



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	<b>Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 7 October 2020</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item No. 7</b>
Subject	<b>Council Priorities and Service Performance Report 2020-21 Quarter One</b>
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	<a href="#">Annex A</a> – Council Priority report <a href="#">Annex B</a> – 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, 80,000m<sup>2</sup> 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 57,000m<sup>2</sup> 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.

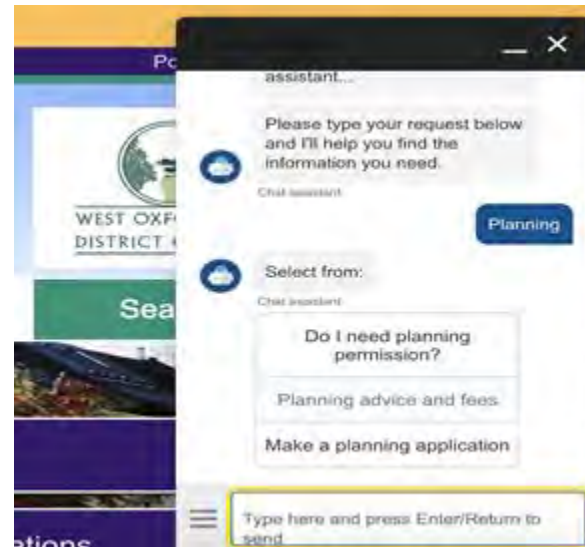
The Live Chat capability which was launched on the Council's website in January allowing customers to interact in real time with Customer Services, also proved useful in supporting the CS team to handle the demand created by Covid-19 as well as the change to the waste contract.

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**

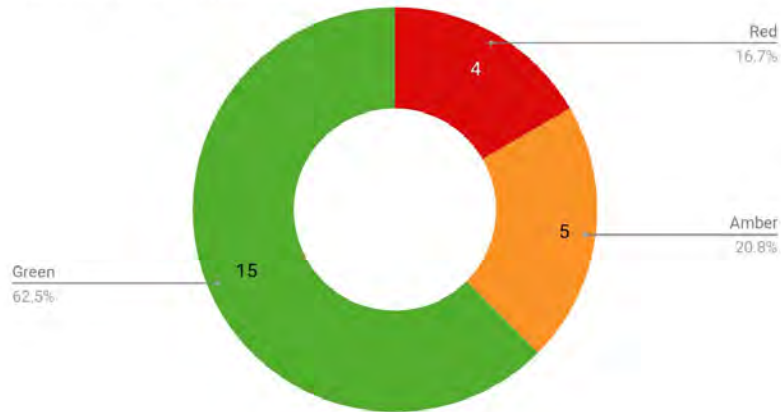
## KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS LIST

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	Green
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



