the north of the village be developed for residential use.

Stakeholder comments: The project team engaged with Williams Performance Tenders, a key employer in the village. Williams employs a number of local people and has run a successful apprenticeship scheme. The business noted that improving employment opportunities for local residents within the village is key to raising aspirations. Generally, other stakeholder reflect very positively on the business and its management.

Williams intends to double in size over the next five years, subject to overcoming key constraints. This growth would require new floorspace and would create approximately 30-40 new jobs. The key challenges are: i) recruitment, which has provided difficult in the past, particularly for experienced professionals; and ii) premises, as the business would need more space than its current factory at Vogue Business Park and smaller space at Queensford Lakes.

Proximity to the Lakes was a key reason Williams is located in Berinsfield. In an ideal world, Williams would like to move to a bespoke manufacturing facility next to the lake as this would provide them with long-term security of tenure, space to grow and direct access to the lake without having to navigate roads through the village. Williams stated that it could not afford to develop this new facility as a standalone venture owing to the infrastructure costs (in particular sewerage and road access). As such, Williams would have to rely on a significant element of this being paid for as part of a wider commercial development on the Queensford Lakes site.

There were only four comments on Queensford Lakes from the wider community. These variously suggested developing a community facility at the Lakes, avoiding housing development and ensuring the scheme “takes advantage” of the Lakes.

The Council will be holding a further meeting with Williams and will also engage with Knowles in relation to the Dorchester House site.

### **Employment**

Employment was a prominent issue for stakeholders, but was mentioned in only two labels and two comment forms. These responses all suggested that more local job opportunities should be available, with individual comments highlighting that opportunities could be created around Dorchester House and that low-skilled work should be prioritised.

Stakeholder comments: See above details of feedback in relation to Berinsfield Employment Action Group. One local employer highlighted their past experience of challenges in employing people from the village, such as poor behaviour and other social issues. The redevelopment of Dorchester House is likely to cause disruption for some employers in the village, though this does not appear to be a significant concerns and the landowner (Knowles) appears to be working collaboratively with current tenants.

### **Miscellaneous comments**

A full summary of comments within each of the above categories is provided in the appendices. However, there were a number of issues which attracted multiple comments which are not addressed in the above categories. These are summarised below and full details are provided in the appendix:

- Garages – four map labels highlighting four specific ‘problem areas’ in terms of garages
- Footpaths and pavements – four map labels suggested improvements to footpaths / pavements, with three referencing over-grown hedges on particular streets
- St Mary & St Berin Church – three maps labels gave miscellaneous comments on the Church and Church Hall (eg the latter should be extended to create storage space)
- Rubbish and litter – three map labels provided suggestions on how to address this concern on specific streets
- Alleyways – three map labels identified specific problems with three specific alleyways within the village
- Sports clubs – two map labels references the gymnastics club (one stating it was popular and one suggesting it should be renamed ‘Berinsfield Gymnastics Club’) and one map label reflected positively on Berinsfield Boxing Club
- Concerns about delivery – in tone, a number of respondents expressed concerns about delivery of the investment scheme
- Sense of community – two map labels reflected on Berinsfield as a positive place to live

## **Appendix A – Comment form responses**

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Two types of comment form were available at the community events. A short form asked four questions:

- 1) Do you agree with the issues and challenges presented at the community drop-in events?  
Are there any others you want to add to the list?
- 2) What do you think are the top three priorities for Berinsfield?
- 3) What do you think we should do about them?
- 4) Do you have any other comments?

A second, extended form asked a wider range of questions, reflecting the issues and questions posed on the display materials at the events.

**27 comment forms** were returned during the three days of the events (26 short forms and one extended form).

The issues raised in these forms are summarised by category below.

### **Housing**

Housing was an issue for the majority of the people who responded, with **16 respondents** referring to this subject (59 per cent).

People stated the need for more housing, with a sentiment that it was “time to get on with it”.

