

# Public Document Pack



Tuesday, 7 December 2021

Tel: 01993 861522  
e-mail - [democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk)

## CABINET

You are summoned to a meeting of the Cabinet which will be held in the Council Chamber, Woodgreen, Witney, OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 15 December 2021 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Cabinet

Councillors: Michele Mead (Leader), David Harvey (Deputy Leader), Suzi Coul, Councillor Merylyn Davies, Jane Doughty, Jeff Haine, and Norman MacRae MBE

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 Democratic Services officers know prior to the start of the meeting.

# AGENDA

1. **Notice of Decisions (Pages 5 - 12)**  
To receive notice of the decisions taken at the meeting held on 10 November 2021.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any declarations from Members of the Committee on any items to be considered at the meeting
4. **Participation of the Public**  
To receive any submissions from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.
5. **Receipt of Announcements**  
Purpose:  
To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council or Members of the Cabinet.
6. **Finance Performance Report 2021-22 Quarter Two (Pages 13 - 26)**  
Purpose  
This report provides details of the Council's financial performance at the end of 2021-22 Quarter Two (Q2).  
  
Recommendation  
That the 2021/22 Q2 finance performance be noted.
7. **Approval of Extension to Agreement for Support Services with Publica (Pages 27 - 44)**  
Purpose  
For Cabinet to consider an extension of the Publica service agreement for Support Services.  
  
Recommendation  
That the Support Services Agreement with Publica Group (Support) Limited be extended for a further four year term until 31 October 2026.
8. **Infrastructure Funding Statement (Pages 45 - 64)**  
Purpose  
To consider and approve the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) for 2020/21.  
  
Recommendation  
That the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) attached at Annex A to the report be approved and published on the Council's website by 31 December 2021 in accordance with legislative requirements.
9. **Annual Monitoring Report (Pages 65 - 108)**  
Purpose

To consider the Council's Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report for 2020-2021.

Recommendation

That the content of the Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report be noted.

10. **Performance Monitoring Report Q2 - 2021/22 (Pages 109 - 142)**

Purpose

This report provides details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2021-22 Quarter Two (Q2).

Recommendation

That the 2021/22 Q2 service performance be noted.

11. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

In view of the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business.

12. **Consideration to write off debt (Pages 143 - 148)**

Purpose

To seek approval for the writing off of Council Tax debts in excess of £5,000.

Recommendation

That Cabinet approve the write off as detailed within the report.

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## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet

Held in the Council Chamber at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 10 November 2021**

#### PRESENT

Councillors: Michelle Mead (Leader, David Harvey (Deputy Leader), Suzi Coul, Marilyn Davies, Jane Doughty, Jeff Haine and Norman MacRae MBE.

Also present: Councillors Rosa Bolger, Julian Cooper, Colin Dingwall, Duncan Enright, Andy Graham, Alex Postan.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Senior Strategic Support Officer), Angela Claridge (Interim Monitoring Officer), Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer), Mandy Fathers (Business Manager Operational Services), Emma Cathcart (Counter Fraud Manager), Caroline Clissold (Housing Manager), Thomas See (Homeseeker Plus Lead), Barry Clack (Communications Officer) and Bill Oddy (Group Manager - Commercial Development).

#### **48 Notice of Decisions**

The decisions from the meeting held on 13 October 2021 were noted.

#### **49 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Martin McBride.

#### **50 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

#### **51 Participation of the Public**

There was no participation of the public.

#### **52 Receipt of Announcements**

##### Cabinet Update

Councillor Mead addressed the meeting and advised that the Cabinet met every Wednesday, as a group initially, and were then joined by officers to go through and discuss the upcoming Cabinet reports, meetings and Cabinet Work Programme. Councillor Mead suggested that if any Councillors had questions or queries that they would like putting to officers, they could ask the Cabinet to pose these directly at their Wednesday meetings.

##### Refuse Collections

Councillor MacRae announced that, despite the steady success of refuse collections being at 99%, there had been a number of problems experienced recently due to staff absences at Ubico. This had been exacerbated by the continued unavailability and scarcity of qualified HGV drivers. Councillor MacRae also advised that the fleet's 'narrow lanes' vehicle had broken down and was currently awaiting spare parts to be delivered. In the meantime, Ubico had hired a duplicate vehicle which had unfortunately also failed, resulting in a number of missed collections for those properties located down narrow access routes. Whilst the team were working hard to rectify the issue, there was little that could be done to speed up the delivery of the spare parts required as they were stuck in the supply system.

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Following a question from Councillor Graham, Councillor MacRae explained that he did not know where the spare parts were coming from so could not comment on how long term the issue would be. However, it was hoped that the hired vehicle would be back on the road soon.

#### WODC and Blenheim Housing Award

Councillor Davies was delighted to announce that the Council and Blenheim Estate Homes had won the inaugural Public/Private Partnership of the Year Award at the Estates Gazette Awards. She explained that the new category celebrated partnerships between the public and private sector, for delivering solutions through real estate. Councillor Davies highlighted that the partnership had meant the Council could provide houses at 80% market rent and she thanked all of the officers involved, including Caroline Clissold and Tom See who were both present at the meeting.

Councillor Enright thanked the team behind the award and applauded Blenheim Estates for the turnaround in culture they had achieved in recent years. Councillor Graham also welcomed the news and referred to a document entitled 'A sketchbook for an emerging vision for Blenheim Estate'. He explained that this was a document produced and commissioned by Blenheim that looked at potential emerging sustainable communities in West Oxfordshire, which Councillors may find insightful.

Councillor Davies concluded by reiterating her gratitude to all officers involved and stated that the award was a testament to the Housing team and the Planning officers at the Council.

#### Oxfordshire wide Electric Vehicle Charging Point project

Councillor Harvey announced that the contract for the above EVCP project had now been signed and installation would commence in the next few weeks.

Following a question from Councillor Graham, it was confirmed that the first site to have charging points installed would be the Woodland Way Car Park.

#### Planting Session – Mary Ellis Country Park

Councillor Postan advised that Bloor Homes had organised a tree planting session at the northern end of the Brize Norton Mary Ellis Country Park on Friday 12 November 2021, at 10.30am. He encouraged those elected Members who lived nearby to attend and show their support.

#### **53 Homeseeker Plus Policy Update**

Members received a report from the Housing Manager which updated them on the legislative changes needed to ensure that the HomeseekerPlus Policy met the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Allocation of Accommodation standards and reflected the outcome of the stakeholder consultation.

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HomeseekerPlus was a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme run by seven Local Authorities, in partnership with social housing landlords, operating within Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire. Demand for affordable housing within the HomeseekerPlus area was very high and could not be met in its entirety from the available social housing resources.

The Policy explained who was eligible and who qualified to apply on HomeseekerPlus and set out how applications would be assessed and awarded a subsequent Emergency, Gold, Silver or Bronze banding based on housing need. A copy of the 2019 Banding Table was attached at Annex E to the report.

In late 2019, West Oxfordshire District Council's Cabinet approved the suggested changes set out in the 2019 draft Policy, attached at Annex B, and they had agreed that these should be made available for wider consultation. This report outlined the proposed Policy changes that had been consulted upon and set out the legislative reasons for recommending the approval of the final draft of the HomeseekerPlus Policy.

There were a number of further annexes attached to the report, including those noted above and these were as follows:

Annex A – Draft HomeseekerPlus Policy (Pending Formatting)

Annex C – Summary of Proposed Changes HomeseekerPlus Policy 2019

Annex D – Consultation outcome

Annex F – New Banding Table 2021

Annex G – Equalities Impact Assessment

The report asked Cabinet to approve the policy for adoption and requested that the HomeseekerPlus Management Board be given approval to confirm the date for adoption, once all partners had received approval from their authorities, and professionally format the policy prior to publication.

An alternative option was outlined in full at section 10 of the report and detailed the implication of withdrawing from the current HomeseekerPlus Partnership, sourcing the Council's own Choice Based Letting system and designing its own Policy. It was noted that this would also impact on staffing arrangements, would require a significant financial contribution and extend timescales considerably.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, Councillor Davies, introduced the report and explained the reasons for updating the policy. She proposed the recommendations as laid out and these were seconded by Councillor Doughty.

Following a question from Councillor Dingwall, officers confirmed that an applicant was asked to specify a preferred area on the application form, however, this did not restrict them if they wished to register their interest on properties in any area.

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Councillor Graham queried if was thought the amendments to the policy would impact on the number of people being accommodated. Officers advised that this report addressed how the Council allocated housing in a fair and transparent manner.

Councillor Davies added that Councillor Graham's question related to the Strategic Planning area of work and meetings were being held to try to marry the two areas together.

Having considered the report, and having heard from the Members present, the Cabinet

**Resolved that**

- a) The policy be approved for adoption; and
- b) Approval be given for the HomeseekerPlus Management Board to:
  - confirm the date for adoption once all partners have approval through their individual authorities governance structure (likely to be early 2022); and
  - professionally format the policy prior to publication.

#### **54 Our House and Housing First Project Updates and Funding Extension Options**

Members received a report from the Group Manager for Resident Services and the Housing Manager which updated members on the 'Our House' and Housing First projects since their inception, and recommended the continuation of the projects and outline future opportunities over the next two years.

The report explained that the Council had worked with Countywide partners for many years to provide a collaborative approach to ending rough sleeping in the County and, as a result, Oxfordshire had both an established Young Peoples Supported Accommodation Pathway and an Adult Homelessness Pathway, achieving much success in reducing the numbers of those that were sleeping out.

The report explained that the Adult Homelessness Pathway would be refreshed for 2022-2025 by adopting a more Housing First focused approach, whilst still continuing to deliver effective supported accommodation. However, due to the high concentration of rough sleeping in Oxford City, and the graduation of people from rural areas to the services located in the City, much of the funding and supported accommodation projects were located in Oxford.

The report detailed how the Housing First project operated and how it worked alongside the Adult Homeless Pathway and gave an update on the numbers of individuals helped over the past twelve months. The complex funding streams supporting this work were outlined at paragraph 3.1 and a list of them was provided at Annex A, showing how they related to West Oxfordshire.

There were a number of proposals set out at section 2.26 of the report and these were aimed at reducing the use and time spent in expensive short term, emergency accommodation by

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utilising the funds in the Housing Reserve account, if further grant funding cannot be sourced, benefiting both the Council and the client in the longer term.

There were no alternative options outlined in the report.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, Councillor Davies, introduced the report and highlighted that this was a very targeted and specific project, designed to help vulnerable people. So far eighteen young people had been helped to find housing and were being supported on the path to independence. She hoped that the continuation of the projects would be supported and proposed the recommendations as laid out.

This was seconded by Councillor Haine, who was very supportive of both causes detailed in the report and he referred to paragraph 2.16 of the report which outlined the projects successes.

Following a question from Councillor Postan regarding a definition for the term 'disability', Councillor Davies proposed that officers respond directly after the meeting.

Clarification was also given on the support given to anyone suffering or fleeing from Domestic Violence and officers gave an outline of the external organisations worked with.

Councillor Enright supported the projects and highlighted a minor grammatical error in recommendation d) which should read 'as set out in 2.33'. Councillor Graham also expressed his support for the initiatives and asked what the strategy was beyond the two year timescale, if and how it would be reviewed and relevant timescales.

In response, Councillor Davies explained that this report was funding specific for two years. Officers advised that the project was constantly under review and would enable the existing bed spaces to remain accessible.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, the Cabinet

**Resolved that**

- a) the recommendation to continue the projects for a further 18 months from April 2022, is agreed;
- b) the outsourcing of the Support element of both projects via waiver, is agreed;
- c) the exploration of external funding sources including bidding for Government and/or community grant funds in order to continue the projects, is agreed;
- d) the use of the Housing Reserve / Housing Grant Underspend, as set out in paragraph 2.33 of the report, to guarantee the continuation of the projects whilst alternative funding options are explored, is agreed; and

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- e) delegation of any amendments to these allocations is given to the Housing Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness subject to compliance with funding allocation conditions.

## **55 Use of the Internet and Social Media in Investigations and Enforcement Policy**

Members received a report from the Counter Fraud Unit Manager which presented Cabinet with a new 'Use of the Internet and Social Media in Investigations and Enforcement Policy' for adoption.

The report advised that the Council's Policies were based on the legislative requirements of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA) and the Codes of Practice relating to directed surveillance and the acquisition of communications data. Councils had come under increased scrutiny in this area by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) during inspections and there were a number of recommendations in their annual reports, procedures and guidance. This included that evidence should demonstrate that consideration had been given to whether the activity could be considered surveillance and the appropriate authorisation sought.

Existing arrangements had been reviewed and the policy for ensuring compliance had been developed.

There were no alternative options listed in the report.

The report had been considered by the Audit & General Purposes Committee on 23 September 2021 and following confirmation from officers on a number of points, the policy was endorsed.

The Leader, Councillor Mead, introduced the report and proposed the recommendations as laid out. This was seconded by Councillor MacRae.

Following a question from Councillor Graham, the Counter Fraud Unit Manager explained the scenarios in which this policy would be used ie any occasion where officers were asked to investigate a criminal offence against the Council. She highlighted that staff should not be using any personal social media accounts and the policy would help protect staff and the public.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, the Cabinet

**Resolved that**

- (a) the Policy attached to this report is approved and adopted; and
- (b) the Chief Executive is authorised to approve future minor amendments to the Policy in consultation with the Counter Fraud Unit Manager, Legal Services and the Leader of the Council.

## **56 Community Facility Grant Awards - 2nd Round - 2021/22**

Members received a report from the Business Manager – Contracts, which asked them to consider applications for grant aid from the Community Facilities Grant Scheme.

The report explained that these recommendations represented the second of two rounds of funding for the Community Facilities Grant scheme, with Round 1 awarding £11,563. This had left £188,437 in the scheme and, if agreed by Cabinet, Round 2 would total £134,472.

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All applications had been scored against a matrix and funding allocations were proposed in line with this. A list of the applicants and a breakdown of each financial commitment was provided at Annex A to the report.

An alternative option was that Cabinet could choose to offer differing levels of grant aid than those proposed in Annex A, but within the budgets established for these purposes, however, this could result in the projects not being viable due to insufficient funding.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Delivery, Councillor Doughty, introduced the report and provided a breakdown of each application, details of the individual schemes and the different areas of the District that this would help and support. The applicants were as follows:

- Stonesfield Playing Field Association, who required funding to develop their outdoor sports facilities;
- 1<sup>st</sup> Stonesfield Scouts, who had to rebuild their scout hut following demolition of their previously, unsafe premises;
- Witney Rugby Club had applied for funding towards an extension to their existing clubhouse, work to outside patio areas and to allow winter fitness training to take place inside;
- Ducklington Parish Council required assistance to make improvements to the playground and installation of a multi-games area;
- Witney Mills Cricket Club had applied for funding to purchase a new outfield mower; and
- Filkins Village Centre required funding for playground refurbishment.

Councillor Doughty expressed her delight at being able to recommend these grants for approval and proposed the recommendation as laid out. This was seconded by Councillor Coul. The Leader highlighted how impressive it was that all of the organisations had been successful in raising their own share of funding towards the projects, especially during Covid times.

Councillor Cooper queried why not all of the applicants had secured Parish or Town funding. Councillor Doughty agreed to speak to officers and respond outside of the meeting.

Councillor Dingwall addressed the meeting and passed on his thanks to the Cabinet for continuing to support these community projects. He went on to highlight the inspirational and diverse services that organisations such as Witney Rugby Club provided to residents of West Oxfordshire and Councillor Dingwall reminded the meeting that Community Facility Grants were not a statutory responsibility of the Council. Therefore, he felt that officers and the administration should be thanked for helping communities to continue to bring in additional funding for projects.

Councillors Bolger and Graham added their support to the proposals. Councillor Graham thanked all involved to continuing to assist these schemes which reflected the needs of the community.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, the Cabinet

**Resolved** that the grants as recommended in Annex A to the report are agreed.

The Meeting closed at 2.40 pm

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CHAIRMAN

# Agenda Item 6

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>Cabinet: Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item No. 6</b>
Subject	<b>Finance Performance Report 2021-22 Quarter Two</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Suzi Coul, Cabinet Member for Finance Email: <a href="mailto:suzi.coul@westoxon.gov.uk">suzi.coul@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Elizabeth Griffiths, Section 151 Officer Tel: (01993) 861188 Email: <a href="mailto:elizabeth.griffiths@westoxon.gov.uk">elizabeth.griffiths@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	This report provides details of the Council's financial performance at the end of 2021-22 Quarter Two (Q2).
Annexes	Annex A – Detailed revenue budget comparison Annex B – Update on Capital spend
Recommendation	That the 2021/22 Q2 finance performance be noted
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. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – Q2 2021/22

- I.1. Significant variances and those of note are explored in the body of this report. A full list of variances by cost centre is included in Annex A.
- I.2. Q2 results overall are in line with what was reported in Q1 with no new significant budget pressures to report. Covid specific grants which created surpluses in Q1 are being spent consistently and are on track to be fully exhausted by year end in line with grant conditions. In the areas of Car Parking, Investment Property and aged debt there has been encouraging recovery and improvement over the reported Q1 performance.
- I.3. The underspend in Q2 is a little less than twice the reported underspend in Q1 (£219k) which reinforces the consistency between the two sets of results. £230k of the £420k underspend is attributable to the disparity between the revised garden waste fees and the budget which wasn't updated to reflect them. As noted previously, this will be amended for 22/23.
- I.4. One of the issues exacerbated by Covid is the Council's level of aged debt but WODC have successfully engaged a credit controller on a fixed term contract and this is being addressed.
- I.5. Overall Q2 remains encouragingly on track.

I.6.

Original Budget 2021/22	Q2 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£	£

### Service Area

Democratic and Committee Services	952,702	531,871	577,665	45,794
Environmental & Regulatory Services	478,583	206,992	197,870	(9,121)
Environmental Services	7,088,145	2,799,671	2,571,377	(228,294)
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	889,592	439,670	494,215	54,545
ICT, Change & Customer Services	1,801,649	934,554	934,950	396
Land, Legal & Property	863,453	421,290	365,067	(56,223)
Leisure & Communities	2,057,791	594,546	458,590	(135,956)
Planning & Strategic Housing	712,370	440,568	288,732	(151,837)
Revenues & Housing Support	894,923	477,473	465,805	(11,669)
Investment Property and Retained Services	(1,870,756)	(1,894,047)	(1,827,361)	66,686
<b>Total cost of services</b>	<b>13,868,452</b>	<b>4,952,589</b>	<b>4,526,909</b>	<b>(425,679)</b>

Plus:

Investment income receipts	(787,778)	(393,889)	(389,305)	4,584
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<b>Cost of services before financing:</b>	<b>13,080,674</b>	<b>4,558,700</b>	<b>4,137,605</b>	<b>(421,095)</b>
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- I.7. Income from car parking penalty charge notices has improved during Q2 to 29% of budget for off street and 40% of budget for on street. Whilst an encouraging improvement on the Q1 performance this still represents a significant loss of income for the year with the shortfall currently estimated at £110,000.

- I.8. The payment plans for Investment Property that the Council entered into during 2020/21 continue in place with invoices totalling £197,380, an improvement of £89,515 since the start of the financial year. Overall the total value of outstanding invoices relating to Investment Property has fallen by 40% during Q1 & Q2 to £597,672. The Estates Team will continue to proactively manage our tenants to recoup the maximum outstanding debt possible.
- I.9. The Revenues Recovery Team have continued their good work throughout Q2, reducing Council Tax and Business Rates arrears relating to 2020/21 that were the direct result of Covid. The outstanding balances represent 2.14% of all Council Tax collectible in 2020/21 and 5% of Business Rates.

	<b>20/21 Debt 31.03.21</b>	<b>21/22 Recovery</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Council Tax	£2,654,906	-£712,915	£1,941,991
Business Rates	£1,871,523	-£659,079	£1,212,444
	<b>£4,526,429</b>	<b>-£1,371,994</b>	<b>£3,154,435</b>

- I.10. A disproportionate rise in transactional bank charges was reported in 2020/21 Outturn and Q1 performance. This has been raised with our current supplier and they have offered a significant saving contingent on an extension of the current contract. Discussions are also taking place with other suppliers to evaluate all available options and ensure the best outcome is achieved.
- I.11. Planning Application income has proven volatile during Q1 & Q2 from a high of £194,000 in July to a low of £54,000 in May but is exceeding target overall at £137,000 above budget. Pre Application Advice is also performing well and is overachieving the budget by £4,000.
- I.12. The invoiced amount for Trade Waste for 2021/22 is £673,000 and £28,000 for Schedule 2 chargeable household waste collections. This is £43k less than the budgeted cost of delivering the service. Invoiced income in the current financial year is £673k but even with increased emphasis on credit control, it's anticipated that there could be £100k of this that is uncollectable. Even after an initial debt collection exercise has been undertaken we are still carrying £130,000 of aged debt from previous financial years. This means that the actual shortfall against budget could be anything from the £43K budgeted loss to over quarter of a million. Since this is a non statutory service, the ongoing viability of it is being investigated.
- I.13. The 2022/23 budget setting process is almost complete with budget consultation meetings held in Q2 with the Business Managers and Portfolio holders. These meetings discussed any significant changes in the revenue budget for next year including post Covid recovery in income, changes in costs of service delivery and the consumption of Earmarked Reserves.

1.14. The SI06 webinar was held at the end of September with good attendance from Councillors from the District Council and Town and Parish Councils. The service has already had very positive interactions with project money being spent and new initiatives underway.