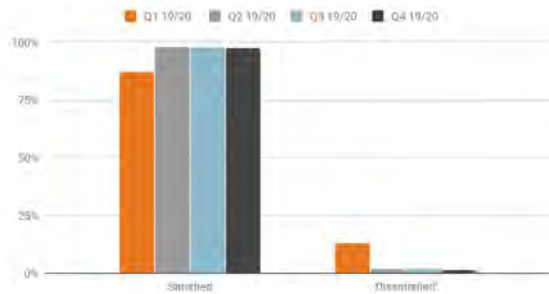
#### Phone

734 Respondents

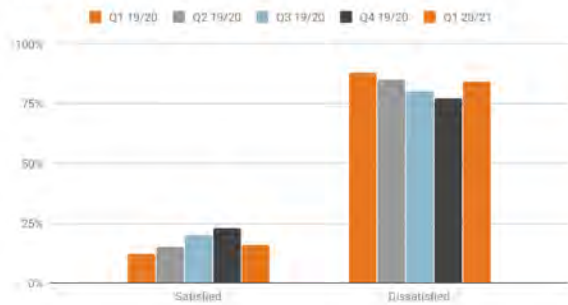


### What's the trend?

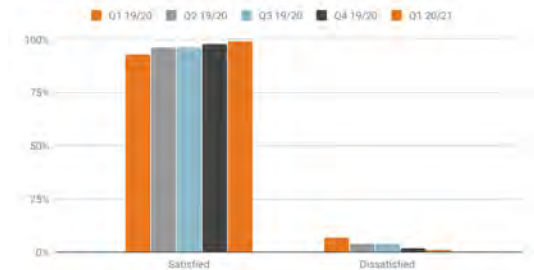
#### Face to Face



#### Web



#### Phone

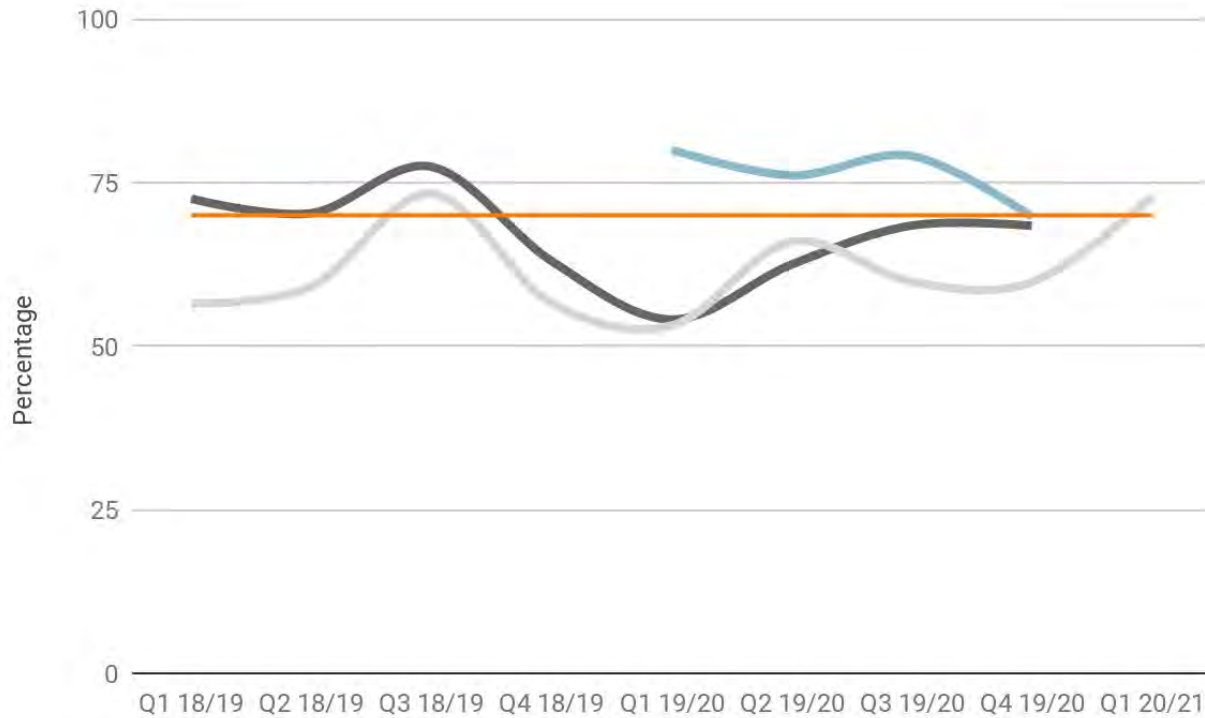


### OBSERVATION

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**



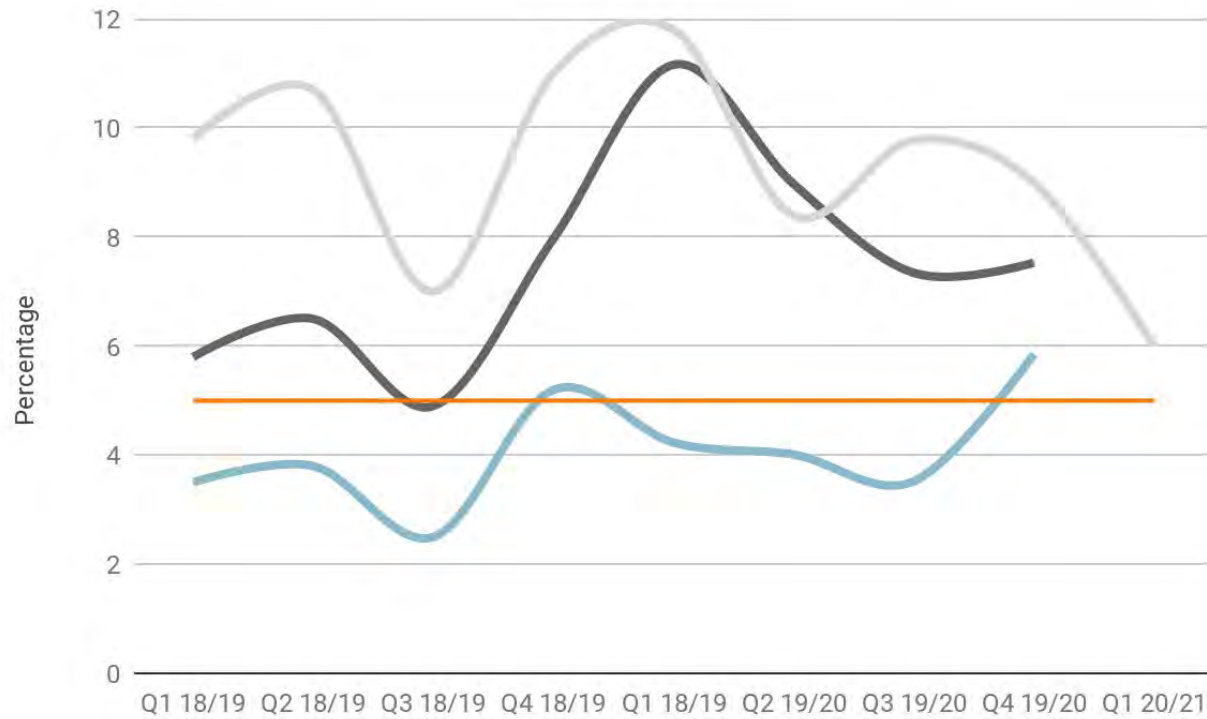
**OBSERVATION**

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

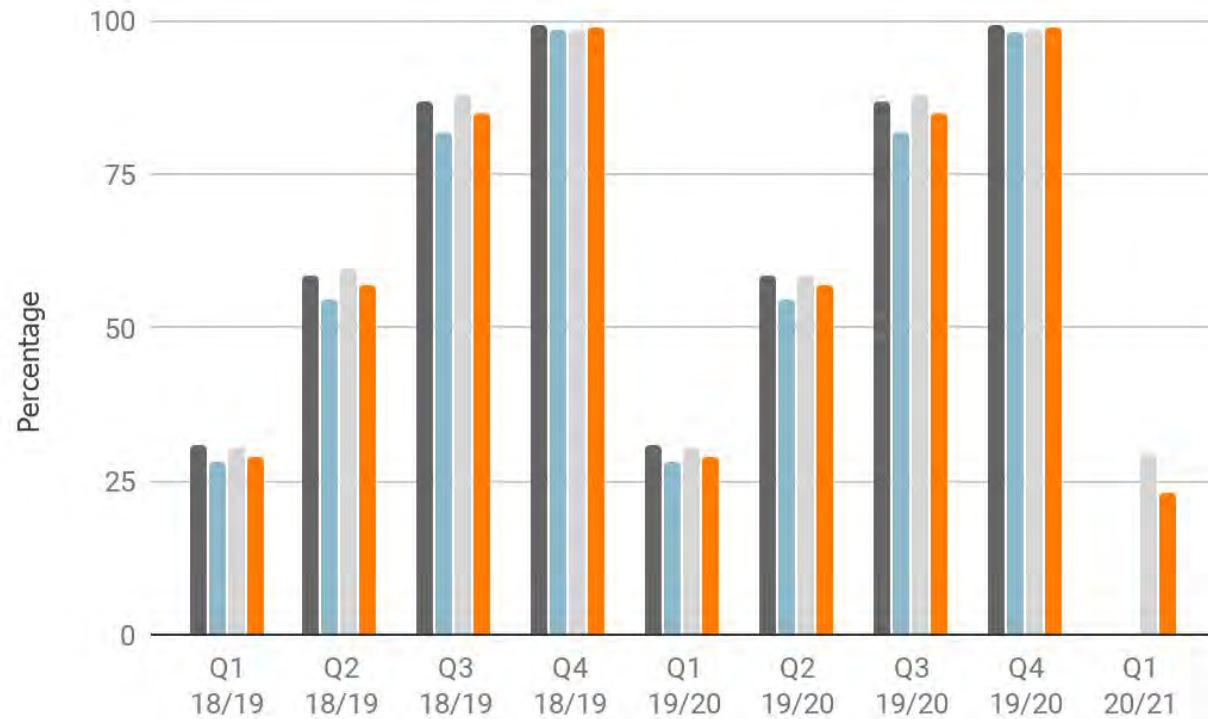


**OBSERVATION:**  
Historically, the service has experienced capacity issues caused by turnover and the implementation of a new CRM system. The transfer of staff from the face to face sites to the phones has contributed to the improved performance



## Revenues and Benefit

### Percentage of council tax collected (cumulative)



#### OBSERVATION:

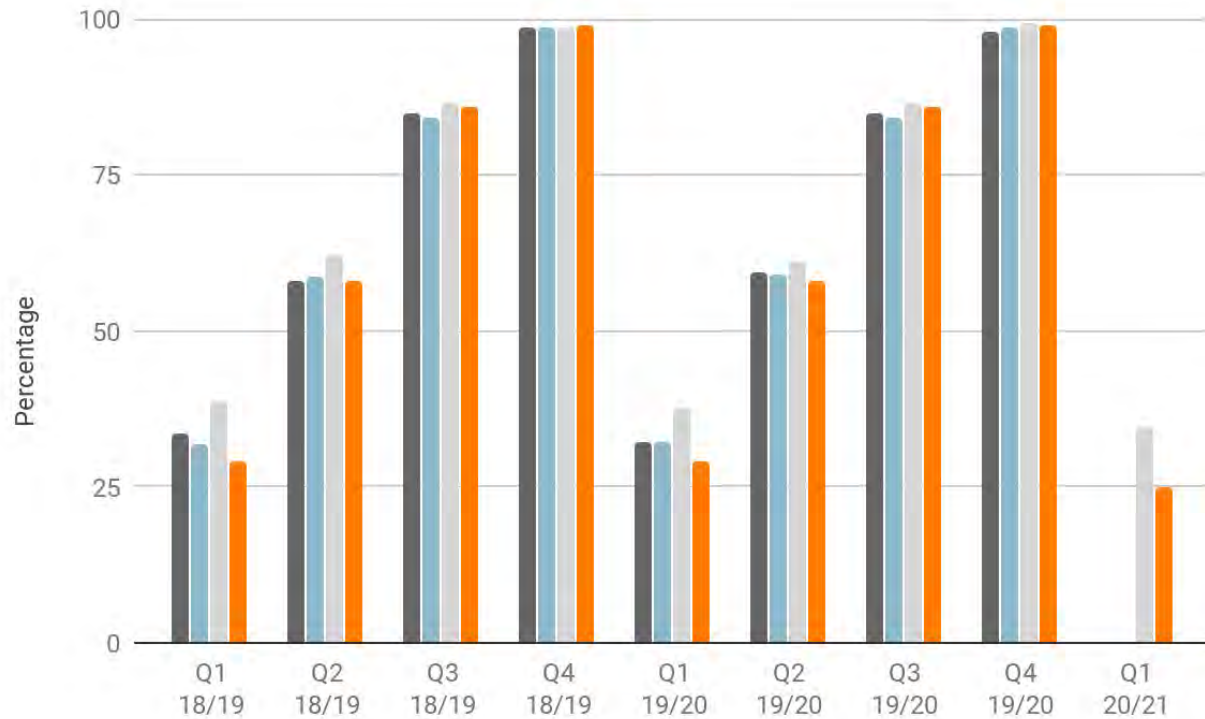
At the end of Q1, there was a slight decrease in the collection rate compared to previous years.

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)

Target
  Cotswold
  Forest of Dean
  West Oxfordshire



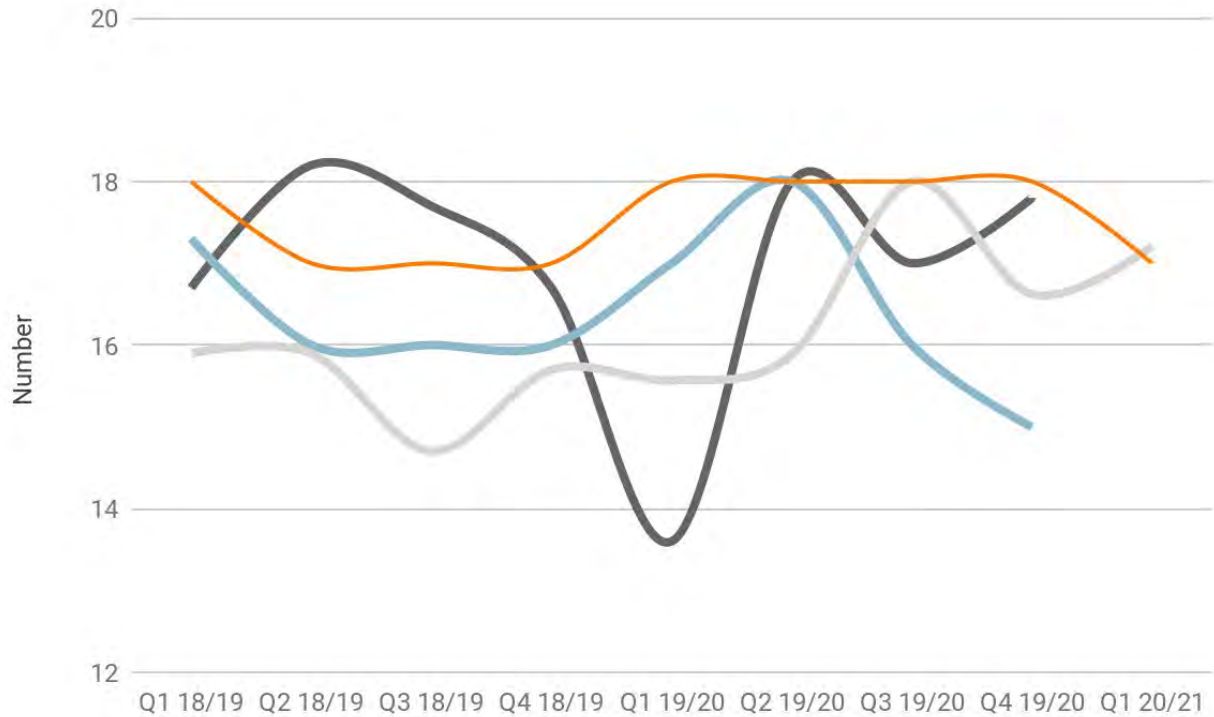
### OBSERVATION:

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)**



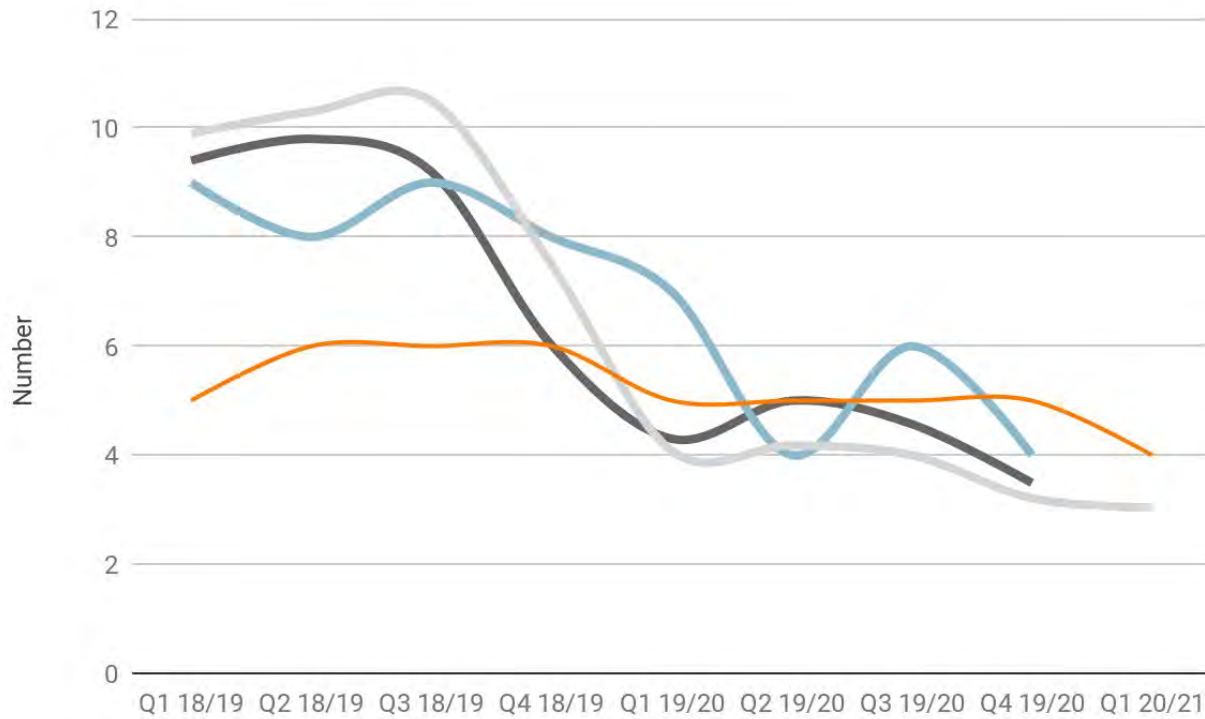
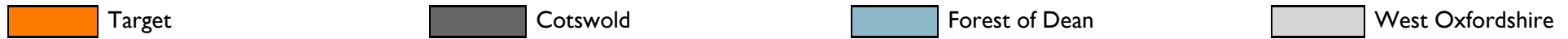
**OBSERVATION:**

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

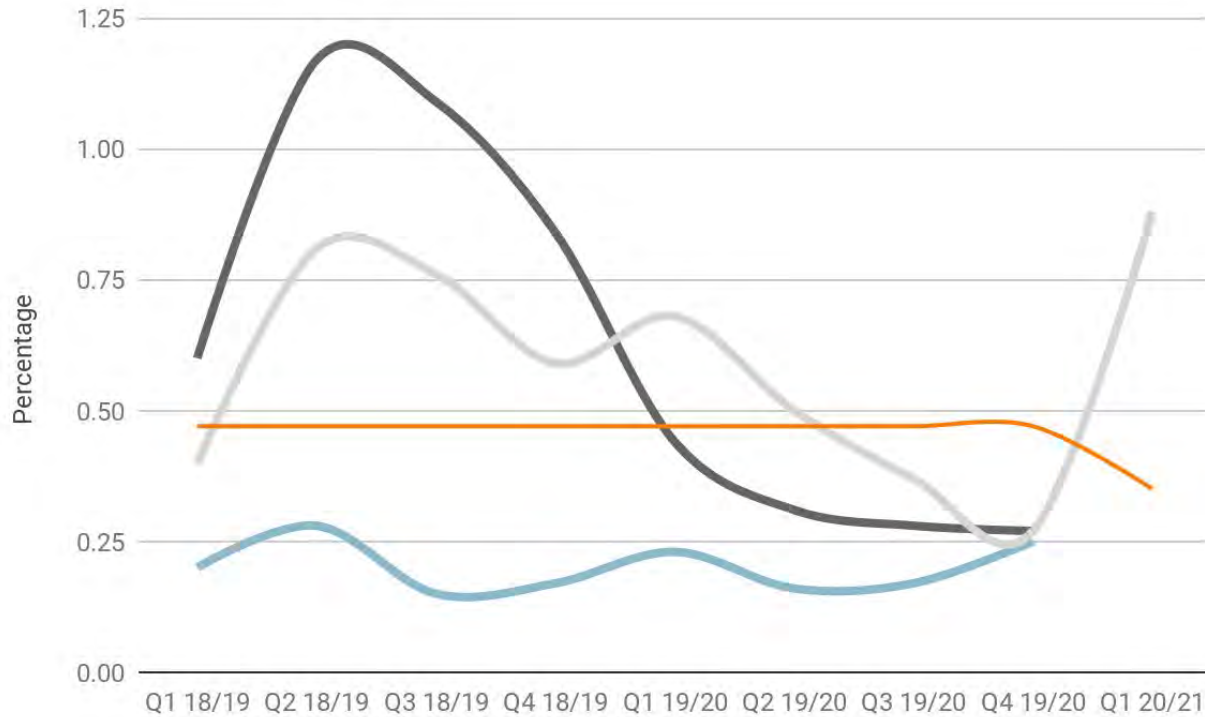
The number of Universal Credit claims has increased due to the impact of Covid-19, which in turn has resulted in an increase in changes that affect housing benefit.

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:**

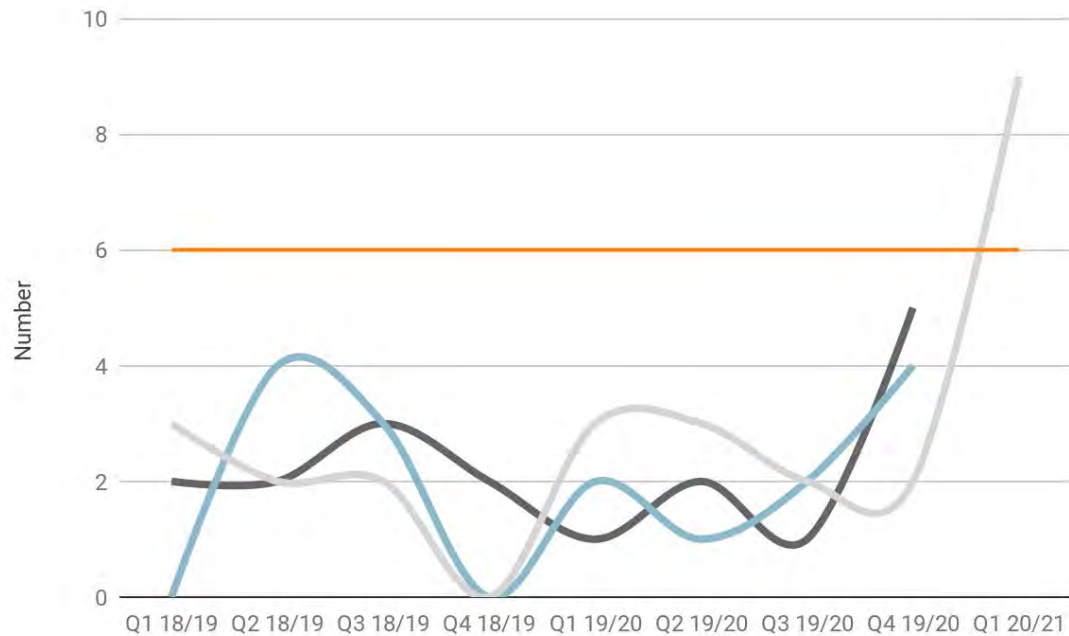
We are continuing to involve a number of staff in quality assurance. Due to the high volume of change of circumstances, we take a sampling approach and target areas which we know have high error rates such as calculation of earnings.

