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Tuesday, 6 April 2021

Tel: 01993 861522 e-mail democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

You are summoned a meeting of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held remotely, via Cisco Webex on Wednesday, 14 April 2021 at 12.30 pm.

Giles Hughes Chief Executive

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To: Members of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillors: Councillor Derek Cotterill (Chairman), Councillor Alex Postan (Vice-Chair), Councillor Alaa Al-Yousuf, Councillor Rosa Bolger, Councillor Louise Chapman, Councillor Julian Cooper, Councillor Maxine Crossland, Councillor Merilyn Davies, Councillor Harry Eaglestone, Councillor Steve Good, Councillor Jeff Haine, Councillor Gill Hill, Councillor Liz Leffman, Councillor Dan Levy, Councillor Norman MacRae MBE, Councillor Michele Mead, Councillor Toby Morris, Councillor Geoff Saul and Councillor Harry St John

Due to the current social distancing requirements and guidance relating to Coronavirus Regulations 2020 – Part 3 – Modification of meetings and public access requirements this meeting will be conducted remotely using Cisco Webex.

Members of the public will be able to follow the proceedings through a broadcast on West Oxfordshire District Council Facebook account (You do not need a Facebook account for this).

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted. By participating in this meeting, you are consenting to be filmed.

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

AGENDA

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2021.

2. Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

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

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

5. Committee Work Programme (Pages 13 - 16)

Purpose:

To provide the Committee with an update on its Work Programme.

Recommendation:

That the Committee notes the work programme and provides comment where needed.

6. Cabinet Work Programme (Pages 17 - 22)

Purpose:

To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the Cabinet Work Programme published on 23 March 2021.

Recommendation:

That the Committee decides whether to express a view to the Cabinet on relevant issues in the Work Programme for the period.

7. **Publica Business Plan 2020-2022** (Pages 23 - 42)

Purpose

To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the Publica Business Plan 2020-22 before its presentation to Cabinet on 21 April 2021.

Recommendation

That the Committee decides whether to express a view to Cabinet on the Publica Business Plan 2020-22.

8. Service Performance Report 2020-21 Quarter Three (Pages 43 - 80)

<u>Purpose</u>

This report provides details of service performance during Q3.

Recommendation

That the Committee reviews, and challenges as appropriate, performance for 2020-21 Q3.

9. **Members Questions**

Purpose:

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

Recommendation:

That Members' questions be dealt with as appropriate.

10. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Recommendation:

That, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule I2A to the Local Government Act 1972, (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, (including the authority holding that information)), the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business.

11. Investment Property Review Update

Purpose

To receive a verbal update on the Council's investment property and the capital valuation process; focussing on any substantial moves or changes that have occurred in the Council's property portfolio valuations for 2021.

Recommendation

To note the update.

12. Report from Arlingclose on the Council's Externally Managed Pooled Funds (Pages 81 - 92)

Purpose:

To present the Committee with the external fund managers' report for information and

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

13. Call In of Cabinet Decision relating to request for funding for the Garden Village Design Works (Pages 93 - 102)

Purpose:

To consider the call-in request relating to the Cabinet decision of 24 March 2021.

Recommendations:

- a) That the Committee decides whether or not to support the call-in request; and
- b) That, if the request is supported, the Committee determines whether it wishes to submit any additional comments to Cabinet.

(END)



Agenda Item 1

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee held via video conferencing at 12:30 pm on Wednesday 3 February 2021

PRESENT

<u>Councillors</u>: Derek Cotterill (Chairman); Alex Postan (Vice-Chairman); Alaa Al-Yousuf, Maxine Crossland, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Steve Good, Gill Hill, Liz Leffman, Dan Levy, Geoff Saul, Harry St John and Elizabeth Poskitt.

Also in Attendance: Councillors Andy Graham and Toby Morris.

Officers: Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive); Frank Wilson (Group Director – Finance); and Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Senior Strategic Support Officer)

32. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 December 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

There were no apologies for absence received, and the following temporary appointments were notified:

Councillor Elizabeth Poskitt for Councillor Julian Cooper Councillor Duncan Enright for Councillor Rosa Bolger.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

35. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no requests received.

36. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2020-2021

The Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Head of Democratic Services, which invited it to consider its Work Programme for the remainder of 2020/2021.

The Senior Strategic Support Officer outlined the report and highlighted that a revised version needed circulating with amended dates for 2021 along with an update on when the Investment Property Review would be submitted.

The report noted that the Publica Business Plan had been approved for a two year period last year and a provisional, interim report date of July 2021 had been added.

Officers agreed to confirm whether the Implementation of the Transformation Programme from Publica would be incorporated into the Business Plan report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

37. CAPITAL, INVESTMENT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The Chief Finance Officer stated that due to a miscommunication with officers, this item had been incorrectly added to the agenda. Whilst it was noted that these strategies would be presented to Cabinet later in the month, officers had not been in a position to present them to this Committee at this stage.

38. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Committee received and considered a presentation from the Chief Finance Officer on the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Mrs Griffiths advised that figures were still being finalised but there were no changes from the budget submitted to Councillors in January. It was noted that authorities were in a better position with regards Government Funding compared to last year and having put a number of projects on hold, the financial position was in a better position moving forwards.

It was highlighted that the financing issue was a longer term one, with a drop in funding expected, combined with a loss of income due to Covid-19 of £1.8 million. There was a budget gap within the Capital Programme that would need funding and with a pressure on cash reserves, there was no way of paying back any potential borrowing. The example of the replacement of the Ubico fleet was used which had a life span of seven years. Mrs Griffiths highlighted that a number of the projects planned would not return any funds to the Council.

With regard to the loan made available to Cottsway Housing, Mrs Griffiths explained that this had been to facilitate affordable housing throughout the District and the term was over 50 years. Therefore, this money was tied up, long term.

This was followed by a robust discussion by Members of the Committee, and officers answered questions on a range of areas.

In relation to the Ubico fleet, the options of moving to greener methods of transport and communicating with other shareholders regarding their fleets and needs were discussed.

Officers reiterated that a lot of the Council's finances were tied up in longer term investments and decisions may need to be made to defer items on the Capital Programme, especially as the income from the leisure service was now uncertain. Mrs Griffiths assured the meeting that GLL was acting proactively to continually assess the business and to try to meet the changing needs of residents.

Councillor Postan addressed Members and noted that a true sub-contracting model for Ubico would result in them supplying the fleet of vehicles and the Council paying them for the service. He requested that a cost comparison be produced along with an engineers' report on the differing impacts to vehicles when used in rural or urban areas.

Mrs Griffiths confirmed that lease costs versus capital costs could be requested and advised that the transformation team had looked at a mixed fleet covering larger areas in the past. She also reminded Members that this was a teckal company and the Council was obliged to cover their costs.

The Cabinet Member for Resources addressed the meeting and advised that the programme had been looked at closely and items moved accordingly. He reiterated that this was a live document and some tough decisions would need to be made.

Members agreed the idea of cannibalising vehicles for leasing to other Councils had been discussed previously and noted that it would be useful to be presented with a scheme.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

UPDATE ON 2021/2022 BUDGET

The Committee received an update from the Chief Finance Officer who advised that little had changed on the budget report since the last submission in January 2021.

Mrs Griffiths highlighted the areas of concern which included the Capital Budget and large value items that may require the need for external borrowing in the future.

Following a query from Councillor Al-Yousuf, Mrs Griffiths confirmed that the January 2021 report was still the most up to date with no material changes. Settlement figures had been added but there were no changes to the revenues budget.

Mrs Griffiths stated that this was a balanced budget and although it was recognised that all sectors were facing uncertainty, the Council was in the best position to approach the coming year. The finalisation of the Ubico contract was unlikely to alter the budget figures.

Members noted that savings would still need to be made and officers were working on a transformation programme whilst encouraging other partners, such as Ubico, to look at cost effective ways of working.

In response to a query from Councillor Leffman, Mrs Griffiths advised that officers did communicate with partners, officers and colleagues and shared ideas, thoughts and aspirations for making realistic savings. It was recognised that Cabinet could also look at the relationship between the Council and Ubico and the Cabinet Member for Resources would be asked to investigate how this was being addressed at a strategic level.

The Senior Strategic Support Officer reminded Members that representatives from Ubico had been invited to attend the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee the following week, and Members were welcome to forward any questions for discussion.

The Cabinet Member for Resources thanked Councillor Leffman for her question and assured the Committee that his fellow Cabinet Member, Councillor MacRae, had regular meetings with Ubico and continued to have robust service delivery discussions with them.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

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 19 January 2021.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS 41.

Councillor Postan had submitted two questions prior to the meeting as specified below:

- "How often should Publica provide information on its activities to FMOS and in addition to performance statistics, customer satisfaction and financial data what communication needs to be provided to Council members?"
- "What activities that involve both members and Publica staff can the committee suggest that might foster teamwork and regain the joint sense of purpose that existed prior to Publica's inception?"

In response to question I), the Director of Finance, Mr Wilson responded as follows:

'Detailed Publica reports on performance against delivery targets are presented to Cabinet and each scrutiny committee on a quarterly basis and to Cabinet on a similar basis. This covers a range of performance indicators as set by the Council.

Publica financial data is reported quarterly to the board – board papers can be found on the Publica portal, which can be accessed by the members portal.'

In response to question 2), the Committee were advised that discussions had taken place between the scrutiny chairs and Leaders across the four Councils with a view to reestablishing a forum for Members liaison.

Members noted that workshops had been held in the past, pre Covid-19, but it was felt that there was a lack of interaction between officers and elected members. Officers assured Members that communication amongst staff was generally good with many departments using 'Teams' to hold quizzes across the festive period. However, it was acknowledged that many of these relationships had been watered down with the decision taken following the 'Stay at Home' advice from government.

The Chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 1.47 pm

CHAIRMAN

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee held via video conferencing at 12:30 pm on Wednesday 14 April 2021

PRESENT

<u>Councillors</u>: Derek Cotterill (Chairman); Alex Postan (Vice-Chairman); Alaa Al-Yousuf, Louise Chapman, Julian Cooper, Maxine Crossland, Harry Eaglestone, Steve Good, Liz Leffman, Dan Levy, Geoff Saul, Harry St John and Duncan Enright.

Also in Attendance: Councillors Norman MacRae, Michelle Mead and Toby Morris.

Officers: Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive); Frank Wilson (Group Finance Director - Publica); Jasmine McWilliams (Asset Manager); Andrea Clenton (Principal Planner - Major Developments and Appeals); Andrew Sherbourne (Accounting Technician); Georgina Wilkinson (Shared Compliance Officer); Adrienne Frazer (Strategic Support Officer) and Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Senior Strategic Support Officer).

42. MINUTES

Having considered the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2021, the Committee

RESOLVED: That the minutes be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Councillor Enright substituted for Councillor Bolger.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

45. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no requests received.

46. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2020-2021

The Committee considered the previously circulated report from Democratic Services, which invited it to consider its Work Programme for the remainder of 2020/2021.

No comments were raised other than the desire to add more items to the programme for future scrutiny. Councillor Al-Yousuf indicated that he would be requesting an additional item under Agenda Item 12 on the agenda, Report from Arlingclose on the Council's Externally Managed Pooled Funds (see Minute 52).

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted with the following addition:

(a) the establishment of a Task and Finish Group be added to the work programme to look at defining the Council's Investment Policy.

47. 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 March 2021.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

48. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were no Members' Questions.

49. PUBLICA BUSINESS PLAN

The Committee considered the report from the Chief Executive which gave Members the opportunity to comment on the Publica Business Plan 2020-22 before its presentation to Cabinet on 21 April 2021.

The Group Finance Director addressed the Committee and outlined the report, highlighting that this was a mid-point update within the two year business plan. He reminded Members that a lot of the original work planned for the first year, had been impacted by Coronavirus. He also noted that some of the images used in the plan had since been updated to reflect the new Leader of the Council and a revised version would be submitted to Cabinet in April.

Councillor St John asked if the issue of empty dwellings could be addressed in the plan as he was mindful that whilst it was important to build new houses, it was also important to work on reducing the number of existing, empty properties in the District.

Mr Wilson advised that an Empty Homes Co-ordinator had recently been recruited and would continue the ongoing work of the Homelessness Team in this area of work. He advised that an update could be provided at a future meeting if the Committee requested it.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and no further comment be expressed to Cabinet.

50. SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020-21 QUARTER THREE

The Committee considered the report from the Chief Executive which provided detail of the Council's Service Performance during Quarter 3.

The report outlined the Performance Management Framework which had been developed along with the Commissioning Framework, approved by Cabinet in October 2020. Section 3 of the report highlighted the performance impacted by Covid-19 and explained the support that had been rolled out to residents across the district as well as an overview of the various business grants that had been administered.

Councillor Levy queried the level of work carried out by the enforcement team at the Forest of Dean and Cotswold District Councils with regard to fly-tipping, who appeared to be operating at a higher level than West Oxfordshire.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Councillor MacRae advised that the department were in the process of appointing additional resources to tackle this issue. He advised that he had been in discussion with the Group Manager for Waste and two agency staff were being introduced to the team.

Councillor St John applauded the team at West Oxfordshire for responding swiftly to an abandoned caravan in his ward recently and stated that the process for reporting issues was working well.

RESOLVED: That the Service Performance for 2020-21 of Quarter Three be noted.

51. 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.

REPORT FROM ARLINGCLOSE ON THE COUNCIL'S EXTERNALLY MANAGED 52. **POOLED FUNDS**

The Committee considered the report from the Chief Finance Officer and the Council's external financial advisors, Arlingclose. The report set out the performance of the externally managed pooled funds, covering the 12 months up to 28 February 2021.

Phiroza Katrak (Client Director) attended as a representative of Arlingclose, outlined the highlights of the report and answered questions from Members.

Councillor Al-Yousuf proposed that a Task and Finish Group be established to look at defining the Council's Investment Policy and requested that a special meeting be held following the elections to review Arlingclose's service contract and investment mandate.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

53. **INVESTMENT PROPERTY REVIEW**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Asset Manager in relation to the current situation regarding property lettings across the District and how the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted on them.

The Asset Manager provided information on the businesses hardest hit by the pandemic and following a question from Councillor Leffman advised that officers were guided on which businesses to rent to by the Councils Commercial Rents Policy. It was noted that some premises had been purchased with business tenants in occupation.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

54. CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION - GARDEN VILLAGE DESIGN WORKS

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive following the Call-In request relating to the Cabinet decision of 24 March 2021 (minute number 124) relating to the funding of design works for the access roundabout and underpass to the Garden Village Science Park to integrate with Oxfordshire County Council Housing Improvement Fund (HIF) A40 improvement works.

Councillor Levy outlined the reasons for the Call-in and the areas of work that he felt required further clarification.

Officers responded to each of the queries raised in the Call-In request and provided background information on the desire to retain employment opportunities in the area and how \$106 money is used and managed in a development of this size.

In response to a query from Councillor Cooper, officers explained the responsibility of each individual party and authority with regards to funding.

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Haine answered a number of questions from the Committee and reminded them that it would be down to the Planning Committee to determine any application on its merits.

The Chief Finance Officer provided assurances regarding the Council's funding arrangements and advised that she was comfortable with the decision as approved by Cabinet.

Following a robust debate, the Committee concluded that the decision had been scrutinised appropriately. The Chairman therefore proposed that the Call-In was not supported and this was seconded by Councillor Good. Members noted the importance of moving ahead with the work required.

RESOLVED: That the Call-In was not supported and the decision could proceed.

The meeting closed at 2.22pm

CHAIRMAN

Agenda Item 5

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	Finance & Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Wednesday 14 April 2021
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 5
Subject	Committee Work Programme 2020/2021
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Derek Cotterill, Chairman Finance & Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Email: derek.cotterill@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Amy Bridgewater-Carnall, Senior Strategic Support Officer amy.bridgewater-carnall@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To provide the Committee with an update on its Work Programme
Annexes	Annex A – Work Programme for 2020/2021
Recommendation	That the Committee notes the work programme and provides comment or updates where needed
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

I. BACKGROUND

1.1. At the May meeting the Committee gave consideration to the development of its Work Programme for the year having regard to the changes to the approach to scrutiny work adopted by Council on 22 October 2008.

MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. Attached at Annex A is a new style Work Programme for 2020/2021 for discussion and approval.
- 2.2. Updates to note are:
 - Publica Implementation of the transformation programme has been combined with the Business Plan item on this agenda
 - Investment Property Review officers advised that this would need to slip.
- 2.3. 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.

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.

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

Work Programme – Finance & Management O&S

14 APRIL 2021

	Title	Format	Lead Officer / Cabinet Member	Next report / Anticipated Completion Date	Comments
I	Investment Property Review	Report	Jasmine McWilliams Cllr Toby Morris	Annual report (tbc)	To advise Members of current property investments and their performance since the last review (last report in Jan 2020)
2	Treasury Management Activity and Performance	Report and discussion	Elizabeth Griffiths / Councillor Morris	Quarterly report	To provide an update of the Council's investments. Representatives from Arlingclose to be invited
Page 15	Publica Business Plan & Implementation of the transformation programme	Report and discussion	Jan Britton / Leader / FW / BO	July 202 I	End of first year update following the approval of the Business Plan for a two year period. Following a governance review of Publica it was recommended that a review of the Member Representative Board arrangements and a comprehensive shareholder communications plan be developed.

Work Programme – Finance & Management O&S

2 JUNE 2021

Title	Format	Lead Officer / Cabinet Member	Next report / Anticipated Completion Date	Comments

14 JULY 2021

	Title	Format	Lead Officer / Cabinet Member	Next report / Anticipated Completion Date	Comments
Page 16	Treasury Management Activity and Performance	Report and discussion	Elizabeth Griffiths / Councillor Morris	Quarterly report	To provide an update of the Council's investments. Representatives from Arlingclose to be invited

Other Reports	Frequency	Comments
Introduction of Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Council Car Parks	On-going as required	Awaiting the Distribution Network Operator costs for the installation of any additional infrastructure to support the implementation strategy approved by Cabinet in February 2020. Update given at October meeting – officers looking at changing supplier.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE WORKSTREAMS

Agenda Item 6

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee –Wednesday 14 April 2021
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 6
Subject	Cabinet Work Programme
Wards affected	All
Accountable members	Michele Mead, Leader of the Council michele.mead@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 23 March 2021.
Annexes	Annex I – Cabinet Work Programme published 23 March 2021.
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

I. 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 <u>published on 23 March</u>, covering the period to June 2021 is included in the <u>Annex to this report</u>, 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 23 March 2021

N	О.	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
	l.	Approval to use allocation of up to £140,000 from the Capital programme to procure and implement environmental service system with In-Cab technology in partnership with Ubico	Yes	No	Cabinet	21 April 2021	None	Will first be considered by Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	2.	Approval of revised Publica Business Plan for 2020/22	Yes	No	Cabinet	21 April 2021	None	Will first be considered by Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	3.	Approval of the allocation of the car parking fund set aside for works associated with the Parking Strategy	No	No	Cabinet	21 April 2021	None	
,	4.	Approval of support for the establishment of a Growth Board Environment Advisory Group, endorsement of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Environmental Principles; and support for the development of an Arc Environment Strategy	Yes	No	Cabinet	21 April 2021	None	
ļ	5.	Approval of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision in order to inform future plan and strategy development in Oxfordshire	Yes	No	Cabinet	21 April 2021	None	

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		and (if applicable) reason(s) the matter is proposed to be considered in private	Decision (Yes/No)	considered in private (Yes/No)	maker	Decision		
	6.	Approval of draft West Eynsham Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for consultation	No	No	Cabinet	26 May 2021	Consultation draft	
	7.	Approval of upgrade to West Oxfordshire's public space CCTV provision and monitoring arrangements	Yes	No	Cabinet	26 May 2021		Considered by Economic & Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 November 2020
ַ !	8.	Approval of proposed standard fees for Legal and Estates	No	No	Cabinet	26 May 2021	None	
3	9.	Appointment of representatives on outside bodies for 2021/2022	No	No	Cabinet	26 May 2021	None	
	10.	Proposed support for Gloucester City entering into the Ubico partnership and becoming an equal partner	Yes	No	Cabinet	26 May 2021	None	
	11.	Approval of proposed Covid-19 Rent Policy for the Council's Commercial Tenants	Yes	No	Cabinet	26 May 2021	None	
	12.	Approval of North Witney Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Issues Paper for Consultation	No	No	Cabinet	16 June 2021	None	
	13.	Approval of East Witney draft Supplementary Planning Document for consultation	No	No	Cabinet	16 June 2021	None	

Likely to be

Decision-

Date of

Documents

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No.

Proposed Decision

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
14.	Approval of Oxfordshire Plan 2050 for consultation purposes	No	No	Cabinet	16 June 2021	None	
15.	Approval of Community Facilities Grants	Yes	No	Cabinet	16 June 2021	None	

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Agenda Item 7

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee –Wednesday 14 April 2021
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 7
Subject	Publica Business Plan 2020-22
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Michele Mead, Leader of the Council: Email: Michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Tel: (01993) 861000; Email: Giles.Hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Report authors	Bill Oddy, Group Manager – Commercial Development Email: bill.oddy@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the Publica Business Plan 2020-22 before its presentation to Cabinet on 21 April 2021.
Annexes	Annex A - Publica Business Plan 2020-22 Annex B - Infographic
Recommendation	That the Committee decides whether to express a view to Cabinet on the Publica Business Plan 2020-22
Corporate priorities	Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	 Publica Board Cotswold District Council Forest of Dean District Council Cheltenham Borough Council

I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. As part of the establishment of Publica a number of items were identified as reserved matters for council approval to ensure that shareholder councils retained an element of control over their company. The reserved matters were approved in October 2016 as part of the governance principles underpinning the establishment of Publica.
- 1.2. The reserved matters decisions fall to the shareholder representatives to determine. For each partner Council this is the Leader of the Council. To assist the Leader in reaching his decision the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet reviewed the Draft Business Plan in 2020 and were invited to suggest appropriate amendments before it was adopted.
- 1.3. In 2020 all of the Shareholder Councils adopted the two year business plan (2020-22) which is contained at Annex A and this contains four priorities which are:
 - Support our member councils to deliver their ambitions
 - Get commissioning right
 - Be a great service provider
 - Be a great place to work
- 1.4. The Business Plan provides the vehicle to carry forward and address the issues identified in the Managing Director's assessment. The priorities in the plan are focused on supporting the partner councils to deliver their priorities, improve Publica's approach to commissioning, continue to improve services and customer experience using digital technology, and investing in staff and managers.
- 1.5. A set of action plans support the four business plan priorities and strategic actions. Progress is monitored by the Publica Board and progress will be reported to each Shareholder Council as part of their scheduled scrutiny committee programmes.
- 1.6. Although progress has been made with the delivery of the business plan action plans (https://www.publicagroup.uk/media/1546/publica-business-plan-2020.pdf) during the last year, in some areas this has been held back as a result of the response to the coronavirus pandemic, which has dominated much of Publica's work on behalf of the partner councils during the last year. The table below outlines some examples of progress that has been made under each priority:

Priority	Progress Update
Support our member councils to deliver	Adoption of a Carbon Action Plan
their ambitions	2) Adoption of a Covid Recovery Plan
	3) Delivery of affordable homes target
	4) Work to support businesses and
	clinically extremely vulnerable
	residents during the pandemic -
	Outlined in appendix B
	5) Adoption of an Investment Strategy
Get commissioning right	Awarding contract extension to
	Ubico to deliver waste and grounds
	maintenance contract across West
	Oxfordshire
	2) Launch of Members' Portal to provide support to councillors
	3) Production of Commissioning and
	Procurement User Guide and training
	for all staff

Priority	Progress Update
Be a great service provider	 4) Launch of new council website and automation of basic enquiries 5) Implementation of replacement Revenues & Benefits system 6) Adoption of an Agile Working Strategy 7) Making data and business information live
Be a great place to work	8) Implementation of the new pay and grading structure 9) Introduction of new staff appraisal framework 10) Introduction of a new benefits platform 11) Registration for Investors in People accreditation and employee survey carried out
	12) Commenced implementation of a leadership development programme

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. The focus of the business plan is on supporting the partner councils to deliver their priorities, improve Publica's approach to commissioning, continue to improve services and customer experience using digital technology, and invest in its employees' development. Collectively, the fourteen strategic actions that support the business plan priorities form a cohesive programme achieving sustainable and embedded change over the business plan period.
- 2.2. The benefits of adopted a two year business plan were to enable a sustained focus on the priorities and the longer horizon fits better with the nature of the plan and priorities.
- 2.3. The current business plan is now a year old and half way through its life and the Publica Board reconsidered the priorities when it met on the I February and they believe they remain relevant and appropriate for the next year. The business plan is being presented to the Cabinet for consideration, recommending that it recommends to the Council Leader (as Shareholder representative) to give formal agreement to continuing with the current plan and priorities, as in 2020 the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to review the Business Plan invited to suggest appropriate amendments before it is adopted.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1. As part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings are included in line with the Publica business case approved in October 2016. Publica is required to deliver these savings and Strategic Action 6 in the business plan outlines a commitment to deliver these.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1. This Business Plan has to be adopted in accordance with The Members' Agreement for Publica Group Limited.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1. There are no specific risks in adopting the Publica business plan as it is based upon the principles and targets set out in the business case approved by the Council in 2016 and the approval of this business plan in 2020.