**2. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

2.1. None

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT**

3.1. None

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

4.1. None

**5. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

5.1. None

## Annex A - Comparison of Q2 Budget Monitoring

	Q2 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Democratic Services</b>			
DRM001-Democratic Representation and Mgmt	88,540	93,493	4,953
DRM002-Support To Elected Bodies	194,475	199,167	4,692
ELE001-Registration of Electors	12,950	14,439	1,489
ELE002-District Elections	72,700	99,642	26,942
ELE004-Parliamentary Elections	0	1,960	1,960
ELE005-Parish Elections	0	0	0
ELE006-County Elections	0	(5)	(5)
ELE007-European Elections	0	0	0
ELE008-Police & Crime Commissioner Elections	0	0	0
SUP001-Administration	163,206	168,969	5,763
<b>Total - Democratic Services</b>	<b>531,871</b>	<b>577,665</b>	<b>45,794</b>

The apparent overspend in District elections is a budgeting timing issue which will be corrected in the 22/23 budget

	Q2 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Environmental &amp; Regulatory Services</b>			
BUC001-Building Control - Fee Earning Work	(70,562)	(67,865)	2,697
BUC002-Building Control - Non Fee Earning Work	34,027	38,246	4,219
EMP001-Emergency Planning	6,812	4,287	(2,524)
ESM001-Environment - Service Mgmt & Supp Serv	53,220	46,897	(6,324)
PSH002-Private Sector Housing-Condition of Dwellings	1,500	0	(1,500)
REG001-Environmental Health General	0	0	0
REG002-Licensing	(22,212)	(35,812)	(13,601)
REG009-Environmental Protection	83,466	81,740	(1,726)
REG010-Noise Control	0	138	138
REG013-Pollution Control	61,449	60,170	(1,278)
REG016-Food Safety	63,992	66,080	2,089
REG021-Statutory Burials	2,500	6,065	3,565
TAC309-Other Trading Services - Markets	4,800	8,109	3,309
<b>Total - Environmental &amp; Regulatory Services</b>	<b>206,992</b>	<b>197,870</b>	<b>(9,121)</b>

## Annex A - Comparison of Q2 Budget Monitoring

	Q2 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Finance, Human Resources &amp; Procurement</b>			
SUP003-Human Resources	82,623	75,367	(7,256)
HLD302-Miscellaneous Cash	0	(4,853)	(4,853)
HLD305 - Temporary Staff			
HLD308-Vehicle Tracking	0	0	0
HLD313-Lease Cars	0	0	0
SUP009-Accountancy	154,433	154,091	(342)
SUP010-Internal Audit	75,385	106,567	31,182
SUP011-Creditors	20,739	16,272	(4,467)
SUP012-Debtors	27,663	24,195	(3,468)
SUP013-Payroll	28,340	24,607	(3,733)
SUP019-Health & Safety	15,307	15,701	394
SUP020-Training & Development	13,299	13,642	342
SUP033-Central Purchasing	17,415	17,277	(138)
SUP035-Insurances	4,467	4,581	115
<b>Total - Finance, Human Resources &amp; Procurement</b>	<b>439,670</b>	<b>447,446</b>	<b>7,776</b>

SUP010 - Additional expenditure will be incurred throughout the year on grant post assurance work which is likely to continue into Q4 although this will be offset through new burdens funding given for additional Covid responsibilities

	Q2 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>ICT, Change &amp; Customer Services</b>			
SUP002-Consultation, Policy & Research	58,138	58,531	393
HLD301-ICT Purchases	0	(0)	(0)
SUP005-ICT	408,274	412,727	4,452
SUP006-Telephones	5,000	14,760	9,760
SUP008-Reception/Customer Services	229,728	231,415	1,687
SUP014-Cashiers	3,150	0	(3,150)
SUP041-Business Solutions	158,057	156,568	(1,489)
TMR002-Street Furniture & Equipment	(2,400)	(11,369)	(8,970)
TOU002-Tourist/Visitor Information Centre	74,607	73,021	(1,585)
<b>Total - ICT, Change &amp; Customer Services</b>	<b>934,554</b>	<b>935,651</b>	<b>1,097</b>

## Annex A - Comparison of Q2 Budget Monitoring

	Q2 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Land, Legal &amp; Property</b>			
ADB301-3 Welch Way (Town Centre Shop)	13,918	7,178	(6,739)
ADB302-Guildhall	5,207	4,340	(868)
ADB303-Woodgreen	122,900	120,034	(2,866)
ADB304-Elmfield	99,750	92,162	(7,588)
ADB305-Corporate Buildings	198,002	178,541	(19,461)
ADB306-Depot	(47,325)	(50,644)	(3,319)
LLC001-Local Land Charges	(78,984)	(61,515)	17,469
SUP004-Legal	122,439	87,743	(34,696)
TAC303-Swain Court & Newman Court Ind Est Witney	(14,618)	(12,773)	1,845
<b>Total - Land, Legal &amp; Property</b>	<b>421,290</b>	<b>365,067</b>	<b>(56,223)</b>

ADB305 - There is a £17k underspend for general & planned maintenance which will be on budget by the end of the year and a £3k underspend on professional fees

LLC001 - Land Charges is continuing to be affected by the softening of the housing market in the recovery from Covid with an underachievement of income in the first two quarters of the year of £16k

SUP004 - In line with Q1 there has not been the need to engage external legal expertise (barristers), resulting in an underspend of £15k. The remaining underspend is from books and partnership staff. We expect this position to hold until year end.

## Annex A - Comparison of Q2 Budget Monitoring

	Q2 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Leisure &amp; Communities</b>			
CCR001-Community Safety (Crime Reduction)	33,738	15,905	(17,833)
CCR002-Building Safer Communities	(3,950)	(7,474)	(3,525)
CCT001-CCTV	43,100	58,973	15,873
CSM001-Cultural Strategy	44,182	38,414	(5,768)
CUL001-Arts Development	27,119	27,630	512
ECD001-Economic Development	41,867	21,698	(20,169)
OPS003-Countryside	0	0	0
REC001-Sports Development	48,173	(11,117)	(59,290)
REC002-Recreational Facilities Development	24,843	25,674	831
REC003-Play	20,251	19,558	(693)
REC301-Village Halls	6,624	6,795	170
REC302-Contract Management	22,913	(20,819)	(43,732)
SUP016-Finance - Performance Review	49,985	50,809	824
TOU001-Tourism Strategy and Promotion	82,962	79,805	(3,157)
<b>Total - Leisure &amp; Communities</b>	<b>441,806</b>	<b>305,850</b>	<b>(135,956)</b>

CCR001 - Covid related Winter Grant is being spent consistently and will be fully utilised by year end

CCT001 - there is a timing difference with the receipt of external funding

ECD001 - £20,000 funding for Local Referendums related to WODC support of Neighbourhood Planning activity with Parish/Town Councils. Three or four new Neighbourhood Plans are expected to go live in 2022/23

REC001 - £55,000 Move Grant funding received for Move Together project

REC302 - There is invoiced income of £39,743 for the Solar Fund. An agreement has been reached with GLL to repay the Council the support advanced to them out of their 21/22 profits

## Annex A - Comparison of Q2 Budget Monitoring

	Q2 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Environmental Services</b>			
CCC001-Climate Change	43,164	48,879	5,715
COR301-Policy Initiatives - Shopmobility	10,478	7,516	(2,961)
CPK001-Car Parks - Off Street	69,341	116,348	47,007
CPK011-On Street Civil Parking Enforcement	7,821	60,159	52,338
ENI002-Grounds Maintenance	240,200	234,544	(5,656)
ENI303-Landscape Maintenance	36,920	42,556	5,637
FLD001-Flood Defence and Land Drainage	73,323	60,805	(12,517)
REG004-Dog Warden	27,660	36,503	8,843
REG005-Public Health Sewerage	(12)	0	12
REG018-Pest Control	7,000	(5,600)	(12,600)
REG019-Public Conveniences	77,663	54,768	(22,895)
REG023-Environmental Strategy	40,034	37,002	(3,032)
RYC001-Recycling	1,307,254	1,268,930	(38,324)
RYC002-Green Waste	(521,479)	(737,478)	(215,999)
STC004-Environmental Cleansing	515,695	521,468	5,773
TRW001-Trade Waste	22,780	22,183	(597)
TRW002-Clinical Waste	(550)	(14)	536
WST001-Household Waste	850,797	824,615	(26,181)
WST004-Bulky Household Waste	6,584	(6,183)	(12,767)
WST301-Env. Services Depot, Downs Rd, Witney	(15,000)	(14,993)	7
<b>Total - Environmental Services</b>	<b>2,799,671</b>	<b>2,572,007</b>	<b>(227,664)</b>

CPK001 - Q2 has shown some recovery in PCN income but still currently only 28.8% of budget.

CPK011 - Levels of income from on street PCNs has improved during Q2 to 40.9% of budget.

FLD001 - This year we have not needed to call out external contractors saving £11k.

REG019 - The new cleaning contract delivered an unbudgeted saving of £40k per annum.

RYC001 - Recycling credits are slightly higher than budget, but they are partially offset by a corresponding increase in disposal costs. Legacy budgets of £20k relating to ICT licences & marketing have been identified by the Business Manager as no longer required and they will be used to partly offset contract inflation in the 2022/23 budget.

RYC002 - The agreed price increase in green waste fees was not included in the budget this year so there is an expected overachievement of £230k offset by a small overspend on bins. This budget will be amended for 22/23.

TRW001 - The number of trade waste customers has fallen overall with collections £30,000 below budget. This service is also carrying £130,000 of aged debt between 3 months and 2 years old which raises questions about what proportion of this year's income could be lost as bad debt.

WST001 - there is a £20k underspend on bin purchases which may be timing and catch up by year end.

## Annex A - Comparison of Q2 Budget Monitoring

Q2 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

### Planning & Strategic Housing

DEV001-Development Control - Applications	(189,057)	(327,352)	(138,296)
DEV002-Development Control - Appeals	37,892	38,866	975
DEV003-Development Control - Enforcement	77,439	79,431	1,992
ECD301-WOSP - West Oxon Strategic Partnership	4,500	1,575	(2,925)
ENA001-Housing Enabling	57,739	50,044	(7,695)
ENI301-Landscape Initiatives	25,244	25,893	649
HLD315-Growth Board Project (Planning)	41,892	41,861	(31)
PLP001-Planning Policy	256,067	262,435	6,368
PLP003-Implementation	(459)	0	459
PLP004-Conservation	42,258	43,800	1,542
PSM001-Planning Service Mgmt & Support Serv	87,054	72,179	(14,875)
<b>Total - Planning &amp; Strategic Housing</b>	<b>440,568</b>	<b>288,732</b>	<b>(151,837)</b>

DEV001 - Planning Application income has proven volatile during Q1 & Q2 from a high of £194,000 in July to a low of £54,000 in May but is performing very well overall at £137,000 above budget. The 2022/23 budget will review the income target for next year. Pre Application Advice is performing well and is overachieving the budget by £4,000

PSM001 - Professional fees are underspent by £10,000 with further small underspends across the supplies & services budget

## Annex A - Comparison of Q2 Budget Monitoring

	Q2 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Retained Services</b>			
COR002-Chief Executive	119,231	128,049	8,818
COR003-Corporate Policy Making	32,772	33,615	843
COR004-Public Relations	6,030	4,801	(1,229)
COR005-Corporate Finance	186,344	160,145	(26,199)
COR006-Treasury Management	13,350	7,986	(5,364)
COR007-External Audit Fees	28,500	17,742	(10,758)
COR008-Bank Charges	34,600	97,728	63,128
COR302-Publica Group	(132,362)	(75,802)	56,560
FIE341-Town Centre Properties	(340,488)	(395,413)	(54,925)
FIE342-Miscellaneous Properties	(596,121)	(497,057)	99,064
FIE343-Talisman	(868,013)	(889,569)	(21,556)
FIE344-Des Roches Square	(401,629)	(412,593)	(10,964)
FIE345-Gables at Elmfield	(30,649)	(23,660)	6,989
NDC001-Non Distributed Costs	359,550	324,056	(35,494)
TAC304-Witney Industrial Estate	(126,288)	(110,714)	15,574
TAC305-Carterton Industrial Estate	(166,463)	(182,593)	(16,131)
TAC306-Greystones Industrial Estate	(11,162)	(14,083)	(2,920)
TAC308-Other Trading Services - Fairs	(1,250)	0	1,250
<b>Total - Retained Services</b>	<b>(1,894,047)</b>	<b>(1,827,361)</b>	<b>66,686</b>

Bank Charges - There has been a significant increase in bank charges for credit & debit card transactions over the last 12 months. Discussions are ongoing with our existing card bureau who have offered a substantial reduction in fees and discussions are being undertaken with other suppliers to establish if we need to take this forward to a tendering exercise.

Investment Property - During 2020/21 the Council entered into payment plans with many of our tenants to spread the cost of their rent across more than the 2020/21 financial year. These payment plans continue in place and monies relating to last year are being recouped. The Estates team are proactively managing each tenant to ensure that payment plans are effective. The current outstanding debt is £597,672 with £197,380 in payment plans. There has been a 30% drop in invoices 3-12 months old since year end.

## Annex A - Comparison of Q2 Budget Monitoring

	Q2 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Revenues &amp; Housing Support</b>			
HBP001-Rent Allowances	100,060	65,313	(34,746)
HBP003-Local Housing Allowance	(3,500)	40	3,540
HBP005-Benefit Fraud Investigation	59,522	61,108	1,586
HOM001-Homelessness	88,203	79,756	(8,447)
HOM002-Homelessness Grants	5,000	0	(5,000)
HOM003-Rent In Advance Scheme	0	(295)	(295)
HOM004-Refugees	0	2,671	2,671
HOM005-Homelessness Hostel Accomodation	0	(6,109)	(6,109)
LTC001-Council Tax Collection	100,338	80,758	(19,580)
LTC002-Council Tax Support Administration	73,219	74,138	919
LTC011-NNDR Collection	63,587	67,026	3,439
PSH001-Private Sector Housing Grants	22,685	23,217	532
PSH004-Home Improvement Service	(31,640)	(30,109)	1,530
<b>Total - Revenues &amp; Housing Support</b>	<b>477,473</b>	<b>417,514</b>	<b>(59,960)</b>

HBP001 - The Council has received £82,000 in one off government grants which will be spent throughout the year on software upgrades due to statutory changes and additional temporary resource to process Benefit claims. There is also a timing difference between Housing Benefit payments and Subsidy received which will resolved by the end of the year

LTC001 - There is a £17,000 underspend in postage costs which will be spent in Q4 on annual billing

## Annex B - Capital spend at Q2

### Capital Programme - 2021/22

Scheme	2021/22 Original budget	2021/22 New Schemes	2021/22 Total budget	Actual Expenditure Q2
CAP027 Developer Capital Contributions	0			17,769
CAP200 Parish Council Loans Scheme	0			
CAP301 IT Provision - Systems & Strategy	112,244		112,244	36,817
CAP302 In-cab technology	140,000		140,000	135,478
CAP306 Deployment of High Speed Broadband	1,230,366		1,230,366	
CAP325 Council Buildings Maintenance Programme	325,000		325,000	
CAP333 IT Equipment - PCs, Copiers etc	40,000		40,000	
CAP361 CCTV - Upgrading	200,000		200,000	
CAP505 Improvement Grants	606,800		606,800	269,747
CAP509 Shop Mobility - Replacement stock	10,000		10,000	
CAP510 Loan to Cottsway Housing Association	0		0	
CAP511 Replacement dog and litter bins	52,701		52,701	5,250
CAP512 Weighbridge at Bulking Station	0		0	
CAP513 Replacement Street Sweepers	200,000		200,000	
CAP514 Ubico Fleet - Replace Vehicle Hire Costs	1,004,374		1,004,374	19,524
CAP515 Vehicle & Plant Renewal	70,157		70,157	
CAP535 Flood Prevention Works 2009/10	0		0	
CAP543 Cottsway - Blenheim Court Growth Deal	170,500		170,500	
CAP544 Unicorn CPO purchase provision	700,000		700,000	
CAP545 Town Centre Shop building renovation project	75,000		75,000	
CAP546 Southhill Solar Loan	0		0	
CAP547 Cottsway - Lavender Place Growth Deal	99,000		99,000	
CAP548 Talisman re-roofing project	0		0	
CAP549 Affordable Housing in Witney (Heylo)	1,761,875		1,761,875	
CAP600 Community Grants Fund	325,115		325,115	33,390
CAP609 Carterton Leisure Centre Phase 2	0		0	
CAP629 Madley Park playing Fields Project	6,165		6,165	
CAP630 Chipping Norton Sports Hall Floor	0		0	
CAP649 Abbeycare - Public Art	0		0	1,200
CAP671 Purchase of Vehicles	0		0	54,929
CAP677 House Property Purchase	0		0	
CAP678 Chipping Norton Creative	30,063		30,063	375
CAP679 Carteron Connects Creative (Swinbrook s106)	47,280		47,280	2,720
CAP768 Electric vehicle recharging points	400,000		400,000	
CAP769 Raleigh Crescent Play Area (s. 106)	75,000		75,000	
CAP550 Old Court House, Witney	1,452,750		1,452,750	1,274,471
CAP551 Property Purchase in Carterton		2,400,462	2,400,462	2,400,462
Investment Strategy for Recovery	15,000,000		12,599,538	
	<b>24,134,389</b>	<b>2,400,462</b>	<b>24,134,389</b>	<b>4,252,132</b>

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 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date</p>	<p><b>Cabinet: Wednesday, 15 December 2021</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>Agenda Item No. 7</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>Approval of Extension to Agreement for Support Services with Publica</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Councillor Michele Mead, Leader; Email: Michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>For Cabinet to consider an extension of the Publica service agreement for Support Services</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A - Support Services Agreement</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>(a) That the Support Services Agreement with Publica Group (Support) Limited be extended for a further four year term until 31 October 2026.</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance: Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>Leader, Deputy Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services</p>

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Publica Support Service Agreement (“the Agreement”) expires on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022. Shareholder Councils are required to give 12 months’ notice of their intention to grant an extension and consequently a decision is required now. Publica has confirmed that it is comfortable with slightly shorter notice to that included within the Agreement.
- 1.2. Publica is a not-for-profit company owned by West Oxfordshire District Council along with Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council. Through Publica we share skills and resources to provide a range of important services to the Councils and to their residents and communities. Publica was set up in early 2017 and its contracts to supply services to the Councils commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017.
- 1.3. A key element of West Oxfordshire District Council’s approach to its finances over the last decade has been the delivery of savings through shared services, as a result of efficiencies and economies of scale. This has helped protect front line services. The setup of Publica took this long term approach to shared services to another level.
- 1.4. The formal steps to set up Publica began in June 2014 when the four Councils approved a "Report and Outline Business Case for a "2020 Vision for Joint Working". In August 2015, the full "2020 Vision for Joint Working Business Case" was prepared. This Business Case, based on the original proposition, forecast to return cumulative savings totalling £38m over a 10 year period with annual revenue savings of £5.7m. External funding of £3.8m towards the cost of the Programme was received from the Government's Transformation Challenge Funding.
- 1.5. Consequently, the Business Case was agreed and approved by the four Councils in September/October 2015. Subsequently the 2020 Joint Committee (“the Joint Committee”) was established and became operational in February 2016 with a number of shared services being established from April 2016.
- 1.6. In June 2016 the Joint Committee agreed an updated Business Case and to consult with partner Councils about the proposal to implement a company model. In October 2016 the Councils all agreed a report recommending the creation of a company model comprising three companies, then described as a support services company, coordinating company and a regulatory services company. Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council agreed to become members of the three companies. Cheltenham Borough Council agreed to become a member of the support services company and to receive only Finance, HR and ICT support from that company.
- 1.7. As agreed the Publica companies were formed early in 2017 and over the intervening period Officers established the companies to accept the transfer-in of approximately 650 employees. As part of that it was determined that to mitigate tax issues, ease complexity for employees, and, keep running costs down, only one company was necessary at least initially. To enable Cheltenham to retain its involvement within the shared service company it was agreed this would be Publica Group (Support) Ltd as this is the company of which it is a member (“the Company”). .
- 1.8. As part of the arrangements the Councils entered into Agreements with Publica to deliver the joint services from Autumn 2017. Cheltenham Borough Council continued to receive the

services of Finance, HR and ICT services only (in line with its current contract arrangements).