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

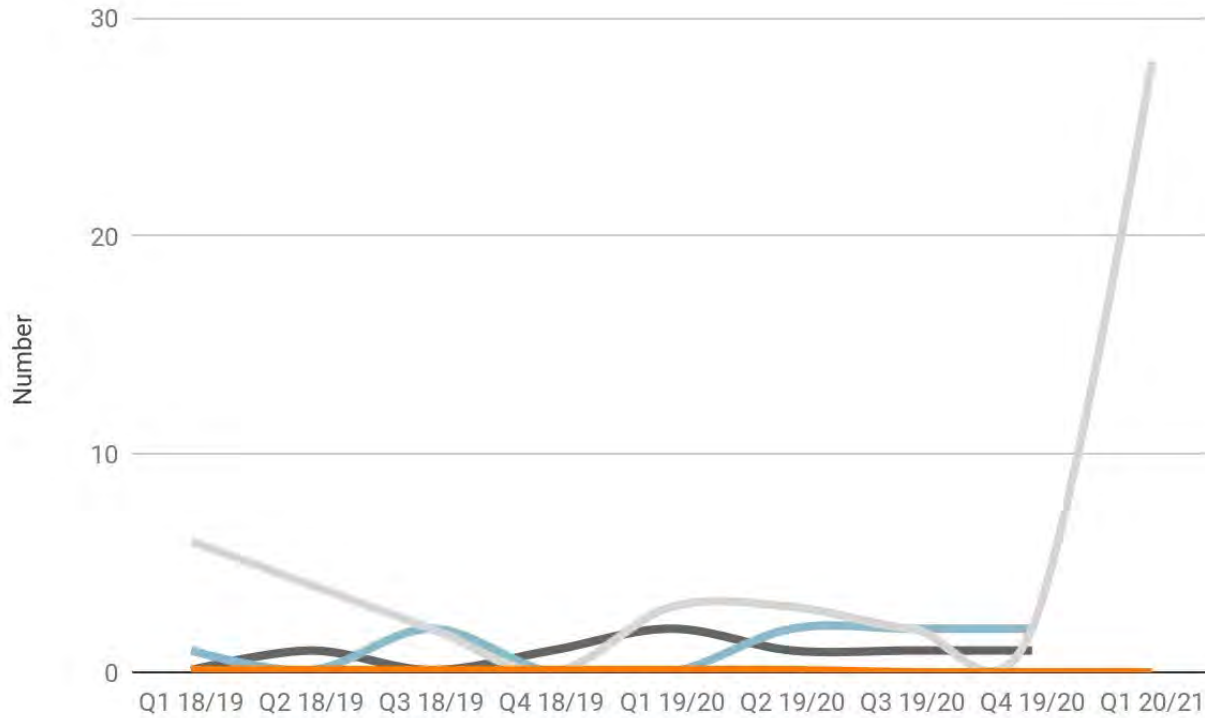


#### OBSERVATION:

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

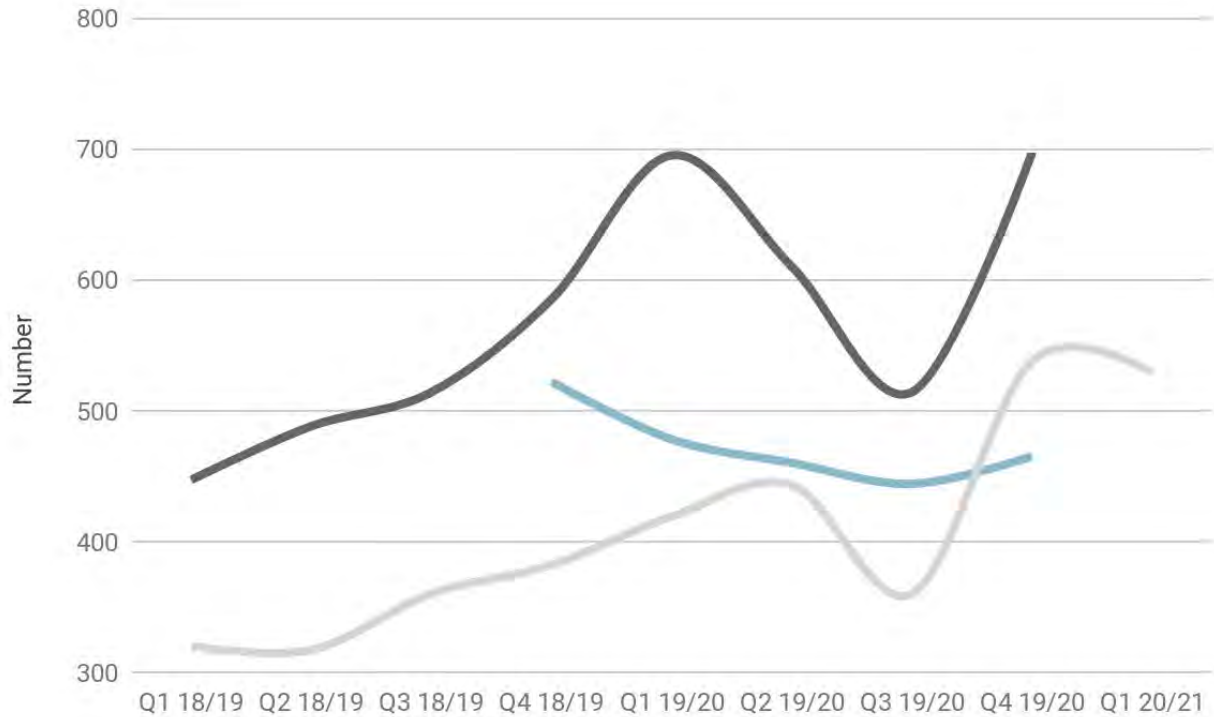


**OBSERVATION:**

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



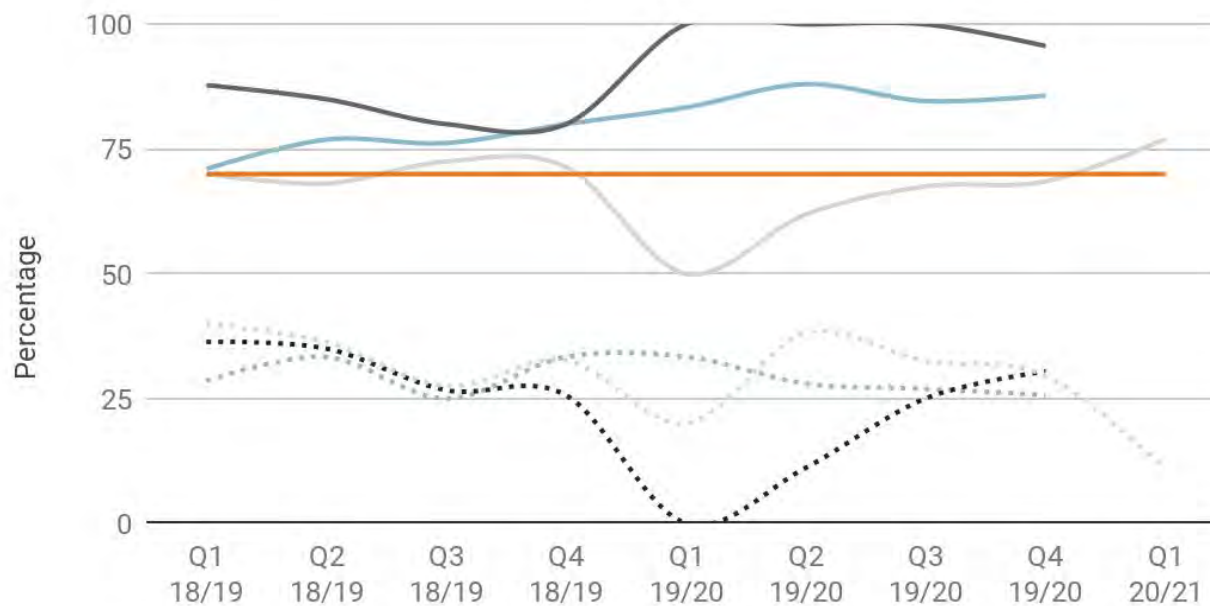
## Planning and Strategic Housing

### 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.

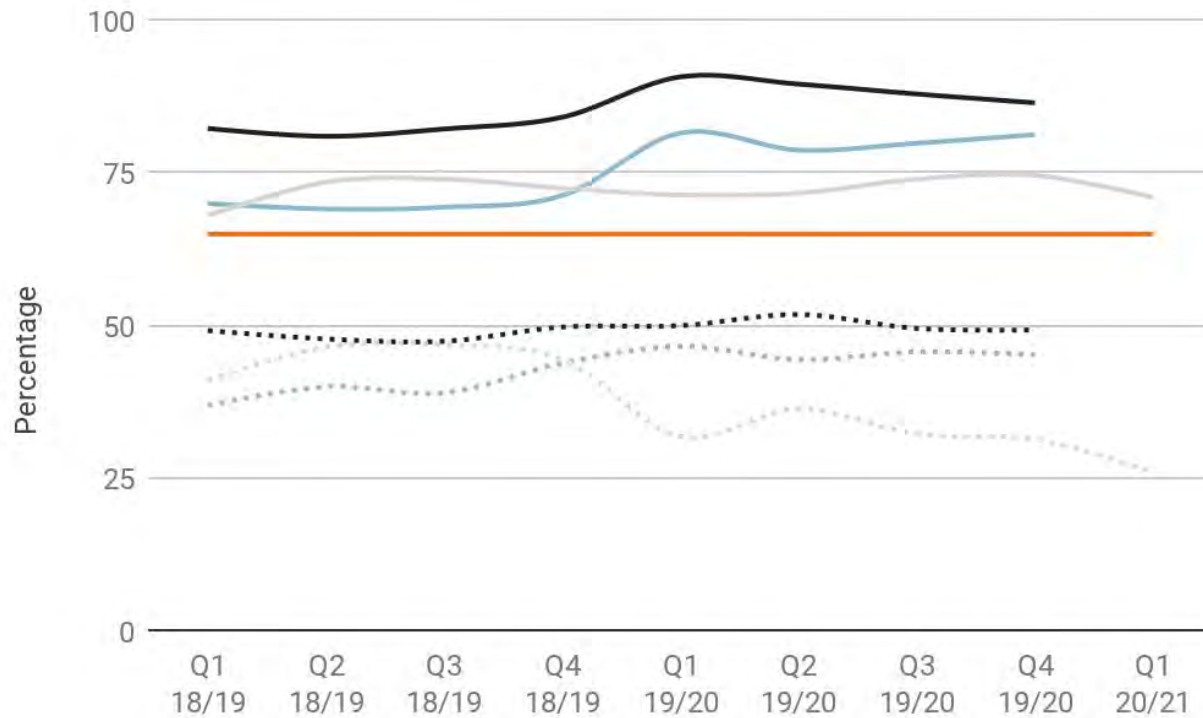
Extensions of times are often a result of consultees requesting changes to the scheme or because the consultee response is essential but has not been received within the timetable. They are also used where officers are working proactively with applicants to improve schemes and make developments acceptable.