5.2. If the Council does not approve the plan there is a risk that the company will not be able to commence some of the activities necessary to deliver the savings set out in the business case and Council's MTFS.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1. The business plan has a priority to 'Support our member councils to deliver their ambitions' which includes the work to deliver the Council's Climate Action Strategy.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1. The report has no specific implications for any particular equality strand.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

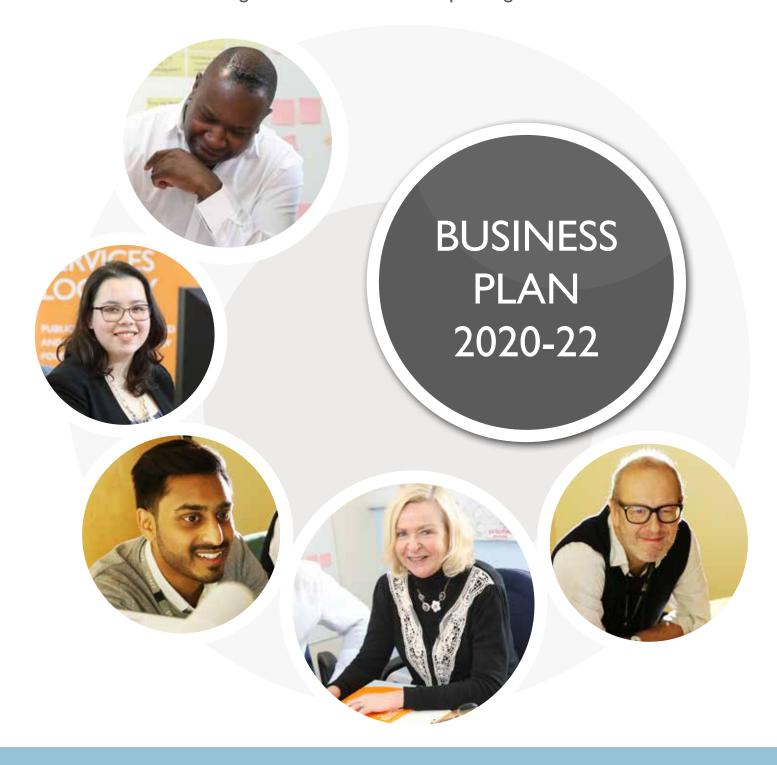
8.1. The Cabinet is free to make comments in relation to the Plan, and proposed amendments will need to be agreed by the other partner councils.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1. The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:
 - Report 69 to Cabinet dated 19 October 2016 and associated minutes
 - recommendations made by the Cabinet to Council on 26 October 2016 and associated minutes
 - Report 117 to Cabinet dated 18 March 2020 and associated minutes
- 9.2. These documents will be available for inspection at the Council Offices at Woodgreen in Witney during normal office hours for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting. Please contact the author of the report.

PUBLICA

Delivering Local Priorities and Improving Services











FOREWORD

Publica has now reached an important milestone. The underlying business case for the partnership continues to be sound, providing scope for efficiencies, economies of scale and capacity for self-improvement which individual councils alone may not be able to achieve. Much has already been achieved in terms of budget savings, but the expectations and service requirements of our partner councils and residents have changed in the years since the decision was taken to establish the company and we need to continue to evolve to meet these changes.

In a report to the Publica Board in December 2019, the new Managing Director presented an assessment of 'the state of Publica', with a number of high-level recommendations for moving the business forward over the next two years. This Business Plan – deliberately short and concise – aims to convert these recommendations into four priorities and a number of key strategic actions to drive the business forward.

This year we will focus on supporting the partner councils to deliver the priorities set out in their Corporate Plans, improve our approach to commissioning, continue to improve services and customer experience using digital technology, deliver efficiency savings, and invest in our employees.

Collectively, the strategic actions that support the Business Plan priorities form a cohesive programme to achieve sustainable and embedded change over the Business Plan period.

This Business Plan has been adopted in accordance with The Members' Agreement for Publica Group (Support) Limited.

Information about Publica is available on its website (www.publicagroup.uk)

Cllr Rowena Hay
Leader
Cheltenham Borough
Council

Cllr Joe Harris
Leader
Cotswold District
Council

Cllr Tim Gwilliam
Leader
Forest of Dean District
Council

Cllr Michele Mead

Leader

West Oxfordshire District

Council

Dave Brooks
Chairman
Publica Group (Support)
Limited

Jan Britton
Managing Director
Publica Group (Support)
Limited

WHAT IS PUBLICA?

Publica is a council-owned not for profit company which delivers services for Cotswold, West Oxfordshire, and Forest of Dean District Councils and Cheltenham Borough Council. Publica additionally provides services to the Cheltenham Trust, Cheltenham Borough Homes and UBICO (an environmental services local authority company).

Each of the councils and clients retain their independence and identity but by working together and sharing resources, seek to maximise mutual benefit, leading to more efficient, effective delivery of local services.

During the last year Publica has supported the councils to deliver their priorities, implemented new digital capabilities and implemented new organisation-wide ways of working.



STRATEGIC FINANCIAL CONTEXT

Our partner councils have set out ambitious plans on behalf of residents in their new Corporate Plans. Climate change, affordable housing and creation of infrastructure relating to jobs and economic development are all priorities. These ambitions will need to be supported by significant investment programmes at a time when funding for local government remains under pressure, and customer expectations continue to increase. This will require us collectively to be creative and innovative in order to deliver our councils' ambitions within the resources available.

After a decade of austerity, local government finances are not as strong as we would like. The Local Government Association has identified a shortfall of £3. Ibn in local authority funding and this is anticipated to rise to £8bn as spending pressures rise over the next few years. Many of these pressures fall on authorities with social care responsibilities, and the government has indicated this as their priority for funding.

As a consequence, district and borough councils in particular face a tightening financial position. Incentive-based funding schemes derived from house building are being replaced by other streams that are broader and less district focused.

Our partner councils are facing extreme funding pressures as set out within their published medium-term financial strategies. They have collectively identified potential budget gaps of over £15m over the next three years – in the order of 15-20% of gross revenue budgets.

This pressure on local government funding comes at a time when residents' expectations are rising and each partner council has ambitious plans to make a positive impact on their area.

Filling this funding gap after ten years of reduced spending on local services will be challenging in light of increased service expectations and will require us all to become more commercial in our outlook. Efficiencies and additional shared services will not fill this gap alone, and run the risk of removing resources needed for partner councils to deliver their priorities. We will, therefore, need to support our partner councils with their commercial ambitions and plans to increase earned income, and keep a sharp focus on existing and new revenue streams through the development and implementation of commercial strategies.



Cllr Sid Phelps (Forest of Dean District Council) and Cllr Nick Penny (Mayor of Coleford) launching the new recycling containers scheme.

BUSINESS PLAN PRIORITIES

This Business Plan provides the vehicle to carry forward and address the issues identified in the new Managing Director's report over the next two years. The focus of the plan is on supporting the partner councils to deliver their priorities, improve our approach to commissioning, continue to improve services and customer experience using digital technology, deliver efficiency savings, and invest in our staff and managers. Collectively, these priorities form our vision:

Delivering local priorities and improving services

The Business Plan priorities form a cohesive programme, achieving sustainable and embedded change over the two-year period 2020-22 and will be reviewed and refreshed after the first twelve months. The Business Plan priorities for 2020-22 are:

Each of the strategic actions will have an action plan that will sit beneath this business plan to ensure the outcomes and benefits are delivered and there are clear milestones and measures of success. These plans will each have a Sponsoring Director and Lead Group Manager who, along with a core delivery team, will be responsible for developing and delivering the strategic actions. A framework will be put in place to allow the partner councils and the Publica Board to monitor progress.



OUR VALUES

Everything we do will be built on the following values:

Authentic

We act genuinely and transparently. We do the right thing for our customers, our organisation and each other.

Modern

We are not set in our ways. We are constantly looking to find ways to innovate and do things smarter.

Flexible

We are agile - adapting how and what we do to meet the demands of our customers, our colleagues, our local communities and the needs of the modern world.

Thoughtful

We take pride in delivering a great service, taking the time to understand and care about our customers and their needs.



SUPPORT OUR PARTNER COUNCILS TO DELIVER THEIR AMBITIONS

Our primary medium-term objective in relation to this priority is to develop Publica's Management Team and focus Executive Directors and Group Managers on working with partner councils to lead Publica's strategic, organisation-wide response to the priorities set out in the partner Councils' Corporate Plans. This will extend to other managers within Publica and retained employees within the councils.

It is central to the aims of the councils and also the future success of Publica that the efforts of our senior team should align with the priorities set out in the partner councils' Corporate Plans. These high-priority projects include climate emergency, affordable housing and growing commercial income. Other strategic priorities include commissioning, performance and resource management.

We are committed to supporting each partner council to deliver a number of significant projects, these include:

- The roll-out of Cotswold District Council's new waste and recycling service
- Cheltenham Borough Council's Corporate Plan priorities with effective and efficient business support services
- Forest of Dean District Council's regeneration of Lydney Docks
- West Oxfordshire District Council's Garden Village

We are also working with Ubico, a local authority owned waste company delivering services for the partner councils to implement an improved customer experience for residents using technology.

In our new approach, one of Publica's Executive Directors will act as the Relationship Lead, working with each council and will be responsible for co-ordinating and leading our work to deliver that council's priorities, as outlined in the table below.

Cheltenham Borough Council	Managing Director
Cotswold District Council	Executive Director (Commissioning)
Forest of Dean District Council	Executive Director (Services)
West Oxfordshire District Council	Executive Director (Finance)



The following strategic actions will be delivered to support our partner councils deliver their ambitions:

Support our partner councils to deliver their ambitions

We will help our partner councils deliver their priorities by:-

- Preparing climate change strategies and actionable proposals that will deliver against those strategies
 Executive Director (Services)
- Assessing how we might deliver additional affordable homes and bring forward delivery proposals
 Executive Director (Commissioning)
- Preparing strategies to support the local economy, employment and develop investment proposals
 Executive Director(Commissioning)
- Supporting our partner councils with modernisation, improvement of services, and commercialisation
 Executive Director (Finance)
- Effectively manage waste and recycling contracts, and ensure they are meeting the needs of residents
 Managing Director
- Ensuring an effective parking infrastructure to support the local economy is in place
 Managing Director
- Develop an effective performance and accountability framework Executive Director (Commissioning)
- Ensuring high quality leisure provision is in place, and the councils work effectively in partnership to ensure the health and well-being of residents

Executive Director (Services)

1

Support our partner councils to deliver their ambitions

2

We will improve engagement with cabinet members, chairs of committees and key partners to translate council priorities into action plans to deliver their desired outcomes. Specifically, we will implement a structured, regular briefing programme to ensure that cabinet members and chairs of committees are fully briefed on plans, programmes, opportunities and risk.

Sponsoring Director:
Executive Director (Commissioning)

3

We will increase residents' awareness of the outcomes and benefits that the partner councils deliver by working with each partner council to develop effective communication strategies and plans.

Sponsoring Director: Managing Director

4

We will assist our partner councils to achieve financial sustainability and deliver their medium term financial strategies by working with them to develop commercial plans to increase their revenue income.