- 1.9. It was agreed by the Councils that the Agreement durations would be as follows:
- Support Service Provision - five years plus opportunity to extend for two further periods each of four years (next expiry 31 Oct 2022)
  - Direct Service Provision - seven years plus opportunity to extend for seven years (next expiry 31 Oct 2024)
  - Commissioning and Advisory Services - 10 years plus opportunity to extend for 10 years (next 31 Oct 2027)
- 1.10. The different variation periods reflects the relative difficulty in commissioning these services.
- 1.11. Because West Oxfordshire District Council has a shareholding in Publica, it in combination with the other partner Councils has ultimate control over the Company. The relationship between the Council and Publica is not therefore just a client/ contractor relationship, and the Council has the ability to influence Publica outside of Service Agreements. To aid the Councils' roles as Shareholders a new Shareholders Forum has been set up.
- 1.12. Under the terms of the Service Agreements the Councils are required to give 12 months' notice of their intention to grant an extension and consequently a decision is required now on the Support Service Agreement which is due to end on 31 October 2022. Publica has confirmed that it is comfortable with a slightly shorter notice period to that specified in the Agreement.
- 1.13. Cheltenham Borough Council's Cabinet considered this matter in October, and agreed to extend the Agreement for the proposed four year term. Forest of Dean District Council's Cabinet considered this matter in November and also agreed to extend the Agreement by the recommended term. The matter will also be considered by Cotswold District Council's Cabinet during December.
- 1.14. The matter was considered by West Oxfordshire's Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 1<sup>st</sup> December. The Committee resolved to support the extension of the Agreement for another four years, and commented that before the next renewal decision on the Agreement, a review of options should take place to inform that future decision.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. The Support Services Agreement is attached at Annex A and sets out the detail of service provision. The principal services that are contained within the Agreement are:-
- ICT
  - Finance
  - Human Resources & Payroll
  - Procurement
  - Property
  - Land Charges
  - Flood Engineering

- 2.2. The bulk of these support services have been delivered in some form of partnership arrangement since 2012 when GO Shared Services was formed. Other informal sharing arrangements for the other services were formalised with the introduction of Publica in November 2017.
- 2.3. The Agreement for Support Services sets out an initial period of five years to the end of October 2022. With an allowance of 12 months' notice this requires the Council to make a decision on extending the arrangement for a further period of four years as provided for within the Agreement.
- 2.4. Publica Group (Support) Ltd is a Teckal company and one of the benefits of the Teckal model is that it enables the company owners (local authorities) to procure services from the company in a flexible way. The Agreement with the Company enables the Council to make changes to the services (whether by way of the removal of services, the addition of new services, increasing or decreasing the services, specifying the order in which the services are to be performed or the locations where the services are to be provided) through the annual review process, or in the event of an urgent matter on giving reasonable written notice for any reasons whatsoever.
- 2.5. Indeed since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic the Council and Publica have needed to be flexible in the way resources have been allocated to deal with many aspects of service provision and this has had significant impacts on ICT, Finance and HR provision particularly in respect of home and hybrid working arrangements and business grants administration.
- 2.6. This flexibility of the Teckal company arrangement is indeed one of the key strengths of the governance arrangements that are part of the approach within the partnership.
- 2.7. As a consequence of these flexible arrangements should the Council agree to extend the Agreement for a further four year period this does not bind the Council to this 'set' service definition for the full period and variations can continue to be made as in the previous four years.
- 2.8. Publica is still a relatively young organisation in local government terms, and is on a journey to deliver modern services and local priorities for the Shareholder Councils across the partnership.
- 2.9. In overall terms the performance of Support Services has been good with the ICT Service provision highly regarded across the partnership. Finance Transactional Services and Payroll are also highly regarded. Finance Advisory Services has suffered from some staff turnover issues which created some service pressures but a new structure and recent appointments have made a significant difference over the last six months and service improvement is expected to continue.
- 2.10. A number of parts of the HR service are currently being reviewed as part of a HR Improvement Plan which is currently awaiting approval but we are already seeing improvements in some areas such as Recruitment and Learning and Development.
- 2.11. In terms of Performance Indicators for these Services these are shared with the Partner Councils as part of the performance pack but the key metrics are shown below:-
  - Accounts paid within 30 days            97-98% (target 90%)
  - ICT Server availability                    99.9% (target 99.8%)
  - Payroll accuracy                            100%
  - Sickness Absence                          4.5 days (8 days District Council average)
  - Underlying staff turnover                11.65% (long term average 10%)

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. There are no direct financial implications from extending the term of the Agreement. The contract fee is agreed on an annual basis and takes into account any changes to services. However, if the Council decided not to renew the Agreement there could be significant financial implications.
- 3.2. The 2020/21 service cost budget for support services for West Oxfordshire was estimated as set out below. A costing review is currently underway which could see a reduction in these budgets due to volumetric changes but this review is incomplete at the moment.

WODC	
<b>Finance</b>	
SUP009 Accountancy	339,302
SUP011 Accounts Payable	18,445
SUP012 Accounts Receivable	37,599
SUP033 Procurement	40,364
SUP035 Insurance	8,357
<b>People</b>	
SUP003 Human Resources	143,998
SUP013 Payroll	21,547
SUP019 Health & Safety	11,038
SUP020 Training, Talent & Recruitment	37,851
<b>Technology</b>	
SUP005 ICT +Business Solutions	483,144
SUP042 Business World Support	11,375
	1,153,020

- 3.3. Unit cost information is still being developed but the 2020/21 unit costs were:-

- Cost to fill vacancy £1,055
- Cost per debtor a/c £4.52
- Cost per a/c payable £3.37
- Cost per payslip £4.04
- Cost per Procurement £515

- 3.4 The Institute for Fiscal Studies report on English Local Government funding, published in 2019 gave an estimated cost for “Central and Other” services of £57 per resident. The figures quoted above for WODC show a cost of £10.53 per resident. There is insufficient detail to determine the exact correlation of the two estimates but it would appear to support the argument that the price quoted by Publica to deliver the services above represents good value for money.

#### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. The Council is bound by the terms of the Agreement for services and is required to give written notice if it wishes to extend its term. The Agreement includes provisions for making changes to the services.
- 4.2. The Council could chose to exercise its option not to extend the Support Services Agreement but would be liable for any costs associated with leaving.

#### **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. There are no significant new risks from extending the Agreement for support services. If an alternative option is chosen there could be risks in terms of disruption to services, additional costs, and the opportunity cost from the staff time required to implement an alternative approach.

#### **6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1. None from this report. Publica has signed up to 'Disability Confident' and committed to encourage applications by offering an interview to those who declare they have a disability, if the person meets the minimum criteria for the job as defined on the person specification..

#### **7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. None from this report. Publica has set out plans for considering the environmental impact of business activities, aiming for a more sustainable future and reducing the carbon footprint of the business through a detailed carbon reduction plan. A commitment has been made to consider climate impact in all Publica work and this will be embedded into project management, commissioning and procurement.

#### **8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 8.1. The Council could choose not to extend the Agreement and look either to bring these support services in house, or alternatively contract these services from another provider.
- 8.2. Given the integrated nature of the Business World Enterprise Resource Platform it may be difficult to dis-establish the transactional elements of the Partnership and these services are generally recognised as high performing and low cost.
- 8.3. Should the Council wish to transfer advisory type services (e.g. flood engineering, Human Resources, and property) back to the Council then this could be accommodated more easily but the Council would lose out on the lower employment cost structure, and the economies of scale and resilience provided by the wider partnership.
- 8.4. An alternative outsourcing route through a private sector provider could be also considered, but this model would not offer the flexibility of the Teckal model, which allows the Council to vary services as circumstances change without undue financial penalties.

8.5. If the Council did not extend the Agreement then it would need to work with Publica and engage with employees on any relevant employment matters such as the Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment regulations (TUPE).

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1. The following documents are of relevance to this report:

- Publica Business Plan - 2020 to 2022; and
- Publica Annual Report 2020-21;
- Ten years of collaboration and sharing, Publica



**SERVICE SPECIFICATION FOR SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED TO:**  
**COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL, FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL and**  
**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

This Specification for the Services details the high level Services to be provided by the Company to Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council. [More detail (in relation to Service Standards and performance indicators) is set out in the documents linked to the Service Agreement.]

The overriding principle applying to the Specification is that the Company will deliver the relevant Services to the extent permitted by Law. Where any Service involves the exercise by a Council or a Council Officer of functions or discretions which may not be delegated to the Company, the Company's obligations shall be to provide such administrative and other support to enable the Council (or relevant Council Officer) to lawfully discharge such obligations and (for the avoidance of doubt) the Council or applicable Council Officer shall remain responsible for the discharge of such functions and/or exercise of such discretions as may not be delegated.

For the avoidance of doubt, the non-delegable statutory elements of those Service Areas shaded in red will be discharged (as applicable) by the relevant Council or Council employee.

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**Service area: ICT**

<b>Function</b>	<b>Council</b>
Provide strategic ICT advice and guidance to Councillors and Council employees	CO, F, WO
Business Partnering	CO, F, WO
Service transformation support	CO, F, WO
Oversee ICT related procurement activities and provide input where required	CO, F, WO
Design, manage and install Council networks and infrastructure	CO, F, WO
Telecoms – design, implementation and management	CO, F, WO
Disaster Recovery / Backups	CO, F, WO
Specify, deploy and manage ICT hardware and devices	CO, F, WO
ICT Helpdesk	CO, F, WO
Business World Helpdesk and infrastructure support	CO, F, WO
Support Business World infrastructure	CO, F, WO
Ensure compliance with Government and industry standards	CO, F, WO
Local Land and Property Gazetteer	CO, F, WO
GIS and mapping service	CO, F, WO
Street naming and numbering service	CO, F, WO
Website and digital services	CO, F, WO
Data services – complex reporting, data migration, transformation and extraction	CO, F, WO
Application development and integration	CO, F, WO
Specify, implement and update Application systems	CO, F, WO
Support corporate Applications and Systems	CO, F, WO
ICT related Security policies, procedures and advice	CO, F, WO
Data Protection and handling advice and guidance – liaison with SIRO	CO, F, WO
Information Security – policy development, registration and coordination of breaches, liaison with Information Commissioner	CO, F, WO
ICT training for elected members and Council employees	CO, F, WO
BACs Bureau Service	CO, F, WO
Issuing ID / security access cards	F only

**Service area: Finance**

<b>Function</b>	<b>Council</b>
Service transformation support	CO, F, WO
Accounts payable	CO, F, WO
Purchase ordering	CO, F, WO
Accounts receivable	CO, F, WO
General ledger management	CO, F, WO
Cash and bank input	CO, F, WO
VAT	CO, F, WO
Bank reconciliation	CO, F, WO
Trust Funds	CO, F, WO
Mortgages, Car Loans and Loans to Third Parties	CO, F, WO
Mayor's / Chairman's charity	CO, F, WO
Leasing - employee cars / pool cars (financial aspects)	CO, F, WO
Leasing – Other leases	CO, F, WO
Support services costing	CO, F, WO
Journals	CO, F, WO
Statement of Accounts	CO, F, WO
Collection Fund accounting	CO, F, WO
Financial Strategy / Budget preparation	CO, F, WO
Management Reporting	CO, F, WO
Business Partnering	CO, F, WO
Government Returns – RO, RA, QRO, C.O. etc.	CO, F, WO
Technical accounting support	CO, F, WO
Treasury Management	CO, F, WO
Insurance support and advice	CO, F, WO
Collate Precept data from Parish Councils, Upper Tier Authorities, Police Authorities	CO, F, WO
<b>Business World System Support</b> – administration and support	CO, F, WO

**Service area: Human Resources and Payroll**

<b>Function</b>	<b>Council</b>
Service transformation support	CO, F, WO
HR functions for staff employed directly by the Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce intelligence</li> <li>• Recruitment and induction</li> <li>• Leavers</li> <li>• Disclosure and Barring Scheme</li> <li>• Staff welfare</li> <li>• Employee Relations/Case work</li> <li>• Grievance, Disciplinary &amp; Capability</li> <li>• Redundancy</li> <li>• Job evaluation; Employee benefits; Reward &amp; Recognition</li> <li>• Maternity/Paternity Support</li> <li>• Long Service Awards</li> <li>• Retirements and Flexible Retirements</li> <li>• Death in Service</li> <li>• Annual Leave and Flexi-leave</li> <li>• Performance and Appraisals</li> <li>• Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship Levy</li> <li>• Employee representation – Trade Unions etc.</li> <li>• Total Reward, including benefits platform</li> <li>• HR Metrics</li> <li>• Employee communications and engagement</li> </ul>	CO, F, WO
HR functions for staff employed directly by the Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence Management</li> </ul>	
HR Procedure & Policy Development	CO, F, WO
Organisational HR Strategy	CO, F, WO
Learning & Organisational Development including learning skills, knowledge & behaviours and Change Management	CO, F, WO
Health and Safety, including Fire Safety advice	CO, F, WO
Pensions Administration	CO, F, WO
Payroll Function: For employees directly employed by Councils (including elected members)	CO, F, WO

**Service area: Procurement**

<b>Function</b>	<b>Council</b>
Service transformation support	CO, F, WO
Common Procurement Strategy, reflecting local flexibility	CO, F, WO
Common Contract Rules	CO, F, WO
Common suite of Standard Documentation	CO, F, WO
Standardised procurement web pages	CO, F, WO
Common Contract Register	CO, F, WO
Support through full tender/quotation process	CO, F, WO
Contract Management	CO, F, WO
Contract Monitoring	CO, F, WO
Procurement Portal – management of and guidance	CO, F, WO
Business World procurement module strategy and directional guidance including suppliers, products and training	CO, F, WO
Spend analysis, reporting and identification of procurement savings	CO, F, WO
Common work plan	CO, F, WO
Supplier adoption on e-portal where in use	CO, F, WO
Supplier engagement and Meet the Buyer events	CO, F, WO
Credit checks (organisational)	CO, F, WO
Category Management	CO, F, WO
Purchase Order management	CO, F, WO
Purchase Cards / Corporate credit cards	CO, F, WO
Procurement support to other Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire Districts for joint procurement / tendering	CO, F, WO
Procurement training	CO, F, WO

**Service area: Property Services**

Function	Council
Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation for Council approval and delivery of Asset Management Strategy, Accommodation Strategy and Commercial Property Investment Strategy</li> <li>• Identification of and option appraisals for potential development sites</li> <li>• Liaison with county and other external groups to deliver on common goals</li> <li>• Support delivery of other strategies and corporate projects from property perspective, e.g. car parking, developments etc.</li> </ul>	CO, F, WO
Maintenance and Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement of Contracts for annual, routine and reactive maintenance, minor capital works, utilities and cleaning</li> <li>• Risk assessments and action plans for Health &amp; Safety compliance for all operational assets, including for asbestos, legionella, fire and glazing</li> <li>• Formulation and procurement of maintenance frameworks and condition surveys</li> </ul>	CO, F, WO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Projects:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Manage / deliver capital programme works</li> <li>○ Manage / deliver other large projects, e.g. office relocations, redevelopment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	CO, F, WO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Delivery of annual, routine and reactive/emergency maintenance programme for all operational assets (including admin support)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	CO, F, WO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Administer cyclical / routine term contracts including M&amp;E, CE, PPM, Fire Precaution, Security Systems, Lifts, Crematoria Plant, Premises Hygiene, structural maintenance, Townscape, Utility services and any related compliance works</li> <li>○ Carry out Facilities management duties</li> </ul>	CO, F, WO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Miscellaneous tasks:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Manage and provide professional and administrative support for party wall awards, contaminated land issues, insurance matters on Council owned property, tender evaluations, development budget estimates, ad hoc enabling works</li> <li>○ Carry out and produce schedules of dilapidations, periodic asset condition surveys, prepare/review planned maintenance programme</li> <li>○ Report maintenance issues, vermin control requirements, conservation (green spaces &amp; historic buildings) compliance</li> <li>○ Landscape and open spaces maintenance works</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	CO, F, WO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Carry out the administrative functions of client management for services, e.g. off street parking management and enforcement, grounds maintenance, caretaking, office cleaning and public toilets, green space and play area management and maintenance</li> <li>○ Assist in the provision of bereavement services, including lot management, funerals and assisted burials (where there is no next of kin)</li> <li>○ Management of Council-owned car parks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	F only

Function	Council
<b>Estate Management:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landlord and Tenant, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Negotiate rent reviews, lease renewals, variation and breaches, licences, freeholder approvals, service charges, approval for works landlords' consent, mapping, schedules, dilapidations, tenant compliance, rent arrears, mediation and arbitration and instruct Legal service to prepare necessary documentation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	CO, F, WO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land management, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Negotiation of easements, rights of way, compensation for disturbance, memoranda of understanding, stakeholder engagement, consultation, encroachments, land protection measures, including landlord and boundary inspections, adverse possession claims, and other land management</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	CO, F, WO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cemetery management</li> <li>○ Management of trees owned by the Council</li> </ul>	F only F only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property management, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support and advisory services including commercial transactions, insurance claims</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	CO, F, WO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valuations, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Undertake valuations e.g. capital valuations, insurance, rating, rental and rent reviews</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	CO, F, WO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land and property terrier:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Management and maintenance of the land and property terrier</li> <li>○ Ensuring records are updated on completion of transactions</li> <li>○ Reconciliation with Finance Asset register</li> <li>○ Management of electronic property related records</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	CO, F, WO
<b>General:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land and ownership enquiries</li> <li>• Agency e.g. marketing, viewings and procurement of agents where required</li> </ul>	CO, F, WO

Service area: **Land Charges**

Function	Council
Manage all administrative aspects of Land Charges service, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain Local Land Charges Register</li><li>• Responding to requests for CON29 enquiries and charges against particular properties</li><li>• Responding to requests from personal search companies</li><li>• Liaison with County Council and other internal services regarding responses to CON29 requests and coordinate responses</li><li>• Dealing with S157 requests</li></ul>	CO, F, WO

Service area: **Flood Engineering**

Function	Council
Preparing consultee responses on Planning applications	CO, F, WO
Design, procurement and implementation of flood relief schemes	CO, F, WO
Flood consent and enforcing	CO, F, WO

Service area: **All Services**

Function	Council
<p><b>Generic responsibilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of reports as and when required in accordance with prescribed timetables</li> <li>• Attendance at meetings/dealing with elected members as required</li> <li>• Engagement with internal and external stakeholders and partners as appropriate</li> <li>• Maintaining appropriate legislative / regulatory / professional knowledge/networks and complying with relevant Continuous Professional Development (CPD) requirements</li> <li>• Writing and contributing to appropriate policies, procedures and guidance notes</li> <li>• Maintenance of records, including online records</li> <li>• Corporate responsibilities e.g. preparing responses to complaints, Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, transparency agenda, safeguarding, business continuity, emergency response, equality, Prevent, audit, health and safety, and risk management in compliance with specific Council policies as appropriate</li> <li>• Processing payments and invoices</li> <li>• Keeping website information up to date</li> <li>• Benchmarking, performance monitoring and statistical reporting/returns as required</li> <li>• Preparing responses to local and national consultations</li> <li>• Preparing and contributing to relevant funding bids</li> <li>• Providing training for elected members and parish/town councils as required</li> <li>• Preparing responses to Ombudsman complaints and legal challenges</li> </ul>	CO, F, WO

 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>Cabinet: Wednesday 15 December 2021</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>Agenda Item No. 8</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS)</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Councillor Jeff Haine Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning Email: <a href="mailto:jeff.haine@westoxon.gov.uk">jeff.haine@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager Tel: 01993 861686; Email: <a href="mailto:Chris.Hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk">Chris.Hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To consider and approve the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) for 2020/21.</p>
<p>Annex</p>	<p>Annex A - Infrastructure Funding Statement 2020/21</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) attached at Annex A to the report be approved and published on the Council's website by 31 December 2021 in accordance with legislative requirements.</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>The main purpose of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is to provide greater clarity on the receipt and use of developer contributions including Section 106 planning obligations to fund new and enhanced infrastructure in support of planned growth. As such, the IFS will help to support a number of the aims and objectives of the Council Plan (2020 – 2024).</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>None.</p>

## **I. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. Following changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations in 2019, local authorities are now required to report on the receipt and use of developer contributions through the publication of an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS).
- 1.2. The IFS must be published by 31 December each year and cover the previous financial year (1 April - 31 March). Its main purpose is to set out in a transparent manner, future infrastructure requirements and expected costs, contributions received during the previous financial year, anticipated funding from developer contributions (e.g. Section 106 and CIL) and the Council's future spending priorities.
- 1.3. In particular, the IFS must set out:
  - A report relating to the previous financial year on the Community Infrastructure Levy (where CIL is in place);
  - A report relating to the previous financial year on section 106 planning obligations; and
  - A report on the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure that the Council intends to fund wholly or partly through CIL.
- 1.4. Any authority that receives a contribution from development through CIL or section 106 planning obligations must prepare an IFS. This includes County Councils.
- 1.5. The IFS must be updated annually (although local authorities can produce more regular updates if they wish) and should be published on the Council's website no later than 31st December each year.
- 1.6. The IFS is intended to feed back into Local Plan reviews and effectively replaces previous local authority CIL regulation 123 lists (which set out CIL spending priorities) where these were in place.

## **2. WEST OXFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2020/21**

- 2.1. The Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is attached at Annex A and covers the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021.
- 2.2. Section 2 of the IFS provides an overview of future infrastructure needs and costs in West Oxfordshire with reference to a number of sources of information including the district-wide West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016) which was prepared in support of the Local Plan and more recent infrastructure studies that have been prepared for the Eynsham area and Woodstock respectively.
- 2.3. Section 3 reports on S106 planning obligations (agreed, received, spent etc.) in the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021.
- 2.4. Headline figures to note are as follows:
  - £1,671,560 of Section 106 funds were secured/entered into during 2020/21 which included £1,255,800 for affordable housing;
  - £986,491.41 of Section 106 funds were collected by the District Council in 2020/21 of which the majority (£622,936) was collected towards sports, recreation and play facilities, followed by affordable housing (£164,563) public art (£61,652) and contributions towards various enhancements of Kilkenny Lane Country Park (£58,478);
  - £728,626.96 of Section 106 funds were either spent by West Oxfordshire District Council, transferred to Oxfordshire County Council or transferred to the Town/Parish Council;

- £1,706,920.34 of received Section 106 funds were allocated (i.e. committed to a certain project) but not spent in 2020/21;
- A total of £5,797,172.53 has been received from Section 106 funds before 1st April 2021 but has not yet been allocated (i.e. committed to a certain project) by the District Council;
- As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, the District Council held a total of £1,490,105.59 in commuted sums for maintenance.

2.5. Section 4 of the IFS provides a brief update on CIL, explaining that in September 2021, Cabinet agreed to defer further progress towards submission and examination pending the publication of the Government's new Planning Bill.

2.6. As the Planning Bill has been delayed, Officers are continuing to monitor the situation in order to determine whether to proceed to submission and examination.

2.7. Section 5 of the IFS explains the extent of the infrastructure funding gap in West Oxfordshire which is estimated to be in the region of £192.2m - £198m. The extent of the funding gap emphasises the importance of maximising funding from Section 106 planning obligations subject to the relevant statutory tests and potentially CIL subject to any national policy changes and implementation in West Oxfordshire.

2.8. Section 5 also provides an overview of the District Council's future spending priorities with reference to a number of relevant sources including the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016) and the District Council's draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was published for consultation in December 2020.

2.9. Future infrastructure funding will be drawn from a variety of sources including Section 106 legal agreements (planning obligations), CIL (depending on further progress towards adoption) and other potential sources of funding where applicable and available (e.g. from Central Government).

### **3. NEXT STEPS**

3.1. Subject to the approval of Members, the IFS will be published on the District Council's website no later than 31 December in accordance with legislative requirements.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1. The IFS for 2020/21 provides information on monies received and spent in relation to Section 106 planning obligations during the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021. It also provides an overview of future infrastructure needs and costs and the spending priorities of the Council in relation to Section 106 planning obligations and CIL, subject to future implementation.

### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1. Publication of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is a requirement of the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019.

5.2. There are potential legal implications if the Council does not fulfil its obligations in respect of Section 106 legal agreements. The preparation of the IFS on an annual basis provides much greater transparency in relation to S106 funds including those which have been received, spent, allocated and not yet allocated or spent.