Of the 16 who mentioned housing:

- Three people mentioned the need for four-bedroom family homes
- Three people mentioned the need for affordable housing
- One person mentioned the need for two-bedroom housing
- One person felt that it would be better to renovate existing housing rather than building new houses in the village

### **Transport**

Transport was the second most common issue raised, with **12 respondents** (44 per cent) commenting on it. Of these:

- 10 people explicitly wrote of their unhappiness at the poor bus service. Some of these people said they felt the return of a more frequent service ought to be a priority
- Three people mentioned the need for improved crossings – and explicitly supported plans to introduce these
- Two people mentioned the need for better parking
- One mentioned the need for a better school bus
- One suggested the possibility of introducing a minibus service
- One called for better quality roads with new tarmac
- One individual felt the village needed another road entrance

### **Shopping provision**

**Nine respondents** (33 per cent) mentioned the shops in the village. Of these:

- Several spoke of the need to both improve the quality of the shops and the space in which they are located – especially the “bottom shops” including the former Costcutter
- Two people mentioned the need for bigger shops
- Three requested cheaper shops such as Tesco
- Two people mentioned the need for a new café and places to eat

- One person mentioned that a charity shop would be welcomed in the village

### **Health**

Improving the health of Berinsfield residents was a relatively common theme, with **eight respondents** (30 per cent) referencing health-related concerns.

- Seven people were concerned about the potential closure of the doctor's surgery and/or emphasised its importance in the village
- Two people mentioned the poor state of mental health in Berinsfield, with one respondent stating that this was an issue that ought to be addressed if individuals are to succeed in the labour market

### **Green space**

The village's central green space was mentioned explicitly by **six respondents** (22 per cent) – all of whom felt it was important to preserve this area.

- Two people proposed the idea of an outdoor gym/exercise area
- One comment referred to the need for "open spaces"
- One suggested increases in allotment space
- One supported the general upkeep of these spaces through increasing litter picking and clamping down on dog fouling
- One comment mentioned the need for improved seating
- One stated that improving lighting should be a priority for the communal areas in the village

### **Education and youth**

- **Five respondents** had concerns relating explicitly to schools, with three mentioning the need for a secondary school. One person stated that the village was currently "overloaded" in terms of educational demand
- Respondents were split when it came to whether the village would benefit from a new children's centre – two supported this and two opposed it
- Generally, the suggestion of creating a new community hub where community services would co-locate was well received
- Two people mentioned the need for improved adult learning facilities and one person mentioned the need for a quality library

### **Delivery concerns**

- There appeared to be a general sense that some residents had "heard it all before". One individual mentioned that the village needed an MP who is "available to the residents of Berinsfield". Others questioned how they could trust that the development would go ahead.
- However, the project appeared to be supported by the majority. While a certain level of scepticism is apparent, almost all respondents backed the community investment scheme

### **Miscellaneous**

- Two people mentioned the need for more jobs in the village, with one calling for more low-skilled positions
- Two people mentioned the need to protect against flooding in the village
- One person asked for improved bike sheds
- One individual asked for a more active police force
- One person felt the village could benefit from a food bank
- One person felt that the number of HGVs that pass through the village is an issue, especially to those on bikes

## **Appendix B – Village map responses**

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A large map of Berinsfield was available at the community events for attendees to attach pins and labels providing their feedback. Different coloured pins were provided for different types of comment: green pins to identify aspects that attendees liked, red pins to identify aspects that attendees did not like, and blue pins for general comments or ideas.

A total of **337 labels** were attached over the three days of the events:

- 123 on Thursday 15 September
- 103 on Friday 16 September
- 111 on Saturday 17 September

The comments are summarised by category below. These comments have also been indexed in relation to their location on the village map – Camargue can provide this database on request.

### **Green and open space**

**88 comments** were received relating to green and open space, with the majority of these relating to the central green space, which is clearly seen as an important asset to the village. Most of the pins used were either green or blue, suggesting that residents mainly wish to protect and enhance the central green space.

Of these comments:

- 27 comments specifically opposed development on open space, particularly on the central green space
- Nine comments expressed general support for the green space, particularly the main central area
- Two comments requested improved facilities at the play park at the northern end of the village, while another requested more care be taken of it
- Two comments requested improvements to the skate park
- Two comments requested better upkeep of the central green space, while another requested more bins
- Two comments requested planting fruit trees and herbs at the central green space
- Two comments supported the trees at the entrance to the village
- Two comments supported the cemetery, while another requested that it be expanded
- Two comments requested providing more facilities for horses using the Roman Road as a bridleway
- Two comments noted that more facilities for teenagers could be provided at the central green space
- One comment supported the local football club
- One comment suggested allocating space for wildlife walks
- One comment requested that the council improve the fencing at the central green space
- One comment requested more trees
- One comment supported the village fete held on the green
- One comment raised concerns about flooding on the central green space
- One comment requested a dog exercise area
- One comment raised flooding as an issue
- One comment raised concerns about motorbikes being ridden on the green
- One comment raised concerns about fly-tipping

### **Retail**

**28 comments** were received relating to retail. Most of these were negative comments related to the 'bottom shops', but several also referred to the other retail facilities at the west of Fane Drive.