Sponsoring Director: Executive Director (Finance)



GET COMMISSIONING RIGHT

Publica is responsible for delivering the majority of services provided by Cotswold, West Oxfordshire and Forest of Dean District Councils. Cheltenham Borough Council, Ubico, Cheltenham Borough Homes and the Cheltenham Trust also receive business support services from Publica. For example, our Human Resources and Information Technology Teams continue to support Cheltenham Borough Council in delivering their Modernisation Programme. Publica is also responsible for commissioning other services; for example, leisure centres and waste collection, acting as a client agent for the partner councils.

As both service provider and commissioning agent, Publica must provide its partners with robust performance information and analysis so that they can hold both Publica and other third party service providers to account for the services we provide.

A high level statement on commissioning was produced in November 2019 and sets out the respective roles and responsibilities of the Councils' Heads of Paid Service and other statutory officers, shareholder representatives, Publica's Executive Director (Commissioning), and other senior staff within Publica. We will ensure that Publica conforms to the requirements of this statement.

We will support our partner councils to plan, procure, deliver and evaluate the services they provide, using a recognised commissioning cycle to deliver the most appropriate service and allow each partner to make informed decisions about commissioning.

We will develop a new performance framework, including quantitative and qualitative performance indicators together with an honest and transparent assessment of how Publica is performing against the councils' priorities. We will ensure that our governance arrangements are open and transparent, and allow the councils to properly hold Publica to account.

In addition, a new Programme and Project Management Framework will be implemented to ensure proper rigorous governance arrangements are in place for all major projects carried out on behalf of the partner councils, and to provide assurance that progress is being made as expected in delivering against each Council's high-priority projects.



The following strategic actions will be delivered to get commissioning right:

Get commissioning right

We will enable our partner councils to properly hold Publica to account for the services we provide on their behalf. By implementing the high level statement on commissioning, which sets out roles and responsibilities in the commissioning function, and producing a robust and transparent performance management framework.

Sponsoring Director:
Managing Director

We will work effectively with partner councils to drive efficiency savings and increase their income by securing, managing and monitoring contracted services to enable them to deliver their medium term financial strategies.

Sponsoring Director: Executive Director (Finance)

We will ensure that each partner council's high-priority projects are delivered as expected by implementing stronger project governance arrangements for all significant projects, in line with the new Programme and Project Management Monitoring Framework.

Sponsoring Director:
Executive Director (Commissioning)



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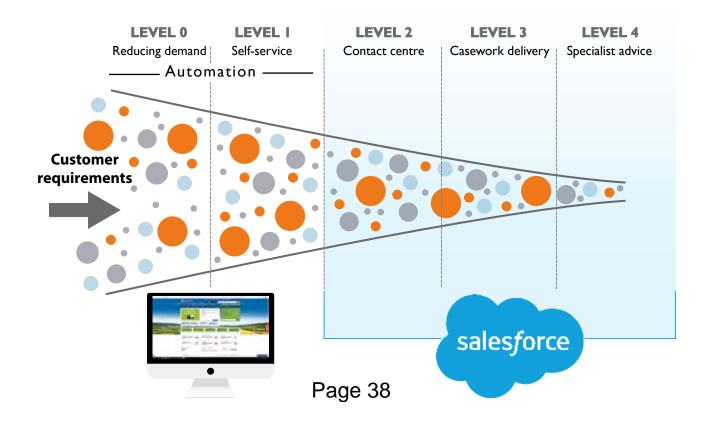
BE A GREAT SERVICE PROVIDER

We are committed to providing a positive customer experience in the delivery of services for the partner councils. Over the last year, we have obtained feedback from over 7,000 customers, and this has enabled us to determine more clearly what they expect from their council. This information has enabled us to identify six promises that will ensure customers have a great experience. These are:

- Easy access to services when it suits them
- To be kept informed of our progress with their case
- To listen to their feedback and act on it
- To receive a good quality service
- Prompt delivery of services
- To know who is dealing with their case, and for it to be dealt with in a consistent way

To meet the expectations of our partner councils' customers, we need to deliver on these six promises. This will involve making the best use of our skills and resources, and organising ourselves more effectively to ensure customers receive a great service.

We will provide modern digital services that meet customers' needs quickly and deal with customer issues before they have to contact the council, for example by allowing customers to track progress with their case. We are implementing an operating model using the Salesforce platform which in addition to the new websites at Cotswold, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire District Councils, will enable us to deliver on the six promises. This work will be coordinated by a Service Improvement Group. The diagram below illustrates how we intend to manage demand from the councils' customers. Managing demand in this way will ensure that cases are dealt with quickly (Level 0 - 2), referring only the most complex cases to caseworkers and then specialist employees (Level 3 - 4), and using automation where it is appropriate.



Ensuring that customers have a consistently great experience is at the core of how we work. To achieve this we will make improvements to our services, including the introduction of new digital capabilities, that will improve the experience of council customers. We also recognise that not all residents want to use online digital solutions, so we will maintain our high-performing contact centre and reception areas for those customers who prefer to use more traditional methods of communication and engagement, whilst nudging those, who are willing, towards the internet.

We will also improve how we organise ourselves, modernise our outdated processes and develop a customer-centric culture to ensure that all of our staff and services are focused on meeting the needs of council customers.

The following strategic actions will be delivered to support being a great service provider.

Be a great service provider

We will create an environment, supported by robust and effective processes, where we look to maximise the potential value of all procurement opportunities by fully understanding the local supplier base / economy, utilising economies of scale and adopting innovative routes to market.

Sponsoring Director: Executive Director (Commissioning)

services for the partner councils by implementing the customer promise through delivery of the Salesforce Operating Model and improving outdated processes.

Sponsoring Director: Executive Director (Finance)

10

We will improve how we organise ourselves, manage our resources and develop a customer-centric culture to ensure that we are focused on meeting the needs of the councils' customers.

Sponsoring Director: Executive Director (Finance)

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BEA GREAT PLACE TO WORK

We want Publica to be a great place to work, and to become an employer of choice that people are proud to work for, delivering great public services for our partner councils and local communities. It is our absolute conviction that our employees should be proud to work for the council or councils they serve, and proud to work for Publica. There is no contradiction, we succeed together.

If our employees feel well-led, supported, rewarded, safe, and empowered within a healthy workplace culture, we will have created the right conditions for high performance and productivity and excellent service delivery. In turn, this should improve our ability to attract and retain high quality employees whose commitment and effort are essential to our continual improvement of customer-focused services.

We will encourage and support all of our employees to do their job brilliantly, providing every person with the tools, support and development opportunities they need to excel at the role they perform. This will include regular appraisals to ensure all employees have clear objectives and an understanding of how their work supports our partner councils' priorities and the delivery of this Business Plan.

Publica will also ensure our commitment to health and safety not only meets, but exceeds relevant standards, and will put the welfare of employees at the forefront of what we do. We will work with the recognised trade unions to help refresh our approach to health, safety and welfare, as we have done with the implementation of new terms and conditions of employment for staff who transferred from our partner councils.

To enhance our reputation as an employer of choice, and support our partners and communities, we also need to demonstrate a clear commitment to our social and environmental responsibilities and make a meaningful impact in these areas. We will implement our Corporate Social Responsibility policy and develop a carbon reduction (climate action) plan for Publica that complements and extends the climate action plans of our partner councils.

We will use the Investors in People (IiP) framework to guide our strategic approach to becoming an employer of choice, by delivering our People Strategy aspirations:

liP Framework	Publica People Strategy Aspirations
Leading: Leading and inspiring people Living our values and behaviours Empowering and involving people	Great Leadership: Our leaders will be inspirational role models ensuring we make the lives of residents and businesses easier with services that our staff are proud to deliver.
Supporting: Managing performance Recognising and rewarding high performance Structuring work	Great People: We will attract and retain talented people, develop their strengths and provide excellent opportunities for personal, professional and career development through ongoing investment in them.
Improving: Building capacity Delivering continuous improvement Creating sustainable success	Great Culture: We will aspire to deliver services that are responsive, flexible and focused on our customers' needs. We will create a climate of well-being/support/inclusion so that each individual feels valued and listened to. We will work to create one team, working collaboratively to support our partner councils' priorities. Page 40

The following Strategic Actions will be delivered to support being a great place to work

Be a great place to work

11

We will attract and retain high quality employees by ensuring that they are trained, appraised, recognised and rewarded fairly, working in a safe environment with the highest standards of welfare and support. We will achieve this by implementing our People Strategy and working closely with our recognised trade unions.

Sponsoring Director: Executive Director (Services)

12

We will implement the pay and grading framework, working closely with our recognised trade unions to ensure the approach is fair, modern, flexible and reflects the diverse nature of the roles performed by Publica employees, to recognise and reward existing employees and help attract high quality individuals.

Sponsoring Director: Executive Director (Finance)

13

We will inspire, motivate and empower employees by implementing a Leadership Development Programme, based on the principle of "leadership at all levels" including political and commercial awareness.

Sponsoring Director: Executive Director (Services)

14

We will create the right conditions for achieving continuous improvement, high performance and productivity, by improving our HR practices using the Investors in People (IiP) framework and attaining IiP accreditation.

Sponsoring Director: Executive Director (Services)

During the COVID-19 crisis, we've been busy supporting residents, businesses, and local people, and in 2020 we provided the following services:



1,260

Residents given emergency support via the Help Hub



£34.9M

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



69,50I

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



£17.5M

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



748

Extra tonnes of recycling collected as compared to April - December 2019



48 I

Extra tonnes of food waste collected as compared to April - December 2019



745

Extra tonnes of garden waste collected as compared to April - December 2019



Agenda Item 8

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 14 April 2021
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 8
Subject	Service Performance Report 2020-21 Quarter Three
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 service performance during Q3
Annexes	Annex A – Performance Indicator report
Recommendation	That the Committee reviews, and challenges as appropriate, performance for 2020-21 Q3
Corporate priorities	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 each quarter as well as progress towards achieving the aim and priorities set out in the Corporate Plan at the end of Q2 and Q4.
- 1.2. Performance in those service areas relating to the work of this Committee is provided in this report.

2. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK - PERFORMANCE REPORTING

- 2.1. A high level Commissioning Framework was approved by Cabinet in October 2020. The Commissioning Framework identifies that the provision of robust performance data quantitative and qualitative, together with a robust analysis of that data and evidence is vital to ensure that the Council has the information to assess whether its commissioned services are being delivered to a high quality.
- 2.2. A new performance management framework has been 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. The performance report will continue to evolve in line with the Performance Management Framework as well as feedback from senior officers and Members.
- 2.4. The Commissioning Framework also sets 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.
- 2.5. The Council's Chief Executive has received a report on service performance, and he has assessed it in line with the high level Commissioning Statement, and confirms that overall, services have been delivered to the agreed quality and standard. The Chief Executive has also noted the continued impact of Covid-19 on communities, businesses, customers, services, and staff as the nation moves from response to recovery and back to response again. The recent flooding incidents also meant that Ubico crews, staff, councillors and volunteers were out supporting residents over the Christmas period, while other staff helped with coordination and organisation, and keeping residents and communities up to date with the latest information. He has drawn particular attention to the following:
 - i. Many services continue to support residents, communities and businesses that have been impacted by Covid-19 as part of their every day job. Enormous efforts continue to be made by a number of services in supporting businesses to access grants, and supporting the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and other residents to access the help they need;
 - ii. The Council's leisure facilities re-opened on 25 July 2020 with additional activities being restarted in line with government guidance, but were required to close down again in

line with the announcement of a second lockdown between 5 November and 2 December 2020. Facilities were re-opened in the lead up to Christmas but as Oxfordshire went into Tier 4 on 26 December 2020, all leisure facilities have remained closed from this date. A contract variation and financial recovery package have been agreed to cover the period until March 2021;

- iii. Affordable housing has continued to be delivered in the District and demonstrates the success of the strategic sites included in the Local Plan in bringing forward housing numbers. One hundred and thirty-nine affordable homes were delivered in Q3 bringing the total to 300 for the year so far, and exceeding the Local Plan target of 274;
- iv. The Council's business rates collection figure is being understandably impacted by Covid-19 as is the case with other councils throughout the country. Government has gone some way in helping certain businesses such as retail with 100% business rate relief, but there are still businesses that are struggling financially. The Council is distributing a number of support grants to eligible businesses, however, there is no requirement to use it to pay for business rates;
- v. The Housing team has created exit plans to move households into more secure tenancies including private rented, housing association, and supported accommodation, which has significantly reduced the number of households living in emergency accommodation over the last six months; however, with a third lockdown commencing on 5 January 2021, it is likely that the numbers will start to rise again.