## **6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

6.1. The report raises no specific risks.

## **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

7.1. The report raises no specific implications in respect of equality.

## **8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. The report raises no specific implications in respect of climate change.

## **9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

9.1. None. The publication of the IFS is a legislative requirement and its content is dictated by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1. None.



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**West Oxfordshire District Council**  
**Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS)**  
**2020/2021**

**December 2021**

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## I. Introduction

- I.1. In order to support planned growth, developers are often asked to make what are known as ‘developer contributions’ towards new or improved infrastructure (schools, roads etc.). Such contributions can take a number of different forms but most typically include Section 106 (S106) legal agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- I.2. Section 106 agreements often relate to direct provision e.g. a developer agreeing to provide say 40% affordable housing as part of a residential scheme, and/or can also take the form of a financial contribution e.g. where the developer makes a payment towards improving community facilities nearby.
- I.3. Importantly, S106 agreements are required to meet three key tests; in particular they must be:
  - necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
  - directly related to the development; and
  - fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- I.4. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) applies where local authorities have adopted a CIL Charging Schedule and is essentially a fixed financial contribution based on the size of development proposed. Unlike S106 agreements, money received through CIL is not tied to a particular development and can be spent more flexibly on new and enhanced infrastructure across the District.
- I.5. To ensure greater transparency on the receipt and use of developer contributions, in accordance with the CIL Regulations (2019) as amended<sup>1</sup>, local authorities are now required to produce an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) by 31<sup>st</sup> December each year (or more often if a local authority chooses to do so).
- I.6. The main purpose of the IFS is to ‘look back’ over the previous financial year<sup>2</sup> in terms of Section 106 agreements and CIL monies agreed, received, allocated and spent.
- I.7. The IFS must also ‘look forward’ setting out, where possible, estimated future income from developer contributions along with the Council’s future infrastructure spending priorities, in particular which infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure are expected to be funded via CIL.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation 121A

<sup>2</sup> For this report from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

- I.8. There is no single format for preparing an IFS but, as a minimum, it must include the following information:
- A report relating to the previous financial year on the Community Infrastructure Levy (where CIL is in place);
  - A report relating to the previous financial year on section 106 planning obligations; and
  - A report on the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure that the Council intends to fund wholly or partly through CIL.
- I.9. This West Oxfordshire IFS for 2020/21 is structured as follows:
- Section 1 (this section) provides a brief overview of what an IFS is and the legal requirements for preparing one;
  - Section 2 provides an overview of identified infrastructure needs and anticipated costs in West Oxfordshire;
  - Section 3 provides a summary of developer contributions relating to Section 106 (S106) Legal Agreements allocated, collected and spent by the District Council in 2020/21;
  - Section 4 provides a brief update on the implementation of CIL in West Oxfordshire;
  - Section 5 provides an overview of the estimated infrastructure 'funding gap' that exists in West Oxfordshire and explains how S106 planning obligations and potentially CIL contributions will be used going forwards.
- I.10. This IFS should also be read in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council's IFS which is available to view separately at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>.

## 2. Infrastructure needs in West Oxfordshire

### West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 2.1. The main source of information on infrastructure needs in West Oxfordshire is the District Council's [Infrastructure Delivery Plan \(IDP\) 2016](#).
- 2.2. The IDP identifies the infrastructure that is needed to support housing and employment growth in West Oxfordshire during the Local Plan period 2011 – 2031.
- 2.3. The IDP considers infrastructure needs under three broad categories.
  - **Physical infrastructure** (including transport, water, energy, waste and recycling, minerals and telecommunications);
  - **Social infrastructure** (including education, leisure and sport, health, public safety, community and culture, social care and criminal justice); and
  - **Green infrastructure** (including informal and formal green space, public rights of way, Local Wildlife Sites, Conservation Target Areas etc.)
- 2.4. Appendix I of the IDP comprises a schedule of identified infrastructure projects based on these three main categories. For each project, the schedule provides details of the anticipated costs (where known) expected delivery partners, any funding which has already been secured and how any shortfall is expected to be funded (e.g. S106, CIL).
- 2.5. The projects are also categorised as either 'critical', 'necessary' or 'desirable' and include an indication of expected timescales for delivery. Appendix I is supported by a written narrative set out within the main body of the IDP.
- 2.6. A number of key projects identified in the IDP have now been completed including Phase 2 of Carterton Leisure Centre, a pedestrian crossing on Bridge Street in Witney and improvements to the Downs Road/A40 junction at Witney.
- 2.7. Others such as the new Eynsham Park and Ride remain ongoing with some projects such as the West End Link Road in Witney expected to come forward in the later period of the Local Plan. The IDP (2016) will be updated as part of the forthcoming review of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, which is expected to commence in spring 2022.

### Eynsham Area Infrastructure Delivery Plan (July 2020)

- 2.8. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 identifies the provision of around 3,200 new homes to the north and west of Eynsham, the former comprising a new garden village of around 2,200 homes and the latter, a sustainable urban extension of around 1,000 homes (237 of which are already completed/underway).
- 2.9. Delivery of the garden village (now referred to as Salt Cross) is being led by an Area Action Plan (AAP) and West Eynsham through a developer-led masterplan.
- 2.10. An Eynsham Area IDP ([Stage 1 Draft Report, May 2019](#) and [Updated Draft Report, July 2020](#)) has been prepared, forming part of the evidence base for the Salt Cross AAP and helping to inform the master-planning process for West Eynsham.
- 2.11. The Eynsham Area IDP sets out the potential infrastructure requirements associated with the strategic growth at Eynsham and taking into account other planned growth in the wider area, which is likely to have a cumulative impact.
- 2.12. For each category, the IDP considers relevant plans and strategies, existing provision and where applicable, any relevant standards, translating this into an assessed need for the Garden Village, West Eynsham SDA and the remainder of the study area.
- 2.13. In July 2021, following hearing sessions on the Salt Cross AAP, the Inspector paused the examination to enable the District Council to undertake some additional work on the phasing of infrastructure. At the time of writing, this work remains ongoing and will be provided to the Inspector for consideration in due course.

### Woodstock Community and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2019)

- 2.14. In February 2019 the Blenheim Estate and Woodstock Town Council commissioned Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) to consult the community about the current and future infrastructure needs of Woodstock.
- 2.15. Following extensive consultation during 2019, the findings of the CFO work were launched at community events held in November 2019. Their report can be viewed [online](#) including a series of supporting appendices.

2.16. Key local priorities identified in the CFO report include:

- A new doctor's surgery with parking on the former police station site at Hensington Road;
- A new library - potentially as part of a Community Hub;
- Improve Marlborough School sports facilities, relocating Woodstock FC;
- Indoor swimming pool;
- Invest in a pool of electric cars and develop a community transport/ lift-share scheme;
- Community Development Worker to support new housing developments;
- Pre-school, primary school and secondary school infrastructure;
- Road safety improvements on the A44, Old Woodstock;
- Provision of drop-off areas for cars and school buses in the vicinity of Woodstock Primary and The Marlborough School;
- Blenheim to provide parking (including coaches) inside Hensington gate;
- Wider road environment (traffic management, A44 capacity increase);
- Environmental and low carbon improvements: biodiversity, wildlife habitats and green spaces;
- Improvement to pavements in the vicinity of Woodstock Primary and The Marlborough School;
- Public and school transport improvements/ initiatives;
- Multi-storey car park at Hensington Road; and
- Increase and improve school parking.

2.17. The CFO report also identifies a number of specific local priorities for two Woodstock Local Plan housing allocations at Hill Rise and Banbury Road including EV charging points, wildlife corridors, renewable energy, footpaths and cycleways, sports and play provision.

2.18. The report will be taken into account in future discussions on potential planning obligations associated with the two allocated sites mentioned above and will also be taken into account in the review of the West Oxfordshire IDP (2016).

### 3. Section 106 Planning Obligations

- 3.1. Planning obligations (generally referred to as Section 106 agreements) are legal obligations entered into in order to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal and make it acceptable in planning terms.
- 3.2. Most often, this will be via a planning agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – known as a Section 106 or S106 agreement and will involve both the person with an interest in the land and the Council. It can also be achieved via a unilateral undertaking without the Council’s involvement.
- 3.3. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address the unacceptable impact of development through a planning condition or by the use of other statutory controls. They are legally binding and enforceable if planning permission is granted and they are tied to the land.
- 3.4. Importantly, planning obligations must meet three specific tests. In particular they must be:
  - a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
  - b) Directly related to the development; and
  - c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 3.5. These tests are set out as statutory tests in CIL regulation 122 and as policy tests in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 3.6. The District Council has been negotiating, securing and entering into S106 agreements for many years and has used this process to successfully deliver a raft of benefits to West Oxfordshire residents including new affordable housing, highway improvements, pedestrian and cycling routes, leisure and sports facilities, culture and art, primary health care provision and so on.
- 3.7. Set out below is an overview of S106 contributions which have been secured (i.e. formally agreed), collected, spent and allocated during 2020/21.

#### Section 106 contributions secured (formally agreed) in 2020/21

- 3.8. A total of £1,671,560.00 in financial contributions that will be due to West Oxfordshire District Council was secured through Section 106 agreements entered into in 2020/21. This sum is broken down in Table I, which sets out the location of each development and the type of provision/contribution made.
- 3.9. It is expected that the contributions listed below will come forward in a phased manner and it is important to note that the majority of the contributions will be

index-linked and therefore this total should not be taken to be an exact sum that will be received by the District Council.

- 3.10. There are also a number of non-monetary obligations which have been entered into through S106 Agreements signed in 2020/21, including on-site affordable housing provision and public open space. These are categorised and listed by location in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 1 – Section 106 funds secured through S106 agreements entered into in 2020/21**

Reference	Location	Type	Amount (£)
18/03319/OUT	The Driving Centre, Enstone Airfield, Enstone	Affordable Housing	1,250,000.00
18/03319/OUT	The Driving Centre, Enstone Airfield, Enstone	Middle Barton Community Bus	50,000.00
18/03319/OUT	The Driving Centre, Enstone Airfield, Enstone	Traffic Calming	200,000.00
18/03319/OUT	The Driving Centre, Enstone Airfield, Enstone	Environmental/Social Mitigation	N/A*
18/03403/FUL	Olivers Garage, 80 – 82 Main Road, Long Hanborough	Public Art	4,410.00
18/03403/FUL	Olivers Garage, 80 – 82 Main Road, Long Hanborough	Sport and Leisure	28,900.00
18/03403/FUL	Olivers Garage, 80 – 82 Main Road, Long Hanborough	Play and Recreation	20,450.00
19/03318/FUL	18 - 19 Market Place, Chipping Norton	Car Parking	110,000.00
20/01756/FUL	Eynsham Hall, North Leigh	Provision of planters	2,000.00
20/01933/FUL	Police Station, Banbury Road, Chipping Norton	Affordable Housing	5,800.00
			<b>1,671,560.00</b>

\* 5% of the excess of the annual income of the Museum from ticket sales over the annual expenditure of the Museum on running costs including the Shuttle Bus Service but excluding any such expenditure related to commercial activities (to be paid yearly)

**Table 2 – Affordable housing required from S106 planning obligations signed in 2020/21**

Reference	Location	Total Units
18/03403/FUL	Olivers Garage, 80 - 82 Main Road, Long Hanborough	4

**Table 3 – Non-monetary contributions from S106 planning obligations signed in 2020/21**

Reference	Location	Type
18/03319/OUT	The Driving Centre, Enstone Airfield, Enstone	Shuttle Bus
18/03319/OUT	The Driving Centre, Enstone Airfield, Enstone	Community Forum
18/03319/OUT	The Driving Centre, Enstone Airfield, Enstone	Car Park*
20/00991/FUL	Land North Of Gas Lane And, Ascott Road, Shipton Under Wychwood	Public Open Space

\* developer may also opt to pay a Car Park Contribution of £200,000 in lieu of delivering the car park

### Section 106 contributions collected in 2020/21

- 3.11. A total of £986,491.41 was collected by West Oxfordshire District Council through Section 106 planning obligations in 2020/21.
- 3.12. Of this total, the majority was collected towards sports, recreation and play facilities (£622,936) affordable housing (£164,563) public art (£61,652) and Kilkenny Lane Country Park (£58,478). A full breakdown of the contributions collected is provided in Table 4 below.

**Table 4 – Section 106 funds collected in 2020/21**

Reference	Location	Contribution for	Received (£)
08/1020/P/FP	Land Adj Elmhurst Way, Carterton	Kilkenny Lane Country Park Car Park	38,079.00
14/0091/P/OP	Land East Of Monahan Way, Carterton	Recycling	5,394.00
14/1234/P/OP	Land South Of Witney Road, Long Hanborough	Sports and Recreation	56,106.00
15/01550/OUT	Land North Of Cote Road, Cote Road, Aston	Traffic Calming	10,000.00
15/03128/OUT	Land South Of High Street, Milton Under Wychwood	Public Art	7,205.82
15/03128/OUT	Land South Of High Street, Milton Under Wychwood	Play and Recreation	32,096.86
15/03128/OUT	Land South Of High Street, Milton Under Wychwood	Sports and Recreation	42,697.45
15/03148/OUT	Land West Of Thornbury Road, Eynsham	Public Art	18,098.00
15/03797/OUT	Land South East Of Pinsley Farm, Main Road, Long Hanborough	Public Art	12,600.00
15/03797/OUT	Land South East Of Pinsley Farm, Main Road, Long Hanborough	Sport and Recreation Facilities	45,288.00
15/03797/OUT	Land South East Of Pinsley Farm, Main Road, Long Hanborough	Play Recreation and Activity Areas	33,368.28
15/04061/OUT	Land South Of Stanmore Crescent, Carterton	Leisure Facilities	81,235.00
15/04061/OUT	Land South Of Stanmore Crescent, Carterton	Town Centre Improvement	18,440.00
15/04061/OUT	Land South Of Stanmore Crescent, Carterton	Landscape Improvements	36,880.00
15/04061/OUT	Land South Of Stanmore Crescent, Carterton	Signage	6,147.00
16/01450/OUT	Land At Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Sports and Recreation	227,156.86
16/02851/OUT	Land South Of Milton Road, Shipton Under Wychwood	Sports and Recreation	27,840.00
16/02851/OUT	Land South Of Milton Road, Shipton Under Wychwood	Play Facilities	23,898.00
16/03415/OUT	Land East Of Mount Owen Road, Bampton	Public Art	21,182.14
17/01174/FUL	Land South Of Jubilee Lane, Jubilee Lane, Milton Under Wychwood	Affordable Housing	164,563.00
18/01517/FUL	Linden House, Kilkenny Lane, Brize Norton, Carterton	Public Art	2,567.00
18/01517/FUL	Linden House, Kilkenny Lane, Brize Norton, Carterton	Sports and Recreation	21,513.00
18/01517/FUL	Linden House, Kilkenny Lane, Brize Norton, Carterton	Play Facilities	17,380.00

18/01517/FUL	Linden House, Kilkenny Lane, Brize Norton, Carterton	Kilkenny Lane Country Park Trees	20,399.00
18/02597/FUL	Garden Centre, Park Road, North Leigh	Play Facilities	5,531.00
18/02597/FUL	Garden Centre, Park Road, North Leigh	Sport Facilities	8,826.00
20/01756/FUL	Eynsham Hall, North Leigh	Provision of planters	2,000.00
			<b>986,491.41</b>

### Section 106 funds spent in 2020/21

- 3.13. A total of £728,626.96 of funds collected from S106 planning obligations was spent in 2020/21.
- 3.14. The Council did not spend any funds collected from S106 planning obligations on repaying borrowed money.
- 3.15. The Council did not spend any funds collected from S106 planning obligations on monitoring the delivery of planning obligations.

**Table 5 – Section 106 funds spent in 2020/21**

Reference	Contribution for	Recipient	Amount (£)
12/0084/P/OP	West Witney Recreation Ground	Witney Town Council	259,349.00
12/0084/P/OP	Corn Exchange	Witney Town Council	103,740.00
12/1037/P/FP	Public Art Programme	Witney Community Hospital	404.05
13/1752/P/FP	Public Art (Temporary)	West Oxfordshire District Council (Community Albums)	2,720.00
14/01884/FUL	Public Art (Temporary)	West Oxfordshire District Council (Human Restoration Project Ltd)	7,975.00
14/01884/FUL	Public Art (Temporary)	West Oxfordshire District Council (Chipping Norton Theatre)	20,437.00
14/01884/FUL	Public Art (Temporary)	West Oxfordshire District Council (Ian Nolan Events)	1,500.00
14/02130/OUT	Play Facilities	Stonesfield Parish Council	3,403.00
14/02130/OUT	Public Art	Stonesfield Parish Council	7,785.00
14/1234/P/OP	Sports and Recreation	Hanborough Parish Council	27,020.00
15/01550/OUT	Cote Road Traffic Calming Measures	Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council	10,000.00
15/04061/OUT	Maintenance of Local Equipped Area for Play	Carterton Town Council	78,787.58
16/01353/OUT	Bus Service Improvements	Oxfordshire County Council	48,011.00
16/01353/OUT	Bus Stop Improvements	Oxfordshire County Council	10,539.00
16/01353/OUT	Play Facilities	Freeland Parish Council	7,755.00
16/02657/FUL	Parish Hall Refurbishment	Curbridge and Lew Parish Council	17,627.00
16/02851/OUT	Public Art	Shipton Under Wychwood Parish Council	5,876.33
17/00924/FUL	Education - Primary	Oxfordshire County Council	42,698.00
STC032	Maintenance of Open Spaces	West Oxfordshire District Council	73,000.00
			<b>728,626.96</b>

Section 106 money received by the Council but not spent in 2020/21

- 3.16. The CIL Regulations require local authorities to report on the total amount of money under any planning obligations that was received before the reported year but which has not been allocated by the authority, and the total amount of money under any planning obligations that was allocated but not spent during the reported year.
- 3.17. A total of £1,706,920.34 received under planning obligations was allocated for funding infrastructure but not spent during 2020/21.

**Table 6 – Allocated Section 106 funds**

Reference	Allocated to	Amount (£)
07/0696/P/FP	Temporary public art activities by Stanton Harcourt Primary School	535.00
07/1970/P/FP	Temporary public art programme at Windrush Place, Witney	2,894.24
12/0084/P/OP	Public art and a temporary public art programme led by West Oxfordshire DC	33,654.00
12/0084/P/OP	Public art features on site led by West Oxfordshire DC	70,086.00
13/1752/P/FP	Temporary public art and interpretation in Carterton provided by West Oxfordshire DC	47,280.00
14/0091/P/OP	Public art features and programme in village and Brize Meadow by Brize Norton Parish Council	30,694.98
14/01884/FUL	Temporary public art programmes for youth and community in Chipping Norton delivered by various organisations	35,681.00
16/00758/OUT	Public art features as part of sensory garden by Ducklington Parish Council	2,639.00
16/04230/FUL	Temporary public art programme led by the Theatre Chipping Norton	3,190.21
W2002/0665	Temporary public art in form of an artist's programme at Witney Community Hospital by Oxford Health Arts Partnership	3,409.56
CGU008	Marriott's Walk Play Area	6,334.50
13/0345/P/FP	Raleigh Crescent Play Area	75,000.00
14/1215/P/OP	West Witney Sports Ground	258,350.00
16/01450/OUT	3G Football Pitch	476,823.86
14/01884/FUL	Chipping Norton Leisure Centre	21,367.01
16/04230/FUL	Chipping Norton Leisure Centre	18,422.21
13/1752/P/FP	Toilets at Kilkenny Lane Country Park	11,133.00
18/01517/FUL	Kilkenny Lane Country Park Trees	20,399.00
Various	Car park at Kilkenny Lane Country Park	179,386.42
Various	Heylo Affordable Housing Scheme	409,640.35
		<b>1,706,920.34</b>

- 3.18. A total of £5,797,172.53 has been received through planning obligations before 1 April 2021, and has not yet been allocated by the District Council.
- 3.19. A breakdown per category is set out in Table 7 below. As and when decisions are made to allocate these various S106 contributions, this will be set out in future iterations of the IFS as per the information in Table 6 above.

**Table 7 – Non-allocated Section 106 funds**

<b>Contribution for</b>	<b>Available (£)</b>
Affordable Housing	2,188,503.73
Car Parking	251,563.77
Cemeteries	30,232.00
Community Facilities	488,986.87
Cycling	6,000.00
Education	10,147.00
Flood and Water Management	20,155.00
Green Infrastructure	483,383.20
Healthcare Facilities	29,166.00
Libraries	2,900.00
Public Art	158,495.64
Road Works/Improvements	17,647.00
Sports, Play and Leisure	1,732,145.32
Thames Valley Police	18,604.00
Town Centre Improvements	268,080.00
Waste/Recycling	91,163.00
	<b>5,797,172.53</b>

3.20. The District Council held a total of £1,490,105.59 in commuted sums for maintenance on 1 April 2021.

#### **4. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

- 4.1. CIL is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area to help fund supporting infrastructure. Whereas S106 planning obligations are specific to particular developments, CIL is a more general financial contribution, the receipts from which can be spent flexibly on new and enhanced infrastructure across the whole District. CIL can however only be charged where there is an approved CIL Charging Schedule in place.
- 4.2. In West Oxfordshire, the most recent draft CIL Charging Schedule was published for consultation in July 2020. Further information including a copy of the draft charging schedule and the consultation responses received are available on the Council's website<sup>3</sup>.
- 4.3. At a meeting of the District Council's Cabinet on 15 September 2021, it was agreed that further progress towards the submission and examination of the Council's CIL charging schedule would be deferred pending the publication of the Government's new Planning Bill, which is expected to make significant changes to the current system of developer contributions.
- 4.4. As the Planning Bill has now been delayed, Officers are continuing to monitor the situation in order to determine whether to proceed to submission and examination.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/community-infrastructure-levy/community-infrastructure-levy-examination/>

## 5. Infrastructure Funding Gap and Future Spending Priorities

- 5.1. As part of its CIL draft charging schedule consultation in July 2020, the Council published an updated [Infrastructure Funding Gap Analysis](#) presenting an assessment of the likely infrastructure funding gap<sup>4</sup> that exists in West Oxfordshire to meet identified needs.
- 5.2. The analysis identifies a total infrastructure funding gap of between £192.2m and £198m when taking account of expected costs and known sources of funding. However, this is considered to be a conservative estimate with the actual funding gap likely to be much higher.
- 5.3. This emphasises the importance of maximising available funding, including the use of Section 106 planning obligations subject to the relevant statutory tests and CIL, subject to potential national policy changes and implementation in West Oxfordshire.
- 5.4. In terms of future infrastructure spending priorities, these will be influenced by a number of factors including the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016) and any subsequent update and also where applicable, more locally specific evidence of infrastructure needs including the Eynsham Area IDP and Woodstock Community and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2019).
- 5.5. In considering infrastructure priorities emerging from these studies the Council will have regard to relevant changes in circumstance (e.g. projects since having been completed, or additional/alternative sources of funding having been identified etc.) as well as the respective degree of importance of each infrastructure item in supporting planned growth.
- 5.6. Future funding will be drawn from a variety of sources including Section 106 legal agreements (planning obligations), CIL (depending on further progress towards adoption) and other potential sources of funding where applicable and available (e.g. from Central Government).
- 5.7. Further information on the District Council's future spending priorities is set out in the draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was published for consultation in December 2020.
- 5.8. The draft SPD provides information on what contributions will be sought from new development in West Oxfordshire and from what source i.e. Section 106 and/or CIL.