Of these comments:

- 19 requested the improvement of the bottom shops
- Five requested cafés or places to eat and drink
- Four requested that the bottom shops be demolished
- Three requested more shops or greater choice in the village
- One stated that there were some good shops in the area

### **Parking**

**20 comments** raised parking as an issue, with the vast majority identifying the need for more and better off-street parking, often referring to the existing parking pressures in the village and the difficulties this creates for the movement of vehicles.

Of these comments:

- Four noted that parked vehicles can block the line of sight on roads
- Two comments raised parking on Colwell Road as an issue
- Two comments suggested replacing some green space with parking
- One comment raised concerns about cars parking too close to junctions
- One comment suggested removing parking from main thoroughfares
- One comment requested more parking in front of houses
- One comment noted that parking on Wey Road made it dangerous for emergency vehicles
- One comment noted that parking at the 'top shops' can often be difficult
- One comment requested two parking spaces for each house, while another requested that each house be allowed no more than two cars
- One comment raised parking as an issue near Ock Drive
- One comment suggested more off-road parking, while another requested a funding scheme to provide more driveway space
- One comment suggested lay-bys at the school, while another suggested replacing the green space near the school with parking

### **Road crossing**

**20 comments** were received relating to road crossings and safety, with the vast majority red or blue pins placed around the existing bus stop on the A4074. Of these:

- 18 requested a crossing on the A4074 to provide safe access to the northbound bus stop
- One requested a lower speed limit around bus stop area
- One said the bus stop was currently too far away

### **Education**

**15 comments** were raised regarding education, with the majority placed around the existing Abbey Woods Academy. Of these:

- Seven comments requested a secondary school
- Three comments supported the primary school
- Two comments criticised the primary school, while two others requested that it be improved
- One comment suggested relocating the Adult Education Centre

### **Highways**

**13 comments** raised general points about highways. Most were general comments, placed along the main roads in the village (Wimblestraw Road and Fane Drive). Of these:

- Two comments raised concerns about industrial traffic going through the village
- Two comments requested traffic calming measures along Fane Drive
- One comment suggested an extra exit on the roundabout on the A4074 for Dayton Road, while another requested a roundabout on the Queensford Farm Road, and a third requested another exit to the Drayton Road

- One comment requested resurfacing of roads in the village
- One comment noted that Burcot Lane is very busy
- One comment requested a 30mph speed limit around the village
- One comment noted that plant growth can obstruct visibility on roads
- One comment stated that £70,000 investment in tarmac paths was not necessary on the A4074

### **Residential**

**12 comments** were received relating to new homes. Most were attached to blue pins, and many were placed in areas to suggest that they could be sites for residential development, such as the employment area to the north of the village or fields to the east of the village. Of these:

- Three supported new homes in the eastern fields
- Three requested larger four bedroom houses for families
- Two complained of areas being overcrowded
- Two identified the employment area at the north of the village as an appropriate location for new homes
- One supported housing on the village green
- One raised concerns about housing in the eastern fields
- One supported housing near Dorchester House
- One supported housing in the north west

### **Leisure and sport**

**11 comments** were received relating to the leisure and sports facilities in the village, particularly around the sports centre and central green space. Many used green pins, suggesting that facilities are well-liked, while most of the remainder used blue 'comment' pins. Of these:

- Five requested improved facilities, with four of these relating to the pool
- Four were positive about the existing facilities
- One stated that the swimming pool is useful
- One complained facilities were underused

### **Flooding**

**10 comments** were received relating to flooding, mostly using blue 'comment' pins placed at the south of Fane Drive. Of these:

- Six comments complained about flooding
- Three complained about sewer systems
- One comment said the fields in the north-west do not flood