COVID-19 UPDATE

- 3.1. During Q3, the key elements of the Community Response hub call handling, outbound calling, complex welfare support and problem solving, food parcel delivery and welfare checks were retained but with a much smaller staff resource than during the first lockdown.
- 3.2. The nation entered a second lockdown in November; the Council contacted everyone on the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable list in one form or another depending on their risk factors. An outbound calling team was remobilised to contact a higher risk group, while messages were sent by email and text to others.
- 3.3. Residents that required additional help were referred to the Localities team for more complex support. The team uses a person centred approach to understand the underlying issues and to support the resident to prioritise what s/he may need help with first. This conversation might result in an onward referral to a statutory or voluntary sector service such as Adult Social Care or Citizens Advice, the delivery of an emergency food parcel, a referral to a community support group for befriending or shopping support, or an internal referral to housing services. Between October and December 2020, the Localities team supported 244 residents in this way, and over 1,000 since the start of the response. The lack of a countywide hub such as the one that operates in Gloucestershire has resulted in the district councils in Oxfordshire needing to directly support residents with a wider range of needs. The Community Wellbeing team has remained central to the response and has continued to run the complex calling element whilst balancing the need to continue core work.
- 3.4. During Q3, the Council was also charged with the distribution of its £59k allocation of the government's Emergency Assistance for food and essential supplies funding. The funding was fully utilised on supermarket vouchers for individuals and families in food need (managed by Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire on behalf of the Council), and a grant scheme for community organisations providing food support. In addition, the Council introduced a new grant scheme and allocated £39k to local food projects and foodbanks up to the 31st December.

- 3.5. The Council is continuing to support local businesses who are having to adapt to changing Covid-19 restrictions, and multiple lockdowns. It is responsible for distributing the large range of business grants made available by central government. Financial support is also available to those individuals having to self-isolate under the Test and Trace support payment.
- 3.6. During Q3, the following business grants were awarded:
 - i. Local Restrictions Support Grant (closed) a total of £ 898,890 was paid out to 544 businesses in retail, leisure, hospitality, and events which were mandated to close between 5 November and 2 December 2020. Further retrospective applications have since been received:
 - ii. Additional Restrictions Grant (discretionary) a total of £114,028 was paid out to 70 businesses from November to the end of Q3. This grant is available for businesses that do not have a business rate assessment of their own, and would include charity properties and regular market traders;
 - iii. Christmas Support Payment for wet-led pubs funding grants of £1,000 were paid to 13 businesses during December. This fund closes on 28 February 2021;
 - iv. Local Restrictions (closed) a total of £16,340 was awarded to 17 businesses that were mandated to close either under the Tier system or current lockdown; the fund opened on 2 December.
- 3.7. The administration of business grants and the Test and Trace isolation payments have impacted on resources across a wide range of services including ICT, Accountancy and Accounts Payable, and Revenues and Customer Services. New online application forms have been created and a new process built in Salesforce; and additional returns have been completed on the value of grants paid for each scheme for government reporting. The Revenues and Customer Services teams have supported businesses in responding to their enquiries on the grant process and grant applications. Although additional resource has been made available externally to help administer the grants, existing resources have to support and train them up.

4. SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 4.1. 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 A with pages 4 to 10 of that Annex providing the further relevant information.
- 4.2. Since the start of the pandemic, many services have been impacted by Covid-19; some services have experienced higher workloads due to demand or because colleagues were supporting residents, communities, and businesses through the crisis. The majority of staff continue to deliver services from home in compliance with Covid-19 instructions and guidance. Overall, many services have performed well in the current conditions and restrictions.
- 4.3. Of the nine targeted indicators, four indicators achieved their targets (Green), four indicators achieved their targets 'within tolerance' (Amber), and one indicator did not achieve its target (Red). A full report is attached at Annex A.
- 4.4. The indicator 'percentage of business rates' has been set to 'Amber' to recognise that it has understandably been impacted by Covid-19, and that the service is encouraging businesses to make contact so that it can offer support to those businesses via manageable repayment plans.
- 4.5. The indicator 'average number of days taken to process new housing benefit claims' did not achieve its target. The number of HB new claims is falling as claimants transfer to Universal

Credit; however, the cases that are left tend to be the more complex cases. The average time has increased over the last quarter as there have been large delays in processing a small number of claims. In addition, staff have been involved in data migration and testing activities relating to the implementation of a new revenues and benefits system.

- 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS
- 5.1. None
- 6. RISK ASSESSMENT
- 6.1. None
- 7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS
- 7.1. None
- 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS
- 8.1. None





Delivering great services locally

PERFORMANCE REPORT:

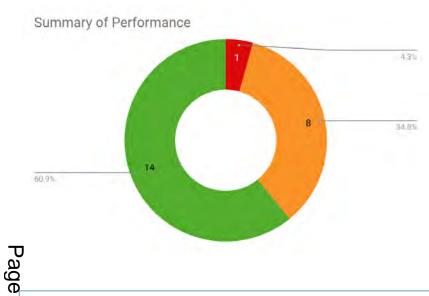
October 2020 - December 2020

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
Customer satisfaction – telephone	Number of Long Term Empty properties	Percentage of high risk notifications risk assessed within one working day
Customer satisfaction - email	Percentage of major planning applications determined	Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales
Percentage of calls responded to within 20 seconds	Percentage of minor planning applications determined	Residual household waste per household (kg)
Percentage of telephone calls abandoned by the customer	Percentage of other planning applications determined	(Cumulative) Percentage of household waste recycled
(Cumulative) Percentage of council tax collected	Percentage of planning appeals allowed	(Cumulative) Percentage of household waste by waste streams
(Cumulative) Percentage of business rates collected	(Cumulative) Number of affordable homes delivered	Number of missed bin per 100,000 scheduled collections
(Cumulative) Average number of days taken to process new housing benefit claims	Percentage of land charge searches dispatched within 10 working days	Total hours spent undertaking on and off-street parking enforcement visits
(Cumulative) Average number of days taken to process housing benefit change of circumstances	Number of visits to leisure centres	
(Cumulative) Percentage of housing benefit overpayment due to LA error/Admin delay	Number of gym memberships	

KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

At a glance...



OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Many services have been impacted by Covid-19, and have had to either cease or find new ways of working during multiple national lockdowns. Other services have experienced higher workloads to meet customer/client demand.

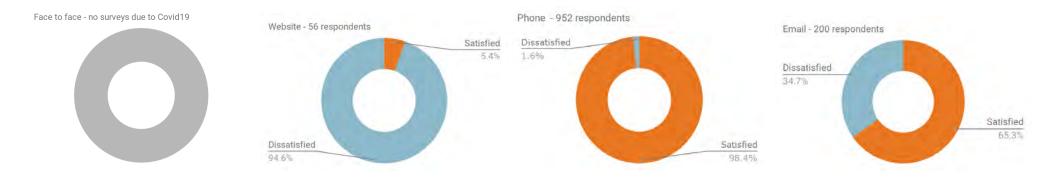
Overall, services are performing well but some services continue to be significantly impacted by Covid-19 such as business rates collection, leisure facilities and food safety inspections. In addition, the benefits team is working on the implementation of a new system which has reduced capacity in the service.

To comply with Covid-19 guidance and restrictions, the majority of staff are still working from home. Although many services have been able to deliver services 'virtually' and customer satisfaction for services delivered by phone remains high, other services such as Planning have found the process less efficient

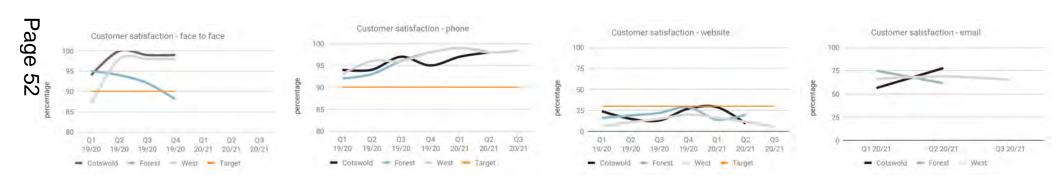
	_
Indicator	Status
Customer satisfaction - phones	
Customer satisfaction - F2F	n/a
Customer satisfaction - website	
Customer satisfaction - email	no target set
% calls responded within 20 secs	
% abandoned calls	
CT collection rate	
NNDR collection rate	
Average days to process HB new claims	
Average days to process HB change events	
% HB overpayment	
Households in Emergency Accomodation under 28 days	
Households in Emergency Accommodation over 28 days	
% major applications determined within time	
% minor applications determined within time	
% others applications determined within time	
% planning appeals allowed	
Affordable homes delivered	
% land charge searches dispatched within time	
% high risk notifications assessed within time	
% high risk food premises inspected within time	
Residual waste per household (kg)	
% overall recycling rate	
Missed bins per 100,000	
Leisure visits	no target set
Gym memberships	no target set
Parking enforcement hours	

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer satisfaction



What's the trend?



OBSERVATION

Due to Covid-19, the Council closed its reception areas; surveys are being conducted by phone, web and email.

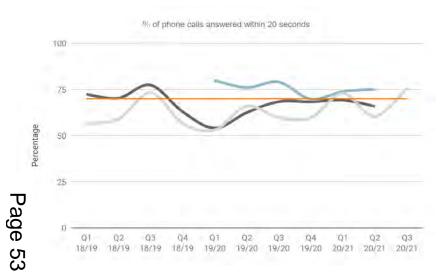
The process of rating the website and leaving feedback is simple with a feedback button on every web page. Despite this, the number of responses to the website survey, although up on the previous quarter at 56 (from 44) remains an extremely small proportion of the 452,484 visitors, and is therefore unlikely to be representative. An analysis of website data for the three Councils has been completed to understand the issues and to determine whether satisfaction is with service provision or the website. The findings indicated that only 40% of responses included any qualitative feedback about potential improvements in council services, web content and navigability. Furthermore, an analysis of the qualitative feedback indicated that a significant proportion (40%) was about service provision or were categorised as user error e.g. mistyping a postcode. Although the website satisfaction survey is yielding some excellent information that can be used to remove errors or make improvements to content on the web platform, due to the extremely small numbers, it provides a poor basis upon which to determine customer satisfaction with the website. Therefore, this indicator has been set to 'Amber'. A new framework to measure the effectiveness of the Council's website and gather customer feedback is planned

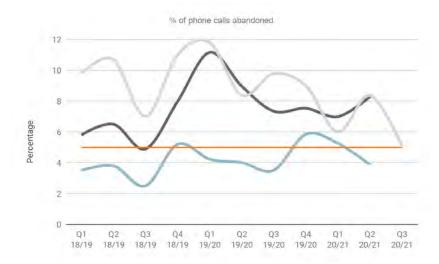
Satisfaction ratings for services delivered by phone continue to be high.

(Performance Annex A - Page 4)

Telephone calls - response and abandonment







Forest of Dean

West Oxfordshire

OBSERVATION

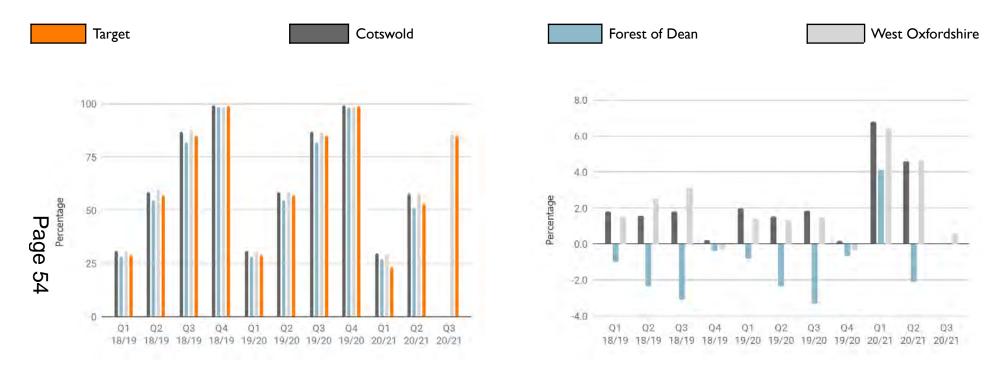
A good level of service was achieved this quarter; Q3 is usually a quieter quarter and the offices were closed between Christmas and New Year.