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<sup>4</sup> i.e. The shortfall in funding available to meet identified infrastructure requirements when the total cost (where known) is set against known or likely available funding.

5.9. To summarise, the draft SPD proposes that S106 agreements will continue to be sought in respect of the following matters:

- Affordable housing
- Custom/self-build housing (5% provision on sites of 100 or more homes)
- Education
- Highways and access improvements
- Public transport
- Healthy and active travel
- Travel plans
- Indoor sports and leisure
- Outdoor sports
- Play areas
- Allotments and other community growing space
- Other green space
- Public rights of way
- Biodiversity mitigation and enhancement
- Air quality
- Flood risk, water management and sustainable drainage
- Public Realm and Public Art
- Community facilities
- Burial space
- Community Employment Plans (CEPs)

5.10 Subject to the implementation of CIL in West Oxfordshire, CIL receipts will be used to supplement any funding gaps that may exist in respect of the above matters and will also, more specifically be used to help fund the following:

- Community services
- Health care
- Fire and rescue
- Policing/community safety
- Ambulance service

 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>Cabinet: Wednesday 15 December 2021</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>Agenda Item No. 9</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2020-2021</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Councillor Jeff Haine, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning Email: <a href="mailto:jeff.haine@westoxon.gov.uk">jeff.haine@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager Tel: 01993 861686 Email: <a href="mailto:Chris.Hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk">Chris.Hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To consider the Council's Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report for 2020-2021.</p>
<p>Annex</p>	<p>Annex A – Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2020-2021</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the content of the Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report be noted.</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>The Annual Monitoring Report is purposefully structured around the six main themes of the Council Plan (2020 – 2024).</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>None.</p>

## **I. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. Members will be aware that under current legislation, the Council is required to prepare a monitoring report which provides an update on the following matters:
- Progress of the Local Plan and any other related documents against agreed timetables;
  - Implementation of Local Plan policies;
  - Neighbourhood Planning;
  - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where this has been introduced; and
  - How the Council has fulfilled its obligations under the Duty to Co-Operate.
- 1.2. The monitoring report must be made available on the Council's website, at its main offices and any other appropriate locations.
- 1.3. Attached at Annex A is a copy of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which covers the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021. A brief overview of the main points arising is provided below.

## **2. AMR 2020-2021 - OVERVIEW**

- 2.1. The AMR is structured in line with the six main themes of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan (2020 – 2024).
- 2.2. Under each theme, the AMR provides relevant contextual/background information before reporting what has happened during the monitoring period 2020-2021.
- 2.3. The AMR is intended to complement the Annual Statement on the West Oxfordshire Council Plan.
- 2.4. Set out below is a brief summary overview for each theme.
- Climate Action**
- 2.5. The AMR demonstrates the results of the Council's carbon emission calculations, reporting that carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) emissions have decreased by 24% between 2019-20 and 2020-2021.
- 2.6. It should be noted that the decrease in carbon emissions can be attributed in part to the Covid-19 pandemic. The significant shift in the number of staff working from home is considered to be the reason for electricity usage in Council offices falling by 22% and business travel falling by 68%. The reduced activity of the District Council's leisure centres has also contributed to a significant reduction in gas and electricity consumption at these sites.
- 2.7. There has been a small decrease in the number of priority species but an increase in overall priority habitat.
- 2.8. A notable decrease in average levels of Nitrogen dioxide at both the Bridge Street, Witney AQMA and Horsefair, Chipping Norton AQMA is considered a consequence of reduced travel patterns arising from the pandemic Lockdowns. Nitrogen dioxide levels in Bridge Street, Witney continue to exceed the national air quality objective.
- 2.9. A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) mechanism was put into operation from April 2020, requiring major (and some minor) applications to demonstrate development proposals secure a positive contribution to biodiversity. In the first year of operation 15 applications were submitted with BNG calculations. Of these applications 3 secured BNG onsite and 2 offsite. The other 10 are either pending or were refused.

### **Healthy Towns and Villages**

- 2.10. The AMR includes a range of contextual information demonstrating that on the whole, West Oxfordshire performs better than, or similar to the national average on most indicators for health and wellbeing.
- 2.11. During 2020/21 the leisure centres were opened only for approximately 5 months (under Covid-19 protocols with increased space, reduced numbers, bubbles etc.) due to the 3 National Lockdowns in April, November, and January. This led to a total attendance at the District's main leisure centres (Windrush, Chipping Norton, Carterton, and Bartholomew) of 111,622 visits which equates to 12% of the number of centre visits when compared to 2019/20.
- 2.12. Consultants were appointed to develop a Built Leisure Facilities Strategy / Accessing Need and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) in March 2020 and significant progress towards this has been made during this AMR period. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be adopted by the Council in early 2022.

### **A Vibrant District Economy**

- 2.13. The AMR demonstrates that West Oxfordshire has a strong and diverse economy and lower than average unemployment rates. Nevertheless, the Covid-19 pandemic and the actions taken to contain it had a significant impact on the local economy, businesses, households and outlook of the district's towns and villages.
- 2.14. In June 2019, the unemployment claimant count was 730 and exactly a year later, the unemployment claimant count peaked at 2,500.
- 2.15. In October 2020, the council published the West Oxfordshire Covid-19 Recovery Plan with aims to guide resource investment across four themes; Economy, Climate and Council, Service Delivery and Finance.
- 2.16. In 2019, there were 57,200 employees, 6,100 more than in 2018, with the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) identifying specific opportunities for new strategic employment growth at the Garden Village and at Carterton.
- 2.17. During the monitoring year, 8,320m<sup>2</sup> (6,625m<sup>2</sup> net) employment floorspace was permitted. 466m<sup>2</sup> employment floorspace was lost as a result of permitted changes of use to residential.
- 2.18. The Council's contract with Gigaclear to bring fibre access to 4,788 of properties across West Oxfordshire was successfully fulfilled shortly after the AMR period in June 2021.
- 2.19. In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the District Council has paid a total of £39,595,446 in grants to local businesses.
- 2.20. The Council worked to implement measures to support the safe reopening of the district's high streets. These included pavement widening, pedestrianisation, and changes to licensing, helping businesses to operate in compliance with Government directives.

### **Strong Local Communities**

- 2.21. The AMR identifies that the proportion of people 'satisfied with their neighbourhood' (90.2%) is higher than the Oxfordshire average (86.5%) and that on the whole, the District remains largely within the least deprived local authority areas in the country.
- 2.22. In the year 2020/21, four further assets were added to the West Oxfordshire List of Assets of Community Value (ACV). These are: Public open space adjacent to Riely Close, Long Hanborough; Rose & Crown Public House, Shilton; The White Horse Public House, Stonesfield; and Cassington Allotments, Cassington.

- 2.23. In addition, nearly £1m was collected by West Oxfordshire District Council through Section 106 planning obligations in 2020/21, the majority (c. £600k) was collected towards sports, recreation and play facilities.
- 2.24. The Council awarded a total of £363,793.53 in grant funding in 2020/21, roughly half and half awarded by way of Community Revenue Grants and Community Facilities Grants respectively.

### **Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population**

- 2.25. The AMR shows that there are around 49,000 households in West Oxfordshire, with around 2,375 households on the affordable housing waiting list as of 31 March 2021.
- 2.26. Since 2011, there have been 5,305 new homes completed, an average of just over 500 per year.
- 2.27. During the monitoring year, 868 new homes were completed, of which 352 were on allocated sites with the total number of affordable homes completed being 335.
- 2.28. 223 dwellings were granted planning permission. The breakdown of residential permissions by property size revealed a higher proportion of 1, 2 and 4+ bedroom properties compared to the Local Plan's indicative housing mix guidelines.

### **Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance**

- 2.29. The AMR demonstrates that the Council remains committed to delivering excellent services to its local communities with just under 80% of planning applications having been determined within target timescales over the last 5 years and over 1,000 building control applications processed each year.
- 2.30. Within the monitoring year, good progress has been made in respect of the Salt Cross Garden Village AAP along with a Developer Contributions supplementary planning document (SPD) and an Affordable Housing SPD.
- 2.31. In respect of the Duty to Co-Operate, the District Council has continued to actively engage with the other Oxfordshire Authorities and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on various spatial planning and infrastructure matters including the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and delivery of all other components of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. The AMR raises no specific financial implications.

## **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. Preparation of the AMR is a legal requirement under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

## **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. The AMR raises no significant risks.

## **6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. The AMR reports on a number of climate action related issues in accordance with the Council Plan 2020 – 2024.

## **7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1. None.

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1. None.

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Annual Monitoring Report

## 2020 - 2021

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## Introduction

This is the West Oxfordshire District Council Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

The AMR has been prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and provides information on the following:

- Progress of the Local Plan and any other related documents against agreed timetables;
- Implementation of Local Plan policies;
- Neighbourhood Planning;
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where this has been introduced; and
- How the Council has fulfilled its obligations under the Duty to Co-Operate.

The structure of the AMR is based on the six main themes of the [West Oxfordshire Council Plan](#) (2020 – 2024) which are as follows:

- 1. Climate Action** - Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity.
- 2. Healthy Towns and Villages** - Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone.
- 3. A Vibrant District Economy** - Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy.
- 4. Strong Local Communities** - Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities.
- 5. Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population** – Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for the wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire.
- 6. Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance** – Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council.

There is a considerable overlap between the Council Plan themes outlined above and the Core Objectives of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. Relevant Core Objectives from the Local Plan are therefore highlighted throughout the AMR as appropriate.

The AMR sets out for each theme an outline of the current district context in terms of background/contextual information, before considering what has happened during the monitoring period 2020/21.

The AMR is complemented by the [Annual Statement on the West Oxfordshire Council Plan](#) which provides a narrative on progress against the actions specified under each of the

Council Plan priorities. The set of actions specified in the Council Plan, together with the Local Plan as the spatial expression of these, highlights the extent of the ambition that West Oxfordshire District Council has for the area, its environment and its resident and business communities.

## I. Climate Action

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

### Background Context

- In recognition of the urgency needed to face the challenge of climate change, West Oxfordshire District Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency, committing to taking local action and leading the district to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- West Oxfordshire is a largely rural district with 34% of its land covered by the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The ONS 2020 mid-year estimate of the district's population is 111,758<sup>1</sup> an increase of 1,958 people from the previous year. On the whole, the population is relatively sparse at approximately 155 persons per square kilometre.
- Climate action is needed to be taken by all who live, work and visit West Oxfordshire and therefore, although this monitoring report section focuses in the main on the District Council's actions and achievements, it also includes some facts and figures on the important work led by others working towards the same goal, at the district / county or more local geographies.
- Previous annual reports have shown a positive, yet gradual, decline in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions across the district. Between 2005 and 2019 total carbon emissions have fallen from 785.6 to 536.4 (kt CO<sub>2</sub>), as broken down by source of emission in figure 1. Industry and commercial emissions saw the biggest decrease in 2019, falling 16% from the previous year.

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<sup>1</sup> [ONS mid-2020 population estimates release](#)

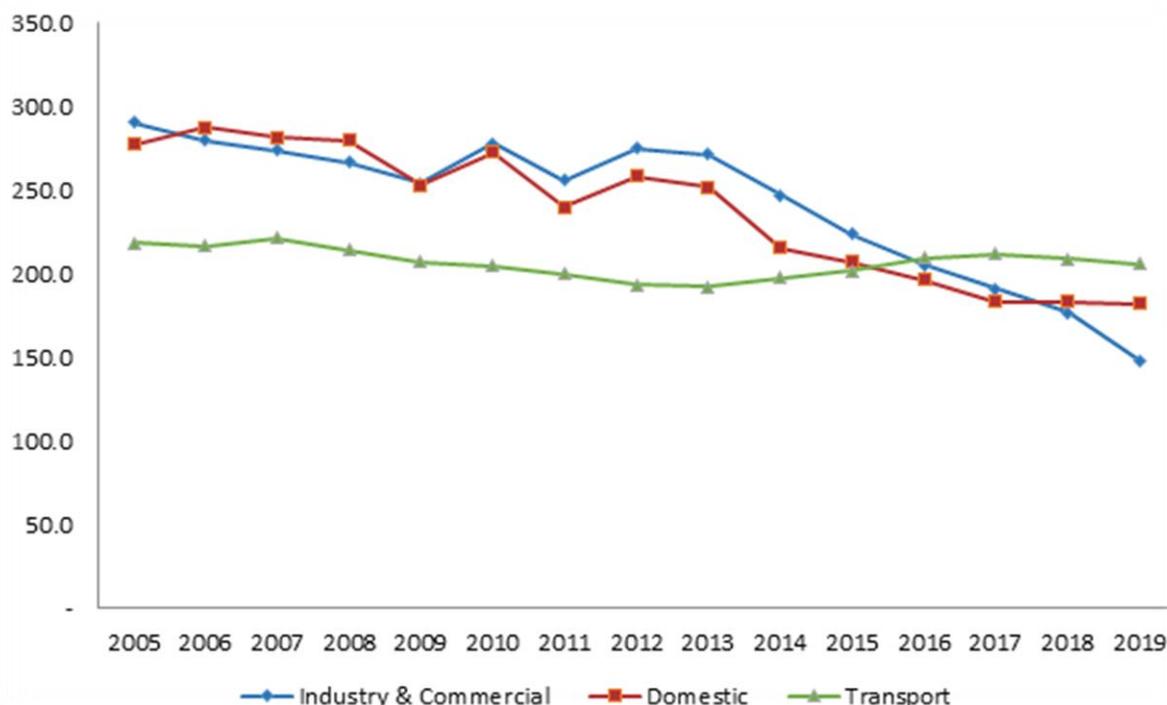


Figure 1: West Oxfordshire's Total kt CO2 Emissions within LA Scope of Influence, By Sector (BEIS)

- Renewable energy generation is becoming increasingly commonplace in the effort to reduce dependency on fossil fuels. As of 2019, there were 2,894 renewable energy sites in the District, 99% of which were Photovoltaics.
- As of October 2021, DfT [data](#) confirms that there were 20 public electric vehicle charging devices available in West Oxfordshire, the District being within the 20<sup>th</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup> percentile of UK local authority areas in terms of total provision.
- West Oxfordshire is covered by 6,584.4 hectares of woodland, which is 9.22% of the total land mass of the District. Woodland cover is defined as being areas of trees that are of at least 0.5ha, wider than 20 metres with a minimum of 20% canopy cover or the ability to achieve it, as presented by [Office of National Statistics Woodland Mapping](#).
- **West Oxfordshire's ecological network** is made up of sites designated for their international, national and local importance, including:

- One international site: a small area of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Two National Nature Reserves (Wychwood NNR and Chimney Meadows NNR)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The state of NNRs are measured by Bucks, Berks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)

- 28 SSSIs wholly or partly in West Oxfordshire, representing approximately 0.02% of the land area. 28.2% of the total SSSI area within the district is in favourable condition. The method used to assess SSSI's has changed in the monitoring year. SSSI's are now split into 'units' of which there are 54 in the District.<sup>3</sup>
- 104 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), totalling 1,601 hectares. The area of these LWS has increased by 30 hectares since the last monitoring year with the new designation of Rushey Common and Tar Lakes as a new Local Wildlife Site.
- 16 Geological Sites, the combined area of which is 333.32 hectares
- 14 Conservation Target Areas (CTAs)
- Part the Cotswolds Valleys Nature Improvement Area (NIA) extends into West Oxfordshire, largely covering the valley areas of the Evenlode and Windrush rivers.

- The map at Figure 3 shows the levels of light pollution in West Oxfordshire. The darker shades of red show the areas which shine the most/brightest light into the night sky and the darker blue shades show the areas which have the lowest levels of light shining into the night sky.

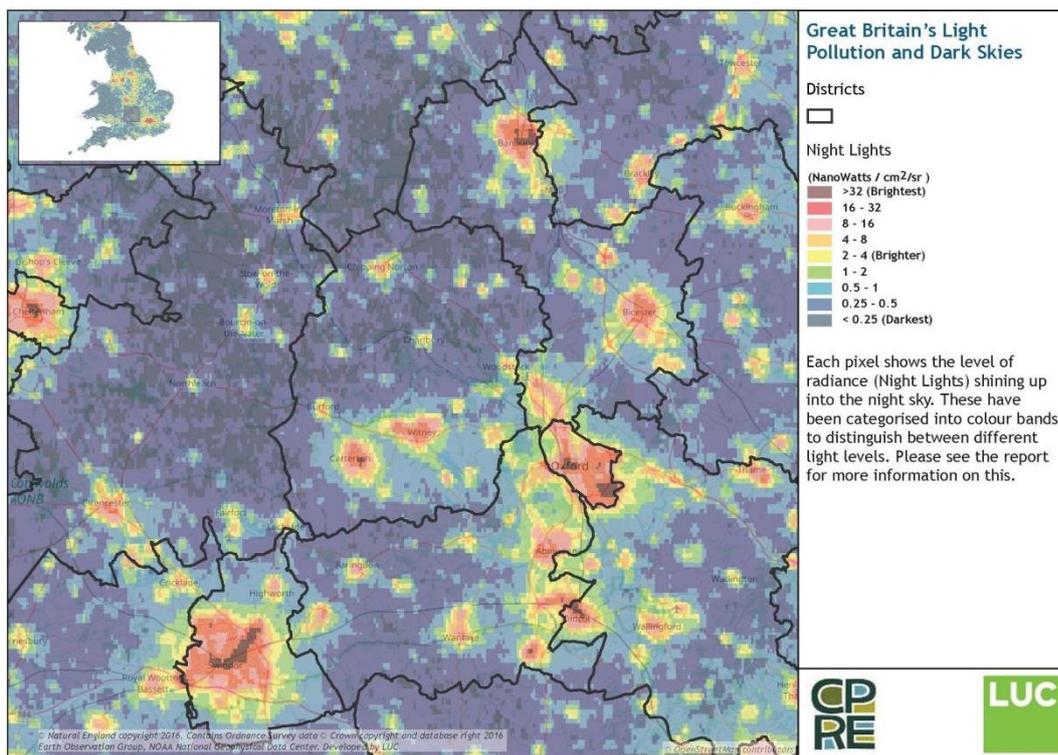


Figure 2: Light pollution and Dark Skies in West Oxfordshire

- The map shows that while high light pollution levels are recorded in Witney and Carterton and in particular the skies above RAF Brize Norton are among the

<sup>3</sup> Thames Valley Environment Records Centre (TVERC) Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report 2019-2020

brightest in the country, a large proportion of the most rural areas in the District have some of the darkest skies and lowest levels of light pollution.

- There is one Dark Sky Discovery Site in the district, located at the Rollright Stones Ancient Monument near Chipping Norton.
- There are two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in the district, at Bridge Street in Witney and at Horsefair in Chipping Norton, both AQMA having been declared in 2005 and both having high levels of Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) pollutants derived from vehicular traffic.
- Several rivers flow through West Oxfordshire providing important corridors for biodiversity, opportunities for recreation and forming part of the setting of many towns and villages. However they also present a flood risk, particularly:
  - High risk flood zone of the River Windrush, intersected by several developed areas in Witney. Much of the land adjacent to the Windrush is, however, rural agricultural.
  - Significant areas of functional flood plain in the south of the Eynsham-Woodstock sub-area associated with the confluence of the River Windrush and the River Thames
  - Large areas of River Thames functional flood plain in the south of the Carterton Sub-area, however again this land is largely rural and agricultural in nature.
  - Functional Floodplain associated with the River Evenlode at Shipton-under-Wychwood and its tributaries flowing from Milton-under-Wychwood.
- Flood defences in West Oxfordshire offer a standard of protection ranging from 2 to 100 years. Defences designed to a 100 year standard are found along the Upper Thames and are maintained by the Environment Agency, such defences include flood walls, embankments and stone revetments. Many of the other fluvial defences across the District have a design standard less than 50 years. Flood defences are mapped in Appendix B, figures 2A-F of the [West Oxfordshire Level 1 SFRA Update Report](#), Nov 2016.
- Water quality is measured on a river catchment scale and West Oxfordshire falls within two catchment areas: the Evenlode and the Windrush. The September 2020 Catchment Reports present data for both:
  - Evenlode Catchment: All 18 water bodies in this catchment failed their chemical status. In terms of ecological quality 6 were rated poor and 12 were rated moderate.
  - Windrush Catchment: All 19 water bodies in this catchment failed their chemical status. In terms of ecological quality 2 were good, 9 were moderate, 6 were poor and 2 were bad.
- There are currently 9 “At Risk” sites in West Oxfordshire included in Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register, including 2 places of worship and 7 archaeological sites. Although there was no change in the last year in the overall number of “At Risk” sites, the number of sites in the district has declined over the last eight years.

