

Democratic Services

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29 September 2020

SUMMONS TO ATTEND

MEETING: FINANCE & MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

PLACE: TO BE HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING BECAUSE OF SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDANCE (see [note](#))

DATE: WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2020

TIME: 2.00 PM

Members of the Committee

Councillors: Derek Cotterill (Chairman). Alex Postan (Vice-Chairman), Alaa Al-Yousuf, Rosa Bolger, Louise Chapman, Julian Cooper, Maxine Crossland, Harry Eaglestone, Gill Hill, Richard Langridge, Liz Leffman, Dan Levy, Harry St John and Geoff Saul

RECORDING OF MEETINGS

The law allows the council's public meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Committee Officer know before the start of the meeting.

A G E N D A

- 1. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2020 ([copy attached](#))**
- 2. Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
- 3. Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of interest from Councillors relating to items to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Local Code of Conduct, and any from Officers.

- 4. Participation of the Public**

Purpose:

To receive any submissions from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.

- 5. Committee Work Programme 2020/2021 (Report of the Head of Democratic Services – [copy attached](#))**

Purpose:
To invite the Committee to consider its Work Programme for the remainder of 2020/2021.

Recommendation:
That the Committee considers Annex 1 to the report and approves its Work Programme for the remainder of 2020/21.
- 6. Cabinet Work Programme (Report of the Head of Democratic Services – [copy attached](#))**

Purpose:
To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the Cabinet Work Programme published on 22 September 2020.

Recommendation:
That the Committee decides whether to express a view to the Cabinet on relevant issues in its Work Programme.
- 7. Council Priorities and Service Performance Report 2020-21 Quarter One (Report of the Chief Executive – [copy attached](#))**

Purpose:
To provide details of the Council’s progress towards achieving its aims and priorities set out in the Council Plan 2020-2024, and service performance during Quarter One.

Recommendation:
That the Committee reviews, and challenges as appropriate, performance for 2020-21 Quarter One.
- 8. Treasury Management Activity and Performance 2020/21 (Report of the Chief Finance Officer – [copy attached](#))**

Purpose:
To advise members of treasury management activity and the performance of internal and external fund managers for the period 1 April 2020 – 31 August 2020.

Recommendation:
That treasury management and the performance of in-house and external Pooled Funds’ activity for the period 1 April 2020 – 31 August 2020 be noted.
- 9. Motion: Live Streaming of Council and Committee Meetings (Report of the Group Manager, Business Support Services – [copy attached](#))**

Purpose:
To further consider the Motion regarding webcasting of meetings referred to the Committee by the Council and to submit comments or recommendations accordingly.

Recommendation:
That consideration be given to the Motion as set out in the report, and comments or a recommendation be made to Council.
- 10. Motion: Electronic Communications (Report of the Group Manager, Business Support Services – [copy attached](#))**

Purpose:
To consider the motion regarding electronic communications referred to the Committee by the Council and to submit comments or recommendations accordingly.

Recommendation:

That consideration be given to the motion as set out in the report, and comments or a recommendation be made to Council.

II. Members' Questions

Purpose:

To receive questions from Members relating to the work of the Committee.

Recommendation:

That Members' questions be dealt with as appropriate.



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

This agenda is being dealt with by Amy Bridgewater-Carnall, Tel: (01993) 861522
Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk

Note: Councillors will be sent an invitation to the remote meeting via Cisco Webex. Members of the public may view the meeting via [Facebook Live](#). A Facebook account is not required.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the
Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held via video conferencing at 2 pm on **Wednesday 8 July 2020**

PRESENT

Councillors: Derek Cotterill (Chairman); Alex Postan (Vice-Chairman); Alaa Al-Yousuf, Rosa Bolger, Julian Cooper, Maxine Crossland, Harry Eaglestone, Gill Hill, Richard Langridge, Liz Leffman, Dan Levy, Harry St John and Geoff Saul.

Also in Attendance: Councillors Duncan Enright and Toby Morris.

Officers: Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive); Frank Wilson (Group Director – Finance), Jasmine McWilliams (Estates Manager); and Amy Barnes (Senior Strategic Support Officer)

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 January 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

There were no apologies for absence or temporary appointments.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers in matters to be considered at the meeting.

4. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no requests received.

5. COUNCIL FINANCES

Members were directed to the follow on papers which had been circulated prior to the meeting. These included an update note on Council Finances following the Covid-19 situation, which was having a significant impact.

The papers contained a diagram detailing the percentage breakdown of pressure areas in the Council's current budget and advised that the most recent MHCLG return submitted forecast an expenditure increase of £1.1m alongside an income reduction of £2m. This was offset by £1.1m grant funding.

The Council's Chief Finance Officer (CFO) outlined the report and reminded Members that this was a worst case scenario. With regard to the financial support being provided to GLL, Mrs Griffiths advised that if the contractor required further assistance in the future, officers would return to Cabinet with a report. In the meantime, the Council was seeking further advice from legal advisors, experienced in working with Leisure Companies. However, it was noted that this was an ever changing situation and the main aim was for the leisure centres and facilities to be open to the public again as soon as possible.

The CFO advised that the first Budget Review meeting had been held recently with some very productive and useful suggestions regarding generating income and cutting expenditure.

Members were assured that Ubico were managing their services well under the current additional pressures and their situation was being monitored closely.

A Treasury Management meeting was due to be held soon and the CFO intended to raise Members' concerns to the Council's advisors, Arlingclose. However, she highlighted that investments that had previously been considered "safe" may not be at present and that she planned to ask Arlingclose to review the current portfolio and advise. With regard to S106 monies, the records were being looked at by the Business Manager – Development Management with a view to trying to pull together the information into a useful and easy to access format. It was hoped that once all the data had been compiled, it would show the amount of monies being held, sums expected in and where it could be used.

Councillor Postan queried whether Arlingclose could be approached about potential opportunities in a similar vein to the advice they provided on the Treasury Management Strategy. With regards to income generation he suggested that a seminar could be held to examine ideas from Members and staff. The CFO advised that officers were working with Business Managers in the first instance regarding income generation.

In response to a question from Councillor Leffman, the CFO advised that the 8% budget pressure relating to Ubico had been based on initial projections as it had been thought that staff numbers would be affected at the company, if individuals had to shield. In reality, only a small number had had to isolate so the impact on their finance had been much lower. She advised that updated figures would be available soon.

Councillor St John queried the length of time it was taking to compile the S106 data. He also asked if the Council was a discretionary client of Arlingclose and whether investment advice could also be sought from other advisors the Council had used previously. The CFO explained that there was a lot of manual work required with the S106 data and officers were about two months away from completion. She advised that different services areas held different parts of information and all of this needed to be drawn together into a usable document. With regard to Arlingclose, she advised that she was due to attend a meeting with internal staff the following week, prior to liaising with Arlingclose but to her knowledge they had always been responsive to any requests for assistance or advice.

Councillor Levy asked if there were any subjects that were 'off the table' and whether West Oxfordshire was out of line with other Councils. He referenced the use of CIL money, the zero rated Garden Village and whether parking charges could be introduced in the District.

Councillor Morris stated that there would always be areas of difference between Councils and he reminded Members that many authorities had been hard hit due to their loss of income from parking since Covid-19. He also recognised that a balance had to be found to encourage cycling, whilst offering attractive parking options in order to get the economy going again. With regard to CIL monies, he advised that this would be discussed at Cabinet for further information.

Councillor Langridge raised a concern that the Council was still providing revenue grants to organisations, asked whether officers were using LGA guidance and noted that it was important to add support to the economy. He was assured that Members were working with their counterparts across Oxfordshire and ensuring that discussions aligned.

Councillor Al-Yousuf addressed Members and was concerned that it was not the right time to be introducing new levies or taxes as businesses and families were struggling. He also asked for clarification on the figures in the diagram. The CFO assured him that the income generation discussions were focused on whether Business Managers felt there

was anything more they could do to deliver their service whilst spending less from their budgets. It was not about introducing new charges or levies but encouraging Business Managers to catch up on lost income or extend current income generating services.

In order to alleviate concerns about a lack of Member involvement, the Group Finance Director, Mr Wilson, explained that the Commercial Strategy was now focused on investment to support recovery. This would follow due process through scrutiny and Cabinet so there would be plenty of opportunity for Councillors to participate.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

6. START TIME OF MEETINGS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services, which asked it to consider the start time for its meetings for the remainder of the 2020/2021 municipal year.

RESOLVED: That the start time for the remaining scheduled meetings of the Committee in the 2020/21 municipal year shall be 2.00pm.

7. CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services which gave Members the opportunity to comment on the Cabinet Work Programme published on 23 June 2020.

Councillor Cooper asked how long the consultation would be on the Woodstock Infrastructure Delivery Strategy. Officers advised they would get back to him via email in due course.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were no questions from Members.

9. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person) the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business.

10. INVESTMENT PROPERTY UPDATE

The Committee received a report from the Estates Manager, Ms Jasmine McWilliams, updating Members on the property portfolio which the Council held, and which helped to support the revenue budget via investment income.

Since the portfolio had been developed, the investments were monitored annually, with the Committee being due to receive an updated report at this meeting. However, due to the workload pressures in responding to the current pandemic it had not been possible to complete the review. Accordingly, this report sought to provide a high level update for the Committee on the anticipated performance of the portfolio in the current year based upon currently known information.

It was noted that the pandemic had had an impact on businesses and tenants and consequently on anticipated income from rents, and Annex A to the report detailed the rental yield but did not take account of any measures taken as part of the emergency response.

The Estates Manager answered a number of questions from Members who raised concerns about falling rents, closure of small and large businesses and the difficulties the high street had been facing before the pandemic.

The wider issue of the impact on Town Centres was also debated and officers advised that it was still unclear what the future would look like. However, the recovery work streams would look at all options to support and revitalise all of the town centres.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that it did not matter which calendar period the request for support fell under, it was offered when the businesses needed it. He also highlighted that the high street had been changing anyway and a lot of issues had been accelerated by the pandemic. It was still the goal of the Council to make town centres a destination and officers and Members would be working with partners to seek to make that happen.

Councillor Cooper requested specific details about the lease of certain properties and was advised that this information would be emailed to him after the meeting.

Officers assured the Committee that they were liaising with tenants regularly and would continue to update Members as necessary.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 3.20pm

CHAIRMAN



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Wednesday 7 October 2020
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 5
Subject	Committee Work Programme 2020/2021
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Derek Cotterill Chairman Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Email: derek.cotterill@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Keith Butler Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To invite the Committee to consider its Work Programme for the remainder of 2020/2021.
Annex	Annex 1 – Suggested Work Programme for 2020/2021
Recommendation	That the Committee considers Annex 1 to the report and approves its Work Programme for the remainder of 2020/21.
Corporate priorities	To enable the Committee to review its Work Programme and support the Council's priorities to protect the environment whilst supporting the local economy, to meet the current and future needs of residents and to provide efficient and value for money services, whilst delivering quality front line services.
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This report is intended to give the Committee the opportunity to consider its Work Programme for the remainder of 2020/2021.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. Attached at [Annex I](#) is a suggested starting point for the Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of 2020/2021. This is based on what was in place when the Committee last considered its Work Programme, which was at its meeting on 29 January 2020.
- 2.2. In addition to the items contained in the Work Programme there will still be the opportunity to bring forward one-off reports and papers on particular issues of interest to the Committee but it will also be necessary to maintain a general overview of the ways in which external agencies are responding to community concerns. The inclusion of a standing agenda item for Members' questions also provides the opportunity to raise relevant issues.
- 2.3. The Committee is invited to consider [Annex I](#) and agree its Work Programme for the remainder of the year, and is free to seek to vary it as it sees fit.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. None

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. Not applicable

6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Whilst there may be climate change implications arising from specific items within the Work Programme, there are none arising directly from this report.

7. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

- 7.1. In accordance with the Constitution of the Council, Committee has the power to investigate any matters it considers relevant to its work area, and to make recommendations to the Council, the Executive or any other Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council as it sees fit.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1. None

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020/2021				
	Work Area	Comments	Meeting / Anticipated Completion Date	Originator/Progress
1	Publica/Implementation of the transformation programme	Reports will be brought forward as the project develops.	On-going as required	FMOS The committee received a presentation on the new business plan in January. A governance review of Publica has recently been concluded and recommended a review of the Member Representative Board arrangements and a comprehensive shareholder communications plan be developed.
2	Introduction of Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Council Car Parks	The Committee established a Working Party to investigate the possibility of providing electric vehicle charging points in the District. The sum of £250,000 has been included within the budget for 2018/2019 for this purpose.	On-going as required	FMOS We are awaiting the Distribution Network Operator costs for the installation of any additional infrastructure to support the implementation strategy approved by Cabinet in February 2020.
3	Treasury Management Activity and Performance	To receive information on treasury management and the performance of in-house and external fund managers' Activity.	Reports on treasury management activity and performance are considered on a quarterly basis.	The Council's Treasury Management Advisors, Arlingclose, attended the October 2019 meeting to provide a comprehensive update of the Council's investments. A report on Treasury Management is included elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting, and the Committee may wish to invite Arlingclose to its meeting in either December 2020 or February 2021

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020/2021				
	Work Area	Comments	Meeting / Anticipated Completion Date	Originator/Progress
4	Budget	To consider the initial draft base budgets, draft fees and charges for and the latest Capital Programme for the current and future years.	December 2020	
5	Medium Term Financial Strategy	To consider the annual refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	A report is submitted on an annual basis	Next anticipated in February 2021, prior to the budget Council meeting later that month
6	Investment Property Review	To advise Members of current property investments and their performance since the last review.	A report is submitted on an annual basis. July 2020	FMOS Completed for current year
7	Local Authority Partnership Purchase Scheme	At the meeting in June 2018 it was agreed that a review of the operation of the Local Authority Partnership Purchase Scheme be included in the Work Programme	Removed	At its meeting held 29 January 2020 the Committee decided to remove this work programme until such time as further information was received
8	Publica Business Plan	To consider the Publica Business Plan for 2021/2023	February 2021	FMOS The business plan for 2020 to 2022 was considered by the Committee in January 2020

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020/2021

	Work Area	Comments	Meeting / Anticipated Completion Date	Originator/Progress
9	Ubico Business Plan	To consider contract management arrangements and the contract process.	To be decided	FMOS Ubico's Managing Director was due to attend one of the meetings of the Committee which was cancelled earlier in the year. The Committee may wish to invite attendance at a future meeting, or to invite Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider this.
10	Building Control Targets	To consider the targets being set for Building Control and understand why these were being missed	December 2020 or February 2021	FMOS Originally intended for April 2020
11	Webcasting of Council meetings	To further consider the financial implications of the motion originally submitted to Council in October 2019, and previously considered by the Committee in November 2019 and provide comments to Council	October 2020	Motion to Council. Report elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting
12	Electronic communications and supply of ipads to councillors	To consider the motion proposed at the meeting of the Council on 22 January 2020 and provide comments to Council	October 2020	Motion to Council. Report elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Wednesday 7 October 2020
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 6
Subject	Cabinet Work Programme
Wards affected	All
Accountable members	James Mills, Leader of the Council james.mills@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Keith Butler Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the Cabinet Work Programme published on 22 September 2020.
Annexes	Annex 1 – Cabinet Work Programme published 22 September 2020.
Recommendation	That the Committee decides whether to express a view to Cabinet on relevant issues in the Work Programme for the period.
Corporate priorities	To maintain and enhance West Oxfordshire as one of the best places to live, work and visit in Great Britain and to meet the current and future needs of residents.
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Cabinet Work Programme is produced on a monthly basis in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Regulations relating to publicity for Cabinet decisions that came into force on 10 September 2012. The programme sets out the Cabinet's work programme for the following three months, as applicable.
- 1.2. The programme [published on 22 September](#), covering the period to December 2020 is included in the [Annex to this report](#), for comment.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. None

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1. Not applicable

5. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

- 5.1. The Committee may take such action as it considers appropriate within its terms of reference

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1. None

Cabinet Work Programme published 22 September 2020

No.	Proposed Decision and (if applicable) reason(s) the matter is proposed to be considered in private	Key Decision (Yes/No)	Likely to be considered in private (Yes/No)	Decision-maker	Date of Decision	Documents	Notes
1.	Approval of Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Issues Paper	No	No	Cabinet	21 October 2020	None	
2.	Consideration and approval of draft Covid-19 Local Recovery Plan for West Oxfordshire	No	No	Cabinet then Council	21 October 2020	None	
3.	Approval of the Council's Carbon Action Plan	No	No	Cabinet then Council	21 October 2020	None	
4.	Approval of Investment Strategy for the recovery of West Oxfordshire	No	No	Cabinet then Council	21 October 2020	None	
5.	Approval of the approach to community recycling (bring-sites) in West Oxfordshire	Yes	No	Cabinet	21 October 2020	None	To be considered by Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 October
6.	Approval of a high level commissioning framework to clarify the roles of the Council and Publica	No	No	Cabinet	21 October 2020	None	
7.	Approval of variations to the Off-Street Parking Order	No	No	Cabinet	21 October 2020	None	

No.	Proposed Decision and (if applicable) reason(s) the matter is proposed to be considered in private	Key Decision (Yes/No)	Likely to be considered in private (Yes/No)	Decision-maker	Date of Decision	Documents	Notes
8.	Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper - approval of funding to develop the Council's response to the White Paper and its proposals for Local Government Reorganisation	Yes	No	Cabinet	21 October 2020	White Paper may be published in early October	
9.	Consideration of principles for a review of the Tourism service	No	No	Cabinet	21 October 2020	None	
10.	Approval of draft West Eynsham Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for consultation	Yes	No	Cabinet	18 November 2020	Consultation draft	
11.	Approval of East Witney draft Supplementary Planning Document for consultation	No	No	Cabinet	18 November 2020	None	
12.	Approvable of funding and associated matters for affordable housing, scheme at The Elms, Langford	Yes	No	Cabinet	18 November 2020	None	
13.	Approval of Policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No	No	Cabinet	18 November 2020	None	
14.	Consideration and approval of applications for Community Facilities Grants	Yes	No	Cabinet	18 November 2020	None	
15.	Consideration of annual Local Plan Monitoring Report	No	No	Cabinet	18 November 2020	None	

No.	Proposed Decision and (if applicable) reason(s) the matter is proposed to be considered in private	Key Decision (Yes/No)	Likely to be considered in private (Yes/No)	Decision-maker	Date of Decision	Documents	Notes
16.	Approval of East Chipping Norton draft Supplementary Planning Document for consultation	No	No	Cabinet	16 December 2020	None	
17.	Approval of North Witney Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Issues Paper for Consultation	No	No	Cabinet	16 December 2020	None	
18.	Approval of upgrade to West Oxfordshire's public space CCTV provision and monitoring arrangements	Yes	No	Cabinet	16 December 2020		Likely to first be considered by Economic & Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee
19.	Approval of Litter Bin replacement programme	Yes	No	Cabinet	16 December 2020		Likely to first be considered by Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
20.	Approval of Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22	No	No	Cabinet then Council	16 December 2020		
21.	Approval of revised draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document for consultation	No	No	Cabinet	16 December 2020	Previous draft, approved June 2020	



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 7 October 2020
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 7
Subject	Council Priorities and Service Performance Report 2020-21 Quarter One
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	All relevant Cabinet Members
Accountable officer	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Tel: (01993) 861658 Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	This report provides details of the Council's progress towards achieving its aims and priorities set out in the Council Plan 2020-2024, and service performance during Quarter One I
Annexes	Annex A – Council Priority report Annex B – Performance Indicator report
Recommendation	That the Committee reviews, and challenges as appropriate, performance for 2020-21 Quarter One.
Corporate priorities	Climate Action: Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance: Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No

I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Council monitors service performance and progress towards achieving the aim and priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.
- 1.2. Each quarter, performance and progress in those service areas relating to the work of this Committee are provided in this report.

2. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK - PERFORMANCE REPORTING

- 2.1. A new Council Plan 2020-2024 was approved by Council in January 2020. Although reporting on progress against the four year Plan commenced this quarter, the main priority for the Council was its response to Covid-19, and the subsequent recovery work which will be closely aligned to the overarching priorities of the Council Plan.
- 2.2. A new performance management framework is being developed; a much broader framework than previous frameworks. It sets out six key strands of information on which assurance needs to be provided, with a key shift in focus from performance monitoring to performance management:
 - Business analytics and service assurance
 - Place based measures and comparators
 - Publica Business Plan strategic actions
 - Council Plan priority actions
 - Project and programme management assurance
 - Risk and opportunity management
- 2.3. As part of the Business Analytics and Service Assurance strand, an initial review of performance indicators has been completed. Significant work is still required and it can be expected that the indicator set will flex as priorities change and gaps are identified.
- 2.4. This report is the first iteration of the newly styled service performance and council priority reports; they will evolve in line with the emerging Performance Management Framework as well as feedback from senior officers and Members.
- 2.5. A high level Commissioning Statement and the new performance management framework will be presented to Cabinet in October 2020. This will set out the relationship between Publica and the Council and their respective responsibilities. Publica's Executive Director (Commissioning) is accountable to the Council for the services commissioned from Publica, and also for the services commissioned by Publica from third parties on behalf of the Council. Publica must ensure that it provides the necessary information to the Council so it can assess whether the commissioned services are being delivered in accordance with the agreed quality and standard. The Council's Chief Executive is responsible for reviewing and approving the information provided in this report prior to its publication.
- 2.6. The Council's Chief Executive has received a report on progress towards achieving the Council's priorities and service performance. He has assessed performance in line with the high level Commissioning Statement, and confirms that overall, services have been delivered to the agreed quality and standard; and he was pleased to note that work is progressing on some of the actions set out in the Council Plan. The Chief Executive has also noted the significant impact of Covid-19 on communities, customers, services, and staff, and draws attention to the following:
 - When the nation went into lock down, a significant number of staff were redeployed to support our communities. The speed at which mechanisms were set up to deal with the response was impressive, for example the Community Help Hub, and the processing of business grants;

- Collaboration with our partners at a county-wide level was key to responding to the pandemic crisis; in particular, close coordination and good communication between the County, City and District Councils, with the NHS and OxLEP, to support vulnerable people and align programmes to support local businesses. Close partnership working with local communities and our partners will continue as the Council moves into the recovery phase;
- Many services have continued to operate without any visible reduction in service delivery. The majority of staff continue to work from home, enabled by robust ICT infrastructure and support. Some services have had to adapt and change the way that they do business which has been challenging but also presents opportunities for doing things differently in the future;
- The impact of Covid-19 on some services has been acute, and some services have had to cease operation, for example, our leisure centres were instructed to close. The Council agreed a financial package with GLL which has supported some leisure facilities to reopen on 25 July.

3. COUNCIL PRIORITY REPORT

- 3.1. During Q1, the Council's main priority was the response to Covid-19 and the commencement of the recovery phase; and this is the key theme running through this report. However, the Council has made progress on the actions in the Council Plan including work on the draft Investment Strategy and service improvement projects including development of our digital services. A full report is attached at [Annex A](#).

4. SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 4.1. On 23 March 2020, the nation went into lock down. A significant number of staff were redeployed to support local communities and businesses, while others continued to deliver services from home. Overall, many services have performed well with no visible reduction in quality or standard.
- 4.2. The services which relate to the work of this Committee are Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits; the relevant indicators are listed at the front of the Performance Indicator report at [Annex B](#) with pages 22 to 29 providing the further relevant information.
- 4.3. Of the nine indicators, six indicators achieved their targets (Green), one indicator achieved its target 'within tolerance' (Amber), and two indicators did not achieve their targets (Red). A full report is attached at [Annex B](#).

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN (LGO) ANNUAL REVIEW 2019/20

- 5.1. The Annual Review Letter 2020 for West Oxfordshire District Council sets out the complaints that were made against the Council in 2019/20, as well as the outcome of those complaints.
- 5.2. In total, the LGO received nine complaints/enquiries about this Council, which related mostly to Planning and Development (five); the other complaints/enquiries related to Housing (two), Environment Services (one) and Benefits and Tax (one). In the previous year, we received 11 complaints/enquiries, which mostly related to Planning and Development (five), and Environment Services (three).
- 5.3. Nine decisions were made by the LGO in 2019/20; five complaints were closed after initial enquiries; two complaints were referred back to the Council for a local resolution, and two complaints relating to Planning, were investigated in detail. The complaints investigated in detail by the LGO were not upheld.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. None

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1. None

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

8.1. None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1. None



COUNCIL PRIORITIES REPORT

April 2020 - June 2020

Our vision is to support West Oxfordshire to be fit for the future through:



1. Climate Action

Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity.



2. Healthy Towns and Villages

Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone.



3. A Vibrant District Economy

Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy.



4. Strong Local Communities

Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities.



5. Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population

Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for the wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire.



6. Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance

Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council.

Covid-19 response and recovery



952

Residents given
emergency support via the
Help Hub

Given the Council's responsibility for delivering services to over 100,000 residents, Covid-19 has been an unprecedented challenge which required us to react quickly to changing circumstances in order to support local business and economy, the voluntary and community sector and local residents. We have maintained essential services whilst redeploying staff to new areas of work to help deal with the crisis.

There has been a dynamic and inspiring community sector response across West Oxfordshire to the challenges introduced through the pandemic. Local groups, towns and villages have mobilised to support their communities and the Council has developed a Community Hub team to work effectively with voluntary sector partners and volunteers.



£27.1M

Total amount in business grants paid out
by West Oxfordshire District Council



84,750

waste and recycling containers
emptied weekly



20,306

Telephone enquiries dealt with
by the Council during COVID-19
lockdown



£16.9M

Total amount in relief to businesses paid out
by West Oxfordshire District Council

Collaboration with our partners at a County-wide level was required in order to respond to the crisis. In particular, close coordination and good communication between the County, City and District Councils, with the NHS and OxLEP, to support vulnerable people and align programmes to support local businesses.

As the response phase draws to a close the Council's focus has shifted to planning for recovery from the impacts of the pandemic and in the longer term, the District's renewal. The recovery and renewal work is being approached with a view to forming a Covid Recovery and Response Plan closely aligned to the overarching priorities of the Council Plan as they provide a helpful framework for ensuring that the wide ranging impacts of the pandemic are mitigated against and adapted to.

A Covid Recovery and Renewal Plan will articulate the Council's commitment to working with others to recover from the impact of the pandemic – the Council needs to build on its strengths in working with local communities, and with Oxfordshire's partners, that have been demonstrated during the early difficult months of the pandemic. Work is progressing on producing this Plan with the establishment of a Covid Advisory Group comprising Councillors working with Officers to consider how we will address new challenges and opportunities as restrictions ease and how the Council will support communities and businesses to thrive in a post-Covid world. A draft Covid Recovery and Renewal Plan will be considered by Full Council in October 2020.

Climate Action: Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity

The Carbon Action Plan is on track to be considered by Full Council in October 2020, and will identify and implement the actions and projects required for WODC to become a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030. This is underpinned by the Council's carbon accounting methodology which has been successfully peer-reviewed by independent consultants. The same consultants produced a report to inform the scope of Council emissions as a baseline for the Carbon Action Plan and strategy to achieve the Council's target to be carbon neutral by 2030.

In addition, the commitment to produce an overarching Climate Change Strategy which will be used to chart improvements in measurable environmental and biodiversity enhancements has also been progressed and is expected to be considered by Full Council in January 2021. Activity has focussed on consultation with a 4 week Climate Action Survey and Young People's competition launched in May. The Climate Action Survey results will inform the Council's next steps towards shaping both the Climate Change Strategy and related Biodiversity Plan. Early analysis indicates that there is clear support from the community for priorities aligning with themes on: energy & carbon reduction; biodiversity; green & active travel; water conservation; waste & recycling; development planning; communications and community engagement.

Regarding activity during Quarter 1 towards achieving biodiversity enhancements, the Council has now confirmed its commitment as a funding partner in the Oxfordshire woodlands mapping project which has the aim of doubling tree cover across Oxfordshire. This mapping work will contribute to our local knowledge base and spatial data on woodlands and will be of value not only to tree-growing objectives within a development planning context but also action being taken by the Council to increase woodland under the umbrella of its own Biodiversity Plan.

Participation in partnership activity towards biodiversity enhancements is of real value to the achievement of this Council Plan priority and it is positive to note that WODC is contributing to the Nature Recovery Network for the Oxfordshire which will eventually produce a Nature Recovery Strategy (a statutory requirement of the Environment Bill) that will endeavour to protect and enhance the natural environment as well as guiding the development of planning policies.

Moving to the built environment, the need for a review of current design and sustainability standards within new developments of West Oxfordshire was identified early on as a priority by the Council. Actions include assessing the viability of net-zero carbon as a standard for the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village; researching viability of Underground Refuse Systems at the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village, and addressing net-zero carbon within the draft Affordable Housing SPD (details under Housing priority). In addition to this, a Sustainability Checklist for Development Management which will inform standards and key performance indicators is in production. This will drive the achievement of lower carbon developments across the District.

Healthy Towns and Villages: Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone

The value in adopting a 'healthy place shaping' approach in new and existing developments is highlighted in the Council Plan. In a positive step towards meeting this ambition, WODC is working in partnership with Oxfordshire authorities to develop a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) toolkit and methodology which will be applied to the delivery of the local plan and major developments. HIA is a practical approach used to judge the effects a proposed development may have on the health and wellbeing of different groups of people. The findings of HIAs are used to make recommendations to decision makers as to how any negative health impacts of a development can be reduced, and any positive health impacts maximised.

A HIA methodology has been drafted by consultants in support of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 with the toolkit being published later in 2020. It is intended that this methodology will be used by developers and consultants when preparing major development proposals to help shape and inform design choices. Healthy Place Shaping has been further augmented by Policy 4 in the Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan which requires a 'Rapid Health Impact Assessment' to accompany any planning application for major development at the garden village. This must demonstrate alignment with the emerging Oxfordshire HIA methodology, to fully identify the needs of everyone in how they live and work, access and use all types of infrastructure, services and networks.

Consultants were commissioned to undertake a Built Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy for the District in March 2020, a significant step towards achieving this key action identified in the Council Plan. The initial stages of the process have involved an audit of current indoor leisure facilities stock across the District. Concurrently, Sport England has modelled leisure facility need against projected population growth for the District. In addition to this early preparatory work towards the Built Indoor Leisure Facility Strategy, a Focus Group to consider the need in the Witney area and scope for a relocated Windrush Leisure Centre ('Windrush 2') is anticipated. To further progress 'Windrush 2' a site identification study has commenced by Ellis Williams Architects Ltd.

The outputs of the initial audit, modelling against population growth and focus group outcomes will inform a needs analysis of indoor Leisure facilities – addressing current, latent and unmet need for built leisure facilities across West Oxfordshire. This will form the basis of the Built Indoor Leisure Strategy and associated Action Plan on which Cabinet is expected to take a decision in Autumn/ Winter 2020.

Note – The progression of Windrush 2 will be dependent upon the yet to be formed recommendations in the Built Indoor Leisure Strategy.

A Vibrant District Economy: Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Local Industrial Strategy

The Council Plan identified two strategic areas for economic growth which the Council is also committed to delivering through their inclusion in the Local Industrial Strategy: the Carterton Technology Hub and the Garden Village Science Park.

The Carterton Technology Hub Update: This project seeks to unleash the economic role, potential and value of Carterton through a new Technology Hub. Local market strengths include many small businesses with specialisms in high-tech manufacturing and engineering in addition to RAF Brize Norton. There is a local imbalance of jobs to workers leading to around 60% out-commuting (including to nearby Witney), indicating both the need and opportunity to diversify the local economy. A strategic outline case has been developed which has informed a proposition paper to the OxLEP, thus further evolving the business case for the project which was successfully made through its inclusion in the adopted Local Plan. Next steps include a detailed feasibility study and SWOT analysis informed by input from a wide range of stakeholders previously engaged in the concept through the Local Plan process. Carterton Town Council is identified as a potential lead partner – supported by WODC and involving the MOD, RAF, OxLEP, local businesses and residents.

The Salt Cross Science and Technology Park Update: Allocated as part of the new 'Garden Village' strategic development area in the adopted Local Plan, the newly named Salt Cross Garden Village includes a 40hectare science and technology park that will attract the best businesses giving them the space to grow and create high value jobs in line with the ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy. The Area Action Plan has been approved by Full Council and includes a policy detailing the requirements of the park which will deliver, within an extensive network of green and blue infrastructure, 80,000m² of science, technology, engineering and high tech related business floor space. Concurrently an Outline Planning Application has been received by site promotor, Grosvenor Estates, which proposes 57,000m² of B-Class land uses as part of an employment area with the proposed uses to be determined at the Reserved Matters Application stage of the planning process. Once the Area Action Plan has been adopted this will be used to set the policy context against which the planning application for Salt Cross will be determined, of which the Science and Technology Park is part.

In close proximity to the Salt Cross Science and Technology Park is Hanborough Station and indeed this is identified within the Council Plan as a focus for partnership effort to secure new and upgraded infrastructure, including short and long-term enhancements to the Cotswold railway line. In Quarter 1 the Hanborough Station Sub-Group of the North Cotswold Line Task Force has been established, bringing together the five county councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships covering the 86-mile route between Hereford, Worcester and Oxford, together with the Cotswold Line Promotion Group, Network Rail and the Great Western Railway. In January 2020, the Task Force submitted its case to the government for a doubled two trains per hour North Cotswold Line service between Worcestershire, Oxford and London and this is now being assessed by the Department for Transport and Network Rail. In parallel, the Task Force set out its aspirations for additional local trains as a metro-style service between Hanborough and Oxford to support West Oxfordshire housing

growth, the visitor economy and to encourage a shift from road to rail for journeys to Oxford or London. The Sub-Group will develop the case for these local services, plans for expanded passenger facilities at Hanborough Station, and engage with local stakeholders and communities.

On the theme of lower carbon transportation, the value of provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) as a means of improving the public realm in our town centres was identified as an action towards achieving a vibrant district economy, in addition to zero carbon ambitions. Two approaches to this are underway:

- **WODC direct procurement of Electric Vehicle Charging Point (EVCP) in Council-owned car parks:** BP Chargemaster is working on behalf of the Council to develop a full costing for the installation of EVCP in, initially, two Council-owned car parks. An application with the District Network Operator (DNO) to request costings associated with energy utility and infrastructure requirements for a power supply to the EVCP is currently with the DNO and is requiring resolution.
- **EVCP in partnership with Innovate-UK funded, Oxfordshire Park and Charge Project:** WODC Cabinet has endorsed a partnership approach to the second phase of EVCP provision in Council-owned car parks across the District and County beyond. A Financial Agreement has been signed signifying this commitment and the necessary surveys and viability assessments to progress EVCP delivery are underway.

Additionally an Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Strategy is being developed to set a consistent design and technical standard for EV infrastructure across the County. This strategy is being co-ordinated by the iHub Innovation Team at OCC, with partnership involvement of WODC and other Oxfordshire authorities.

Strong Local Communities: Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities

The response to the pandemic has shone a spotlight on the importance of this priority – we have witnessed a dynamic and inspiring community sector response across West Oxfordshire to the challenges introduced by the pandemic. Local Groups, towns and villages have mobilised to support their communities and the Council established a Community Response Hub to further augment these efforts and work effectively with voluntary sector partners and volunteers. There has also been a strong collaborative effort to tackle the crisis, where the Council has sought, together with the County, City and District Councils, the NHS and OxLEP to support vulnerable people and align programmes to support local businesses.

These collaborative efforts between ourselves and partners, and the communities we serve must continue and be built upon in order to respond to any local Covid-19 outbreaks, address any local food security issues, and meet any duties to support those who are vulnerable. This work will be ongoing as necessary at the same time as continuing to make progress on other aspects of the Council Plan identified under this priority, as described further below.

A commitment in the Council Plan to direct our management of property assets through a new Asset Management Plan to achieve improvements in the joint use of sites through the One Public Estate programme has moved a step forward with completion of a series of feasibility reviews of sites in Welch Way. Following this we are considering scope for feasibility work on partnership owned sites to consider options for development that suit all partner's needs – in accordance with the principles of the One Public Estate Programme. The next action will be to undertake a draft scoping exercise to which input will be invited from all partner organisations.

A further commitment to working with partners to promote West Oxfordshire as a visitor attraction (whilst protecting its essential character) is made in the Council Plan and the pandemic has placed a new emphasis on the visitor economy as tourism patterns have changed with a drop in international visitors to the District (and the wider Cotswolds) against a backdrop of greater domestic tourism demand. A bid for £125k to the Discover England Fund (£40m government fund originally designed to only target overseas visitors which has now largely repurposed for the domestic market) has been submitted to enable increasing exposure of new/little known experiences to a wider market. A decision will be known in September. Furthermore, a survey has been launched of local tourism businesses which is giving an overview of some of the challenges faced by the visitor economy in the wake of the pandemic. This information will assist in targeting the Council's approach to supporting the visitor economy to recover and renew post-Covid. Some particular patterns of note from the survey are:

- A number not intending to open before August and some not before next year, particularly those reliant on overseas visitors eg tour companies, or B&B's who are averse to having visitors into their homes

- More than half have signed up to VisitBritain's covid compliance accreditation scheme 'We're Good to Go'
- A third only taking advance online bookings (highlighting the need for digitalisation of tourism businesses)
- All respondents anticipate they will be operating at half capacity

Given the significant contribution the visitor economy makes to West Oxfordshire it is evident that the need for support for this sector will be particularly acute and requires focus as we prepare for recovery and renewal post-Covid.

Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population: Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for a wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire

A significant step towards achieving this priority has been accomplished with the publication of the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (AH SPD) which is being consulted on over summer 2020. Once adopted the detailed guidance it provides will steer the successful implementation of Local Plan Policy H3 on the delivery of affordable housing. Following review of consultation responses received, a revised draft SPD will be published in Autumn 2020 for a further, final period of public consultation before being formally adopted. At this stage the AH SPD will become a material planning consideration.

Local Plan Policy H3 requires the provision of on-site affordable housing as part of larger market housing schemes of 11 or more units varying by location from 35% - 50%. In addition, smaller market housing schemes of 6-10 units within the Cotswolds AONB are required to make a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing within the District. The policy also addresses the issue of housing mix and the provision of affordable housing in rural areas including through rural exception sites. By providing additional guidance on the implementation of these requirements, the AH SPD seeks to set out a range of options and requirements to secure delivery of successful affordable housing schemes across the District that meet the housing needs of our changing population.

Options for delivery are presented including criteria for identifying qualifying sites; the size of affordable homes needed, the preferred tenure mix, rural exception sites and self and custom build schemes. Delivery is addressed through requirements relating to design criteria, accessibility and adaptability, space standards, zero carbon homes and modern methods of construction. Specific delivery mechanisms are articulated including housing options for the Armed Forces and also Key Workers and Community Led Housing.

Finally, exploration of two new routes to affordable housing in the District are presented:

- *The Blenheim Approach:* WODC is working closely with Blenheim Estate on an innovative model for delivering an increased level of affordable housing at between 60 – 80% of market rental costs. This model has been successfully implemented in Long Hanborough and will also be offered on their other sites for development at Woodstock East. It is the intention of Blenheim to retain ownership of the rental properties so they can be held in perpetuity for local people, especially those within the key worker categories.

- *Partnerships with Legacy Landowners:* WODC is also interested in partnering with other legacy landowners to accelerate delivery of affordable housing in the District and the AH SPD invites those landowners (particularly in smaller rural settlements) who are considering development as part of their long term legacy planning to engage with them to explore the scope for delivering affordable housing through rural exception sites.

Further to the achievement of the AH SPD, progress towards the delivery of Shared Ownership of Affordable Housing in Witney has been made. In partnership with the Oxfordshire Growth Deal and Heylo Housing, WODC has been able to pursue the acquisition of four apartments of affordable housing rather than them being sold on the open market as originally intended. As a partner on the Oxfordshire Growth Deal, the Council has benefited from their partnership with Heylo Housing (a Registered Provider) who are able to negotiate bulk purchase of new homes from developers for use as shared ownership housing. Over the longer term the ambition is for 100 new affordable homes across all Growth Deal partner authorities to be acquired in this way, of which it is anticipated 20% of these will be within West Oxfordshire.

Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance: Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council

It has been the case for some time that local government finances have been constrained in part by local government finance grant cuts and increasing service costs pressures. These have been further amplified by the pandemic (greater draw on Council services, extraordinary service costs and lost revenue streams) and this, coupled with future limitations to incentive based funding such as the New Homes Bonus, present the Council with a challenge to match delivery ambitions to our revenue stream.

An Investment Strategy has therefore been drafted (and due for consideration by Full Council in October 2020) which sets out a range of tools and activities to help improve the general approach to matching income and expenditure across the activities of the District Council. The strategy starts from a premise that there is a significant funding gap that needs to be closed and capital investment is a major tool available to the Council to achieve this so long as it covers the revenue implications of that investment and makes an appropriate return. Capital Investment provides a route to delivering the ambitious programme of the Council set out in the Council Plan.

The Council is also undertaking a range of service improvement projects which will focus on people, processes and technology. During Q1, members approved the contract award to Civiva for a new Revenues and Benefit system for use across the partnership which will deliver effective, efficient and modern Revenues and Benefits Services. A full project plan is in place to upgrade Forest's system, and then to migrate Cotswold (December 2020) and West (January 2021) to Civiva in time for annual billing and benefit uprating. In May 2020 all three systems will be merged which will allow officers across the partnership to access all cases. There are two major benefits:

- customers will be able to self-serve for example, notify the Council of changes online; this will reduce the need to send out paper documents which is costly, and in turn will reduce our carbon footprint.
- the streamlining of processes and the ability to perform one annual billing process and one benefit uprating process across the partnership, saving huge amounts of time and effort.

Our Salesforce platform is used by Customer Services across the partnership and every day it manages over 1500 customer interactions.

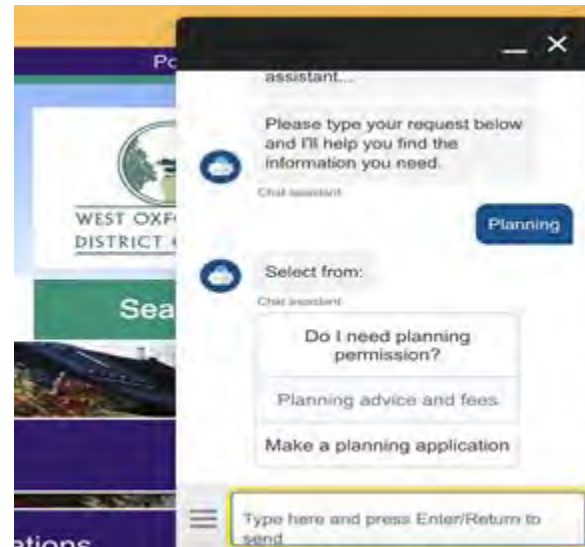
The Live Chat capability which was launched on the Council's website in January allowing customers to interact in real time with Customer Services, also proved useful in supporting the CS team to handle the demand created by Covid-19 as well as the change to the waste contract.

In July, the Salesforce Einstein BOT was introduced to the Live Chat process which allows the customer to connect to an AI BOT which will attempt to automatically answer the questions. This service is available 24/7, although during working hours, our customers will still have the option of conversing with a real person.

In May, Salesforce was used to support the Discretionary Business Grants process. An online form /flow was built in less than two weeks and was able to perform eligibility check so that we only received valid grant applications.

Once the application was received, for the first time, Salesforce was used by both Customer Services and the Back Office to process the application.

Salesforce was also used to create the necessary payment files for processing through the General Ledger and our BACS payment systems.





Delivering great services locally

PERFORMANCE REPORT:
April 2020 - June 2020

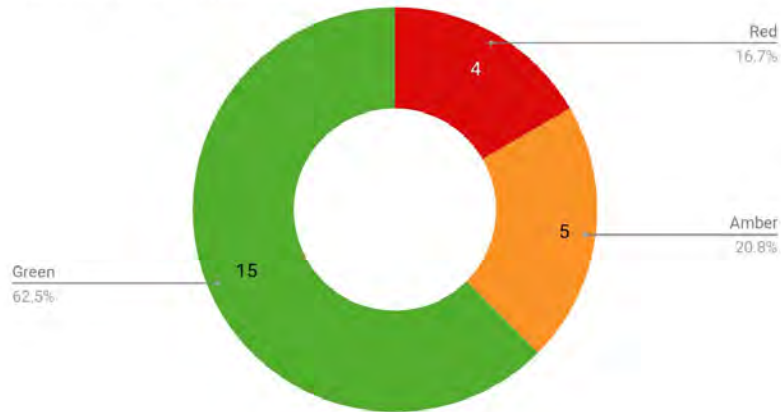
KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS LIST

Finance and Management O & S Committee	Economic and Social O & S Committee	Environment O & S Committee
Customer satisfaction – face to face	Number of households living in emergency accommodation for under 28 days	Number of fly tips collected
Customer satisfaction – web	Number of households living in emergency accommodation for over 28 days	Percentage of fly tips that result in an enforcement action taking place (defined as a warning letter, fixed penalty notice, simple caution or prosecution)
Customer satisfaction – telephone	Number of Long Term Empty properties	Percentage of high risk notifications (including food poisoning outbreaks, anti-social behaviour, contaminated private water supplies, workplace fatalities or multiple serious injuries) risk assessed within one working day
Percentage of calls responded to within 20 seconds	Percentage of major planning applications determined	Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales
Percentage of telephone calls abandoned by the customer before being answered	Percentage of minor planning applications determined	Residual household waste per household (kg)
(Cumulative) Percentage of council tax collected	Percentage of other planning applications determined	(Cumulative) Percentage of household waste recycled
(Cumulative) Percentage of business rates collected	Percentage of appeals allowed	Number of missed bin per 100,000 scheduled collections
(Cumulative) Average number of days taken to process new housing benefit claims	(Cumulative) Number of affordable homes delivered	Total hours spent undertaking on and off-street parking enforcement visits
(Cumulative) Average number of days taken to process housing benefit change of circumstances	Percentage of land charge searches dispatched within 10 working days	
(Cumulative) Percentage of housing benefit overpayment due to LA error/Admin delay	Number of visits to leisure centres	

KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

At a glance...

Summary of Performance



Indicator	Status
Customer satisfaction - phones	Green
Customer satisfaction - F2F	n/a
Customer satisfaction - website	Red
% calls responded within 20 secs	Green
% abandoned calls	Amber
CT collection rate	Green
NNDR collection rate	Green
Average days to process HB new claims	Green
Average days to process HB change events	Green
% HB overpayment	Red
Households in Emergency Accomodation under 28 days	Red
Households in Emergency Accommodation over 28 days	Red
% major applications determined within time	Green
% minor applications determined within time	Green
% others applications determined within time	Amber
% appeals allowed	Green
Affordable homes delivered	Green
% land charge searches dispatched within time	Green
% high risk notifications assessed within time	Green
% high risk food premises inspected within time	Amber
Residual waste per household (kg)	Green
% overall recycling rate	Green
Missed bins per 100,000	Amber
Leisure visits	Amber
Parking enforcement hours	Amber

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Overall those services that have been able to continue service delivery have performed well, despite the impact of Covid-19 on resources as well as workloads. Some services have had to cease operation and / or implement new ways of working in order to deliver their services. A number of the indicators which are 'red' and 'amber' have been affected wholly or partly by Covid-19.

There does not appear to be a significant detriment to limiting the delivery of services to online, virtual or phone; and customer satisfaction for services delivered by phone remains high.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer satisfaction

Face to face - no surveys due to Covid19

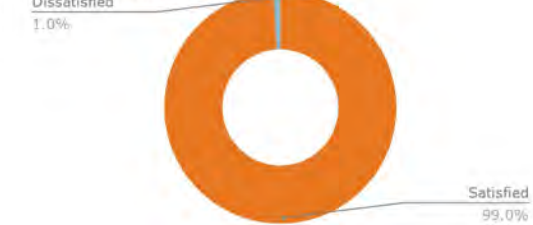


Website

49 Respondents

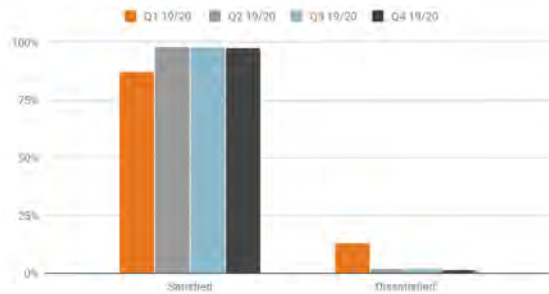


Phone
734 Respondents

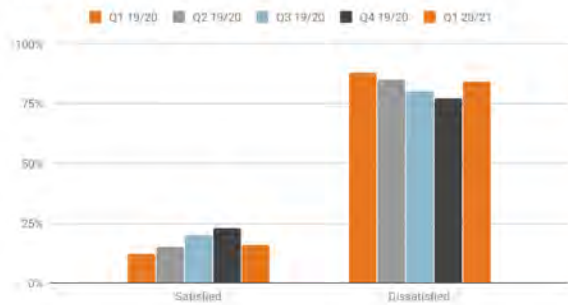


What's the trend?

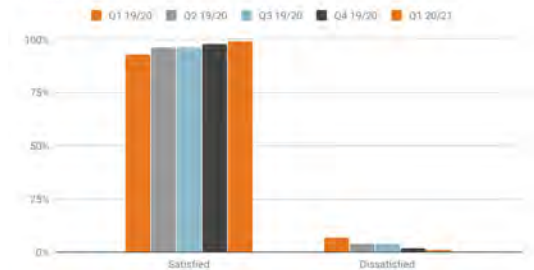
Face to Face



Web



Phone

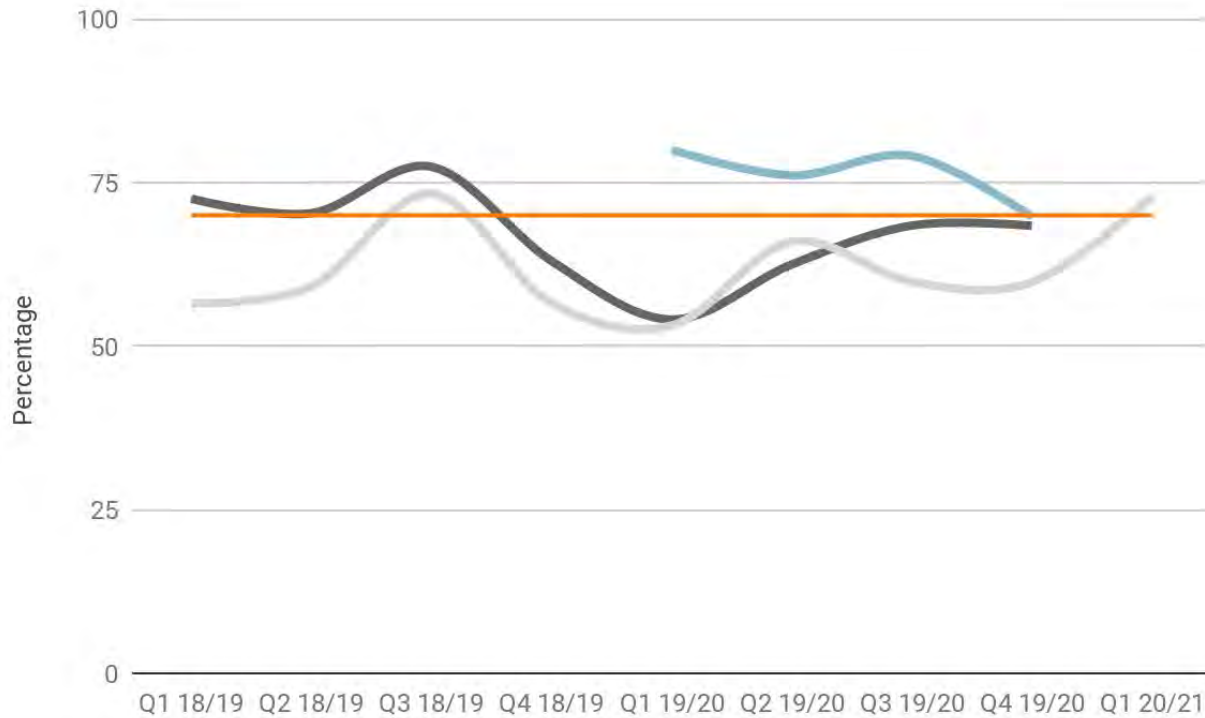


OBSERVATION

Satisfaction with services delivered face to face and telephone remains high. Due to covid-19, the Council closed its reception areas and therefore no face to face surveys were completed.

Website data suggested that improvements were needed to ensure Council websites are user friendly and allow people to transact with us, as well as acting as a source of information. A new website went live on 12 March, and is still undergoing improvements to the content. It is too early to expect to see significant improvements in the satisfaction rating, and the small number of respondents (49) is likely to skew the results

Percentage of calls responded to within 20 seconds



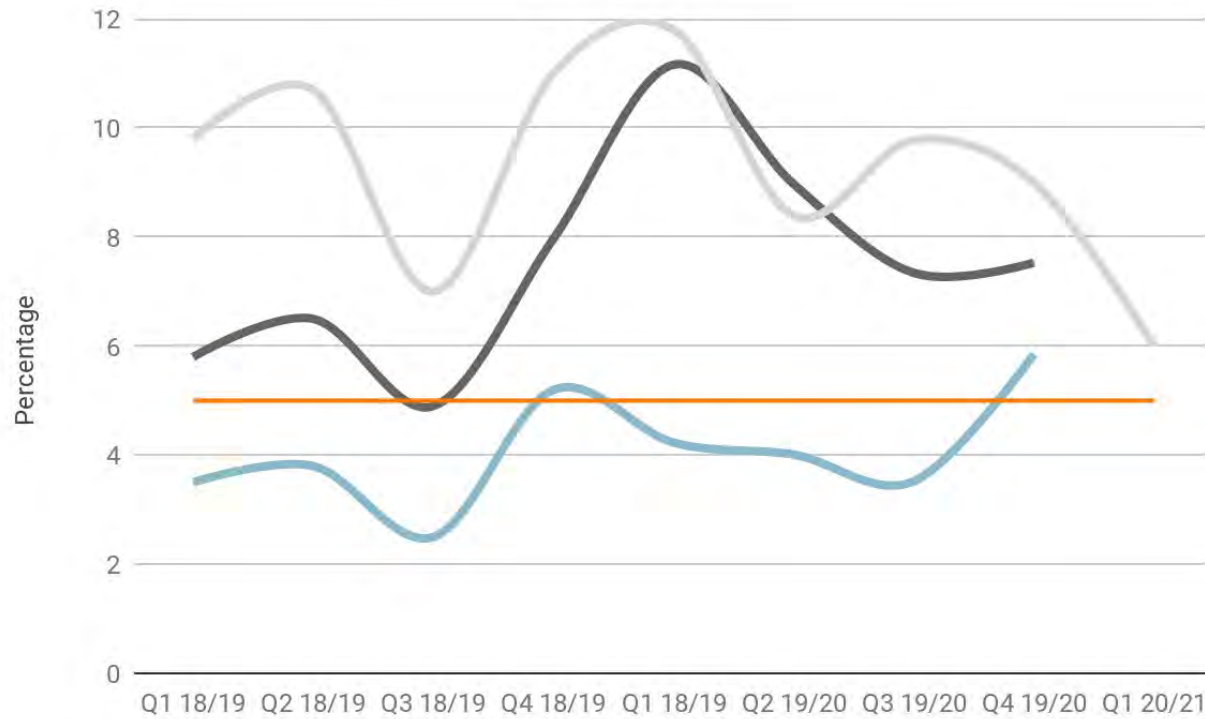
OBSERVATION

For a large part of 2019/20 performance was affected by the implementation of the new CRM system and further enhancements that took time to 'bed in', as well as turnover of staff.

There were higher workloads in 2019-20 Q4 including a spike in calls relating to garden waste renewals, and to Covid-19. The transfer of five staff who usually provide face to face services to the phones has helped to improve performance levels.

The Council has started to offer some face to face appointments for those customers who cannot access services by other methods

Percentage of telephone calls abandoned by the customer before being answered



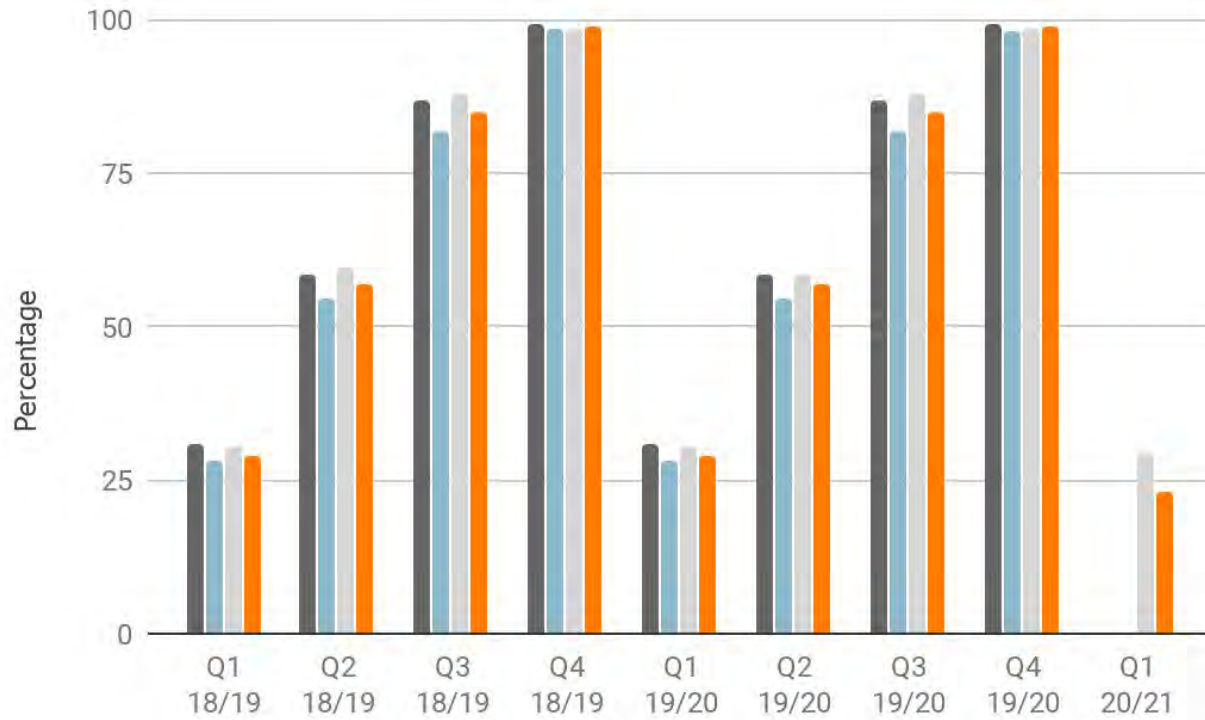
OBSERVATION:

Historically, the service has experienced capacity issues caused by turnover and the implementation of a new CRM system. The transfer of staff from the face to face sites to the phones has contributed to the improved performance

Revenues and Benefit

Percentage of council tax collected (cumulative)

Target
 Cotswold
 Forest of Dean
 West Oxfordshire



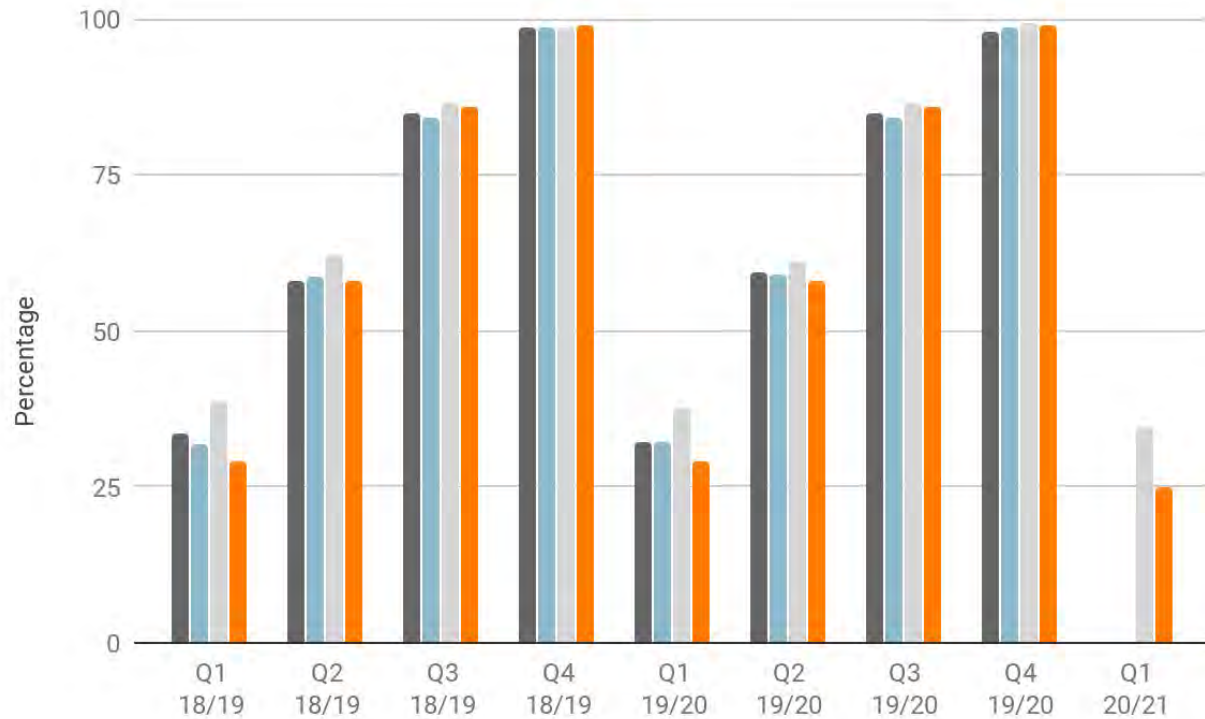
OBSERVATION:

At the end of Q1, there was a slight decrease in the collection rate compared to previous years.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, all recovery action was paused following government guidance and Member decision. The service is working with customers to re-align payment instalments to potentially run between June 2020 and March 2021.