### **Cycling**

**Nine comments** were received relating to cycling in Berinsfield. Of these:

- Two requested cycle hoops/racks at the A4074 bus stop
- Two requested an east-west cycle route across the central green
- One complained about cyclists being too fast and expecting priority on pathways on the central green
- One requested a cycle path along the main road into the village
- One requested bike racks at the bottom shops
- One requested/supported a cycle route to Cowley

### **Children's centre**

**Nine comments** were received regarding the children's centre. Of these:

- Eight supported it and proposed improved funding or support from the council
- One commented that the centre is aesthetically unpleasant

### **Health**

**Eight comments** were received relating to health. Of these:

- Three supported the presence of health services in the town
- Two complained that the health centre was short staffed
- One complained of expensive healthcare
- One requested a bigger surgery
- One requested that the pharmacy stays open on Sundays

### **Public transport**

**Eight comments** were raised relating to public transport. Of these:

- Two comments requested public transport within the village itself, while another suggested approaching Pearce's to run a bus service for the village
- One comment generally noted the lack of affordable transport
- One comment noted that visitors should prioritise public transport
- One comment requested additional stops for buses to Oxford and Wallingford
- One comment requested train services to the village
- One comment noted that connections to schools are poor

### **Commercial buildings**

**Seven comments** were received relating to commercial buildings. Of these

- Five requested the development of the fields to the south-west of the village across the A4074, suggesting offices and/or industrial development
- One requested the improvement of the Telephone Exchange site
- One requested that houses were built on the employment area to the north of the village

### **Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre (BIVC)**

**Five comments** were received relating to BIVC. Of these:

- Three requested it stays open
- One emphasised its importance
- One said it was 'vital' but might benefit from moving to a bigger site

### **Pavements**

**Four comments** were raised regarding pavements in the village. Of these:

- Two comments noted that hedges were impacting on pavements
- One comment noted that bars across some pavements can block prams
- One comment asked which group was responsible for the upkeep of hedges along the pavement of Kennet Close

### **Lakes**

**Four comments** were made relating to the Queenford lakes to the south of the village. Of these:

- One comment suggested delivering a community facility at the lakes
- One noted that the scheme should 'take advantage' of the lakes
- One comment requested that no housing be developed there
- One comment noted that the lakes should be more prominently-featured on the map

### **Library**

**Four comments** were received relating to the local library. Of these:

- Two stated that the library was important/useful

- Two requested the library remains open

### **Garages**

**Four comments** were received relating to garages. Of these:

- One complained about the lack of communication from the council regarding using a space in Wetlands Garages, off Fane Drive
- One commented that the Wetlands Garages are too narrow for modern cars
- One commented that the garages on Glyme Drive are falling down
- One commented generally on ownership of the garages on Windrush Road

### **Church**

**Three comments** were received relating to the church. Of these:

- One requested the church hall is extended to create storage space
- One was generally positive about the church
- One requested the church be considered as a community space

### **Rubbish and waste**

**Three comments** were received relating to rubbish or waste collection. Of these:

- One complained of the waste pick-up route on Wey Road
- One called for a dog waste bin at the 'top shops'
- One requested people take more care with rubbish on Evenlode Road

### **Alleyways**

**Three comments** were received relating to alleyways. Of these:

- One complained of drug use on Evenlode Road
- One complained of bike racing on Lay Avenue
- One called for lights on Wetland Gardens

### **Employment**

**Two comments** were received relating to employment in the village. Both requested new opportunities around Dorchester House, with one specifying these should be for young people.

### **Sports clubs**

**Three comments** were received relating to sports clubs. Of these:

- One supported the club, stating it is popular and attracts people from outside of the village
- One commented the club should be called 'Berinsfield Gymnastics Club'
- One comment supported keeping the boxing gym in Berinsfield

### **Village hub**

**Two comments** were received relating to a 'village hub', with proposed locations at the existing school or the fields to the east of the village. Of these:

- One supported a hub to keep services viable
- One supported merging education services together into a single location in the eastern fields

### **General comments**

**Two comments** were received relating to Berinsfield generally. Of these:

- One commented on the strong sense of community in the village
- One person stated they liked living in Berinsfield

Other general comments include:

- One comment supported keeping the water tower in Berinsfield
- One comment mentioned 'Pokestops' in the north-west field