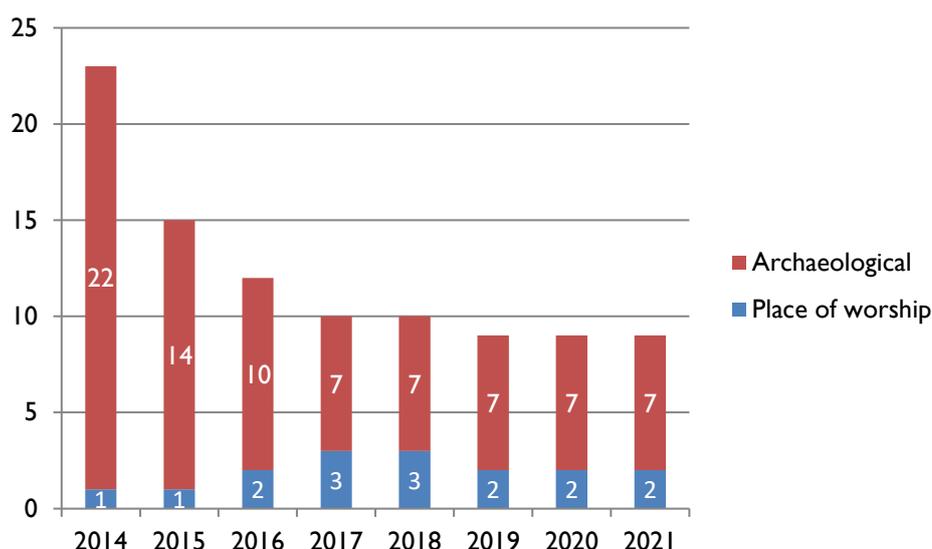


Figure 3: No. of sites on the Heritage at Risk Register from 2014 to 2021

- The Local Plan Core Objectives for protecting and enhancing our environment and reducing the impact from climate change are as follows:

- CO14** Conserve and enhance the character and significance of West Oxfordshire’s high quality natural, historic and cultural environment – including its geodiversity, landscape, biodiversity, heritage and arts – recognising and promoting their wider contribution to people’s quality of life and social and economic well-being both within the District and beyond.
- CO15** Contribute to reducing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.
- CO16** Enable improvements in water and air quality.
- CO17** Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

### What’s happened in 2020/21?

- The District Council has calculated and audited its own carbon emissions for the 2020/21 period using the BEIS UK Government carbon emissions conversion factors (June 2021). The total reported CO<sub>2</sub>e (carbon dioxide equivalent emissions) have decreased between 2019/20 to 2020/21 by 712 tonnes, which is a percentage decrease of 24%.
- The fall in CO<sub>2</sub>e between 2019/20 and 2020/21 can be attributed in part to the COVID-19 pandemic. The significant shift in the number of staff working from home is considered to be the reason for electricity usage in Council offices falling by 22% and business travel falling by 68%. The reduced activity of the District Council’s

leisure centres has also contributed to a significant reduction in gas and electricity consumption at these sites.

- A breakdown of the Carbon Account, by Scope and Location respectively, is provided at appendix I.
- No assessments of the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) were undertaken by Natural England in the monitoring year 2020/2021.
- As reported by Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre (TVERC), in West Oxfordshire from 2020 to 2021, there was:
  - A small decrease in the number of priority species from 101 (2020) to 100 (2021)
  - A small increase in overall priority habitat from 4986ha (2020) to 4993ha (2021)<sup>4</sup>
  - 301 water vole surveys were undertaken in 2020 with 22 recording positive signs. This is a higher proportion of positive recordings than last year.
- Oxfordshire's Nature Recovery Network will need a doubling of land managed for wildlife by 2050. Nature continues to face an uncertain future, with many birds, butterflies, flowers and other wildlife disappearing from Oxfordshire's countryside at an alarming rate. The District Council has teamed up with experts from around the county to develop a [Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire](#). A first draft of a Nature Recovery Network Map has been produced to identify places where wildlife can be helped to return. The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 provides an opportunity to use the Nature Recovery Network Map to help plan for nature's recovery at a county-wide level and to set the framework for future Local Plans, including the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2040.
- A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) mechanism was put into operation from April 2020, requiring major (and some minor) applications to demonstrate development proposals secure a positive contribution to biodiversity. In the first year of operation, 15 applications were submitted with BNG calculations. Of these applications 3 secured BNG onsite and 2 offsite. The other 10 are either pending or were refused.
- No Electric Vehicle Charging Points were installed on Council owned land in 2020/21.
- One standalone renewable energy scheme was permitted in 2020/21, an installation of a Net Zero Carbon project comprising Photo Voltaic solar array (PV Array), Battery Electrical Storage System (BESS), connecting cables, substation, heat pump, water source heat collector pipework, connecting pipes, removal of substation in Palace undercroft and associated works at Land Between Woodstock Sewage Works And B4027, Woodstock. It should be noted however that the majority of small scale energy schemes, especially solar PV schemes, benefit from permitted

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<sup>4</sup> changes most attributable to new information such as confirmation of boundaries or habitat types rather than the creation or loss of habitat

development rights and do not require planning permission. It is not possible to identify and record these installations.

- The latest report on air quality in the District (June 2021) indicates concentrations of airborne pollution is above the national objective levels at both of the District's statutory Air Quality Management Areas. This year annual average levels of Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) are 37.9 ug/m<sup>3</sup> at Horsefair, Chipping Norton and 36.8 ug/m<sup>3</sup> at Bridge Street Witney, compared to last years recordings of just under 42 ug/m<sup>3</sup> this year at the Horsefair monitoring point, and 47 ug/m<sup>3</sup> experienced during 2018. Nitrogen dioxide levels in Bridge Street, Witney continue to exceed the national air quality objective. Although this represents a notable decrease in comparison to previous years (see Figure 4 for 2019 - 2020 comparative NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at Witney, Bridge Street) this is a consequence of reduced travel patterns arising from the pandemic Lockdowns. A comparison of the 2020 data with that of 2019 (our last full year before Covid-19) shows that recovery in NO<sub>2</sub> levels mirrors the relaxation of Covid restrictions and consequent increasing travel patterns. The 2020 data must not be taken as evidence of a significant and sustained emissions reduction in either Witney or Chipping Norton Air Quality Management Areas.
- Areas within West Oxfordshire which don't meet National Air Quality Standards have been declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Current Air Quality Action plans for Bridge Street, Witney and Horsefair and High Street, Chipping Norton are currently being updated and will identify the Nitrogen Dioxide source how to reduce concentrations of air pollutants to below National Air Quality Standards.



Figure 4: Bridge St, Witney Relative NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations 2019 and 2020

- No Conservation Area Appraisals were carried out in 2020/21 but there remains one appraisal in progress, Woodstock, work on which has paused.

- There were no heritage assets added to / removed from the “at risk” register in 2020/21.

## 2. Healthy Towns and Villages

*Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone*

### Background Context

- When assessed against the indicators for health and wellbeing from the Oxfordshire-wide Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2020)<sup>5</sup>, West Oxfordshire on the whole, performs better than, or similar to the national average on most indicators.
- The Coronavirus pandemic started immediately prior to this AMR period in late March 2020. Oxfordshire County Council's Covid-19 Dashboard recorded a weekly rate of Covid-19 cases per 100,000 of:
  - 36 on 1st April 2020
  - a peak of 483 on 4th January 2021
  - 41 on 31st March 2021
- One of the key indicators for health and wellbeing is life expectancy. Both female life expectancy in West Oxfordshire (84.9) and male life expectancy in the district (81.9) is higher than life expectancy nationally (83.5 and 79.6 respectively).
- Primary and Secondary healthcare provided across some 16 local GP practices in addition to the Witney Community Hospital and the War Memorial Community Hospital in Chipping Norton.
- The annual [Sport England Active Lives Survey](#) reported that 65-69% of the District's population are physically active, meaning they undertake 150 minutes weekly exercise.
- The updated (May 2020) [Loughborough University and End Child Poverty survey](#) presents the total number of children under 16 in households with incomes on net housing costs that are below 60% of the median (based on DWP/HMRC local indicators combined with information about housing costs at the local level to estimate poverty rates after housing costs), as a metric of poverty. It indicates that 20% (4058) of children in West Oxfordshire are therefore deemed to be living in poverty.
- Using a [single index for measuring levels of mental health need](#), the district's population has a poorer level of mental health than across Oxfordshire, however, national averages for need of mental health treatment remain higher than district and county levels.

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<sup>5</sup>9 Provided by Oxfordshire County Council, available at: <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/joint-strategic-needs-assessment>

- The Local Plan Core Objectives for strong market towns and villages are as follows:

<b>CO1</b>	Enable new development, services and facilities of an appropriate scale and type in locations which will help improve the quality of life of local communities and where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be minimised
<b>CO2</b>	Ensure that new developments are suitably located and well designed to protect and enhance the individual form, character and identity of our towns and villages as well as contributing to the quality of life in West Oxfordshire.
<b>CO3</b>	Promote safe, vibrant and prosperous town and village centres and resist proposals that would damage their vitality and viability or adversely affect measures to improve those centres.

### What's happened in 2020/21?

- 191m<sup>2</sup> additional floor space for healthcare was permitted in the 2020/21 period, relating to changes of use to dental practices in Carterton and Curbridge.
- At least 192m<sup>2</sup> additional leisure floor space was permitted in the 2020/21 period as set out below. The loss of 91m<sup>2</sup> gym floor space was permitted as part of a change of use scheme at Wesley Walk, Witney.

Parish	Description	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Filkins and Broughton Poggs	Change of use of land from agricultural to class D2 use (Assembly and Leisure) and erection of building for outdoor wedding ceremonies together with associated landscaping.	16
Curbridge	Alterations to include erection of single and two storey extensions to provide enlarged spa, changing room and gym facilities.	176
Shilton	Conversion of agricultural barn to model aviation clubhouse - reception and rest/tea room, model aircraft workshop and storage area. (Retrospective)	Area unknown

- Consultants were appointed to develop a Built Leisure Facilities Strategy / Accessing Need and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) in March 2020 and significant progress towards this has been made during this AMR period. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be adopted by Council in early 2022.

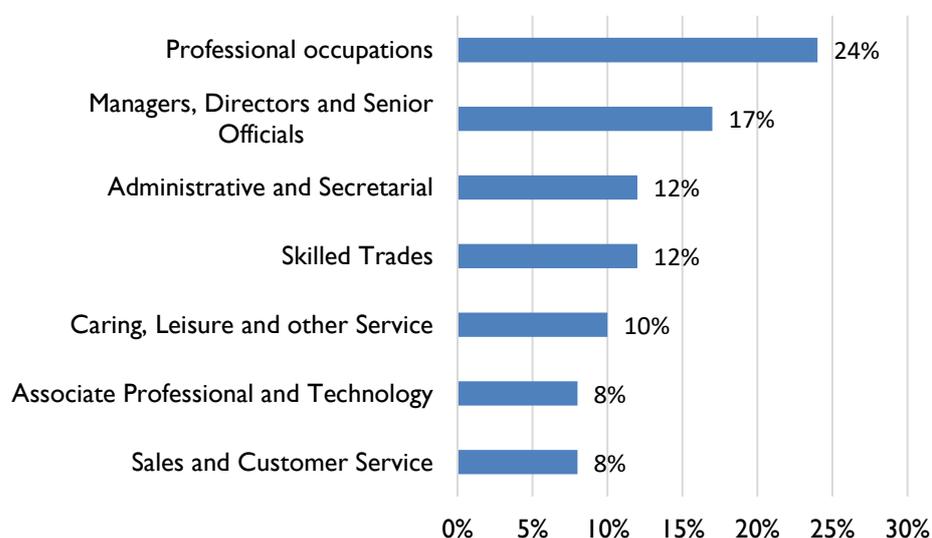
- During 2020/21 the leisure centres were opened only for approximately 5 months (under Covid-19 protocols with increased space, reduced numbers, bubbles etc.) due to the 3 National Lockdowns in April, November, and January. This led to a total attendance at the District's main leisure centres (Windrush, Chipping Norton, Carterton, and Bartholomew) of 111,622 visits which equates to 12% of the number of centre visits when compared to 2019/20.
- Since re-opening in April 2021 a total of 126,039 visits were recorded in Q1 of 2021/22 which whilst indicating a strong return in usage rates in comparison to the previous year, is still approximately 40% behind the usage figures of Q1 2019 - 2020.

### 3. A Vibrant District Economy

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

#### Background Context

- West Oxfordshire has a strong and diverse economy and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country.
- According to the latest ONS experimental estimates of balanced regional gross value added (GVA), GVA in West Oxfordshire totalled 3.2bn (£29,269 per head) in 2016.
- In 2020, West Oxfordshire had approximately 52,600 employees a decrease of around 8% from 2019.
- According to the ONS, in 2019/20, 82.3% of individuals aged 16-64 in West Oxfordshire were economically active, lower than across the south east (86.9%) but higher when compared to the national figure (79.1%).
- As of 2019, of those who were in employment, almost a quarter were in professional occupations (see figure 5).



*Figure 5: West Oxfordshire workforce by occupation*

- Between 2018 and 2020, median earnings in West Oxfordshire decreased from £653.8 a week to £626 a week, previously having been higher than the south east average of £614.90 in 2018 and nationally (£570.50 in 2018), but becoming lower than the average across the region (£629 in 2020) yet still higher than national average (£587.40 in 2020).

- In terms of job growth potential, [the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village employment study](#) suggests that between 2018 and 2031 West Oxfordshire will see an increase of approximately 10,600 jobs. The projections assume that most of the growth will be driven by sectors such as Residential Care & Social Work, Financial and Business Services as well as Computing and ICT industries (see Figure 6). It is important to acknowledge that these projections provide only one view on how the District may grow in the future.



Figure 6: West Oxfordshire Job Growth Forecasts by Sector (2018 to 2031)

- Launched in September 2019, the [Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy \(OxLIS\)](#)<sup>6</sup> responds to the UK Industrial Strategy which aims to increase growth and productivity across the country and create more prosperous communities. The OxLIS presents a long-term framework against which private and public sector investment decisions can be assessed and there are a number of specific opportunities for West Oxfordshire, including:
  - The West Oxfordshire Science Park (part of the proposed Garden Village) and the Carterton & RAF Brize Norton Industrial Hub identified within a proposed network of global hubs and international clusters.
  - Involvement in the establishment of a Data and Mobility Living Lab

<sup>6</sup> Available at: <https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/lis>

- Figure 7 provides an overview of the businesses by employment size in West Oxfordshire. As it can be seen, approximately 86% are micro businesses, and this figure is slightly higher when compared to county and nation. In contrast, West Oxfordshire has roughly 7% of businesses employing 20 or more people, a lower proportion than nationally and county-wide. In 2019, there were 20 businesses employing over 250 people, including Owen Mumford, Siemens and Renault FI.

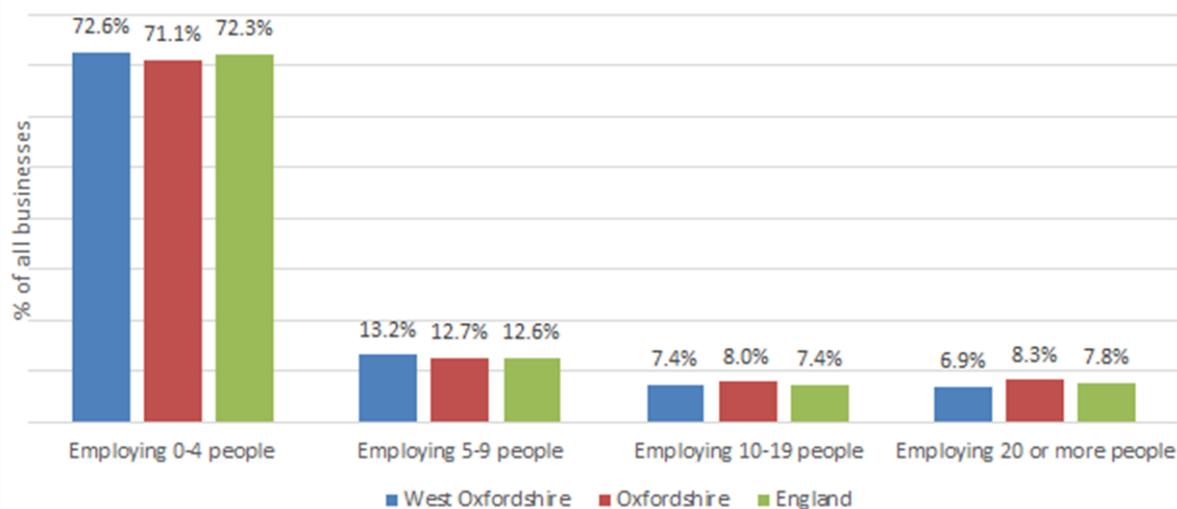


Figure 7: Business size by employees in West Oxfordshire (ONS 2020)

- In West Oxfordshire, enterprises have an average of 1.1 local units, lower than the national average.
- The 2015 [West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot](#) provides the most up to date detailed account of the **key employment locations** across the district. A high-level assessment of these key sites was undertaken in terms of their location, utility and quality (see figure 8). Sites in Carterton, Witney and Eynsham scored particularly well. Further, at the time of the last Census (2011), 18% of employed residents in West Oxfordshire worked mainly at or from home, which had seen an upward trend. The coronavirus pandemic has increased levels of homeworking, however locally specific data is not yet available.

Centre	Sites	Location	Utility	Quality	Total
Carterton	Carterton South Industrial Estate	0	-1	-1	-2
	Ventura Park	1	1	1	3
	West Oxfordshire Business Park	1	1	1	3
Chipping Norton	Elmsfield Industrial Estate, Primsdown Industrial Estate, Station Road Industrial Estate, Worcester Road Industrial Estate	0	1	0	1
	Cromwell Park	1	1	1	3
	Oasis Business Park	1	1	1	3
Eynsham	Elm Place	1	1	1	3
	Oakfields Industrial Estate	1	1	1	3
	Old Station Way	1	1	1	3

<b>Long Hanborough</b>	Hanborough Business Park	1	0	0	1
	Blenheim Office Park	1	1	1	3
<b>Stanton Harcourt</b>	Lakeside Industrial Estate	1	1	1	3
	Stanton Harcourt Industrial Estate	1	1	1	3
<b>Witney</b>	Bromag Industrial Park	0	1	0	1
	De Havilland Way	1	1	1	3
	Eagle Industrial Estate	-1	1	0	0
	Newland Industrial Estate	-1	0	0	-1
	Range Road	1	1	1	3
	Station Lane	0	1	0	1
	Windrush Industrial Park	1	1	1	3
	Network Point	1	1	1	3
	Compton Hay, Des Roches Square, Meadow Court, Spinners Yard, Thorney Leys, Waterside Court, Witney Office Village	1	1	1	3
<b>Remote</b>	Blenheim Palace Sawmill, Clanfield Workshops, Crawley Mill	1	1	1	3
	Enstone Business Park	1	1	0	2
	Langston Priory, Threshers Yard, Mount Manor	1	1	1	3
	Southill Business Park	0	1	1	2
	Groves Timber Yard	-1	-1	-1	-3
	Minster Lovell	-1	-1	-1	-3
	Wroslyn Road	-1	-1	-1	-3

*Figure 8: Key employment site assessment (2015 West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot)*

- The Local Plan Core Objectives for sustainable economic growth are as follows:

**CO7** To support sustainable economic growth which adds value to the local economy, improves the balance between housing and local jobs, provides a diversity of local employment opportunities, capitalises on economic growth in adjoining areas, improves local skills and work readiness, removes potential barriers to investment and provides flexibility to adapt to changing economic needs.

**CO8** To enable a prosperous and sustainable tourism economy

### What's happened in 2020/21?

- The Covid-19 pandemic and the actions taken to contain it had a significant impact on the local economy, businesses, households and outlook of the district's towns and villages.
- To see the impact of Covid-19 on the workforce, unemployment claimant provides a different perspective. In June 2019, the unemployment claimant count was 730 and exactly a year later, the unemployment claimant count peaked at 2,500 (see figure 8).

Although it is important to note that these figures will have been influenced by the furlough scheme.



Figure 9: Unemployment claimant pre and during Covid-19 in West Oxfordshire (ONS 2020)

- In October 2020, the council published the West Oxfordshire Covid-19 Recovery Plan. This local strategy guides resource investment for four Covid-19 recovery themes, Economy, Community, Climate and Council, Service Delivery and Finance. The Economy Covid-19 Recovery aims include:
  - To support the recovery of the visitor economy – including, repurposing the sector for the domestic market and driving delivery of attractions including The Mullin Automotive Park and redevelopment of Eynsham Hall.
  - To work in partnership with others (including the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership) ensure that business support is available to all stages and sectors of business, and that to provide skills training opportunities which match the requirements of the local job market.
  - To support the recovery and longer-term vitality and viability of the market towns.
  - To pursue opportunities to deliver on the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy, particularly in relation to the Garden Village Science Park and potential Carterton Technology Hub.
  
- In February 2021 the OxLEP published The Oxfordshire’s Economic Recovery Plan. This County level strategy provides a well-supported and flexible economic route map for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and builds on the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy. Covering the period Spring 2021 until Spring 2023, specific proposals beneficial to West Oxfordshire are identified:
  - Enhanced reskilling opportunities, targeting specific set of skills required by the local jobs market

- The development and implementation of an active travel project aimed improved infrastructure for increased rates of walking and cycling as a means of town centre regeneration, improved air quality and reduced car congestion.
- To provide financial business support including business rate relief and discretionary grants
- A total of 8,320m<sup>2</sup> (6,625m<sup>2</sup> net) employment land (B use classes) was permitted in 2020/21, the majority of which (4,947m<sup>2</sup>) is located within the Witney sub-area.