The service sent out 'soft' reminders at the end of the quarter

Percentage of business rates collected (cumulative)



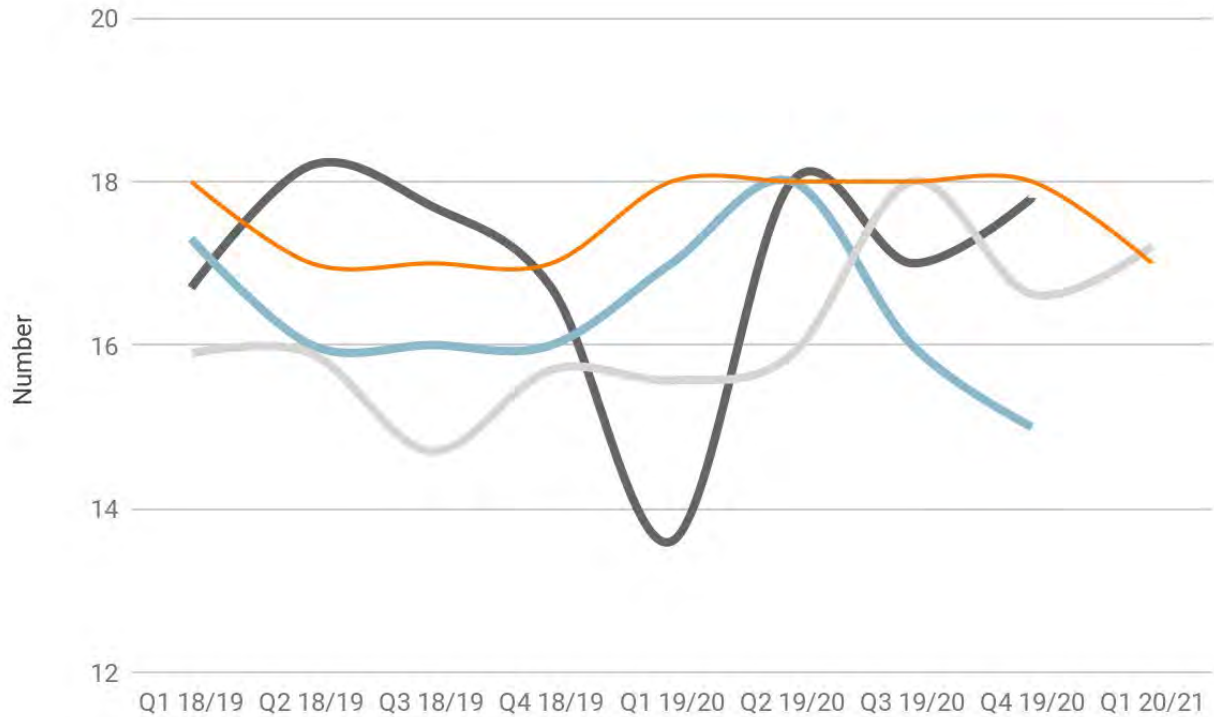
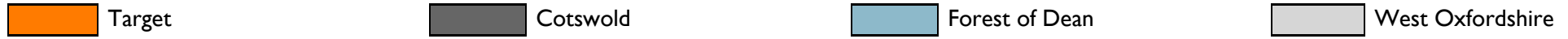
OBSERVATION:

The collection rate at the end of Q1 was lower than previous years.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 and the lock down, many businesses were closed in Q1 and all recovery action was paused. The service is advising and supporting businesses, and businesses are able to delay payment instalments to June.

A high proportion of businesses have had expanded retail relief (shops and businesses that customers are able to visit) which means that their business rates for the year have been waived. The Council will be reimbursed for these waived payments through grants from the government.

Average number of days taken to process new housing benefit claims (cumulative)



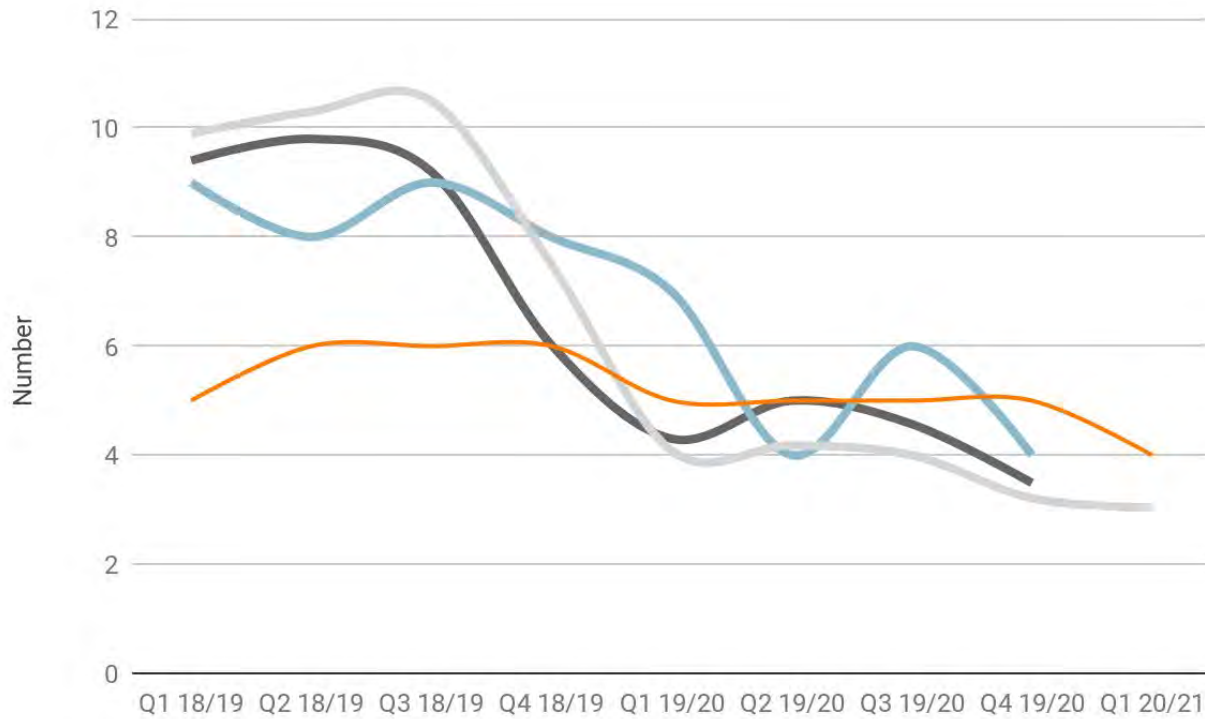
OBSERVATION:

There was an increase in temporary accommodation claims due to Covid-19 which has resulted in a slight increase in average processing times. These types of claims are difficult to administer as claimants may be placed outside of the District or have difficulty returning forms to the Council especially during lock down.

The service was able to access external support 'on demand' which helped to manage workloads.

Note that historically the quarterly targets have been profiled and have generally been maintained at 17 or 18 days. In comparison the shire average is around 20 days

Average number of days taken to process housing benefit change of circumstances (cumulative)



OBSERVATION:

Overall, the indicator is currently showing sustained improvements

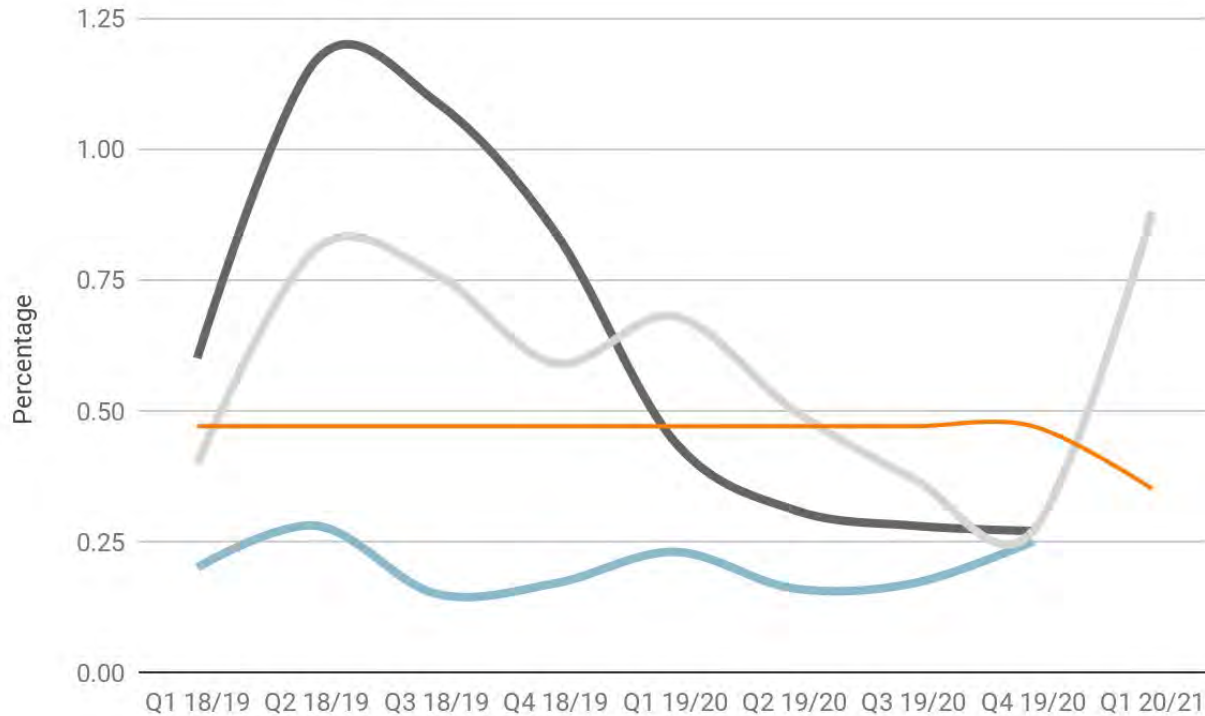
The number of Universal Credit claims has increased due to the impact of Covid-19, which in turn has resulted in an increase in changes that affect housing benefit.

The service was able to access support from an external service 'on demand' which has helped to to manage workloads.

Note that historically the quarterly targets have been profiled and have generally been maintained at 5 or 6 days. A more stringent target of 4 days has been set for 2020-21

Percentage of housing benefit overpayment due to LA error/Admin delay (cumulative)

Target
 Cotswold
 Forest of Dean
 West Oxfordshire



OBSERVATION:

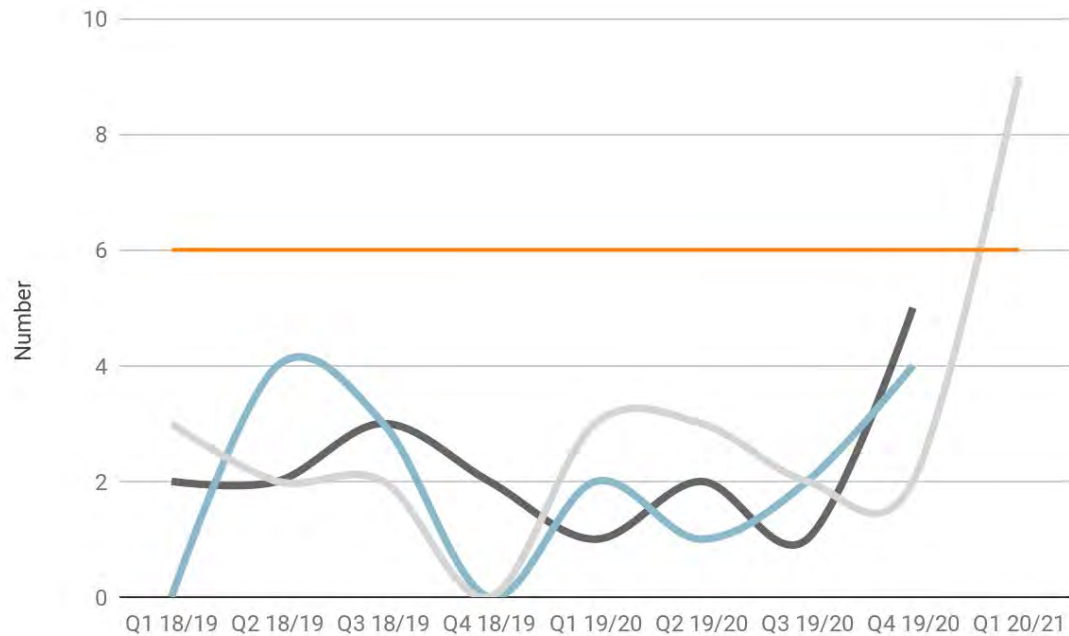
We are continuing to involve a number of staff in quality assurance. Due to the high volume of change of circumstances, we take a sampling approach and target areas which we know have high error rates such as calculation of earnings.

The majority of the overpayment in Q1 related to LA error (0.84%). There were a small number of errors relating to high value overpayments in Q4 which were amended in Q1

Housing Support

Number of households living in emergency accommodation for under 28 days

Target Cotswold Forest of Dean West Oxfordshire

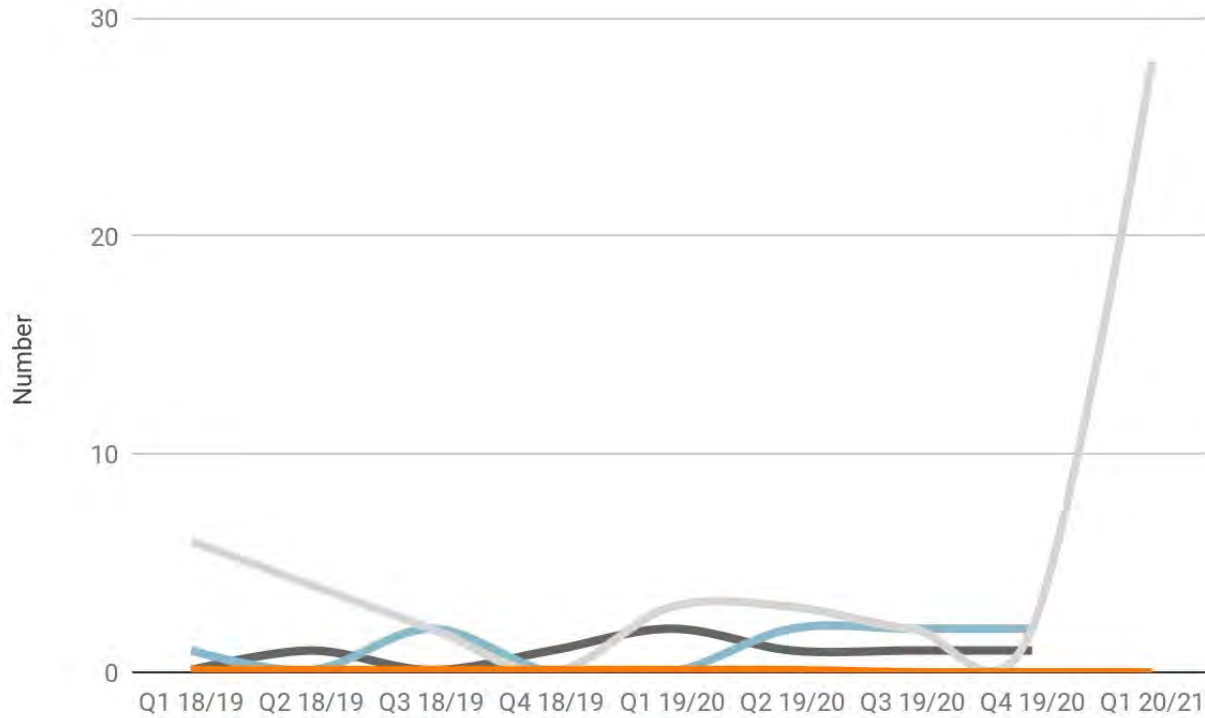


OBSERVATION:

Due to Covid-19, the number of households living in emergency accommodation is rising. All clients who are rough sleeping or at risk of imminent homelessness regardless of priority need who have approached the Council have been placed in emergency accommodation.