Historically, performance has always struggled to meet targets, even before the pandemic. 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 four staff who usually provide face to face services to the phones has helped to improve performance levels.

The impact of home working is continuously under review to ensure that any impact on performance is mitigated

Revenues and Benefit

(Cumulative) Percentage of council tax collected & the difference between the percentage of council tax collected and the target



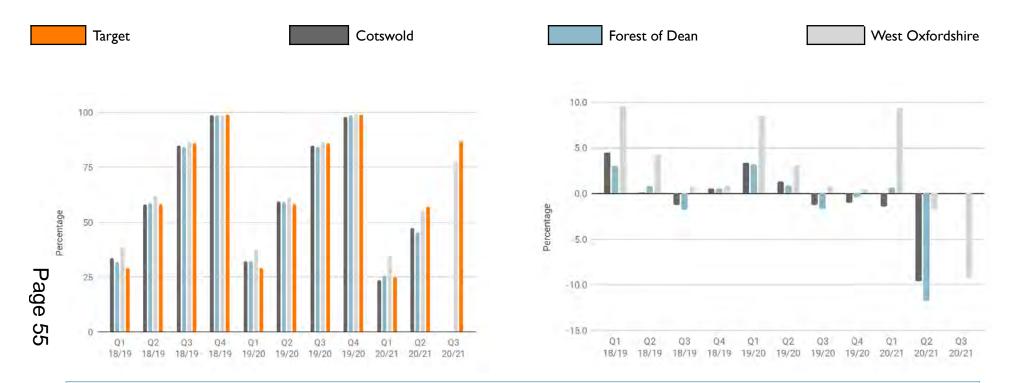
OBSERVATION:

At the end of Q3, the collection rate was less than one percentage point lower than the previous year.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, all recovery action was paused initially following government guidance and Member decision; and the service worked with customers to re-align payment instalments. The service had the go-ahead at the end of September 2020 to re-commence recovery actions such as reminders and final payment letters. The service is contacting customers by phone and email, as well as including a letter with reminders to encourage customers to contact the Council if they are experiencing problems with council tax payments.

Currently, the Magistrates Courts are not holding any liability order hearings which will mean the Council is unable to enforce any debts incurred in 2020/21. The debt will be rolled over into the new financial year, and recovery action will continue

(Cumulative) Percentage of business rates collected & the difference between the percentage of business rates collected and the target



OBSERVATION:

The collection rate at the end of Q3 was over ten percentage points lower than previous years.

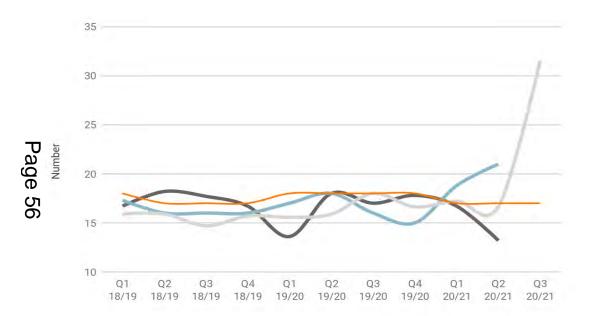
Due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions and two lockdowns, many businesses were closed in Q1, and part of Q2 and Q3. Following an initial pause in undertaking recovery action, the service is sending out reminders, phoning and emailing businesses to encourage them to contact the Council so that we can support them via manageable repayment plans. Currently, the Magistrates Courts are not holding any liability order hearings which will mean the Council is unable to enforce any debts incurred in 2020/21, so the debt will be rolled forward into the next financial year.

The nation went into a third lockdown on 5 January; Covid-19 is having a major impact on business rate collection figures throughout the country. Government have gone some way in helping certain businesses such as retail with 100% business rate relief. Other businesses are able to apply for support grants but there is no requirement to use it to pay their business rates.

Note: central government funding to cover business rates relief is not included in the outturn

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





OBSERVATION:

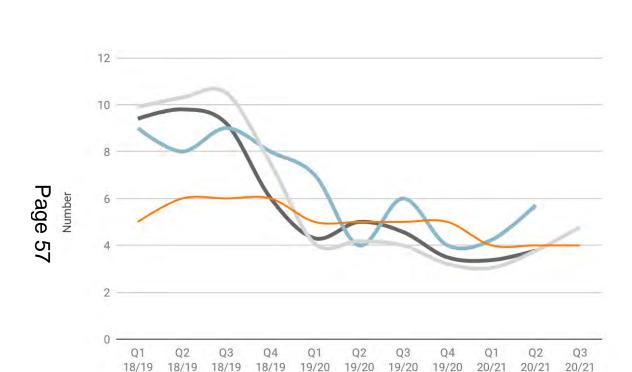
The Council continues to prioritise new claims. However, the number of new claims is falling as claimants are moved to Universal Credit (UC), therefore significant delays in processing a small number of claims can disproportionately affect the average processing time. During the quarter, one new claim was indexed incorrectly which resulted in the claim not being identified for processing. Other reasons for delays are driven by external factors such as chasing and waiting for evidence from the claimant; the number of claims made defective after the required calendar month has increased i.e. claims are started but not completed. Another example is when the claimant is claiming living costs through UC and housing costs through the Council; in this situation, the UC element must be assessed before the housing element but the processing time commences on receipt of the claim.

There is insufficient time to bring the average processing time back on target by the end of the year; a new revenues and benefits system went 'live' on 4 February, and staff have been supporting the data migration and related testing activities.

It is likely performance will continue to be impacted throughout 2021/22 as the next phase of the project is to streamline the process further by merging the three partner council systems into one system, and to implement the open portal to enable customers to self-serve which will include integration of the back office system

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

Cotswold



Target

OBSERVATION:

Forest of Dean

The average processing time has increased over the last two quarters due to increases in workload, and capacity taken out of the service to support the implementation of a new revenues and benefits system.

West Oxfordshire

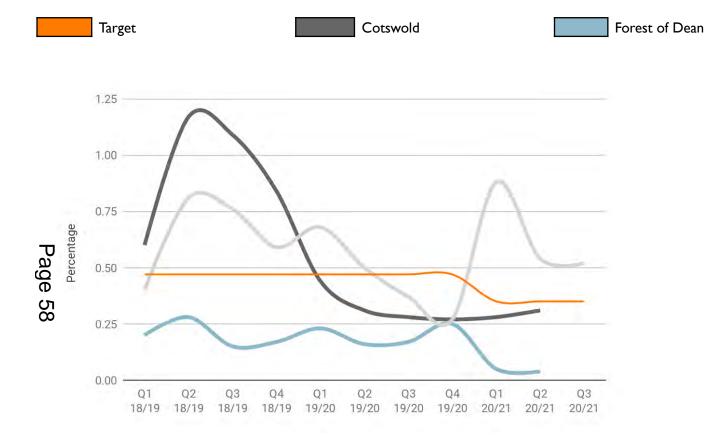
The number of Universal Credit claims has increased due to the impact of Covid-19, which in turn has resulted in an increase in changes that affect housing benefit and council tax support (the latter is not included in this indicator). In addition, the service continues to receive data loads from the DWP that require checking and the updating of records.

The new revenues and benefits system went 'live' on 4 February. The average processing time is expected to increase in Q4 as staff become accustomed to the new system; and deal with a backlog - there will be period of time when the old system is switched off and the new one switched on.

The service is accessing support on demand from an external source.

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 was set for 2020-21

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



OBSERVATION:

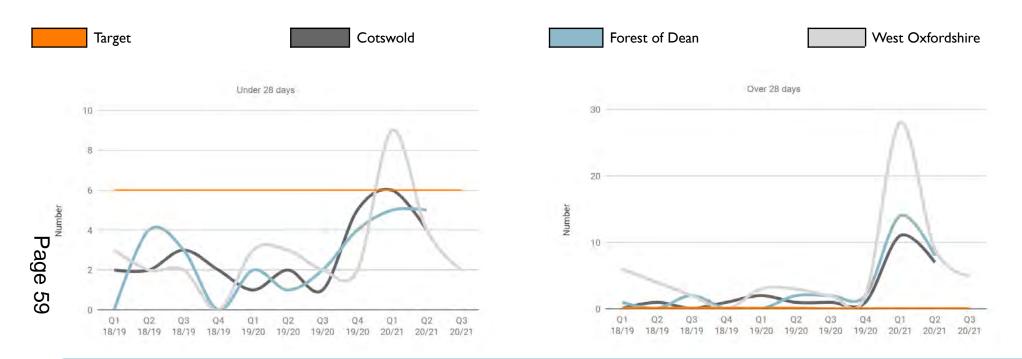
We are continuing to involve a number of staff in quality assurance. Due to the high volume in change of circumstances, we take a sampling approach and target areas which we know have high error rates such as calculation of earnings.

West Oxfordshire

There was a small number of errors relating to high value overpayments in Q4 which were amended in Q1. We were expecting the spike to flatten out over the course of the year, and to achieve the annual target of 0.35%. This is no longer the case as the implementation of the new revenues and benefits system has created a backlog which will result in an increase in admin delay. External support on demand is being accessed to help manage workloads

Housing Support

(Snapshot) Number of households living in emergency accommodation for under 28 days & over 28 days



OBSERVATION:

At the beginning of the first lockdown, councils were required to place all clients who are rough sleeping or at risk of imminent homelessness regardless of priority need who have approached the Council, into emergency accommodation, which resulted in a spike in numbers.

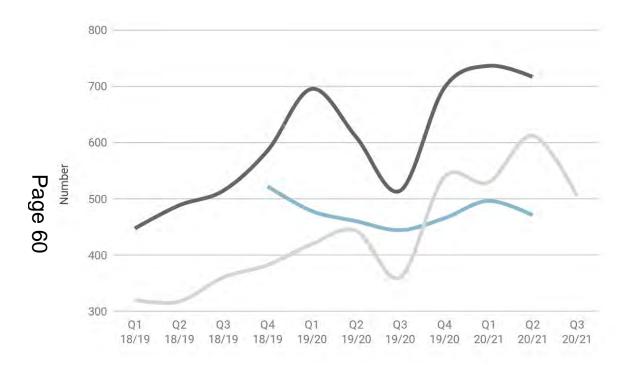
The number of households living in emergency accommodation has fallen over the last six months; the Housing team has been creating exit plans to move households into more secure tenancies including private rented, housing association, and supported accommodation. In addition, some households and rough sleepers have chosen to leave emergency accommodation.

At the end of Q3, there were five households that had been in emergency accommodation for over 28 days. The households/individuals that remain in emergency accommodation for longer periods of time have more complex needs, and therefore, it is more difficult to source appropriate move-on accommodation. Therefore, this indicator has been set to 'Amber'.

With increasing Covid-19 infections in Autumn/Winter, a third lockdown commenced on 5 January. It is likely that the number of households in emergency accommodation will start to rise again

(Snapshot) Number of Long Term Empty properties

Cotswold Forest of Dean West Oxfordshire



OBSERVATION:

The number of long term empty properties decreased at the end of Q3 following an increase over the previous six months.

Cottsway has re-commenced the planned demolition of housing association properties, but there are still some retirement properties that have not sold.

Recruitment to the vacant LTE officer post has been approved. This post is responsible for monitoring properties and working with landlords to support them to bring their properties back into use. The new post will concentrate on those properties where the Council might be able to influence or take action, rather than on those properties that are being well maintained

Planning and Strategic Housing

(Cumulative) Percentage of major planning applications determined

% of all applications completed within an agreed timeframe

Target

Cotswold

Forest of Dean

West Oxfordshire

% of all application completed within 13 weeks

----- Cotswold

Forest of Dean

OBSERVATION:

West Oxfordshire

Twelve major applications were determined in the quarter; and 33 for the first nine months compared to 55 for the same period a year ago.

