

Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan

Evidence Base Review

Appendix 1: Retail sub group report July 2012

Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan

Notes from Retail Sub-Group following meeting on 25th June 2012 and Steering Group meeting on 12th July 2012

Paul Brame - Nominated Member from Sub-Group to report to Steering Group

Due to the complexities of Faringdon's existing shops (i.e. their location in relation to the rest of the town and the size of the retail offerings), the sub-group feels that it is vital that an independent retail assessment of Faringdon is carried out. We will liaise with the Neighbourhood Plan consultants as to how that might be facilitated.

Issues:

- **Population.** The town is currently too small to attract larger retailers (so any expanding housing provision is fully supported by the group).
- **Unit size.** The current shops are too small and this is a further deterrent to retailers coming to the town. It also prevents our successful shop owners from expanding.
- **Location.** The town centre is not the centre of town
- **Footfall** is a big concern to current retailers. Any proposals should be sensitive to attracting or keeping people near the town centre (e.g. moving schools away from town centre is likely to reduce town centre footfall)

Requirements:

- A mix of **new larger shops** with the existing offering (which we are passionate to preserve and sustain), but also catering for **destination shops** and possibly new smaller units for start-ups. The preference would be for **niche operators** rather than multiples.
- To protect and promote the **town centre**
- A **food outlet** as close to the town centre as possible
- More retail space with **bigger shops**

Ideas/suggestions:

- **Planning policy** to prevent loss of existing retail to housing
- Development of **Portway** to mixed use/retail to help bring town centre closer to centre of town
- Possible development of **Junior School** site or part of Junior School site with the Gloucester Street/Faringdon House "**Waitrose**" site for additional retail with housing/office space above and using protected areas to enhance shopping experience. We would also support proposals to widen the access from Gloucester Street
- Encourage a **trade counter "cluster"** on Regal Way next to Tesco with more attractive links towards the town centre "**a gateway**" drawing people towards the Market Place. We would therefore support proposals to replace The Leys with non-residential or mixed uses.
- The establishment of a "**Covered Market**" style **shopping mall** for artisan operators
- **Free parking** (beyond 2 hour limit)