## 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

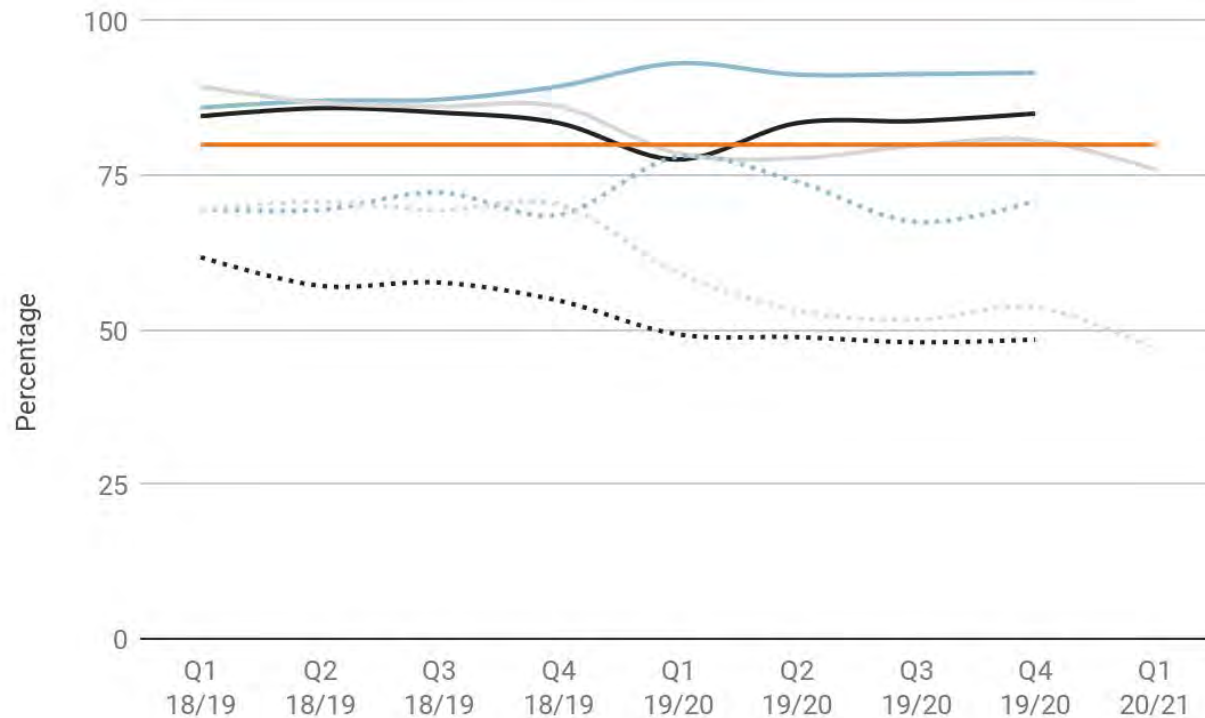
## Percentage of other planning applications determined

% of all applications completed within agreed timescales

Target
  Cotswold
  Forest of Dean
  West Oxfordshire

% of all applications completed within 8 weeks

Cotswold
  Forest of Dean
  West Oxfordshire



### 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

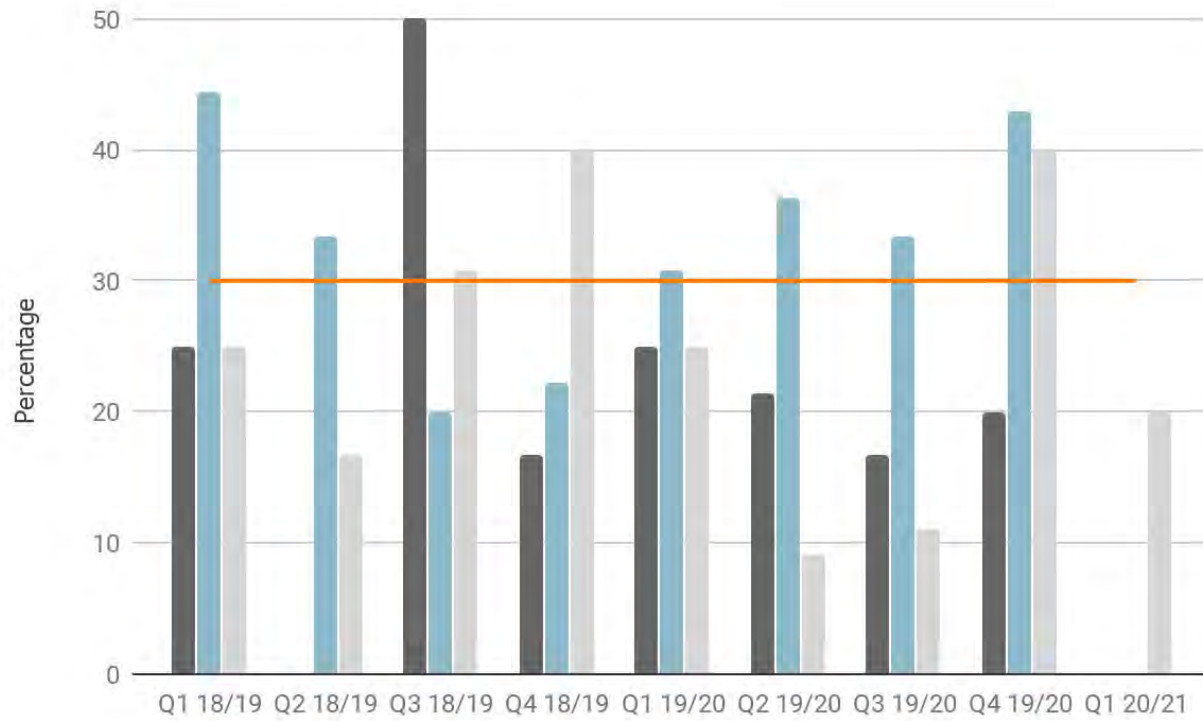
## Percentage of appeals allowed

Target

Cotswold

Forest of Dean

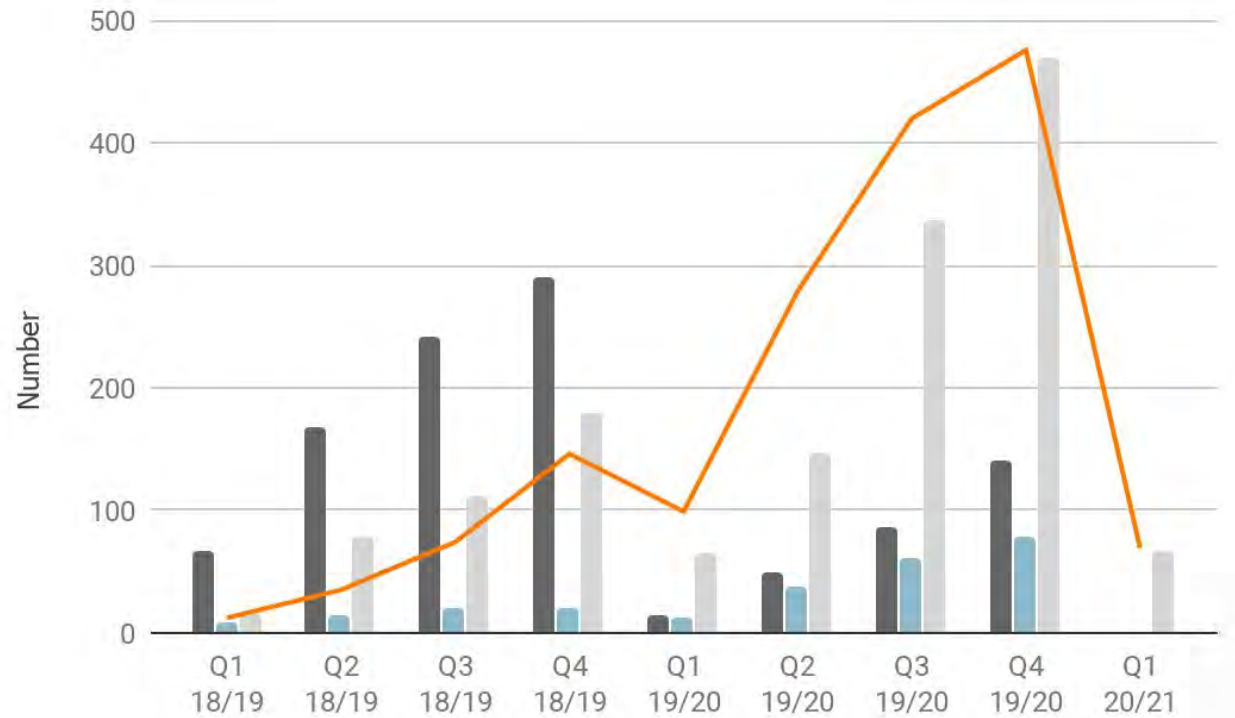
West Oxfordshire



**OBSERVATION:**

One of the five appeals was allowed

## Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)