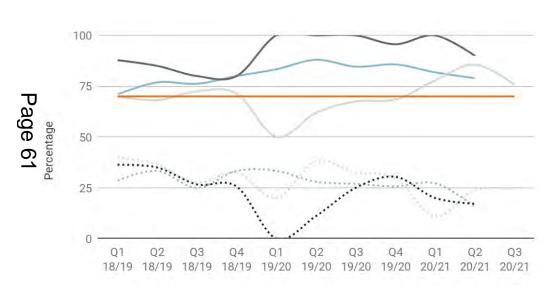
The service has reported that the number of applications received over the summer and then through to the end of December has been a record nationally and that trend is reflected locally. The increasing numbers coming through combined with reduced efficiency in the planning process as a result of Covid-19 is creating a backlog.

The Planning team has found home working and the restrictions imposed by Covid-19 has created additional burdens as not all aspects of this statutory process can be or are best achieved electronically. In addition, home working has reduced communication between officers, and therefore there is less support for officers which is affecting morale. Validating planning applications for accuracy has proved particularly problematic as a home based exercise as details of the application have to be cross checked against a number of plans and maps which can be achieved much easier using paper versions in the office. An increase in the time to validate the application will reduce the time for the planning officer to determine the application. Other tasks that are achieved more easily in the office include redacting and printing documents e.g. site notices.

The restrictions imposed by Covid-19 have resulted in additional preparation time required for committee meetings, and site visits which need to be unaccompanied and pre-arranged, often with a follow up online meeting or phone call.

Some consultees such as the County and the Environment Agency are struggling to meet response target dates which is also impacting on determination times.

Note: a new validation process has been designed and implemented at all three partner Council development management services over the Christmas/New Year period. Currently, staff are getting to grips with the new process, but once embedded should help increase resilience and performance generally



Note

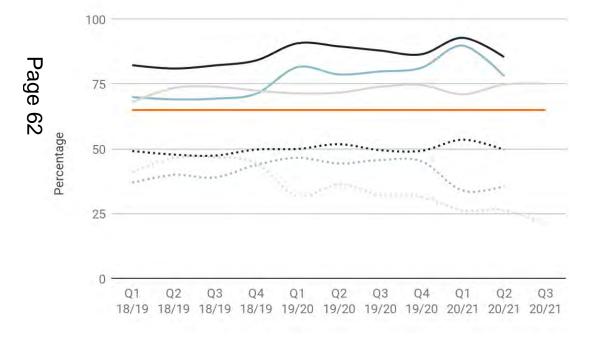
The charts for the planning performance measures have been separated to demonstrate the number of applications that are completed within the set time frames and the number that are completed as a result of an agreed extension of time.

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

(Cumulative) Percentage of minor planning applications determined

% of all applications completed within agreed timescales





OBSERVATION:

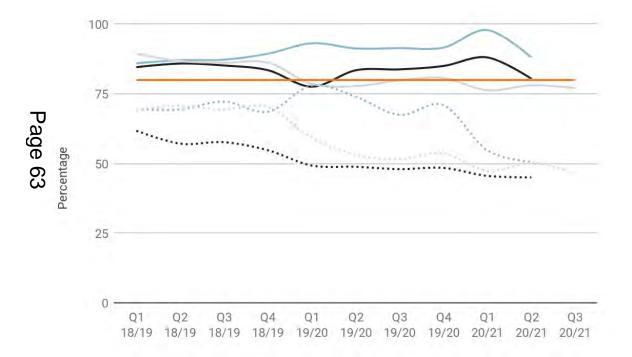
Ninety-one minor applications were determined in the quarter; and 250 for the first nine months compared to 388 for the same period a year ago.

The challenging work conditions coupled with higher volumes of applications coming through is creating a backlog which will begin to impact on performance

(Cumulative) Percentage of other planning applications determined

% of all applications completed within agreed timescales





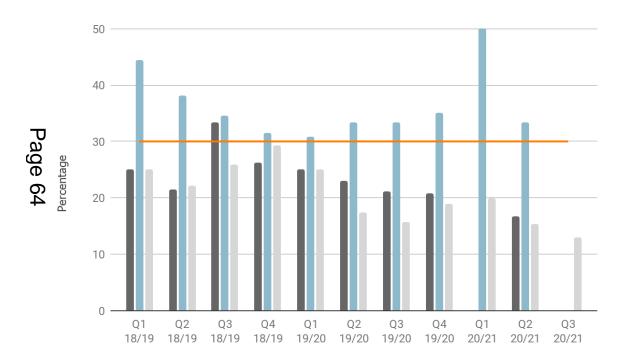
OBSERVATION:

247 other applications were determined in the quarter, and 708 for the first nine months compared to 866 for the same period a year ago.

The challenging work conditions coupled with higher volumes of applications coming through is creating a backlog and is beginning to impact on performance

(Cumulative) Percentage of planning appeals allowed





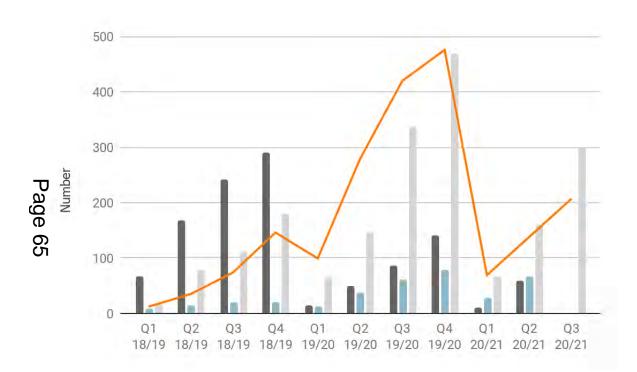
OBSERVATION:

Ten planning appeals were determined in the quarter with one appeal allowed.

Cumulatively from 1 April 2020 - 31 December 2020, three of the 23 planning appeals were allowed

(Cumulative) Number of affordable homes delivered





OBSERVATION:

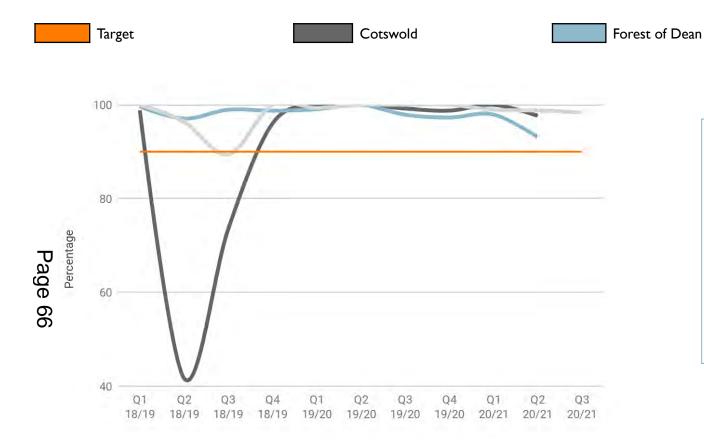
139 affordable homes were delivered in Q3 for rent (95) and low cost home ownership (44) including seven units of discount market sale at Corndell Gardens, Witney.

Cottsway reports that there have been material supply delays in the run up to the brexit agreement that have been exacerbated by some developers stockpiling and increasing demand. However, this has not caused a significant delay to completions to date. Cottsway has repurposed existing buildings on the Stanton Harcourt Airfield development; an administrative delay in obtaining warranty certificates for these properties should be resolved in Q4.

Sovereign has reforecast 14 of the 20 homes anticipated in Q3 and Q4 at Witney Road, Freeland to be completed in 2021/22.

For the first nine months of the year 300 affordable homes were delivered, exceeding the Local Plan target of 274

Percentage of land charge searches dispatched within 10 working days



OBSERVATION:

The service processed 363 official land charge searches; 357 searches were dispatched within 10 working days.

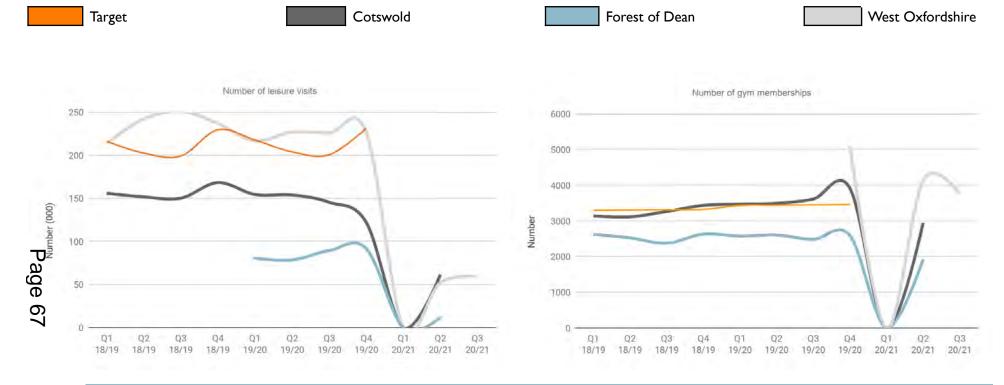
West Oxfordshire

The number of searches, although lower than Q2 (486), was up on the same period of the previous year (278) which may be due to the 'stamp duty holiday' and/or Brexit.

The service is maintaining a high level of service delivery

Leisure

Number of visits to leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships



OBSERVATION:

Following the end of the first lockdown, a financial recovery package was agreed, and some of the Council's leisure facilities reopened from 25 July 2020 under Covid-19 protocols. These included adherence to the governments 'staying COVID-19 secure' declaration which is displayed at all facilities.

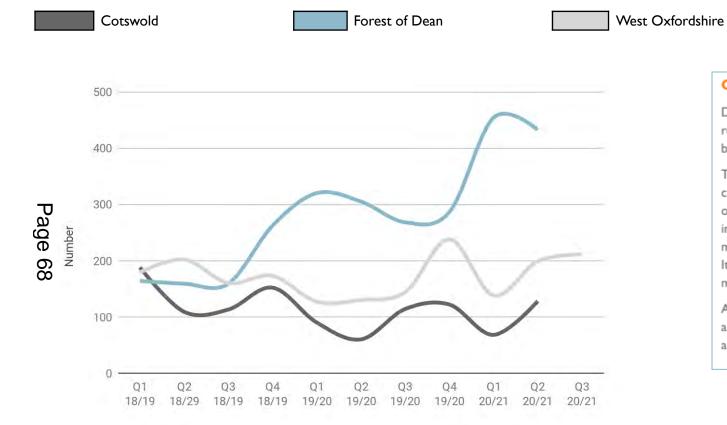
All facilities were reopened providing the core activities of gym, group exercise, and swimming with additional activities being restarted in line with government advice and in conjunction with Covid-19 protocols on social distancing, pre-booking, and enhanced cleaning.

All leisure facilities were closed from 5 November - 2 December as the nation went into a second lockdown. Facilities were re-opened in the lead up to Christmas but as Oxfordshire went into tier 4 on 26 December 2020, all leisure facilities have remained closed from this date.

A contract variation and financial support package have been agreed to cover the period until March 2021

Environmental and Regulatory

Number of fly tips collected



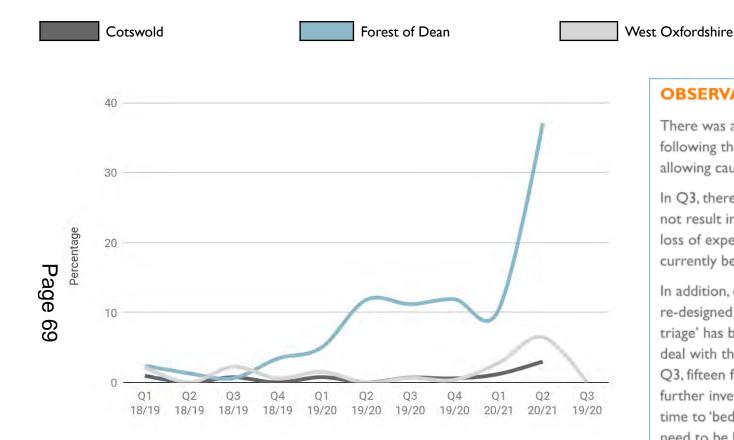
OBSERVATION:

Due to Covid-19, increases in fly tips have been reported nationally, and there are signs that there may be a slight upward trend locally.