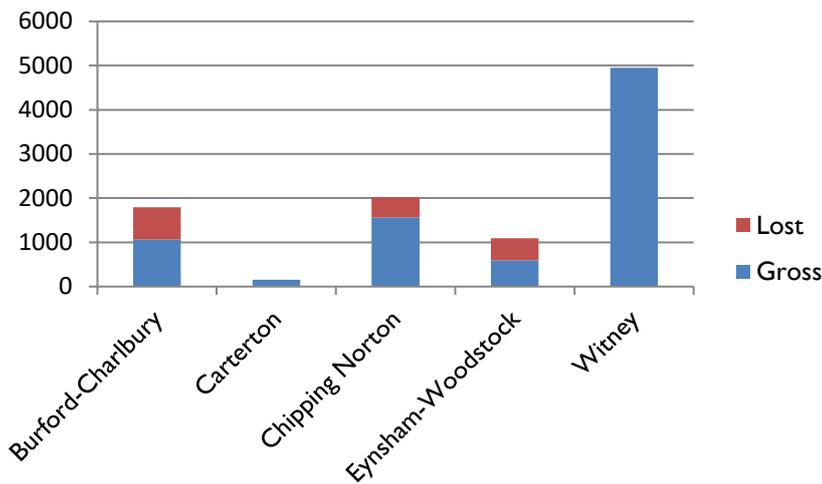


Figure 10: B use class floorspace permitted (m<sup>2</sup>) by sub-area

- A total of 2,139m<sup>2</sup> (net) of permitted employment floorspace was completed, the majority (1,472m<sup>2</sup> net) being in the Witney sub-area.

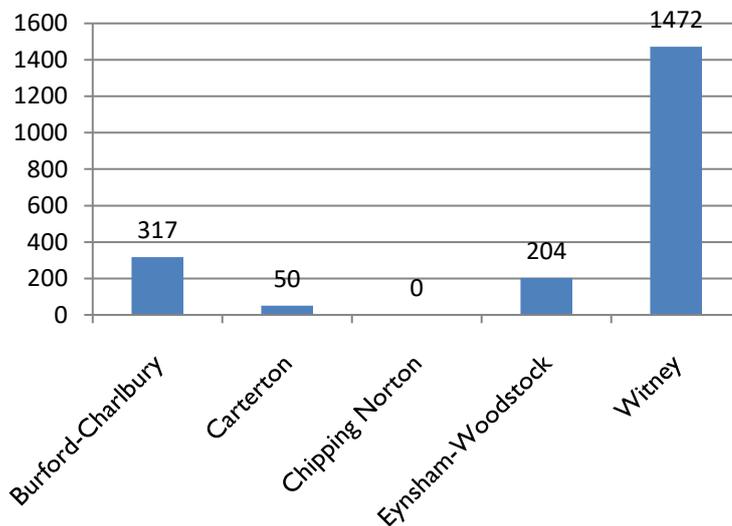


Figure 11: B use class floorspace completed (m<sup>2</sup>) by sub-area

- A total of two change of use schemes from employment to residential completed in the monitoring period resulting in a loss of 466m<sup>2</sup> employment floorspace (both B1a office uses in Kingham and Witney).
- Permitted changes of use to residential in 2020-21 would result in a loss of 418m<sup>2</sup>

employment floorspace, including a scheme to convert four commercial (B1a) units.

- Policy EI sets out the quantum of land available for business development at Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton and Eynsham. The following status of land detailed in Policy EI can be updated, as at 31 March 2021, as follows:

Sub Area	Location	Site Type	Site Area (Ha)	Updated Planning Status/Development Progress 2020/21
Witney	West of Downs Road, Witney	Industrial	2.10	Planning permission on part of previous Local Plan allocation for construction of B8 warehouse (planning reference 20/01338/FUL)
Witney	Land at Witney Football Club	Office	0.40	Residential element of permission under construction. Permitted employment development not yet implemented.
Witney	East of Downs Road, South of Burford Road	Commercial	1.81	Development completed
Witney	Land east of De Havilland Way	Business Park	0.47	Planning permission for new purpose-built facility comprising B1, B2 and B8 class uses (planning reference 20/02391/FUL)
Witney	West Witney SDA	Mixed use	10.00	Residential and phase 1 of employment development (planning permission 19/02011/RES) under construction. Planning permission for phase 2a of employment area (planning reference 20/01729/RES) under construction.
Witney	Former Supergas site, west of Downs Road	Industrial	1.15	No current planning status
Witney	Land Adjacent to Stewart Milne Timber, West of Downs Road	Storage and distribution	0.85	Development completed
Carterton	West Oxfordshire Business Park	Business Park	1.87	Partly completed
Carterton	West Oxfordshire Business Park	Business Park	0.58	Development completed
Carterton	Ventura Park, Carterton	Business Park	0.43	Development completed
Carterton	Land east of Carterton	Mixed use	1.50	Permission granted
Chipping Norton	Cromwell Park, Chipping Norton	Office	0.13	Permission granted
Chipping Norton	Land north of London Road, Chipping Norton	Business Park	9.00	Part of WOLP 2031 allocation (CN1)
Eynsham	Land north of the A40	Science Park	40.00	Allocated in WOLP 2031

- In the main towns of West Oxfordshire (Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Burford and Woodstock), 340m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace was permitted. Conversions and changes of use permitted in the main towns would mean that there would be an overall net loss of -633m<sup>2</sup>.
- Outside of the main towns, 35m<sup>2</sup> (-145m<sup>2</sup> net) of A1 retail floorspace was permitted.

- A handful of schemes which would likely result in a net change in town centre development could not be included in the above figures as the relevant data had not been supplied on submission of the planning application.

	<b>A1 shops</b>	<b>A2 Financial and professional services</b>	<b>A3 Restaurants and cafes</b>	<b>A4 drinking establishments</b>	<b>A5 Hot food takeaways</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>2020-2021</b>						
Witney	0 (-430 net)	0 (-116 net)	0 (-108 net)	26	0 (-69 net)	<b>26 (-697 net)</b>
Carterton	325	-190	0	0	125 (27 net)	<b>450 (162 net)</b>
Chipping Norton	15 (-182 net)	0 (-464 net)	105	0	0	<b>120 (-526 net)</b>
Burford	0 (-21 net)	0	21	0	0	<b>21 (0 net)</b>
Woodstock	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Other settlements</b>	<b>35 (-145 net)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>211 (66 net)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375 (-403 net)</b>	<b>0 (-770 net)</b>	<b>234 (-126 net)</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>193 (-42 net)</b>	<b>828 (-1339 net)</b>

- A total of 22 schemes were granted permission during the monitoring period for tourism related developments. This included approval of construction of the Mullin Automotive Museum at Enstone Airfield. Most of the remaining tourism related approvals involved the provision of holiday accommodation.
- The Council's contract with Gigaclear to bring fibre access to 4,788 of properties across West Oxfordshire was successfully fulfilled shortly after the AMR period in June 2021.
- In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the District Council has paid a total of £39,595,446 in grants to local businesses.
- The Council worked to implement measures to support the safe reopening of the district's high streets. These included pavement widening, pedestrianisation, and changes to licensing, helping businesses to operate in compliance with Government directives.

## 4. Strong Local Communities

### *Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive communities*

#### Background Context

- There are roughly 130 separate towns, villages and hamlets scattered across the district with 83 parishes.
- The proportion of people '**satisfied** with their neighbourhood' (90.2%) is higher than the Oxfordshire average (86.5%)
- **Council tax** in West Oxfordshire is within the lowest five shire districts nationally.
- Since being introduced through the Localism Act 2011, there have been five Neighbourhood Plans 'made' (adopted) in West Oxfordshire. These are Eynsham, South Leigh, Hailey, Shilton, Chipping Norton and Charlbury. As of 31 March 2021, a further five Neighbourhood Planning areas are designated for the purposes of producing a Neighbourhood Plan (Brize Norton, Cassington, Ascott under Wychwood, Milton under Wychwood and Woodstock)
- There are 21 community transport schemes operating throughout West Oxfordshire<sup>7</sup>.
- Based on the MHCLG [Index of Deprivation](#), a greater percentage of Lower Super Output Areas in West Oxfordshire were within the 40% most deprived in 2019 (see figure 14) than in 2015. However, on the whole, the district remains largely within the least deprived local authority areas in the country.
- The Local Plan Core Objectives for sustainable communities with access to services and facilities are as follows:

**CO9** Promote inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free communities.

**CO10** Ensure that land is not released for new development until the supporting infrastructure and facilities are secured.

**CO11** Maximise the opportunity for walking, cycling and use of public transport.

**CO12** Look to maintain or improve where possible the health and wellbeing of the District's residents through increased choice and quality of shopping, leisure, recreation, arts, cultural and community facilities.

**CO13** Plan for enhanced access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.

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<sup>7</sup> 2020/21 Oxfordshire Community Transport Directory

## What's happened in 2020/21?

- The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new Community Right referred to as the Community Right to Bid which allows Town and Parish Councils and defined community groups to ask the Council to list certain assets as being of community value. In the year 2020/21, four further assets were added to the West Oxfordshire List of Assets of Community Value (ACV)<sup>8</sup>. These are:
  - Long Hanborough - public open space adjacent to Riely Close
  - Rose & Crown Public House, Shilton
  - The White Horse Public House, Stonesfield
  - Cassington Allotments, Cassington
- Five ACV's were removed from the West Oxfordshire List of Assets of Community Value during the 2020/21 period due to the expiry of their 5 year listing period:
  - The Bull Inn, Charlbury
  - The Hand and Shears, Church Hanborough
  - Fulbrook Play Park, Fulbrook
  - The White Horse, Stonesfield
  - The Falkland Arms, Great Tew
- In the AMR period for 2020/21, no Neighbourhood Plans were 'made' (adopted). This was because no referendums were permitted to be held during this period due to the pandemic. Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan however was recommended at Independent Examination to progress to referendum subject to a series of modifications and a referendum was duly held in June 2021 once restrictions were lifted. The referendum voted in favour of Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan and this was 'made' on 14th June 2021.
- A total of £986,491.41 was collected by West Oxfordshire District Council through Section 106 planning obligations in 2020/21.
- Of this total, the majority was collected towards sports, recreation and play facilities (£622,936.45) affordable housing (£164,563) public art (£61,652) and Kilkenny Country Park (£58,478).
- Consultation on a revised draft CIL charging schedule took place from 10 July – 21 August 2020. Just over 170 responses were received and these can be viewed [online](#).
- The Council awarded a total of £363,793.53 in grant funding in 2020/21 which comprised:
  - £186,949 in Community Revenue Grants
  - £176,844.53 in Community Facilities Grant
- 349m<sup>2</sup> community use floorspace was permitted from three schemes (an extension to St Michaels And All Angels Church, Great Tew, creation of a woodland retreat

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<sup>8</sup> Full listing available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/residents/communities/community-rights/>

and community building at Kencot Hill Farm and part change of use of a business premises on Mill Street, Eynsham to an art gallery. No floorspace for community use was lost resulting from planning approvals in 2020-2021.

- 1,874m<sup>2</sup> additional floorspace for educational uses was permitted, including construction of new classrooms at Bladon Church of England Primary School and Stanton Harcourt Church of England Primary School and construction of a new science building and replacement changing room building at Cokethorpe School.
- During the 2020/21 monitoring year, the Coronavirus pandemic shifted the District Council's focus towards supporting its residents, businesses and the community and voluntary sector, to mitigate the impact of the national lockdown. A detailed summary of this effort can be found in the [Council Plan Annual Statement April 2020 - March 2021](#).

## 5. Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population

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

### Background Context

- There are approximately 49,000 **households** in West Oxfordshire, with around 900 Ministry of Defence dwellings (estimation based on a combination of Council Tax and Electoral roll data).
- As of 31 March 2021 there were 2,375 households on the **housing waiting list**, with 59% of these requiring a 1 bedroom property. A further 25% of households on the register required a 2 bed property. 11% required 3 bedrooms, 4% required 4 bedrooms and only 1% required 5 or more bedrooms.
- In 2020, full-time workers could expect to pay 10.8 times their annual work-place based earnings on purchasing a home in West Oxfordshire ([ONS, 2020](#)), an increase from 2019, where the property price to earnings ratio was 10.5, 2011 where the ratio was 9.1, and 1997 which saw a ratio of 5.1.
- The most recent assessment of **housing need** in West Oxfordshire identifies an objectively assessed need (OAN) for 660 homes per year from 2011 to 2031. Within this, there is a need for 274 affordable homes each year (excluding existing commitments).
- The West Oxfordshire Local Plan sets out that provision will be made for at least 15,950 new homes in the period 2011 - 2031, phased as follows:

	West Oxon's needs	Oxford City's needs	Combined annual requirement
2011 - 17	550 per annum		550 per annum
2017 - 18	550		550
2018 - 19	550		550
2019 - 20	550		550
2020 - 21	550		550
2021 - 22	525	275	800
2022 - 23	525	275	800

2023 - 34	700	275	975
2024 - 25	850	275	1125
2025 - 26	850	275	1125
2026 - 27	850	275	1125
2027 - 28	850	275	1125
2028 - 29	850	275	1125
2029 - 30	850	275	1125
2030 - 31	850	275	1125
Totals	13,200	2,750	15,950

- Over the last 10 monitoring years (2011—2021) there have been the following residential permissions and completions:
  - 8,697 dwellings granted permission; an average of 870 per year
  - 5,305 new homes completed; a yearly average of 531
- The Council is required to maintain, and update annually, a register of Brownfield sites that are appropriate for residential development and meet a number of criteria set by the government. The West Oxfordshire Brownfield Register, updated in 2020, contains 21 sites with a potential for between 482 and 582 dwellings to come forward over the plan period to 2031.
- There is a theoretical need for around 19 Gypsy and Traveller pitches for the period to 2031 however the requirement is likely to be much lower<sup>9</sup>. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 includes provision for at least 5 pitches and 5 plots between 2016 and 2031.
- As of 1st April 2020 there were a total of 682 registrations on the West Oxfordshire Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register.
- [The Care Quality Commission record](#) at November 2021 indicated that there are 27 care homes in West Oxfordshire providing 1,235 care home beds.

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<sup>9</sup> based on national evidence on those meeting the government's definition of travelling communities being only 10%

## What's happened in 2020/21?

- 868 new homes were completed in 2020/21. This greatly exceeds the Local Plan housing requirement of 550 homes for the monitoring year (West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, Policy H2), but is a marginal downturn since the previous monitoring year, largely as a result of the impact of the Covid pandemic.

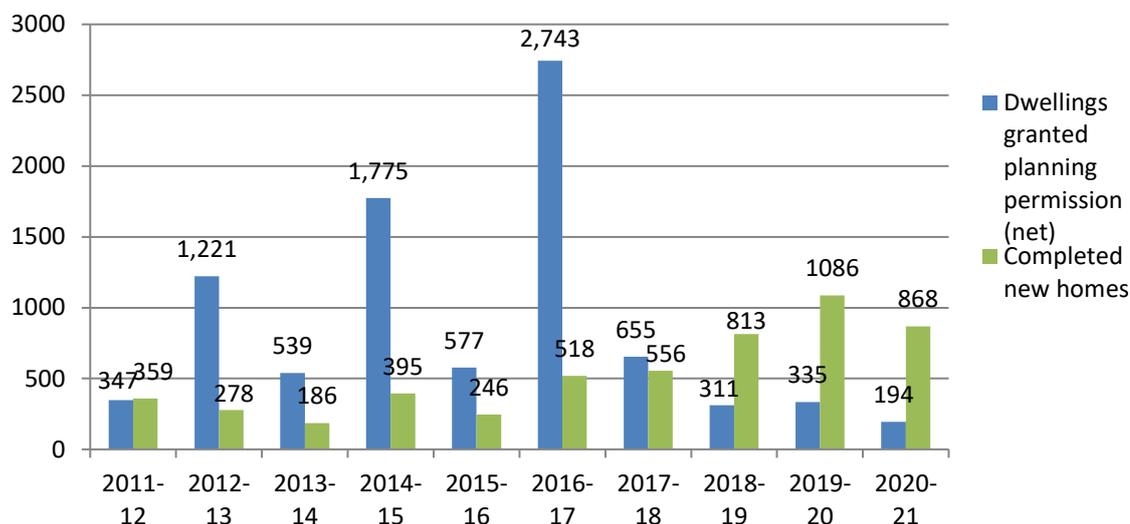


Figure 12: Residential permissions and completions 2011 - 2021

- 215 (25%) of completed dwellings were on previously developed (brownfield) land.
- Of the 868 dwellings completed in 2020/21, 352 were on allocated sites. This included:
  - 116 at North Curbridge (West Witney)
  - 86 at West of Thornbury Road, Eynsham (part of the West Eynsham SDA)
  - 51 at Land south of Banbury Road, Chipping Norton (part of East Chipping Norton SDA)
  - 33 at Land east of Woodstock
  - 29 at Former Stanton Harcourt Airfield
  - 24 at West of Minster Lovell
  - 13 at REEMA Central
- The total number of affordable housing completions in 2020/21 was 335 (38.6% of overall completions).
- 223 dwellings were granted permission, (a net total of 194, taking account of superseded permissions / amended schemes resulting in a net change of extant permissions).
- Previous AMRs have reported the proportion of dwellings granted permission that were on previously developed (brownfield) sites. This indicator is no longer

reported on as a result of this information no longer being provided consistently through planning application forms submitted to the Council.

- The breakdown of residential permissions by property size revealed a higher proportion of 1, 2 and 4+ bedroom properties compared to the Local Plan’s indicative housing mix guidelines and a lower proportion of properties approved with 3 bedrooms, as set out below.

<b>Local Plan 2031 property size guidelines</b>	4.8% 1 bed	27.9% 2 bed	43.4% 3 bed	23.9% 4+ bed
<b>Housing permissions 2020/2021 property sizes</b>	15%	30%	26%	29%

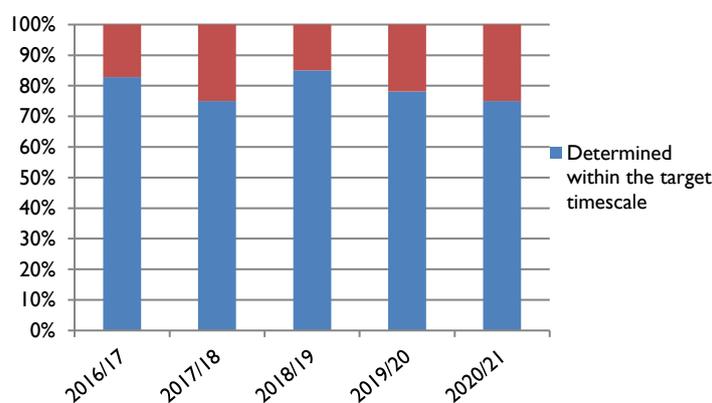
- Permission was granted for the provision of four residential caravan pitches as part of a change of use from agricultural land to enlarge an existing traveller community site at Minster Lovell.
- Between 1 April 2020 and 31st March 2021, there were 94 entries onto the Council’s Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register.
- Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31 Mar 2021 there was an increase in the number of people presenting themselves as homeless to the Council. This was a consequence of the pandemic and significant health implications on single person households remaining in informal sofa surfing arrangements with vulnerable relatives, and the [Governments ‘Everyone In’ directive](#). Throughout the year, an average of around 50 households at any one time were in some form of emergency accommodation. This represents an average increase of around 50% from previous years. With the added combination of the Eviction Ban and Housing Associations pausing all but essential repairs, moving people into longer term accommodation proved to be difficult with many households remaining in emergency accommodation for much longer than would have been the case pre-pandemic. Since the easing of the latest round of lockdown and Covid measures, numbers in emergency accommodation have stabilised to pre-pandemic levels.
- The number of empty homes in the District at 1st April 2021 was 532.

## 6. Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance

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

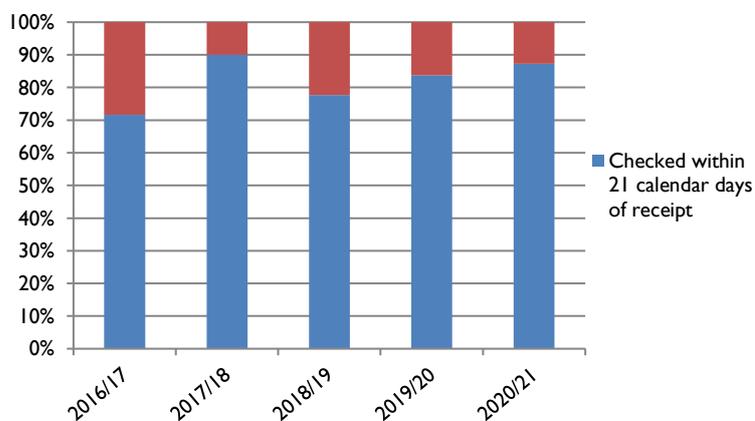
### Background Context

- West Oxfordshire District Council remains committed to delivering excellent services to its local communities.
- Over the past five years 79% of **planning applications** were determined by the Council in the target timescale (see annual break-down in Figure 13).



*Figure 13: Planning application determinations*

- The Council also provides a Building Regulation (Control) approval service, including Full Plan checks and Building Notices (typically for smaller works) and over 1,000 applications are processed each year. Over the past five years 82% of **Building Control Full Plans** were checked within 21 calendar days of receipt (see annual break-down in Figure 14).



*Figure 14: Building Control Full Plan checks*

- As of 30 April 2021, West Oxfordshire District Council owned 282 land/building holdings, of which 252 were freeholds and 30 were leaseholds.

### What's happened in 2020/21?

- No new Supplementary Planning Documents were adopted during the monitoring period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. However, good progress was made towards adoption of the Developer Contributions SPD and Affordable Housing SPD.
- The Council's current LDS (May 2021) identifies a further SPD for the Hanborough Station Masterplan, the timetable for its production to be confirmed. For further information and document timetables in full, please refer to the Council's Local Development Scheme approved in November 2020.
- A total of 1,369 planning applications were determined in 2020-21, 75% of which were determined within the target timescale (down 3% from 2019-20). 9% of applications were refused.
- 87.3% of building control full plans were checked within 21 calendar days of receipt.
- 99.7% of land charge searches were completed within ten working days.
- Section 110 of the Localism Act sets out a 'duty to co-operate' which essentially means that local planning authorities and other 'prescribed bodies' must engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to address cross-boundary issues of strategic importance such as housing and transport.
- The Council continues to actively engage with the other Oxfordshire Authorities<sup>10</sup> and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on various spatial planning and infrastructure matters (including the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and delivery of all other components of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal).
- The pre-submission draft AAP published in August 2020 was accompanied by a [Duty to Co-Operate Statement of Compliance](#) demonstrating how the AAP has been prepared in accordance with the duty to co-operate. A key aspect of this has been discussions with Oxford City Council in respect of various matters including housing need and a memorandum of operation has been prepared to outline the mechanism through which the allocation of affordable homes is expected to take place.