The Housing team is both placing clients and procuring accommodation, working with Property services and Estates. The Council is using a mixture of holiday let accommodation, and pubs with B & B accommodation and is also able to utilise accommodation available across the partnership

Number of households living in emergency accommodation for over 28 days

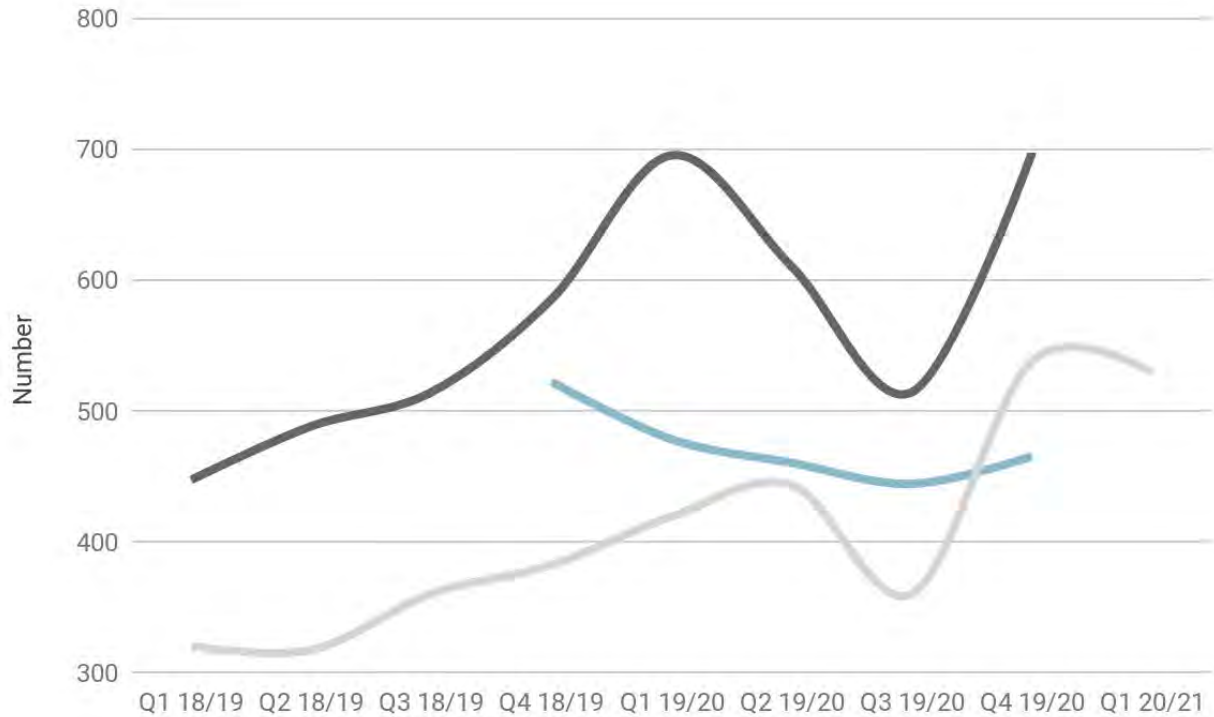


OBSERVATION:

Due to Covid-19, the number of households living in emergency accommodation is rising. All clients who are rough sleeping or at risk of imminent homelessness regardless of priority need who have approached the Council have been placed in emergency accommodation. The Housing team is both placing clients and procuring accommodation, working with Property services and Estates

Number of Long Term Empty properties

Cotswold
 Forest of Dean
 West Oxfordshire



OBSERVATION:

The number of long term empty properties has increased over the last six months due to government instruction to pause house moves in order to contain Covid-19. Furthermore, 44 housing association properties are awaiting demolition.

The LTE officer monitors and works with landlords to support them to bring their properties back into use, however, there is a reluctance to rent to households on the housing register

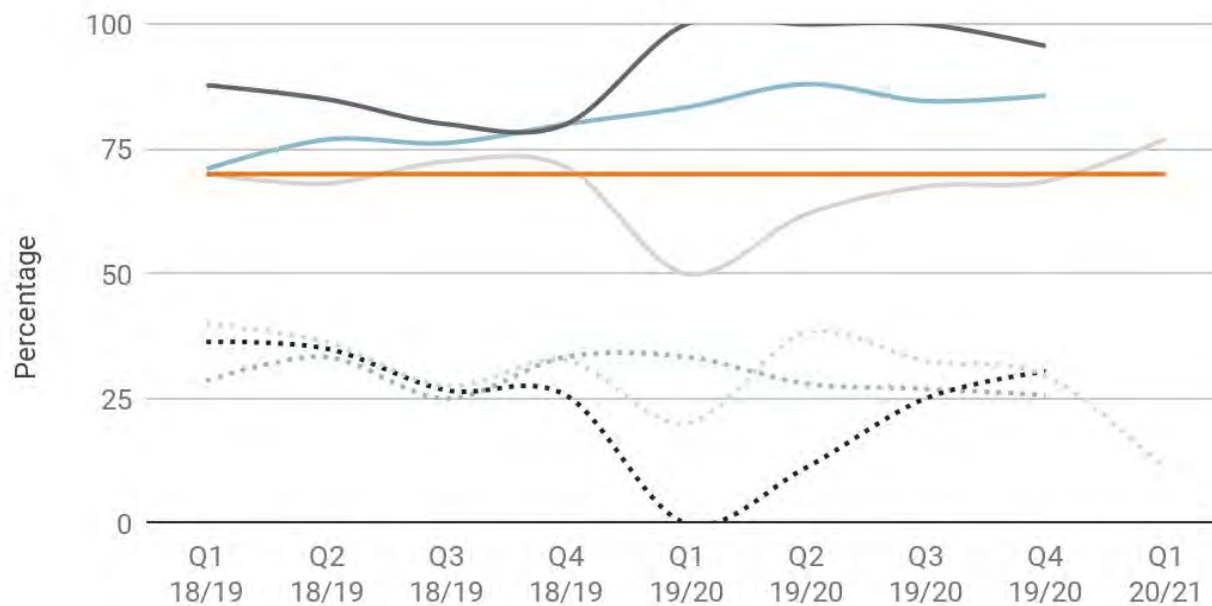
Planning and Strategic Housing

Percentage of major planning applications determined

% of all applications completed within an agreed timeframe



% of all application completed within 13 weeks



OBSERVATION:

Nine major applications determined in the quarter, a lower number in comparison to Q1 of the previous year (13).

Performance was affected as the team moved into lock down; there was no ability to hold Planning Committees and the schemes of delegation did not enable them to be determined. The subsequent move to virtual committees has resolved this issue albeit that the restrictions on site visits, no physical meetings with agents and staff remote working adds considerable delay/complexity to the process and is affecting on-going performance now that the volume of applications received has returned to normal levels. A greater proportion of applications are taking longer than the 13 weeks and would be out of time if an extension of time had not been agreed.

The chart for the planning performance measures has been separated to demonstrate the number of applications that are completed within the set time frames and the number that are completed as a result of an agreed extension of time.

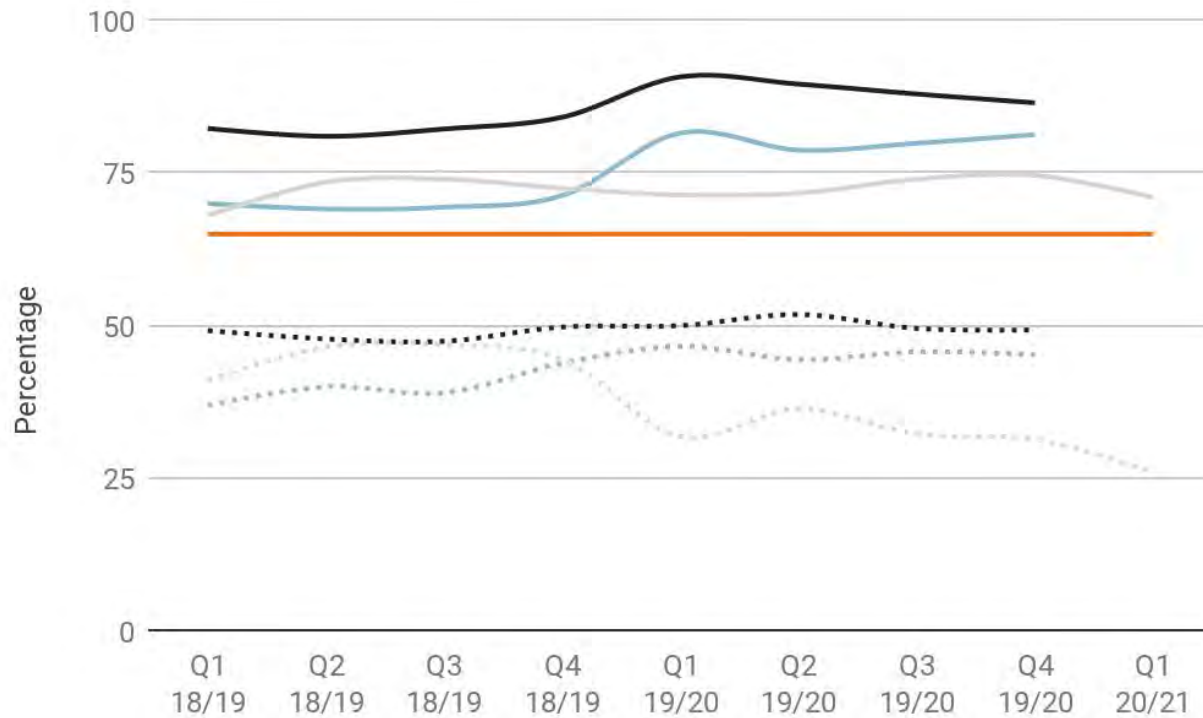
Extensions of times are often a result of consultees requesting changes to the scheme or because the consultee response is essential but has not been received within the timetable. They are also used where officers are working proactively with applicants to improve schemes and make developments acceptable.

Percentage of minor planning applications determined

% of all applications completed within agreed timescales



% of all applications completed within 8 weeks



OBSERVATION:

76 minor applications determined in the quarter, a lower number in comparison to Q1 of the previous year (128).

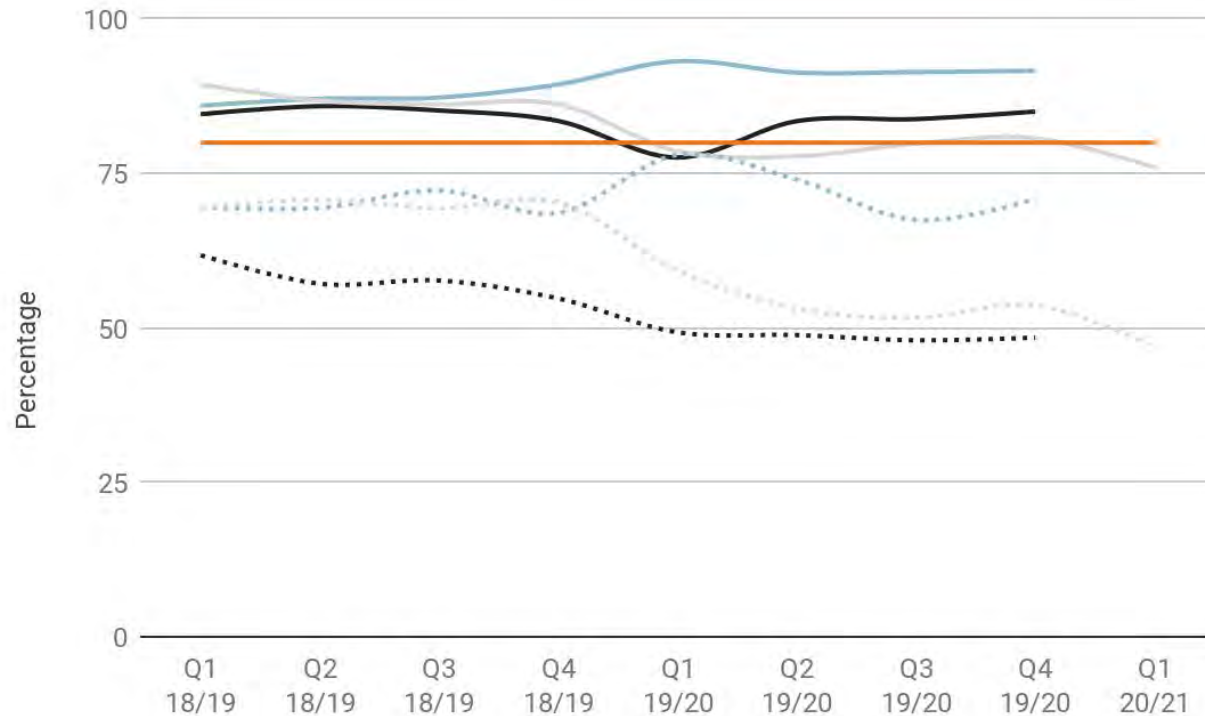
Performance was affected as the team moved into lock down; restrictions on site visits, no physical meetings with agents and staff remote working adds considerable delay/complexity to the process and is affecting on-going performance now that the volume of applications received has returned to normal levels. A greater proportion of applications are taking longer than the eight weeks and would be out of time if an extension of time had not been agreed

Percentage of other planning applications determined

% of all applications completed within agreed timescales



% of all applications completed within 8 weeks



OBSERVATION:

228 other applications determined in the quarter, a lower number in comparison to Q1 of the previous year (300).

Performance was affected as the team moved into lock down; restrictions on site visits, no physical meetings with agents and staff remote working adds considerable delay/complexity to the process and is affecting on-going performance now that the volume of applications received has returned to normal levels. A greater proportion of applications are taking longer than the eight weeks and would be out of time if an extension of time had not been agreed

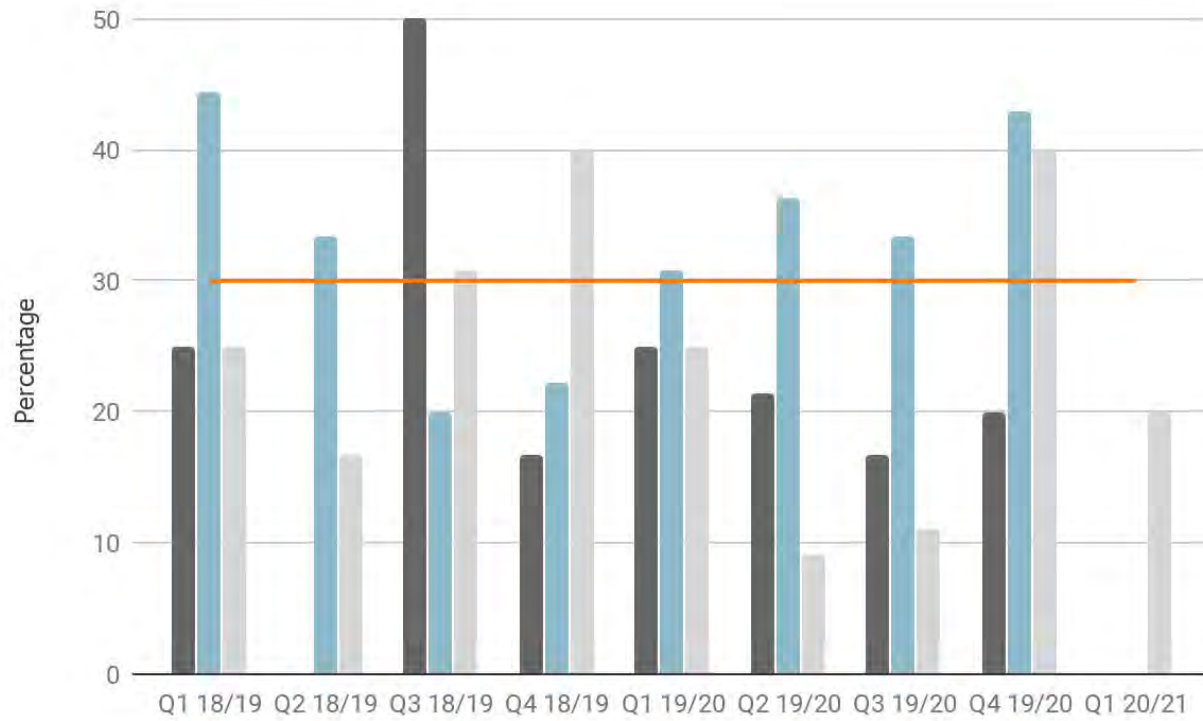
Percentage of appeals allowed

Target

Cotswold

Forest of Dean

West Oxfordshire

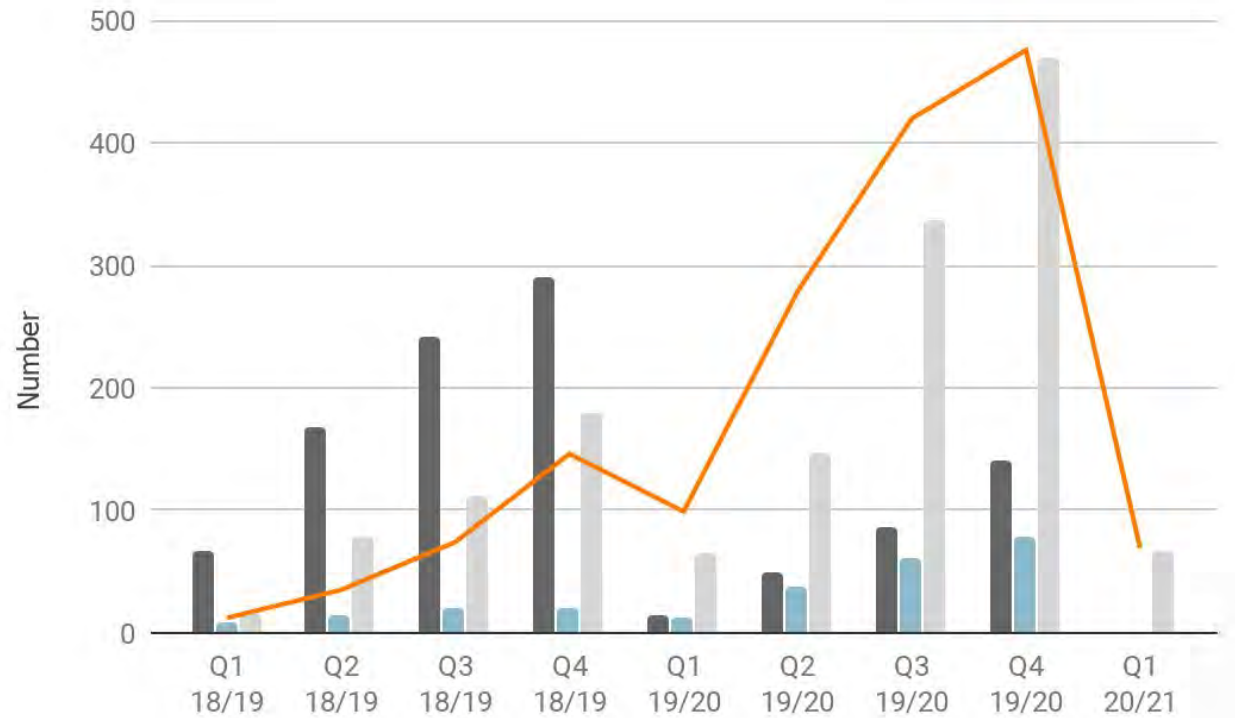


OBSERVATION:

One of the five appeals was allowed

Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)

Target
 Cotswold
 Forest of Dean
 West Oxfordshire



OBSERVATION:

Sixty-seven affordable homes were delivered in Q1 including 15 at Thornbury Rd, Eynsham, 18 at Barwood, Nethercote Road, 12 at West Witney (Persimmon) and 12 at Bloor, E. Carterton.

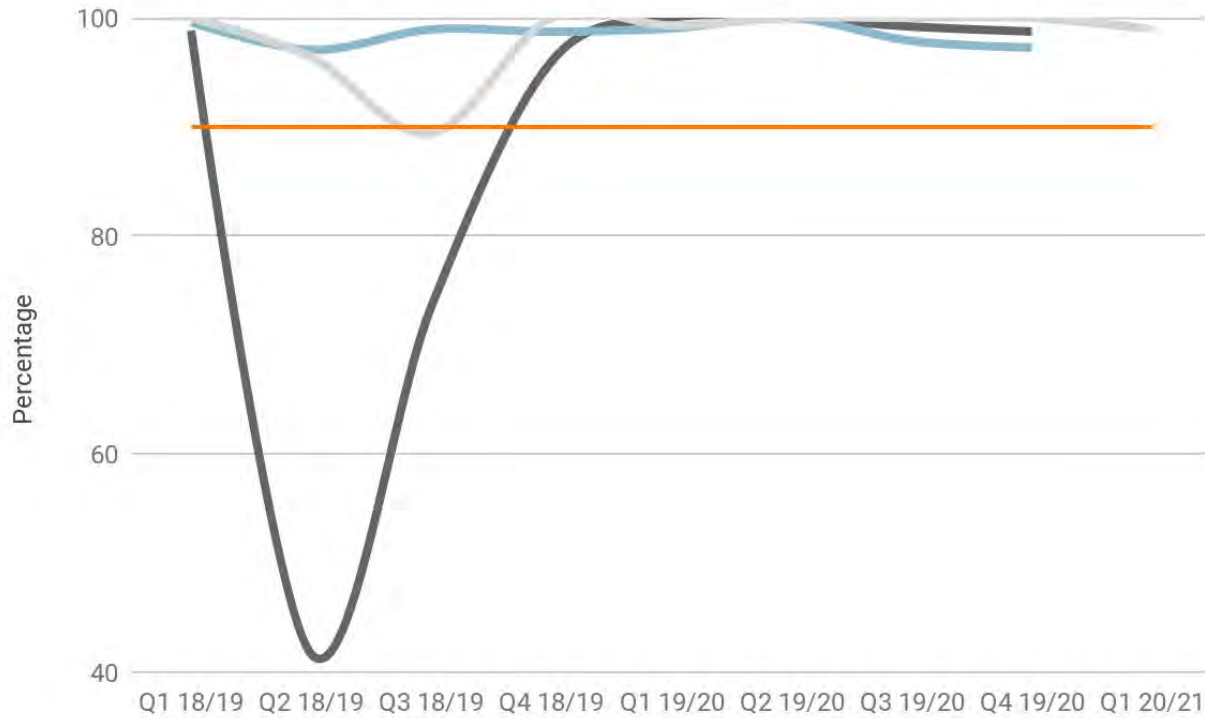
Due to the impact of Covid-19, sites were closed or working with a reduced number of staff from late March to early May.