The fly tipping service has been redesigned based on customer and user need with the introduction of new on-line forms and web pages. The new process was introduced during Q3 and is still 'bedding in', and will make it easier and quicker for residents to report flytips. It will also reduce duplication and therefore create a more efficient and responsive service.

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)



OBSERVATION:

There was an increase in enforcement activity in Q2 following the implementation of a new enforcement pack allowing cautions to be issued via the post.

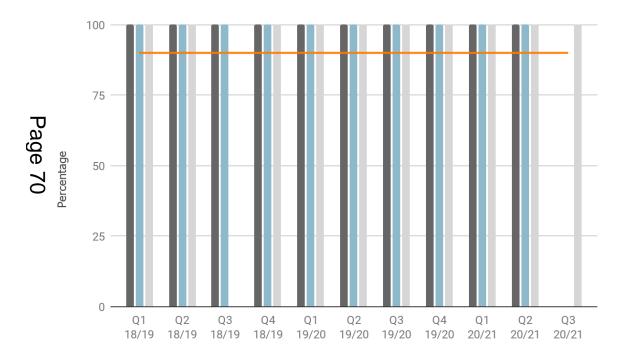
In Q3, there were 301 notifications of fly tips which did not result in any enforcement actions due to a short term loss of experienced resources in the team which is currently being resolved through a recruitment drive.

In addition, during the quarter the fly tipping service was re-designed for Cotswold and West. A 'support service triage' has been set up to free up specialist officer time to deal with the fly tips that can be investigated further. In Q3, fifteen fly tips were referred to ERS specialists for further investigation. The change in service will require time to 'bed in', and it is likely that the referral criteria will need to be broadened to ensure that a sufficient number of referrals come through for investigation.

Cotswold and West operate a small multidisciplinary team. In contrast, at Forest of Dean, there is a dedicated Community Warden team, which has also implemented a new enforcement pack

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 I working day



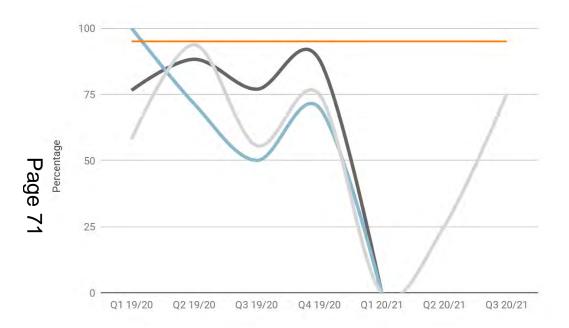


OBSERVATION:

One notification of an allergic reaction to food at a restaurant was received in Q3, and assessed within one day

Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales





OBSERVATION:

This indicator has been set to 'amber' to recognise that the service has been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions.

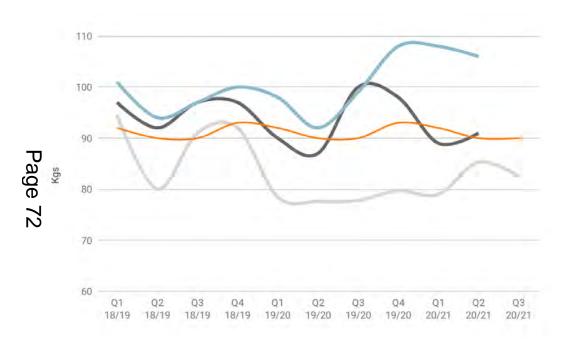
All site visits ceased from mid-March to 18 July due to Covid-19. The FSA issued guidance on 17 July advising that routine inspections in high risk food businesses should recommence, excluding businesses catering for vulnerable people where they have previously been assessed as good. All care homes have been contacted to ensure that the correct protocols are in place.

Eight high risk food inspections were due in Q3; although all eight premises received a remote inspection, only six premises received a site inspection within the 28 day timescale. In line with FSA guidance, the service is able to carry out remote inspections which are intended to highlight areas of concern, and if any should arise, those premises would receive a site inspection.

During each lockdown, no site visits could take place unless absolutely necessary. A backlog of other types of inspections is building up, and the service is awaiting further guidance from the FSA on how to deal with the backlog

Residual household waste per household (kg)





OBSERVATION:

Due to the impact of Covid-19, all waste and recycling stream tonnages have increased, and reached a peak in October 2020 but appear to be slowly reducing again.

The amount of residual waste produced between April and December 2020 increased by 11.7% compared to same period of the previous year. All excess recycling and food waste is being collected at the kerbside if presented correctly. In addition, the crews were also collecting the additional side waste generated during the Christmas period.

Both the Council and the Oxfordshire Recycles (OCC partnership work) are using their social media channels to promote waste reduction

(Cumulative) Percentage of household waste recycled



Forest of Dean

West Oxfordshire

OBSERVATION:

Due to the impact of Covid-19, residents are presenting higher amounts of all types of waste.

Dry recycling tonnages for the first nine months of the year were up nearly 36% on the previous year, garden waste tonnages were up nearly 17%, and food tonnages, just over 16%.

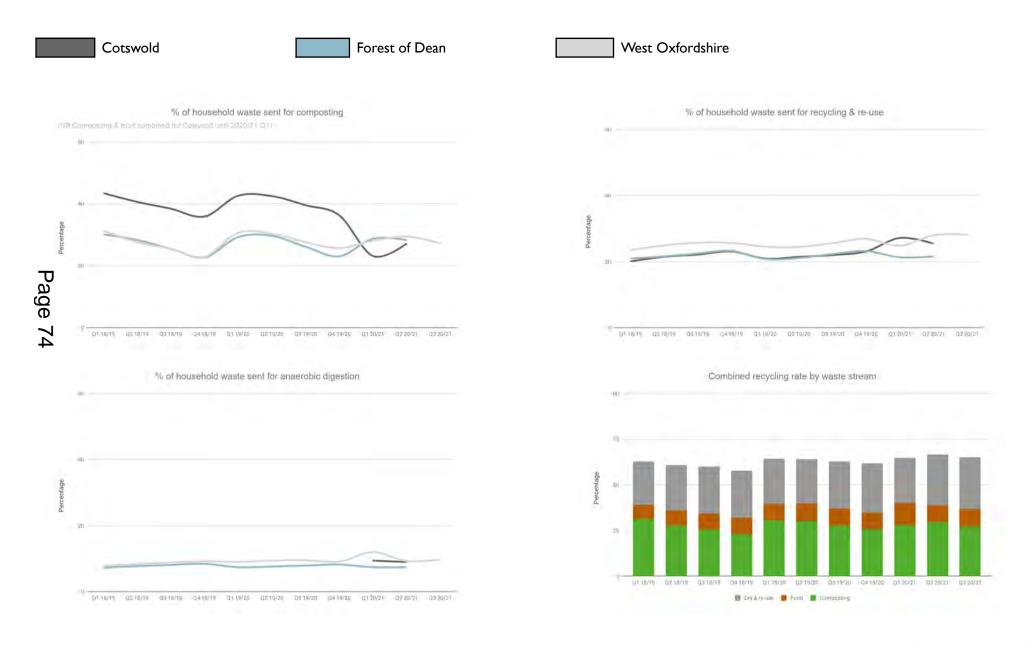
The combined recycling rate for the first nine months of the year was 65% compared to 62.72% a year ago; the increase is mainly driven by the increase in dry recycling.

The dry recycling rate was 28.2% (an increase of 2.6 percentage points compared to the same period a year ago), the composting rate was 27.2% and food waste sent for anaerobic digestion was 9.7%.

The service is working closely with UBICO; and all additional recycling and food waste presented correctly at the kerbside by residents is being collected.

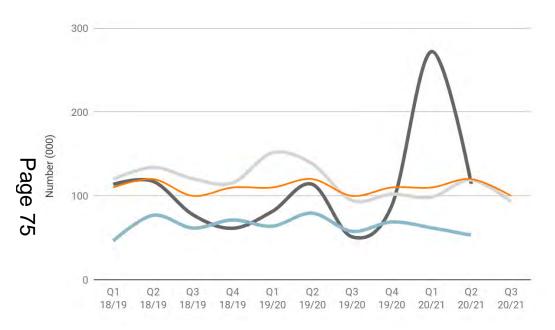
Note that the quarterly recycling targets are profiled to account for seasonal differences. The data is also presented cumulatively which will flatten out some of these differences

(Cumulative) Percentage of household waste recycled by waste stream



Number of missed bin per 100,000 scheduled collections





OBSERVATION:

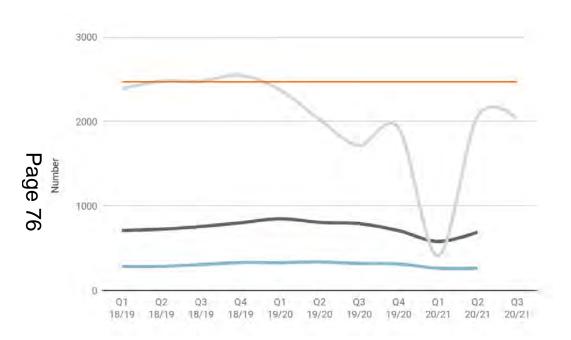
Overall, there have been improvements over the last year. Previously, the service experienced a high staff turnover in waste crews, and the lack of local knowledge amongst new staff and agency staff caused an increase in the number of missed collections.

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 who did not possess local knowledge. Although the service had anticipated that there would be further increases in misses due to increases in waste and recycling tonnage, performance remains 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:

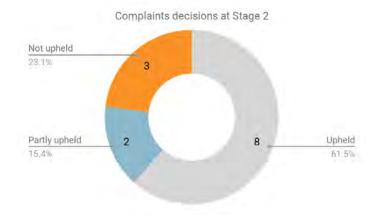
All enforcement activities were suspended on 23 March until 15 June 2020 due to Covid-19, and staff were redeployed to support communities.

Following the suspension, the number of enforcement hours started to return to pre-covid levels; however capacity levels were still down with one vacant part time post and one officer on long term sick. Enforcement officers were also undertaking other duties such as traffic management related to temporary pavement widening and one way systems for social distancing.

During the second lockdown, there was a focus on enforcing dangerous parking and illegal use of disabled bays. Enforcement officers have also been supporting track and trace, and food parcel deliveries.

This indicator has been set to amber to recognise that parking enforcement officers are undertaking a variety of duties

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



OBSERVATION:

A new Customer Feedback Procedure went live on the 1st July 2020. The Corporate Responsibility team is managing all complaints allowing services to focus on delivery.

The new process has the following stages:

Stage 1: Acknowledgement and Assessment

Stage 2: Investigation

Stage 3:Appeal

The complaints shown below only include upheld or partially upheld complaints

In Q3, there was a higher proportion of complaints upheld; there were seven separate complaints on one issue

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Stage	Decision	Response time (days)
Housing	Complainant unhappy with the handling of a housing application	The investigation found that the complainant's original application was not acknowledged. Additionally, an issue with the application had not been communicated to the complainant, resulting in confusion and distress. Apologies were offered for both of these failures	II	Upheld	l2 (on an extended timescale)
Development Management	Complaint about the handling of a planning application on a neighbouring property, and the Council's lack of response to emails	The investigation concluded that the Council had acted fairly with regards to the handling of the planning application. However, an apology was offered for the delay in response to the complainant's emails, and it was acknowledged that confusion could have been prevented had there been better communication between the Council and the complainant	Appeal	Partly upheld at Stage II Partly upheld at Appeal	6 (Stage II) 10 (Appeal)

Development Management	Complaint about the handling of pre-application advice, and subsequent delay in processing the associated planning application	Upon investigation, it was found that the Council had handled the processing of the pre-application advice correctly. However, it was acknowledged that, due to a high workload as a result of the ongoing pandemic, there was a delay in processing the subsequent planning application. An apology was offered, and compensation of £75 to acknowledge the inconvenience caused by the delay	II	Partly upheld	8
Communication & Marketing	Seven complaints about comments made on religious celebrations on social media by a member of staff	The complainants were assured that the Council and Publica take these matters very seriously, and that the comments had been removed. HR is following the appropriate internal procedures in dealing with the member of staff, and communications are being prepared to ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities when using social media	II	Upheld	7

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Agenda Item 12

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Agenda Item 13

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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