### 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.

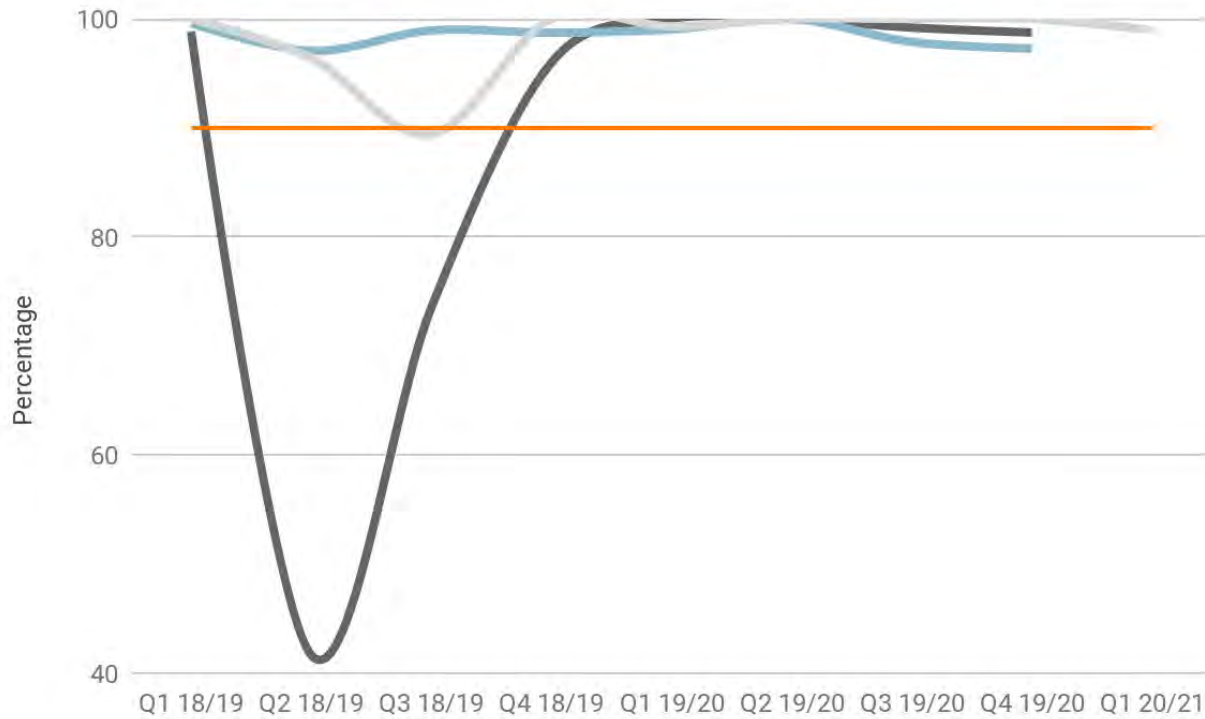
Due to the impact of Covid-19, sites were closed or working with a reduced number of staff from late March to early May.

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

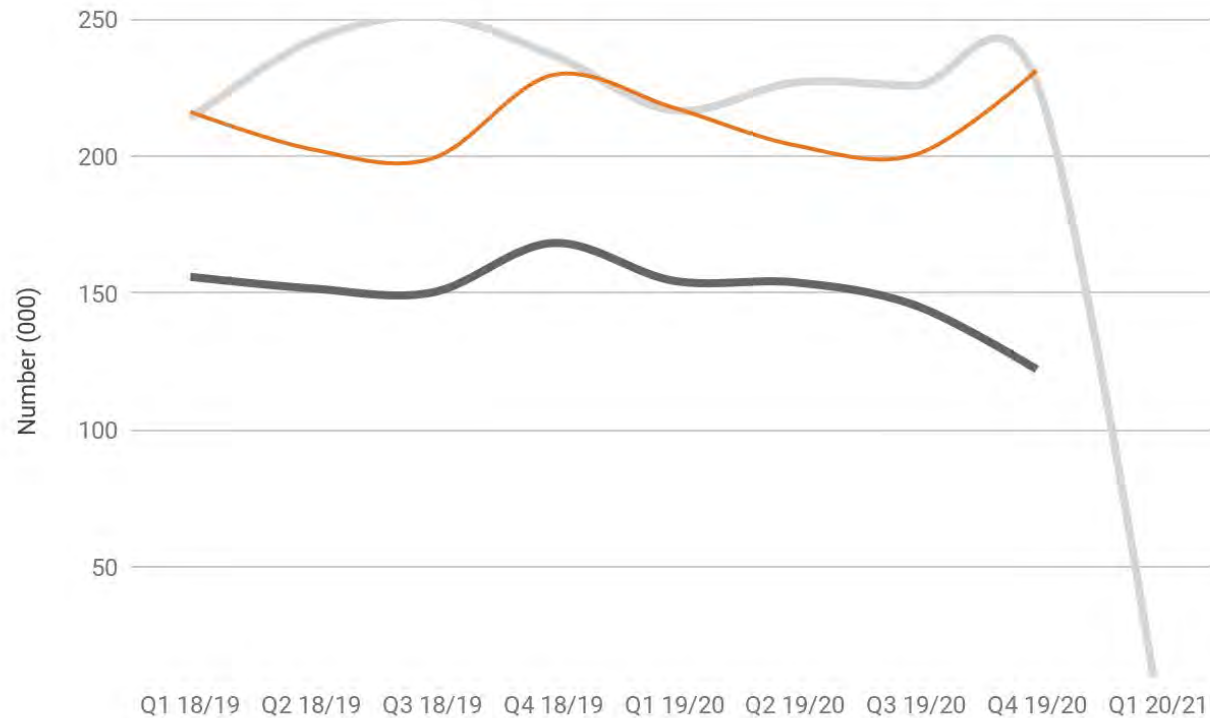
Target      Cotswold      Forest of Dean      West Oxfordshire



**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



#### 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.

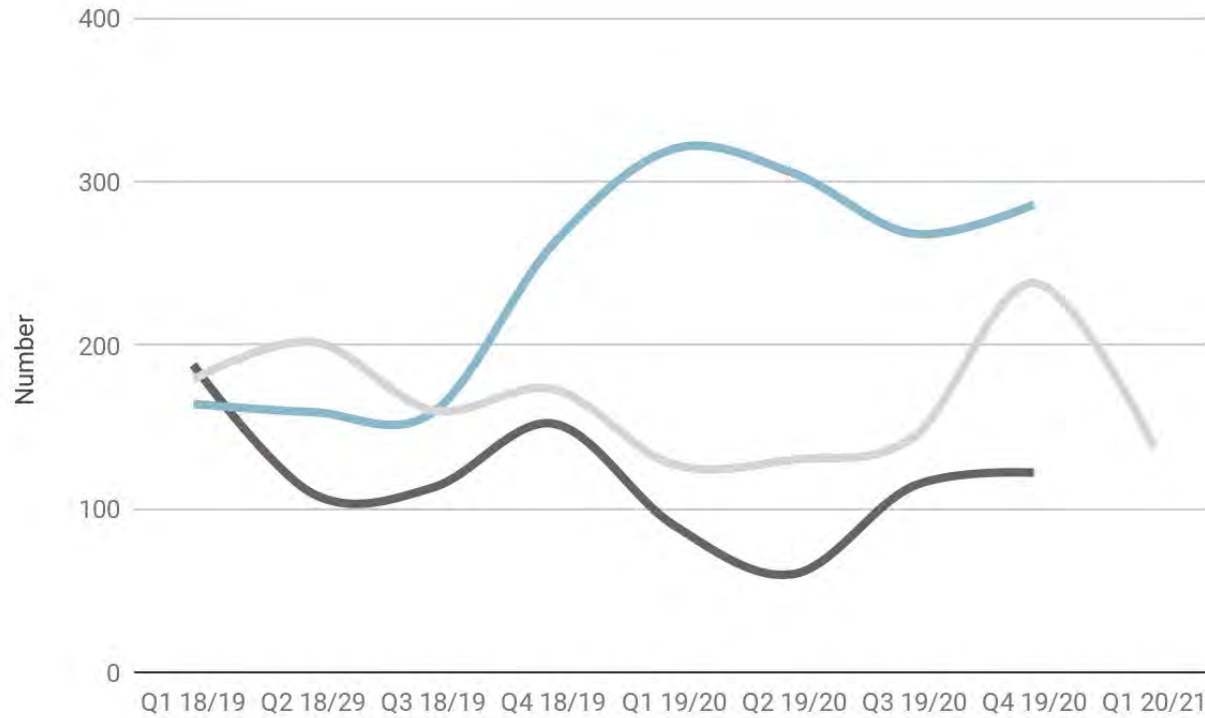
West Oxfordshire District Council is working with GLL Better to agree a financial recovery package to help restart the leisure service.

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:

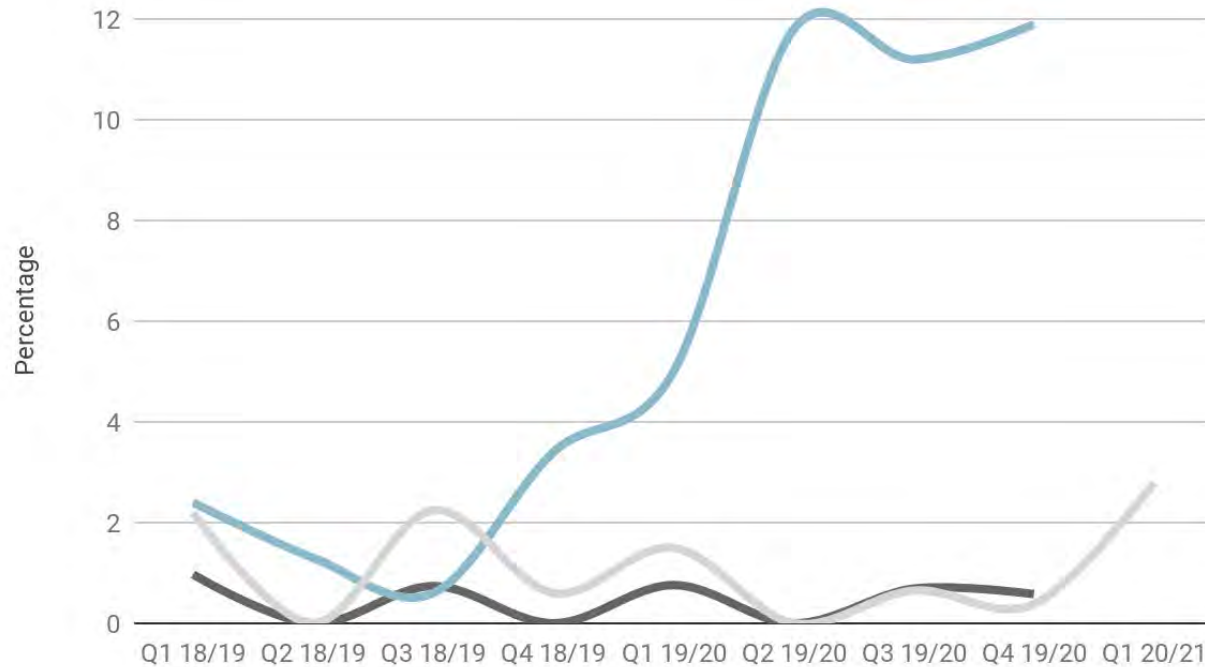
Due to Covid-19, increases in fly tips have been reported nationally, however this is not yet evident in West's figures

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.