Registered providers have received updated programmes from developers, who are also advising that programmes could be subject to change as the year progresses and further disruption relating to the virus emerge. At this stage, the forecast still shows a healthy number of completions this year.

There are challenges around managing hygiene and social distancing, as well as reconfiguring and increasing welfare facilities, and considering how trades are managed.

Percentage of land charge searches dispatched within 10 working days

Target Cotswold Forest of Dean West Oxfordshire

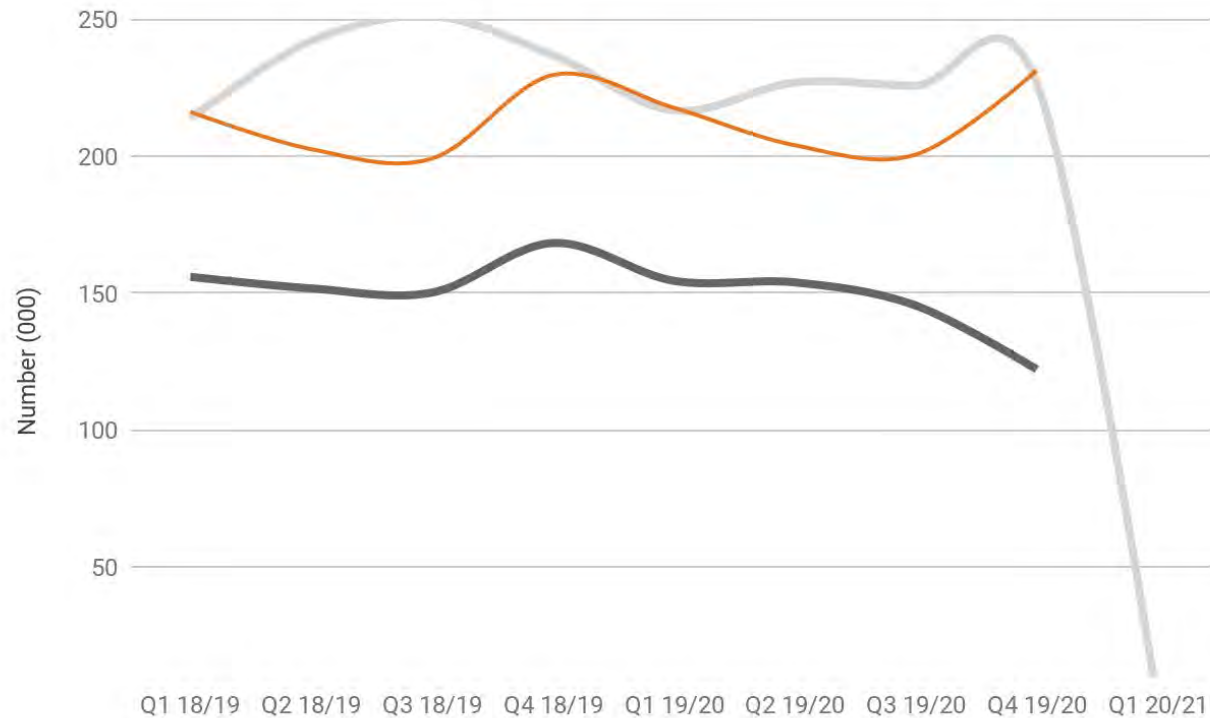


OBSERVATION:
The service processed 288 official land charge searches, of which 285 searches were dispatched within 10 working days.
Overall, the service has maintained a high level of service delivery.

Leisure

Number of visits to leisure centres

Target Cotswold West Oxfordshire



OBSERVATION:

This indicator has been set to 'amber' in recognition that the service was unable to operate during Q1.

Memberships were frozen from 20 March as the nation went into lock down; and there is an option for members to continue to freeze their memberships.

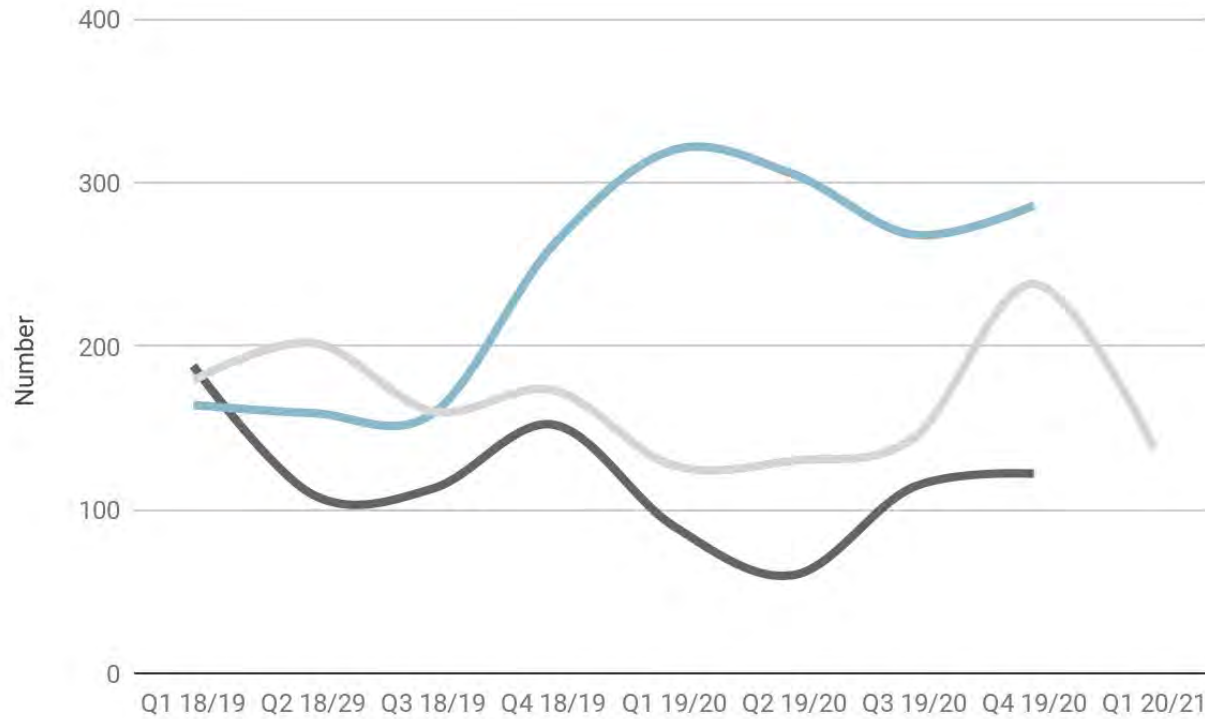
West Oxfordshire District Council is working with GLL Better to agree a financial recovery package to help restart the leisure service.

Following the implementation of Covid-19 protocols including putting hand sanitisers in place, one way systems, social distancing measures, and mandatory pre-booking of sessions, some of the Council's leisure facilities were reopened by GLL Better on 25 July. Further facilities and services will be opened as the recovery stage progresses

Environmental and Regulatory

Number of fly tips collected

Cotswold Forest of Dean West Oxfordshire



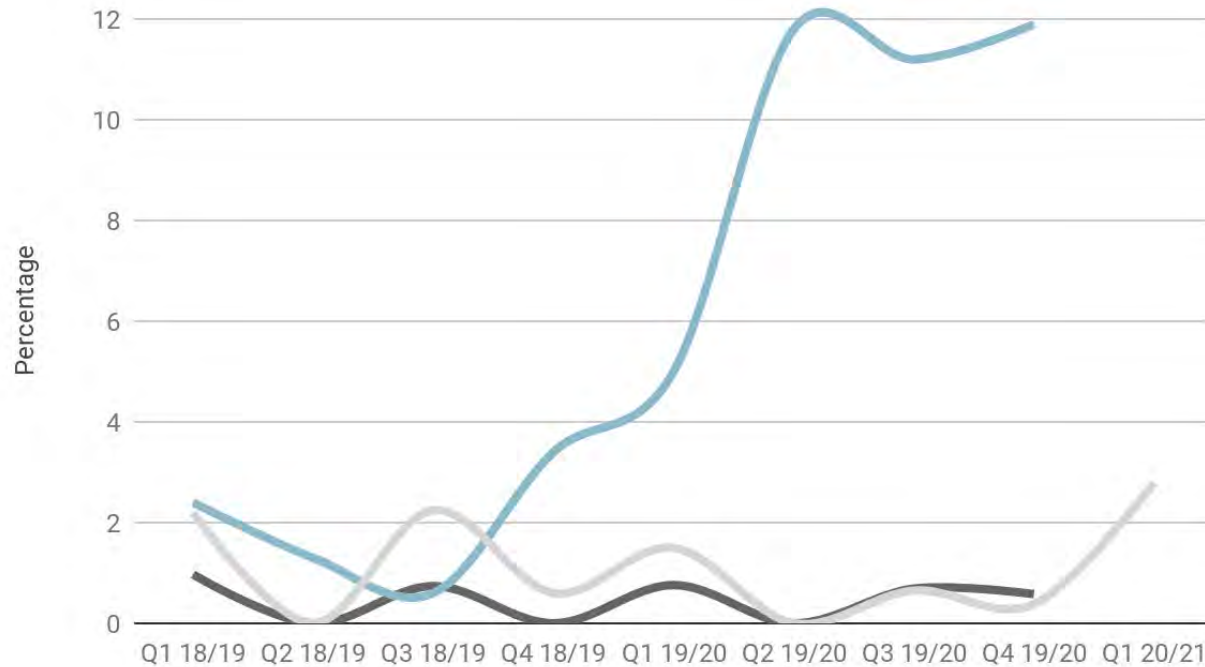
OBSERVATION:

Due to Covid-19, increases in fly tips have been reported nationally, however this is not yet evident in West's figures

A high percentage of the fly tips at the Forest of Dean are at recycling sites, which are not counted by West and Cotswold

Percentage of fly tips that result in an enforcement action taking place (defined as a warning letter, fixed penalty notice, simple caution or prosecution)

Cotswold
 Forest of Dean
 West Oxfordshire



OBSERVATION:

There were 179 notifications of fly tips in Q1 which resulted in 8 enforcement actions lodged against 5 flytips..

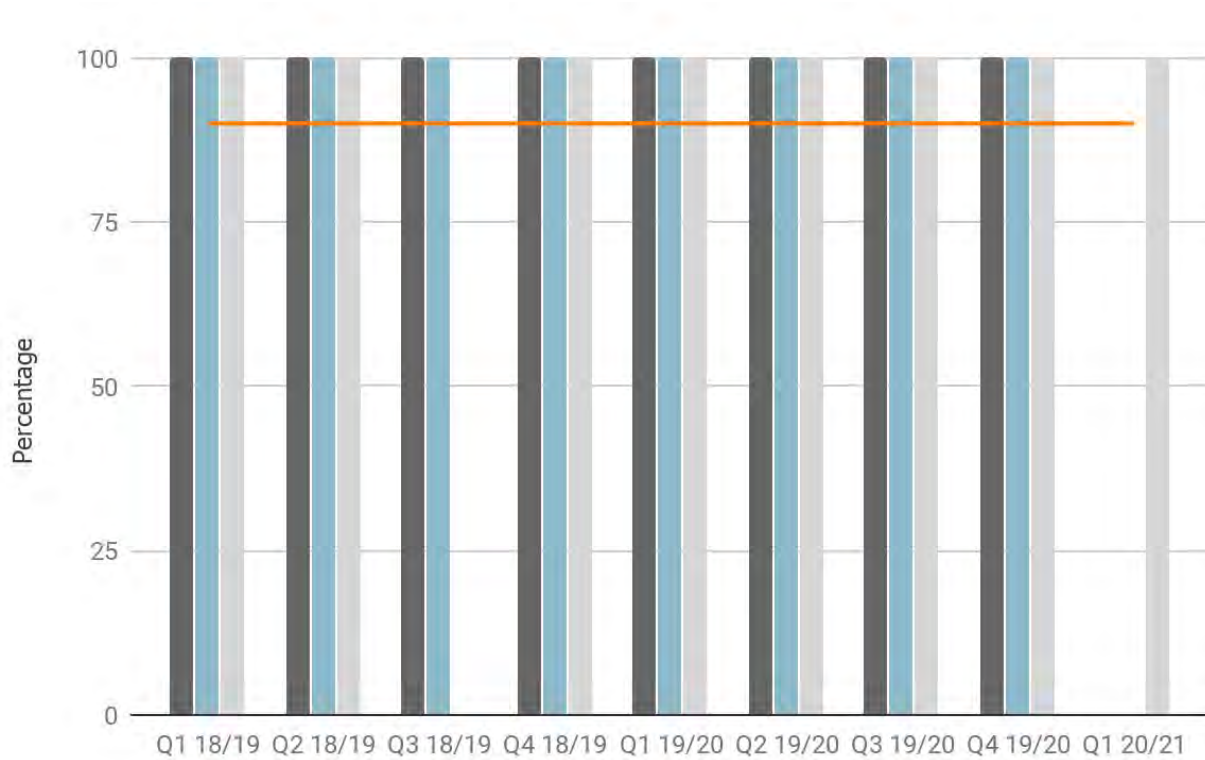
At West and Cotswold, fly tipping is investigated by ERS who take a risk based triage approach to investigation. Officers use their professional judgement to decide whether it is likely that the fly tip will contain evidence that could lead to enforcement action; this is based on an assessment of the waste type reported, for example, black rubbish bags are likely to contain evidence that could lead to enforcement action being taken while a fly tip of car tyres would be highly unlikely to contain the necessary evidence.

In contrast, at Forest of Dean, the Street Warden team usually investigate all fly tips.

The ERS team visited 16 fly tips, a lower number than usual due to the Covid-19 restrictions. The Council will always take enforcement action if fly tipping is witnessed.

Percentage of high risk notifications (including food poisoning outbreaks, anti-social behaviour, contaminated private water supplies, workplace fatalities or multiple serious injuries) risk assessed within 1 working day

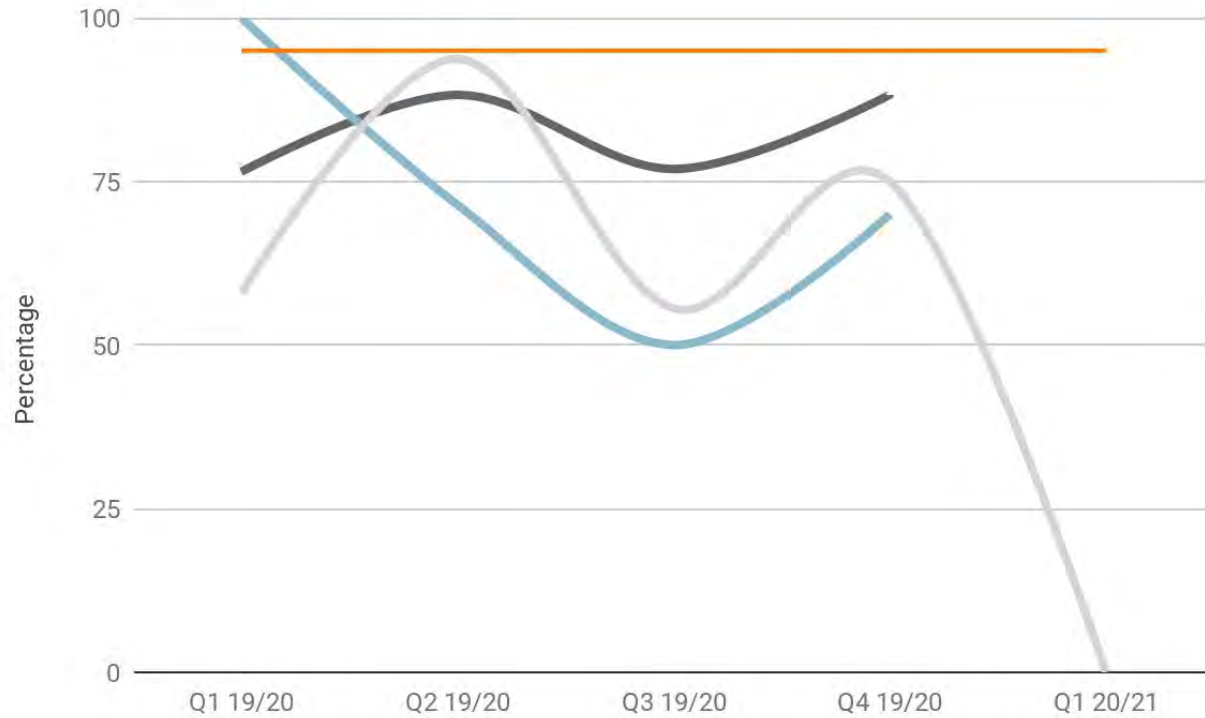
Target Cotswold Forest of Dean West Oxfordshire



OBSERVATION:
Two notifications were received in Q1 and assessed within one day - one report of asbestos on a fly tip and one allegation of neighbour harassment

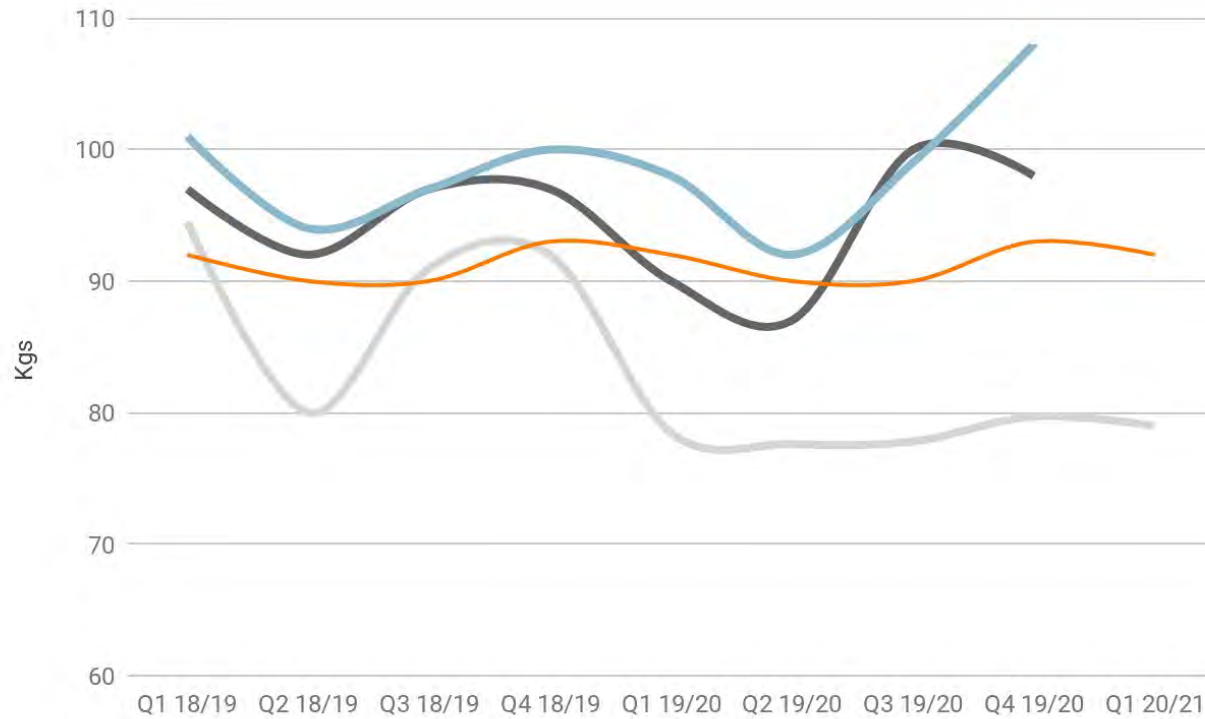
Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales

Target Cotswold Forest of Dean West Oxfordshire



OBSERVATION:
This indicator has been set to 'amber' to recognise that the service had to cease site visits in mid-March following Covid-19 advice. Further guidance was received from the Food Standards Agency to cease all Food Hygiene Interventions until 18 July

Residual household waste per household (kg)

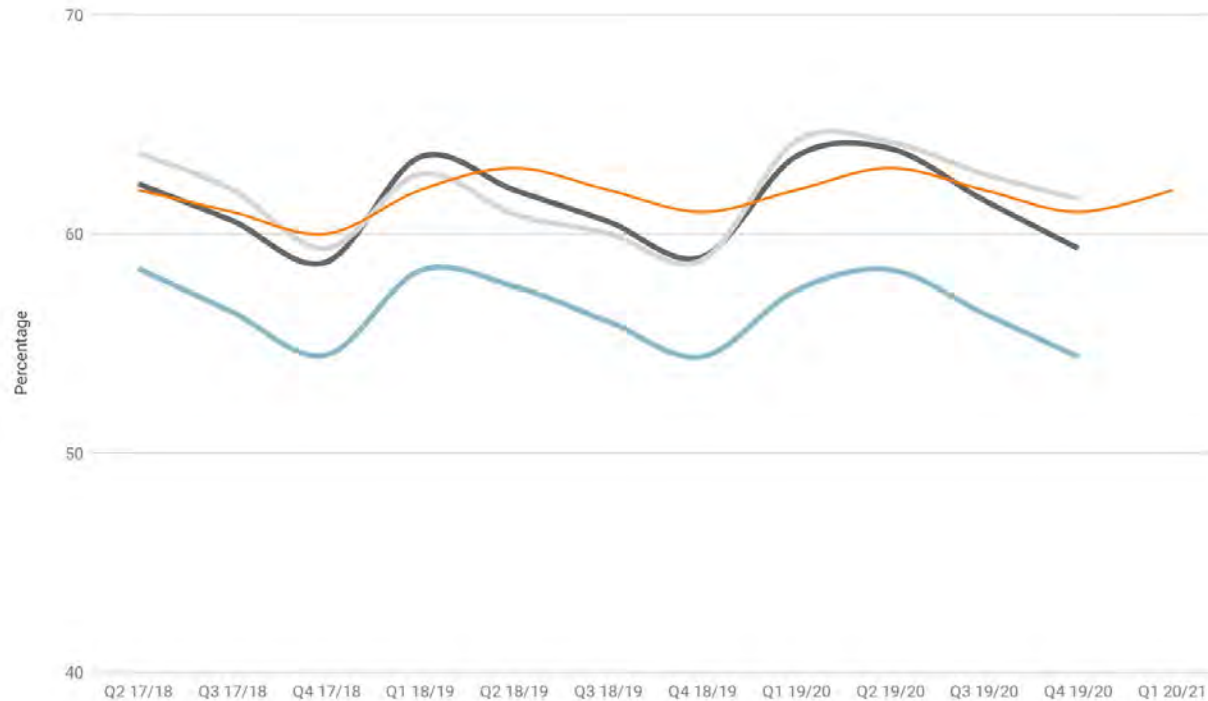


OBSERVATION:

Due to the impact of Covid-19, the amount of waste presented has increased; the Council is collecting all waste presented at the kerbside by residents.

Despite the conditions, the amount of residual waste per household continues to remain relatively low

Percentage of household waste recycled (cumulative)



OBSERVATION:

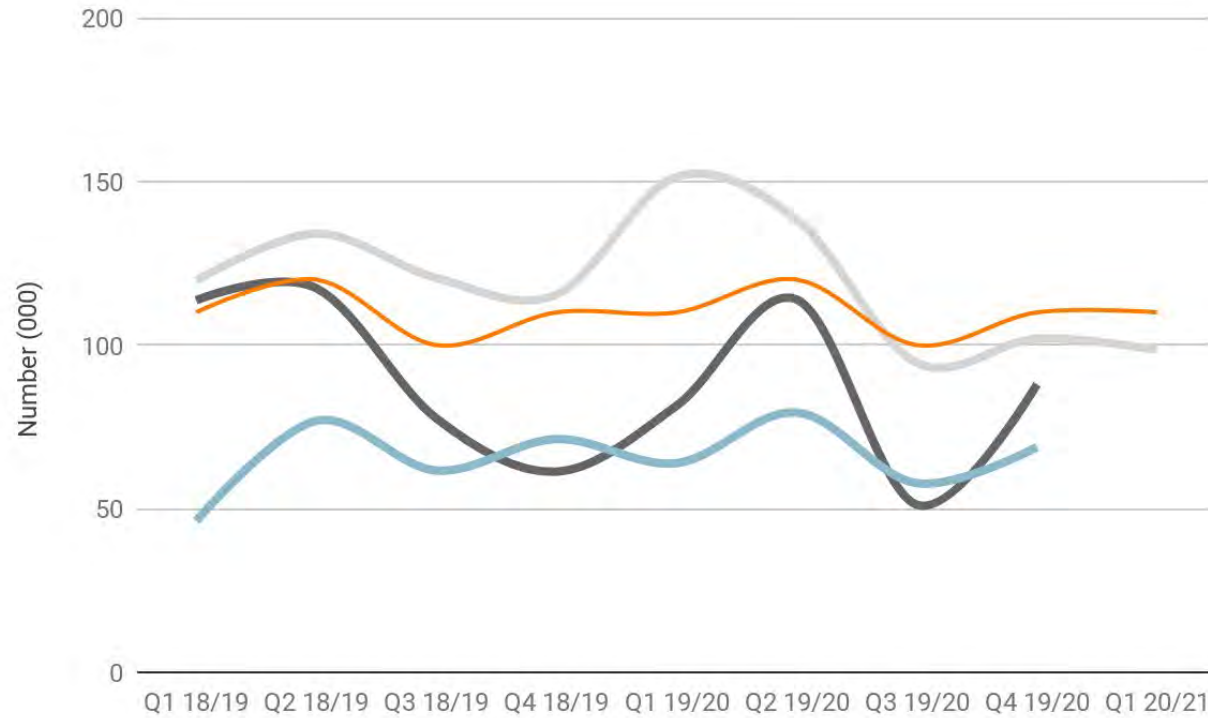
The combined recycling rate was 64.8%, not dissimilar to Q1 of the previous year; the composting rate was 28%, the recycling rate was 24.8% and food recycling rate was 12%.

The service is working closely with UBICO and all waste placed at the kerbside by residents is being collected.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, we are still seeing higher presentation of all types of waste than we would expect at this time of the year. The amount of food waste sent for anaerobic digestion was up over 20% compared to Q1 of the previous year, following the national trend.

Note that the quarterly recycling targets are profiled to account for seasonal differences. The data is also presented cumulatively which will flatten out some of these differences

Number of missed bin per 100,000 scheduled collections



OBSERVATION:

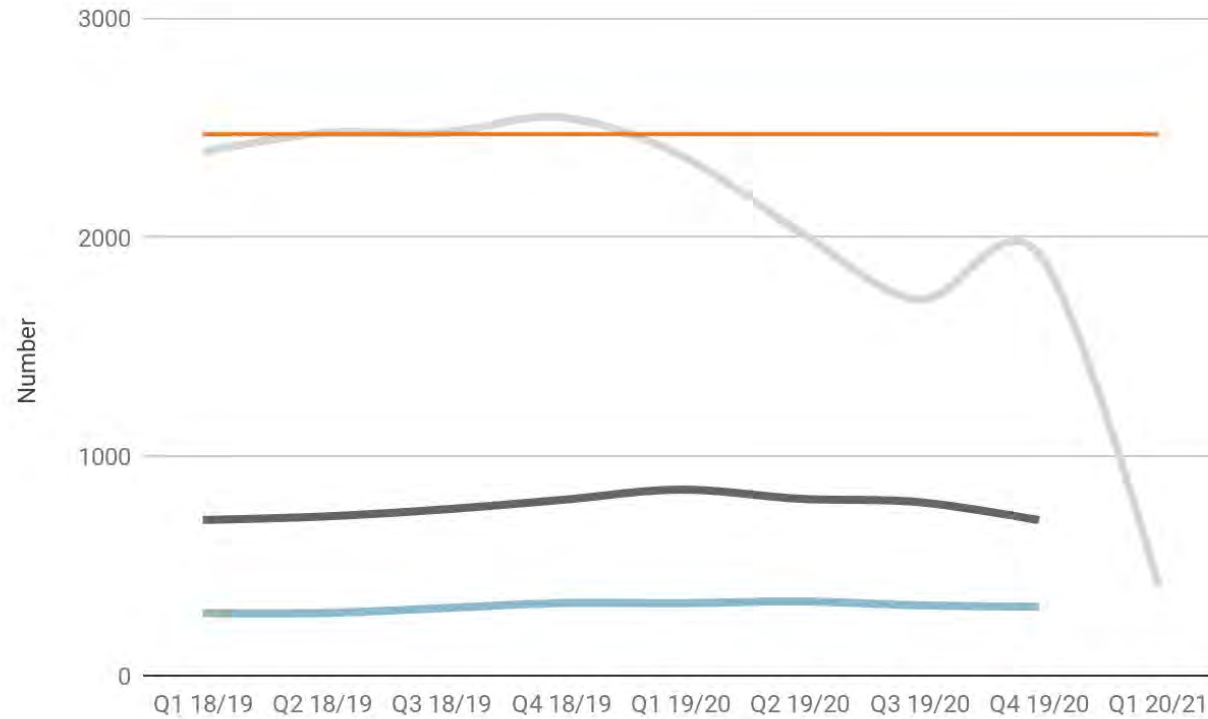
Over the last nine months, performance has improved and remained within the target.

Previously, the service experienced a high staff turnover in waste crews, and the lack of local knowledge amongst new staff and agency staff caused an increase in the number of missed collections.

There was an increase in the number of misses in March 2020 due to staff absences related to Covid-19, and the use of more agency staff. Although the service had anticipated there would be further increases in misses due to increases in waste and recycling tonnage, this has not been the case and performance remains well within the target. The service is working closely with UBICO to reduce the number of missed bins

Parking

Total hours spent undertaking on and off-street parking enforcement visits



OBSERVATION:

This indicator has been set to 'amber' to recognise that enforcement activities were suspended on 23 March until 15 June 2020 due to Covid-19, and staff were redeployed to support communities. There was a phased approach to the return of staff to the service; and two members of staff were shielding.

A light touch approach to enforcement was taken, with just warning letters issued in the first two weeks of the recommencement of service delivery

COMPLAINTS - ARE WE DOING THE 'DAY JOB' REALLY WELL FOR OUR COUNCILS?

● Not upheld



Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Stage	Decision	Response time (days)
Waste	The complainant cancelled collection of bulky waste items and disposed of the items himself. Terms and conditions state that no refund can be given in these circumstances which the complainant felt was unfair	The service followed the stated terms and conditions. However, on reviewing the case, it was felt that there had been sufficient time to cancel the contractor. A refund was given as a gesture of goodwill	1	Not upheld	3 days
ERS	The complainant, a market trader, felt that he had been treated unfairly following a change in procedure (made necessary by the Covid-19 crisis) which affected the location of his pitch	All market traders were affected by these changes which were necessary in order to comply with the guidance	2	Not upheld	13 days

Planning	Property owner was unhappy with treatment by the planning enforcement team, who had issued an enforcement notice as the complainant's property did not have the correct HMO licence. The complainant felt the nature of the Covid-19 crisis had not been taken into account by the enforcement team, and also felt personally victimised in the treatment he had received	The complainant was informed that there were too many people currently living in the property to be covered by the current licence. Once it became apparent that there was a breach of planning control, and given the nature of the breach, the relevant tests were applied and authorisation was given to issue an enforcement notice with a compliance date that could be achieved in light of Covid-19. The matter of unfair treatment by the enforcement team was fully investigated and no evidence of such treatment was found.	I	Not upheld	4 days
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WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Wednesday 7 October 2020
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 8
Subject	Treasury Management Activity and Performance 2020/21
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Derek Cotterill Chairman Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Email: derek.cotterill@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Elizabeth Griffiths, Chief Finance Officer Tel: 01993 861188 Email: elizabeth.griffiths@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To advise members of treasury management activity and the performance of internal and external fund managers for the period 1 April 2020 – 31 August 2020.
Annexes	Annex A – Schedule of Investments
Recommendation	That treasury management and the performance of in-house and external Pooled Funds' activity for the period 1 April 2020 – 31 August 2020 be noted.
Corporate priorities	
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This report is submitted as one of the regular updates provided for this Committee in relation to Treasury Management activity and performance.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. Historically, West Oxfordshire District Council has been in a positive cash position, financing its capital programme from a mixture of capital receipts and working capital and investing the positive cash-flows in a range of instruments that gave a balanced approach to security, liquidity and returns.
- 2.2. Over recent years officers have advised the Council that it was moving towards a position where it would need to borrow to support future investment in the capital programme and have both external debt and investments.
- 2.3. To date officers have managed the financing of the capital programme by effectively using the positive cash-flows of the Council (typically April – Feb) to avoid external borrowing as this has been the most cost efficient form of capital financing with regard to prevailing interest rates. However, given the ongoing scale of the capital programme (£7m in 2019/20 and £18m in 2020/21) it is now clear that the Council will need to supplement this ‘internal borrowing’ with external borrowing or recalling pooled investment funds. As at 31 March 2020 the Council’s accounts stated that the Capital Financing Requirement (the level of capital requiring financing via internal or external sources) was £16.3m and to date this has all been financed through internal borrowing.
- 2.4. WODC have been in discussion with the Council’s Treasury Management advisors, Arlingclose, to review the current portfolio of investments and have sought their recommendations on any that should be liquidated from a risk perspective or any underperforming funds that should be recalled ahead of external borrowing. Their assessment was that nothing needed to be immediately recalled but that where investments had lost large capital values, these should be monitored to ensure that if they persist downwards, consideration is given to closing them.
- 2.5. Cash-flow estimates by the Treasury Officer show that the Council will experience a large cash shortfall of circa £21m by the end of the financial year 2020-21 due to funding large capital expenditure transactions in 2019/20 and 2020/21.
- 2.6. Borrowing from external sources remains an option for West Oxfordshire. There are two main sources for accessing loans with relative simplicity - other local authorities and the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) but all available sources of financing will be considered.
- 2.7. The Covid-19 outbreak and the ensuing market concern saw economic growth forecasts reverse steeply as countries closed borders and imposed lockdowns. Equity markets delivered the fastest bear markets in history in Q1 2020 with the UK and Europe faring worst, losing 25% and 24.7% respectively. This impacted the capital values of Schroders Income Maximiser Fund and the Columbia Threadneedle UK Equity Fund. The capital values in August have shown some recovery since March 2020 but equity prices are expected to remain volatile over the forthcoming 12-18 month period. Currently these two funds are valued at £438k less than the amounts originally invested. Arlingclose’s advice was not to sell now as that would crystallise the losses but to monitor in the hope that the recovery continues.
- 2.8. The returns on the portfolio generally are down with a forecast of £608K against a budget of £680K.

3. INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE

3.1. Performance Achieved for the period (excluding outstanding Icelandic investments) is shown below:-

Performance of Fund 1 April 2020 to 31 August 2020 (annualised returns)	In-House	Bonds
Net Return	0.29%	4.75%

3.2. The current In-house investments have achieved a net return of 0.29% which is 0.09% above the 3 month LIBID rate. As the extent of the losses that banks and building societies will suffer due to the impact from the coronavirus epidemic remains uncertain but is expected to be substantial, in early June following Arlingclose's stress testing of the institutions on the counterparty list using bail-in analysis, a number of UK banks and building societies were suspended from the counterparty list for unsecured deposits. Although much better capitalised than before the 2007-09 financial crisis, under the current economic circumstances these entities were suspended for reasons of prudence. For those remaining on the list, the duration advice remains up to 35 days.

3.3. The table below shows the current valuations of the Pooled Funds portfolio at the end of August 2020 compared with the values at the close of the 2019/20 financial year. In the first five months of the year we have seen a capital gain of £729,363 however dividend returns have seen a drop of over £19k compared with this time last year. The table below shows the current valuations of the Pooled Funds portfolio at the end of August 2020 compared with the values at the close of the 2019/20 financial year.

3.4. Performance of other pooled funds is shown in the following table:

	Initial Investment	1 April Fund Value	31 August Fund Value	Dividends paid out in 2020/21 as at 31 August	Gain / (Loss) for 2020/21	Gain / (Loss) to Initial Principal
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Payden & Rygel –Cash+	2,000,000	2,005,540	2,047,795	3,871	42,255	47,795
UBS – Bond / Equity	2,000,000	1,665,187	1,830,567	44,389	165,380	(169,433)
M&G Strategic – Bond	2,000,000	1,865,992	2,062,593	16,886	196,601	62,593
Royal London Cash + (original investment)	2,000,000					
Royal London Short Dated Credit –Cash (additional investment)		1,933,013	1,995,086	11,612	62,073	(4,914)
Schroders – Equity	1,000,000	687,135	708,073	13,139	20,938	(291,927)

	Initial Investment	1 April Fund Value	31 August Fund Value	Dividends paid out in 2020/21 as at 31 August	Gain / (Loss) for 2020/21	Gain / (Loss) to Initial Principal
CCLA Diversified – All	1,000,000	911,541	989,044	9,914	77,503	(10,956)
Threadneedle - UK Equity	1,000,000	778,854	853,033	14,341	74,179	(146,967)
Kames Diversified- All	1,000,000	843,371	933,805	18,774	90,434	(66,195)
August 2020 Total	£12,000,000	10,690,633	11,419,996	132,926	729,363	(580,004)

- 3.5. **Payden Sterling Reserve Fund** – The fund invests in a diversified range of sterling-denominated, highly-rated and very liquid government agency securities and corporate fixed – and floating-rate and covered bonds. The Fund is currently returning 0.77% annualised and is one of the few funds which is valued at above the amount originally invested. Current gain is just under £48k.
- 3.6. **UBS Multi-Asset Income Fund** – The fund seeks to provide an income, through a diversified portfolio of investments in bonds and equities. The fund is expected, and is currently returning, income of around 4% for the year however the fund is valued at circa £169k less than the amount invested.
- 3.7. **M&G Strategic Corporate Bond Fund** - The aim of the Fund is to provide income and capital growth, through a top-down approach of the fund manager’s economic outlook determining the fund duration, the sector allocation and stock concentration. It invests primarily in investment grade corporate bonds. Returns are likely to be around 3.4% against a budgeted return of 3.5%. The capital value has reduced by over £62.5k against the invested amount.
- 3.8. **Royal London Short Dated Credit Fund** – The Fund aims to offer income and capital growth by investing in a diversified portfolio of investment grade short dated bonds (issued by companies and organisations which meet the Fund's predefined ethical criteria). These bonds will include corporate bonds, asset backed securities, floating rate notes, UK government bonds and supranational and agency bonds. Income return is estimated at around 2.3% against a budgeted 2% return. The value of the fund is just over £5k less than originally invested.
- 3.9. **Schroder Income Maximiser Fund** – The Fund’s investment objective is to provide income with potential for capital growth primarily through investment in equity and equity related securities of UK companies. The fund aims to deliver a target yield of 7% per year and in its first quarter returned 5.4% annualised. This fund has seen a £290k fall in capital value since its original investment.
- 3.10. **CCLA Diversified Income Fund** – The aim of the fund is to provide a balanced return from income and capital growth over time. The portfolio invests with UK and overseas equities, property, bonds and cash. The fund aims to achieve a 3% annual return. Current returns for the first quarter annualised are 3.96%. This fund has seen just under £11k fall in capital value against the amount invested.