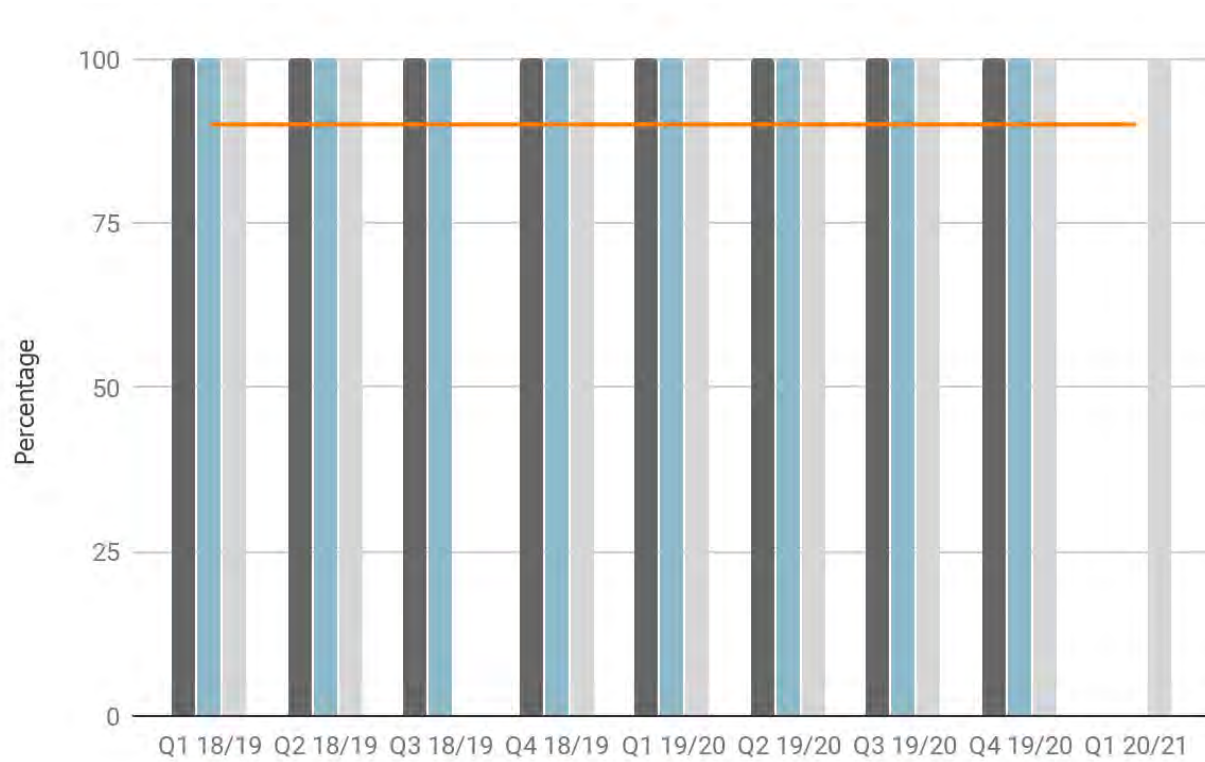
**Percentage of high risk notifications (including food poisoning outbreaks, anti-social behaviour, contaminated private water supplies, workplace fatalities or multiple serious injuries) risk assessed within 1 working day**

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

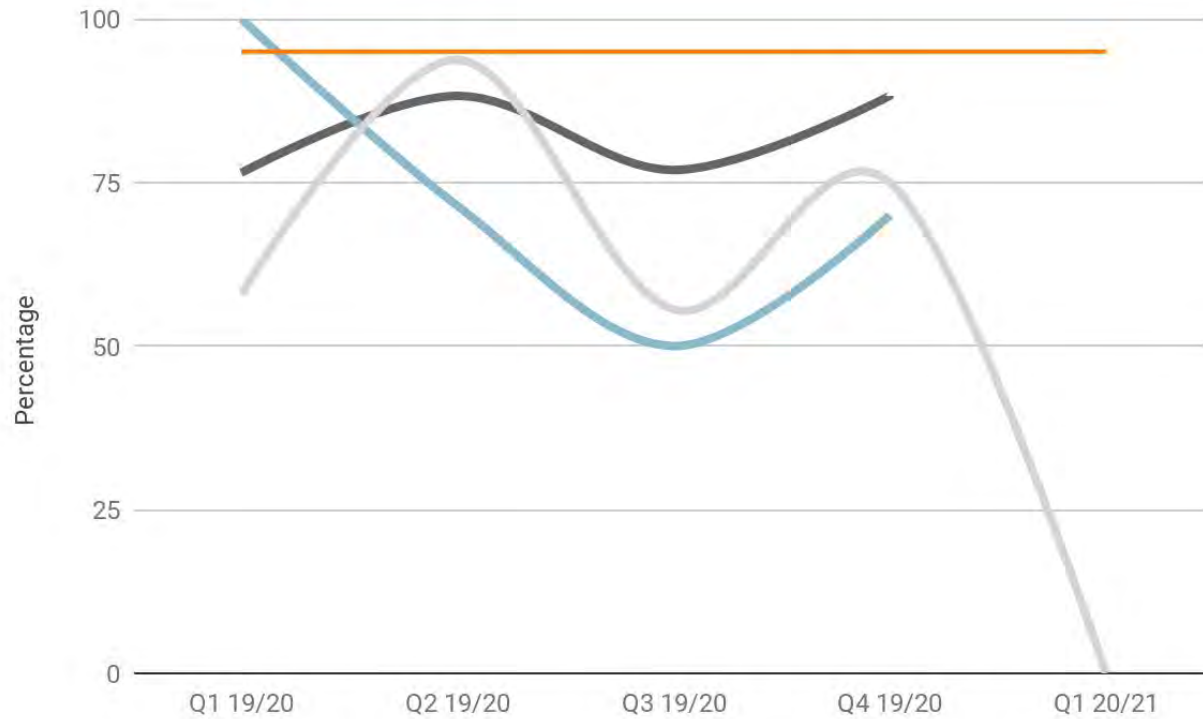
## Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales

Target

Cotswold

Forest of Dean

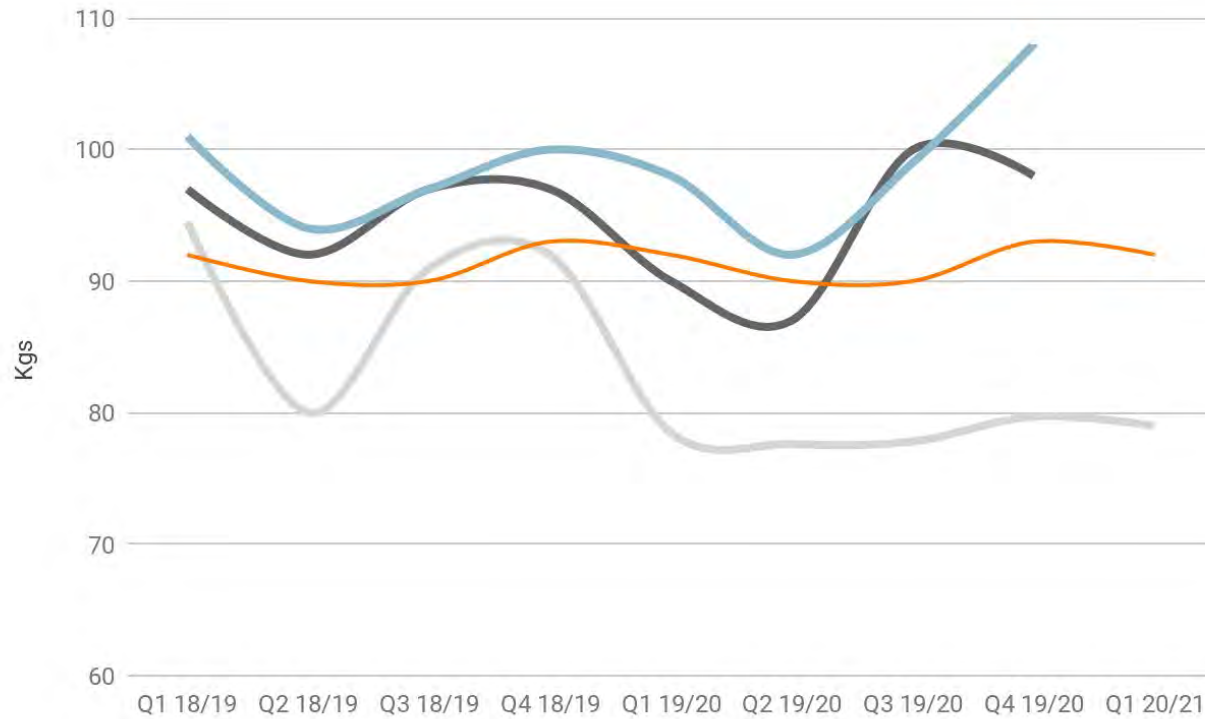
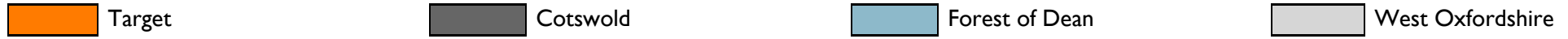
West Oxfordshire