- 3.11. **Threadneedle UK Equity Income Fund** - The aim of the Fund is to provide income with the potential to grow the amount invested. The Fund invests at least two-thirds of its assets in shares of UK companies. The Fund aims to achieve slow returns of income but also growth on the capital invested. The fund aims to return between 2.5% and 3.5% and is currently achieving 2.68%. The capital value of this fund is just under £147k less than the amount invested.
- 3.12. **Kames Diversified Monthly Income Fund** - The investment objective is to generate income with a target yield of approximately 3% per annum, with the potential for capital growth over the medium term (being any 5 year period). The fund is currently achieving 5.4% to date but is £66k down in capital value against the original amount invested.

4. **FUNDAMENTUM SOCIAL HOUSING REIT**

- 4.1. Following the implementation of changes to pooled funds the sum of £1 million was made available to be reinvested as supported by members of FMOS. The Council's Treasury Management Advisors, Arlingclose identified an opportunity to invest in a Real Estate Investment Trust, Fundamentum Property, investment advisors with a track record in the UK social housing market.
- 4.2. Following the launch in November 2019 the Council invested £1m into the new Fundamentum Social Housing REIT which purchases property and holds long term leases with Housing Associations who house vulnerable adults. Since the launch of the Fundamentum Social Housing REIT, the Investment Advisor has overseen 11 transactions up to the end of August 2020 and dividends of £6.5k have been received to date achieving a return of 1.30%. Returns of 5% are expected when the full portfolios of properties have been purchased and a full annual rental income is received.

5. **ECONOMIC AND INTEREST RATE FORECAST**

- 5.1. The UK's exit from the European Union took a back seat during the first quarter of 2020/21 as the global economic impact from coronavirus took centre stage. Part of the measures taken to stop the spread of the pandemic included the government implementing a nationwide lockdown in late March which effectively shut down almost the entire UK economy. These measures continued throughout most of the quarter with only some easing of restrictions at the end of May and into June.
- 5.2. Bank Rate was maintained at 0.1% despite some speculation that the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) might cut further and some MPC members also suggesting that negative rates are part of the Bank's policy tools. In June the Bank increased the asset purchase scheme by £100 billion, taking the recent round of QE to £300bn and total QE to £745 billion.
- 5.3. As can be seen from the table below Arlingclose's view on interest rates is that they remain at 0.10% for the unforeseeable future.

	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23
Official Bank Rate												
Upside risk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.30	0.30	0.30
Central case	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
Downside risk	0.00	0.35	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Investment income in the Authority's 2020/21 budget was set against a very different economic backdrop. Bank Rate, which was 0.75% in January/February 2020 now stands at 0.10%. Interest earned from short-dated money market investments will be significantly lower. In relation to income from the Authority's externally managed strategic funds, dividends and income distributions will ultimately depend on many factors including but not limited to the duration of COVID-19 and the extent of its economic impact, the fund's sectoral asset allocation, securities held/bought/sold and, in the case of equities, the enforced or voluntary dividend cuts or deferral.
- 6.2. The original investment interest budget for 2020/21 was set at £680,000 which was based on an average balance of £32.626 million from all the different type of investments (e.g. fixed term deposits, pooled funds, bonds) achieving an overall average return of 2.18%.
- 6.3. The breakdown of the budget and estimated performance for the year is as follows:

	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Estimate Outturn
Pooled Funds	360,000	339,000
In-House Investments	161,200	125,000
Housing REIT	40,000	25,000
Bonds	118,800	118,800
Total	680,000	607,800

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1. Valuation 31 August 2020 – Pooled Funds & Bonds
- 7.2. In – House investment as at 31 August 2020

**SCHEDULE OF CASH INVESTMENTS OUTSTANDING AT
31 AUGUST 2020**

NAME OF COUNTERPARTY	VALUE DATE	NOMINAL AMOUNT (£)	MATURITY DATE	RATE OF INTEREST	Fitch Credit Rating	
					Long Term	Short Term
IN HOUSE MANAGEMENT						
Thurrock Council	17.10.19	1,000,000	16.10.20	1.02%	AA-	
Federated MMF	31.08.20	5,000,000		0.08%	AAAmmf	
Invesco AIM MMF	31.08.20	3,680,000		0.06%	AAAmmf	
Deutsche Asset & Wealth MMF	31.08.20	5,000,000		0.05%	AAAmmf	
TOTAL IN-HOUSE INVESTMENTS		14,680,000				

BONDS

COUNTERPARTY	Book Cost (£)	Market Value (£)
A2D Bond (4.75%)	2,500,000	2,661,725

HOUSING REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST

COUNTERPARTY	Book Cost (£)	Market Value (£)
Fundamentum REIT	1,000,000	970,000

MANAGED FUNDS

COUNTERPARTY	As at:	NOMINAL VALUE (£)	MARKET VALUE (£)
Royal London Shortdated Credit Fund	31.08.20	2,000,000	1,995,086
Payden Sterling Reserve Fund	31.08.20	2,000,000	2,047,795
M&G Strategic Corporate Bond Fund	31.08.20	2,000,000	2,062,593
Threadneedle UK Equity Fund	31.08.20	1,000,000	853,033
Kames Diversified Monthly Income Fund	31.08.20	1,000,000	933,805
UBS Multi-Asset Income Fund	31.08.20	2,000,000	1,830,567
Schroders Income Maximiser Fund	31.08.20	1,000,000	708,073
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	31.08.20	1,000,000	989,044
TOTAL VALUE OF FUND		12,000,000	11,419,996



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

West Oxfordshire District Council

Name and date of Committee	Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Wednesday 7 October 2020
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 9
Subject	Live Streaming of Council and Committee Meetings
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr Toby Morris, Cabinet Member for Resources Email: toby.morris@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Phil Martin, Group Manager, Business Support Services Tel: 07764352360; Email: phil.martin@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To further consider the Motion regarding webcasting of meetings referred to the Committee by the Council and to submit comments or recommendations accordingly.
Annexes	None
Recommendation	That consideration be given to the Motion as set out below, and comments or a recommendation be made to Council.
Corporate priorities	To meet the current and future needs and aspirations of residents and to provide efficient and value for money services, whilst delivering quality front line services.
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	N/A

I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. At the meeting of the Council held on 23 October 2019, the following Motion was proposed by Councillor Jake Acock and seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, namely:-
“One of the ethos of this council is to be inclusive; not exclusive. We want to welcome people in and get more and more active with local government. This council recognises we are living in an age of technology that can be used to keep in touch, improve communications and change peoples lives for the better. Therefore, in order to improve our communications, we charge that every council and committee meeting is filmed and recorded, then placed on the West Oxfordshire District Council website for West Oxfordshire residents to view and listen to our meetings. Across the country from Manchester, Wandsworth and Bath, council meetings are recorded. Therefore, this council charges that we will now record and stream live all of our council meetings and committee meetings”
- 1.2. In accordance with paragraph 11(e) of the Council Procedure Rules, it was resolved that the motion should stand referred without discussion to this Committee – minute no. 50 of the meeting held 27 November 2019 refers.
- 1.3. Subsequently, Council further considered the matter at its meeting on 22 January 2020 (minute no. 56) and resolved:
 - (a) That further study was required on the various methods of recording available, location options and cost of installation;
 - (b) That the meetings rooms to be included in the evidence gathering should be Committee Rooms 1 & 2 and the Council Chamber, and that feedback should be sought from other Councils which had installed systems, or were due to do so; and
 - (c) That the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider the costings and other information prior to further consideration by the Council.
- 1.4. This further report has been delayed as a consequence of the Coronavirus pandemic, including the cancellation of some meetings earlier in the year, and the situation has of course developed and been influenced by the holding of meetings via video conferencing, which became temporarily permissible under legislation made by the Government in April.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. The Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee has previously considered a report on the Webcasting of Council meetings, in March 2016. A copy of that report and the associated minute extract were attached to [the report to this Committee on 27 November 2019](#). At that time the Committee resolved “*That the content of the report be noted and the Cabinet be advised that the Committee was of the opinion that no further action should be taken on the matter at this juncture.*”
- 2.2. In the four and a half years that have passed since this matter was last considered, the webcasting/live streaming of meetings has become more commonplace. Across the Publica partnership, Forest of Dean District Council introduced webcasting of its Council and Planning Committee meetings in May 2018; Cheltenham Borough Council introduced webcasting from its Council Chamber only, in October 2019; and Cotswold District Council has recently approved the award of a contract for the purchase and implementation of a hybrid web casting solution.
- 2.3. On 4 April 2020 as a result of the pandemic the ‘Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings)

(England and Wales) Regulations 2020' were passed by Government. This temporarily removed the legal requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person thus giving Councils the powers to hold public meetings virtually by using video or telephone conferencing technology. The Regulations and consequent power are in place until 7 May 2021, however this is currently under review so may be extended or made permanent.

- 2.4. Following the change in legislation the Council has used a video conferencing solution to virtually hold and broadcast Council meetings, which has been well received by residents, with just under 900 views on average per meeting (this should be treated purely indicative as all views even if they were only for a few minutes are included in this figure). Because the current powers are time bound there are no guarantees that the current arrangements for live streaming will be able to continue and, in any event, the current system is not suitable for the webcasting of physical meetings taking place at the Council offices, meaning that an alternative solution is required.
- 2.5. In order to future proof any decision regarding webcasting solutions, it is considered that any system would need to have the capability for Councillors to take part either from the offices or from an alternative location such as their home, thereby providing the flexibility to operate during the current pandemic and when movement / access is less restricted. The following options are based around a hybrid approach that meets this requirement.

3. OPTION 1 – PROVIDING RECORDING AND WEBCASTING CAPABILITIES FOR THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND COMMITTEE ROOMS 1 & 2

- 3.1. The implementation of a webcasting solution that provides functionality for meetings to be held in either the Council Chamber or Committee Rooms independently.
- 3.2. The solution can be configured for either a dual delegate unit, which enables two members to log into one delegate unit, with each unit having its own push to talk button and voting capability or a single unit. The difference in costs will be outlined in the finance section of the report.
- 3.3. The solution will utilise four cameras located in the Council Chamber to digitally capture the meeting and three large flat TVs would be installed so that all participants can see what is happening throughout the meeting.
- 3.4. Committee Room 1 would have a similar specification to the Council Chamber using multiple cameras to record the meeting and additional TV screens so that when needed the dividers can be opened up to give access to Committee Room 2, which would be equipped with two cameras and speakers so attendees can fully take part in the meeting.
- 3.5. As with the webex video conferencing system currently being used for all meetings, Councillors would also be able to join the meeting at another location, from their personal device, via a web browser. Whilst possible, this would happen only if Government Regulations allow it beyond 7 May 2021, but would remain possible for informal meetings, such as Councillor briefings or workshops.

4. OPTION 2 - PROVISION OF RECORDING AND WEBCASTING CAPABILITY FOR THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

- 4.1. The implementation of a webcasting solution that provides functionality for meetings to be held in the Council Chamber. The solution can be configured for either a single or dual delegate unit. The difference in costs will be outlined in the finance section of the report.

5. OPTION 3 - RECONFIGURATION OF COUNCIL CHAMBER OR COMMITTEE ROOM 1, WHICH WILL INCORPORATE RECORDING AND WEBCASTING CAPABILITIES

- 5.1. The layout of the Council Chamber is inflexible and so limits how it can be used currently and as a result of this it has generally been used only for full Council and Cabinet meetings, with other meetings being held in the Committee Rooms, mainly Committee Room One.
- 5.2. A possible solution to this is to explore the feasibility of either reconfiguring the Council Chamber so that it could then host all meetings or alternatively making the necessary changes to Committee Room One and hosting all meetings in there, thus freeing up the Council Chamber to be re-purposed.
- 5.3. Whilst costs have been provided for the technical solution in the finance implications section, these do not include the costs of new furniture, lighting and other items required in either the Committee Room or Council Chamber. If the Committee wishes to pursue this option than a full set of costs will be produced.
- 5.4. In addition to providing a steer on their preferred options, the Committee may also wish to provide some clarity as to which meetings might be webcast/live streamed, as there will be different implications associated with different options.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The indicative one off capital costs for the options outlined in the main body of the report are:

Option	Costs
Option 1 with Dual delegate units	£192,132
Option 1 with Single delegate units -	£270,347
Option 2 with Dual delegate units –	£98,109
Option 2 with Single delegate units –	£156,253
Option 3 (re-configuration of Committee Room 1)	£92,189 (does not include furniture or other associated costs)

- 6.2. The revenue costs for system maintenance and hosting are £32,195, based on a three-year contract paid upfront and then £12,763 annually afterwards.
- 6.3. Currently there isn't any funding available in either the Council's capital programme or revenue budgets so this needs to be taken into consideration as part of the recommendation to Council. Should the Council wish to proceed, it will need to be subject to the budgetary process and to it being in a position to make a decision in the knowledge of what consequential impacts there may be.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are potential data protection issues associated with webcasting and live streaming of meetings. Should Council decide to progress with such a project it would be essential to learn from the experience of others and ensure robust safeguards were in place to protect against the misuse of such recordings. This will include the installation of notices in the council chamber and/or other rooms where webcasting/live streaming takes place, updating the constitution to include a protocol for webcasting, and an updated privacy notice.

- 7.2. Although it is recommended that if the Council chooses to progress this matter it should choose a hybrid-option, it remains the case that from May 2021 it may not be possible for councillors to attend a meeting otherwise than by being physically present.
- 7.3. In order to comply with both public procurement regulations and the Council's own Contract Procedure Rules, a framework would be used as this mitigate risks, whilst also reduces the costs and time involved.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1. The main risk associated with webcasting/live-streaming of meetings is highlighted in section 7 above, i.e. the misuse of such recordings. Putting in place robust safeguards would mitigate against such a risk.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 9.1. The Council could choose not to implement a recording / webcasting solution and return to how meetings were held once the current ability to hold meetings remotely changes or comes to an end. It is also possible that the Government may advise that hybrid meetings take place either temporarily – to protect anyone particularly at risk from Covid – or permanently to make democracy more accessible.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1. None.



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

West Oxfordshire District Council

Name and date of Committee	Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Wednesday 7 October 2020
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 10
Subject	Electronic Communications
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr Toby Morris, Cabinet Member for Resources Email: toby.morris@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Phil Martin, Group Manager, Business Support Services Tel: 07764352360; Email: phil.martin@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the motion regarding electronic communications referred to the Committee by the Council and to submit comments or recommendations accordingly.
Annexes	None
Recommendation	That consideration be given to the motion as set out below, and comments or a recommendation be made to Council.
Corporate priorities	To meet the current and future needs and aspirations of residents and to provide efficient and value for money services, whilst delivering quality front line services.
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	N/A

I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. At the meeting of the Council held on 22 January 2020, the following Motion was proposed by Councillor Jake Acock and seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, namely:-

“West Oxfordshire District Council places great importance upon communications with councillors, whether that be sending out agendas for meetings or through regular email updates.

West Oxfordshire District Council also places great importance upon environmental credentials and cost-effective projects.

Therefore, this council resolves that we will no longer send paper copies of communications including agendas for all meetings and will issue every councillor with an iPad for council business.

This will allow the council to:

- a) have stronger greener credentials and help to tackle the climate crisis.*
- b) be more cost and staff efficient.*
- c) be more GDPR friendly.*

This council resolves that this will be added to the 2020 budget and that all councillors will be issued with an iPad by May 2020”.

- 1.2. In accordance with paragraph 11(e) of the Council Procedure Rules, it was resolved that the motion should stand referred without discussion to this Committee – minute no. 60 of the meeting held 22 January 2019 refers.
- 1.3. This report has been delayed as a consequence of the Coronavirus pandemic, including the cancellation of some meetings earlier in the year, but is now intended to give the opportunity for the Committee to consider the motion and submit comments and/or a recommendation to Council.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. The potential financial implications of providing an Ipad for all Councillors are included in section 3 below.
- 2.2. It will of course be for the Council to decide whether or how to proceed in this matter, but it is hoped that the following comments will be of interest:
- In the current circumstances where Councillors are attending meetings via video conferencing, it may not be suitable for them to also need a screen/device for viewing the documents for the meeting in question
 - It is already the case that meetings papers are made available in a “document pack” that contains appropriate links and bookmarks to facilitate electronic navigation of the documents. These are in pdf format and can be read on any device; and may be distributed additional to or instead of paper copies, as desired
 - That said, if an iPad or similar was used, it is likely that that could be in conjunction with software which would enable the documents to be annotated by the user. It is likely that the CMIS system currently used for administering and publishing meeting documents and councillor information etc will be replaced in 2021, in which case the roll out of devices, if approved, might best be scheduled to coincide with the change
 - It is undoubtedly the case that an iPad or similar would be more secure insofar as the councillor would be the only user of the device. It is also relevant that (i) only a very small proportion of documents are not for the public; (ii) they are or would only be supplied to the secure @westoxon email address for each councillor; and (ii) any

device supplied by the council would be configured such that it could not be used for other purposes and locked down via Mobile Device Management (MDM) software to ensure it was secure.

- It is certainly the case that the electronic circulation of documents is quicker and more efficient than copying and posting, as well as being more environmentally friendly but, as stated above, this does not necessarily require the provision of a device.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1. The device costs for the options outlined in the main body of the report are:

Device Options	Costs	Total
iPad – 10.2 Inch Screen, 32Gb Storage	£329	£16,121
iPad Air – 10.9 Inch Screen, 64 Gb Storage	£579	£28,371
iPad Pro – 11 Inch Screen, 128Gb Storage	£769	£37,681

- 3.2. In addition to the device costs, Councillors may require a keyboard, which also acts as a screen cover and cost between £159 and £179 depending on the model.
- 3.3. As the device will operate on the Council's ICT network it will need to be lockdown to ensure it complies with the Council PSN requirements. The revenue costs associated with the implementation of a Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution is approx. £100 per device so totally £4,900 per annum.
- 3.4. Based on the experience of supporting Cheltenham Borough Council who had issued iPads to their Councillors and have now chosen to replace them with laptops there is an increase in ICT support time that should be factored into any consideration along with the need to also budget for replacements and accessories such as covers.
- 3.5. The expected live cycle of a device such as an iPad that is constantly updated is on average 3 years, therefore an allocation would need to be made in the capital programme to fund an ongoing replacement programme
- 3.6. If all Councillors agreed to have Ipads and adopt a paperless approach in terms of the previous of meeting agendas and minutes the annual revenue saving would equate to approx. £5,000 to £7,000.
- 3.7. Whilst the issuing of an iPad to all Councillors would result in savings in time, and in printing and postage costs, it would require a full sign up otherwise a mixed approach could create work, which would then erode the potential to offset the costs.
- 3.8. The total costs for the proposal based on the mid-range priced iPad in the table above are:

Capital

Item	Cost	Total cost
iPad Air – 10.9 Inch Screen, 64 Gb Storage	£579	£28,371
Replacement iPads x 4 due to damage	£579	£2,316
		£30,687

NOTE

1. As the life cycle of the devices is three years, Councillors would need to include a similar sum in the capital budget for 2024/25.

Revenue

Item	Cost	Total cost
MDM software	£100	£4,900
Cases x29	£15	£435
Keyboards x20	£179	£3,580
Sub Total		£8,915
Less – Paper / printing costs		£7,000
Total		£1,915'

NOTE

1. This does not include additional ICT support time that based on our experience is approx. 5 hrs per week nor the potential time saved by the Democratic Services team who wouldn't be printing and posting agendas and meeting minutes.

3.9. Currently there isn't any funding available in either the Council's capital programme or revenue budgets so this needs to be taken into consideration as part of the recommendation to Council. Should the Council wish to proceed, it will need to be subject to the budgetary process and to it being in a position to make a decision in the knowledge of what consequential impacts there may be.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1. None identified

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1. A potential risk associated with issuing Councillors with iPads is the loss of data if the device is misplaced / stolen, this is mitigated by locking down each devices so ensuing they will not have sensitive data stored on them.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

6.1. The Council could choose not to provide Councillors with an iPad and continue paying an allowance for Councillors to purchase a device that suits their own personal needs.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.