### 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)

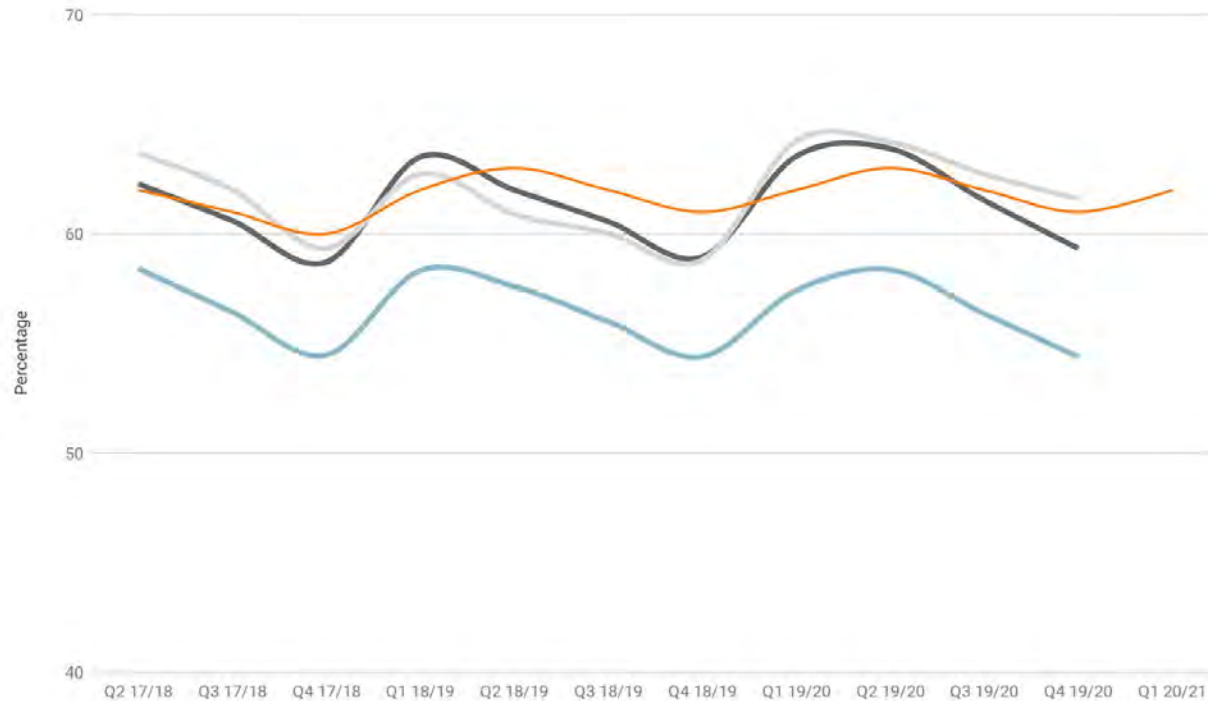


**OBSERVATION:**

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:

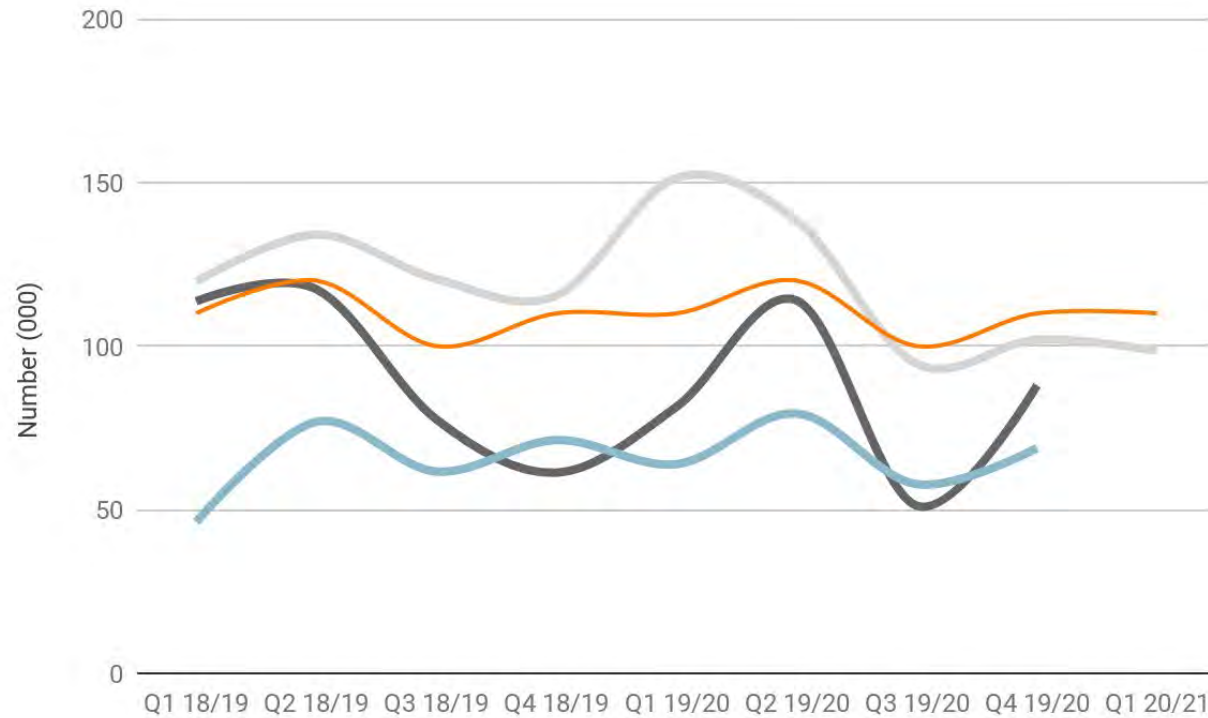
The combined recycling rate was 64.8%, not dissimilar to Q1 of the previous year; the composting rate was 28%, the recycling rate was 24.8% and food recycling rate was 12%.

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:

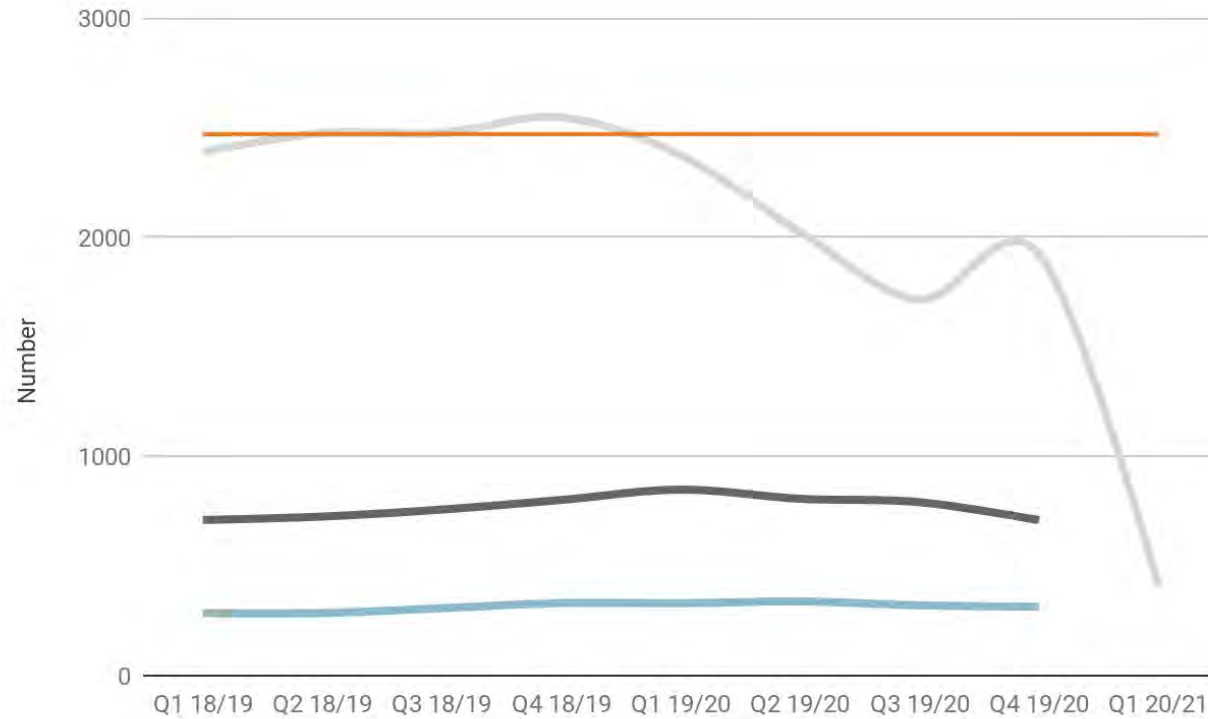
Over the last nine months, performance has improved and remained within the target.

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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