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<sup>10</sup> Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council

## Appendix I

### Carbon Account Breakdown: By Scope

Table I: Total Emissions by Scope

01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	Kg CO2e
Scope 1	1,617,853
Scope 2	217,742
Scope 3	474,371
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,309,967</b>

Scope 1 emissions, associated with gas and liquid fuel, account for 70% of Council emissions.

Scope 2 emissions associated with the purchase of electricity from the National Grid account for 9% of Council emissions.

Scope 3 emissions associated with the transport of gas, electricity and liquid fuel (referred to as T&D, transport and distribution, and WTT, well-to-tank), water consumption, and transport miles for staff and Councillors account for the final 21% of Council emissions.

Figure 2: Total Emissions by Scope

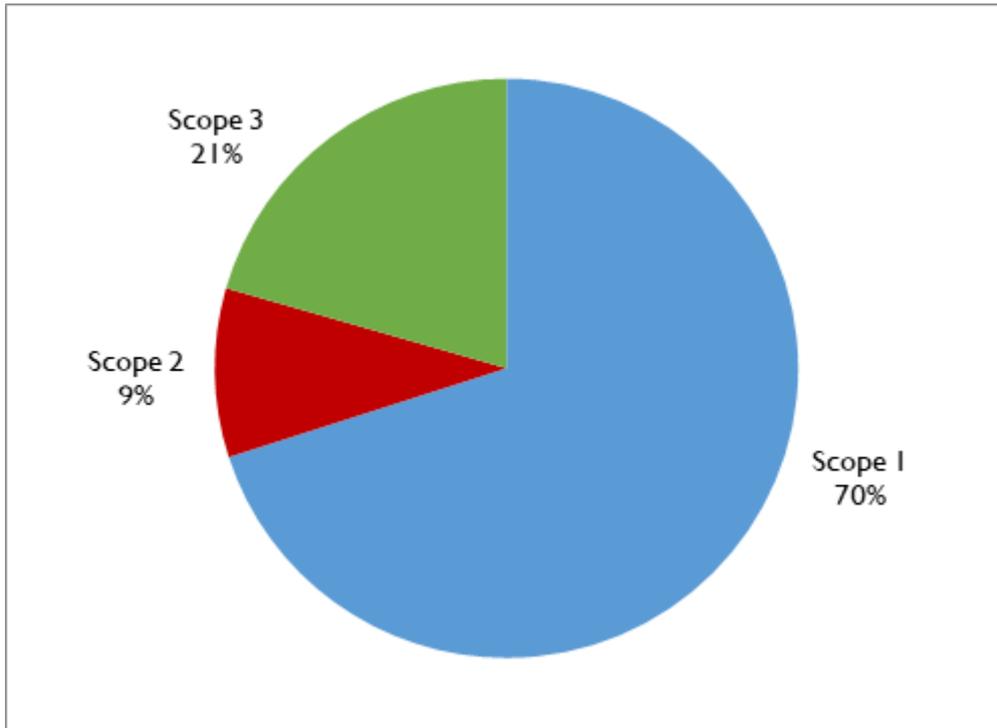
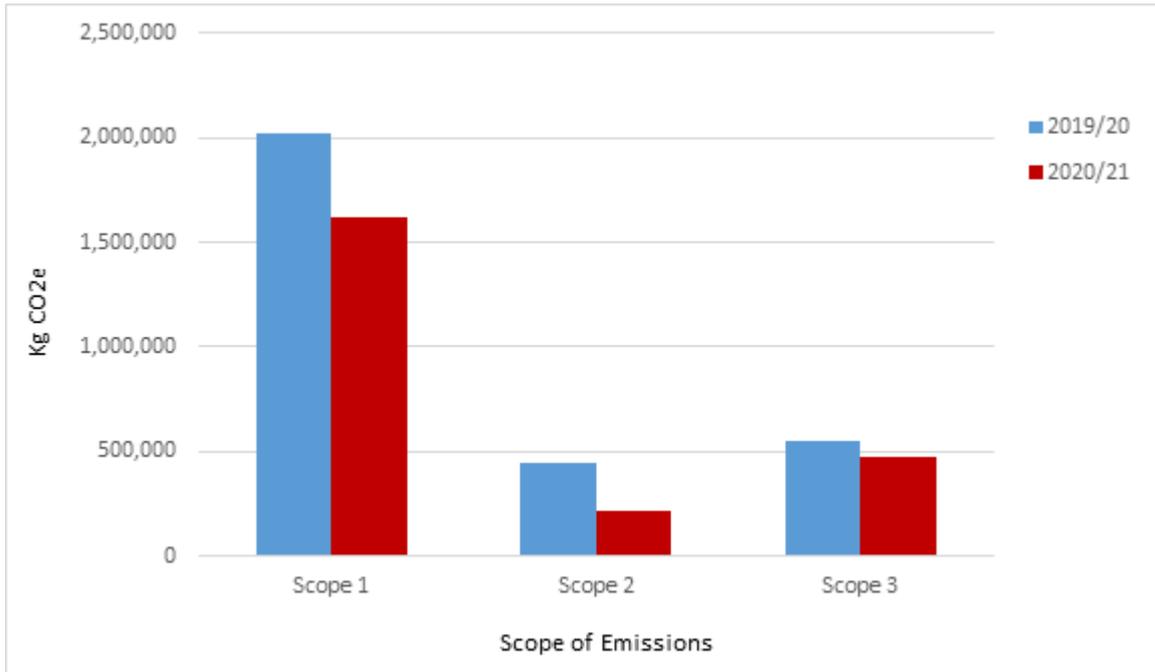


Table 2: Comparative Emissions between 2019/20 Baseline Year and 2020/21

Scope	Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e 2019/20	Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e 2020/21	Change in Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e	Percentage Change
Scope 1	2,020,220	1,617,853	402,367	-20%
Scope 2	447,126	217,742	259,384	-51%
Scope 3	554,853	474,371	80,482	-14.5%

Figure 3: 2020/21 Emissions by Scope Compared to 2019/20 Baseline Year



Scope 1 emissions have fallen 20% from the baseline year as a result of reductions in gas consumption from leisure centres.

Scope 2 emissions have fallen 51% from the baseline year. This reduction in electricity use reflects the reduced building usage during the pandemic as more people stayed at home.

Scope 3 emissions have fallen 14.5% from the baseline year. This reflects reductions in T&D and WTT emissions which fall in line with energy consumption in Scope 1 and 2. There has also been a reduction in business travel among staff and councillors.

### Carbon Account Breakdown: By Location

Table 3: Total Emissions by Location

01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	Kg CO2e
Council offices, property and sites (excluding leisure)	311,805
Leisure centres and facilities	432,673
Council vehicle fleet and transport	1,565,489

TOTAL

2,309,967

Council offices, property and sites represent 13% of total emissions across Scopes 1, 2 and 3.

Leisure centres and facilities account for 19% of Council emissions, across all scopes.

Council vehicle fleet, machinery and transport, including Council-owned waste trucks currently operated by Ubico, account for 68% of Council emissions.

Figure 4: Total Emissions by Location

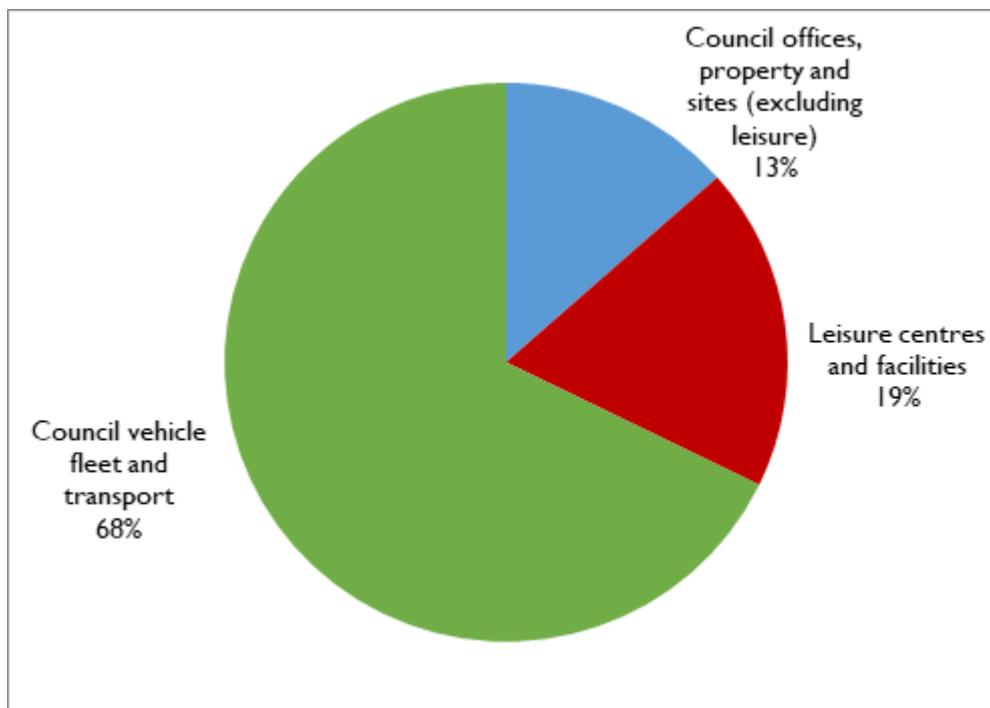
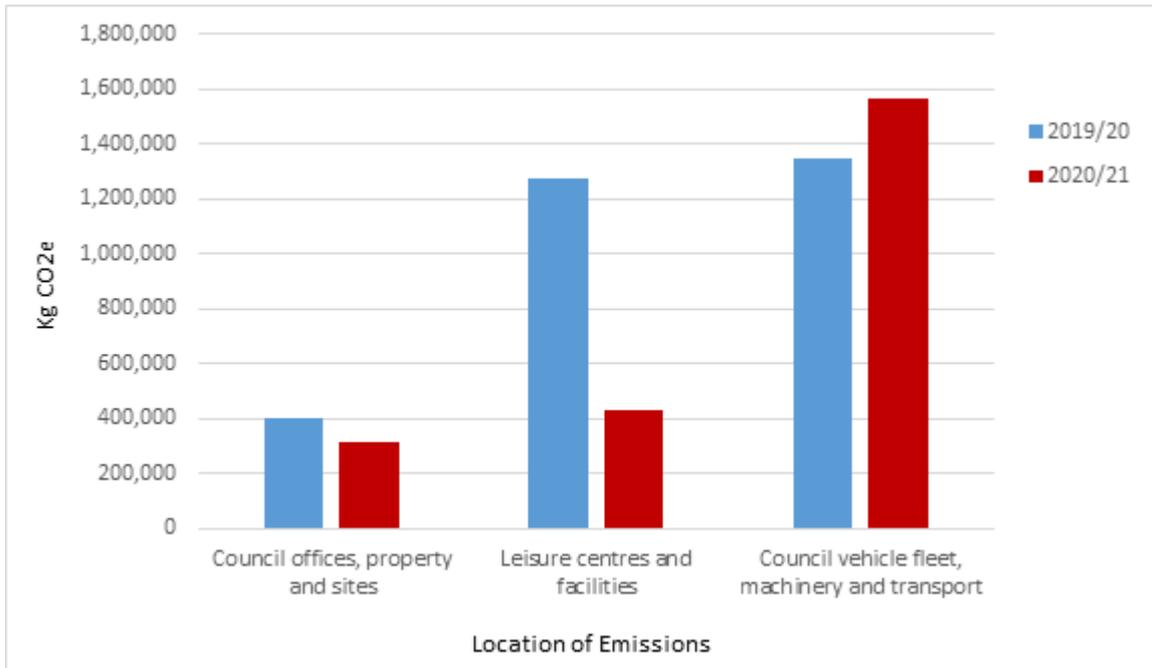


Table 4: Comparative Emissions between 2019/2020 Baseline Year and 2020/21

Location	Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e 2019/20	Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e 2020/21	Change in Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e	Percentage Change
Council offices, property and sites (excluding leisure)	400,418	311,805	-88,613	-22%
Leisure centres and facilities	1,276,260	432,673	-843,587	-66%

Council vehicle fleet and transport	1,345,521	1,565,489	219,968	16%
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Figure 5: 2020/21 Emissions by Location Compared to 2019/20 Baseline Year



Emissions from Council offices, property and sites (excluding leisure) have fallen 22% from the baseline year. This is considered to be a result of changes in behaviour during the pandemic which resulted in reduced building use.

Emissions from leisure centres and facilities have fallen 66% from the baseline year as a result of reduced energy consumption during the pandemic.

Emissions from Council vehicle fleet, machinery and transport have increased 16% from the baseline year. This is due to the Council-owned waste trucks, currently operated by Ubico, accommodating the increased waste flows during the pandemic as more residents stayed at home.

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# Agenda Item 10

 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>Cabinet: Wednesday 15 December 2021</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>Agenda Item No. 10</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>Service Performance Report 2021-22 Quarter Two</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Suzi Coul, Cabinet Member for Finance Email: <a href="mailto:suzi.coul@westoxon.gov.uk">suzi.coul@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Tel: (01993) 861658 Email: <a href="mailto:giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk">giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>This report provides details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2021-22 Quarter Two (Q2)</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Performance Indicator report</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the 2021/22 Q2 service performance be noted</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Climate Action: Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity</p> <p>Healthy Towns and Villages: Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone</p> <p>A Vibrant District Economy: Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Local Industrial Strategy</p> <p>Strong Local Communities: Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities</p> <p>Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population: Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for a wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire</p> <p>Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance: Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>

## I. BACKGROUND

- I.1. The Council monitors service performance each quarter and a report on progress towards achieving the aim and priorities set out in the Corporate Plan is produced at the end of Q2 and Q4. The Q2 update on progress on the priorities will be encompassed within the Annual Monitoring Report and presented to Cabinet in December 2021 followed by the Overview and Scrutiny committees.
- I.2. A review of performance indicators is currently underway, and Portfolio Holders are having discussions with relevant managers about priority areas and finding metrics that would be most representative and provide assurance as to how the Council is performing.
- I.3. A high level Commissioning Framework was approved by Cabinet in October 2020 which sets out the relationship between Publica and the Council and their respective responsibilities. 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.
- I.4. 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. He has noted the capacity issues and high workloads in some services which have contributed to a reduced level of operational performance in those services over the last few months, as well as the actions that are being taken to improve performance. He has drawn particular attention to the following:
  - i. 19 July marked the lifting of all Covid-19 restrictions, and some staff have returned to the office while others are working in a hybrid style in line with Publica's Agile Working Strategy 2020. Whilst we need to ensure that staff are available to deliver services whether in the office or not, the change to more flexible working practices has presented an opportunity to review office space requirements and identify any space that can be repurposed. Draft office layouts have been developed for Woodgreen with proposals for desk layouts, meeting rooms, breakout areas and new tenanted areas. The Chief Executive will be consulting with Members on the proposals shortly;
  - ii. Leisure visits and gym memberships are operating at around 75% and 70% of previous levels respectively. Both Chipping Norton Leisure Centre and Carterton have good membership levels, while Windrush is facing competition from PureGym which is a self-serve 'no frills' gym offer. Furthermore, Witney Lakes Resource has recently invested in a range of leisure facilities including group exercise studios. In response, GLL is revising its marketing and promotions for Witney;
  - iii. Customer satisfaction ratings for services delivered by phone have continued to remain high throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. West Oxfordshire ranked within the top 10 councils on the GovMetric Telephone Channel Satisfaction Index for August 2021. Face to face surveys which only restarted in July are also indicating that satisfaction is high with this channel, although the number surveyed was low due to low footfall;
  - iv. The website satisfaction indicator has been suspended while the service explores other methods for assessing the effectiveness of this communication channel. The Council recognises that it needs to focus on the ability to provide more options for accessing the Council's services including the potential for channel shift to quicker and more cost effective methods of communication where possible, such as the website. The Channel

Choice project has commenced, and processes are beginning to be reviewed in those service areas that receive high volumes of calls.

## 2. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

- 2.1. Performance continues to be mixed for a third consecutive quarter. The main issue has been a lack of capacity due to both high workloads as a result of both internal (improvement work /new systems) and external factors (Covid-19 related, economic, 'stamp duty holiday') and vacant posts in some services.
- 2.2. Additional resources have been secured in particular over the last quarter to support services to reduce the backlog of work, and services are reporting that workloads have become more manageable, although it will take time for performance to improve. In the planning service, there has been a successful recruitment campaign with a total of 20 appointments made across the partnership, many of which are internal, encouraging the retention of a significant number of existing staff. A second round of recruitment has now commenced to complete the consequential vacancies created from the first round and bring the teams up to the new increased resource levels.
- 2.3. Concurrently, improvement work and programmes are on-going. The Planning service has an improvement programme in place which has already delivered significant improvements in the validation of applications, and a service re-designer has commenced work to improve processes in Land Charges. Although it is difficult to resolve the resilience issues in Customer Services, the switch in focus to improving digital take up is expected to reduce call volumes.
- 2.4. Some of the performance indicators that are falling short of their targets and/or indicating a downward trend are considered below together with rectifying actions:

- The percentage of calls responded to within 20 seconds and the abandoned rate has started to show improvements following a decline in performance over the previous six months. Staff in this service are more likely to apply for internal promotions which results in a temporary reduction in capacity.

Resolution: The Customer service team is continuing to recruit to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to deliver the service, however, we need to be mindful that it takes up to six months to train new staff. A review of the customer services indicators to ensure that they are appropriate to customers' needs concluded that these indicators have become outdated and were based on the 'old ways of working', and more emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that satisfaction for our services remains high while also taking into account the benefits of channel shift and providing more options for accessing our services. The Channel Choice project has commenced, and the processes in services with high call volumes will start to be reviewed to reduce the need for customer contact and to reduce call length time.

The service is also identifying 'quick wins' to reduce call waiting time, for example, improvements to call waiting messages were implemented in Q2. Callers now receive a tailored message for the service they are calling about that signposts to easier ways to complete the transaction, which will be digital/online in most cases.

- At the end of Q2, both the average days to process Council Tax Support (CTS) new claims and the average days to process CTS changes was similar to the previous quarter at

33.76 days and 44.42 days respectively. The reduced performance over the last few months was primarily due to high workloads related to the increase in Universal Credit claims since the start of the pandemic (with much of the New Claims time delays beyond our control), the implementation of the new benefits system, Covid-19 related work, and supporting the administration of discretionary housing grants to the most vulnerable residents in the District. The backlog of work that was created following the implementation of the new benefits system was exacerbated by a software failure that prevented the automatic upload of changes of circumstances. Although a partial fix was applied nationally, all councils are awaiting a further fix which is expected to be released in November. In the interim, some cases are being processed manually.

Similarly, the average days to process Housing Benefit changes of circumstances remained at a similar level to the previous quarter at 26.21 days.

Resolution: With the injection of additional resources during the quarter, the backlog of work is being managed and reduced. In addition, three experienced temporary staff have either taken up their positions or will do shortly. A recovery plan is in place which should result in an improvement in performance although this will not be notable this year, aided by the software release as well as the soft launch of the open portal in November. The open portal provides a facility for clients to self-serve, which will reduce the burden in the back office.

- Overall, the percentage of 'Other' planning applications (mainly householder applications) determined within timescales has been falling since summer 2020 when the number of applications coming through started to increase in line with the national trend. The increase in demand coincided with a reduction in capacity due to a number of vacant posts which created a backlog of applications awaiting determination. During Q2, the service had four vacant posts.

Resolution: Given the anticipated ongoing nature of increased workloads, the Council agreed to fund an additional two posts to support the team and to provide an improved career structure to support the recruitment and retention of planning staff. In total, five career graded posts have been successfully recruited to, with the majority starting in Q3. The increased capacity over the next few weeks will help to restore performance to previous levels, however, new staff will need to undergo training and the backlog of applications will need to be cleared before this can happen. We expect to see an improvement in performance in Q4. Furthermore, an improvement action plan for the next 12 months is in place across the whole of the Development Management service which is being overseen by both the Group and Business Manager.

- The number of land charge searches increased by over 20% during the 'stamp duty holiday' compared to the five quarters prior to the 'stamp duty holiday', although numbers started to tail off over the last six months. In spite of the increase in searches, in addition to responding to customer queries, performance targets were achieved until the end of Q4 when there was a significant reduction in capacity in the service. An injection of additional resources to support the service and the recruitment of two new posts in Q1 resulted in improved performance in July which the service was unable to sustain as some aspects of the role are more complex and are dealt with by experienced staff.

Resolution: The new starters in the service completed further training in October on the more complex processes which will reduce delay; and the additional resources brought in to support the service in Q1 will remain in place as a temporary measure. Furthermore, a

service re-designer has started to review the land charge search process to identify where improvements can be made especially around the way customers communicate with us.

- The number missed bins per 100,000 scheduled collections increased steeply in Q2 due to a combination of reasons including the fuel shortage as well as positive Covid-19 cases and a shortage of HGV drivers. In addition to fuel refilling limits, Ubico had to use smaller vehicles as there are only three BP (contracted) garages in the District that can be accessed by full size waste vehicles. The smaller vehicles have less capacity and required multiple trips to be made which created a delay in collections, and therefore repeat reports of missed bins. The use of agency staff and crew members who are unfamiliar with the allocated rounds will also have contributed to the increase in the number of misses.

Resolution: The service reports that improvements are already evident with collections back to normal service. The introduction of In-Cab technology on 29 September is expected to improve efficiency in service delivery including reducing the number of misses by providing crew members with assistance to find all of the properties on their particular round.

2.5. In spite of the challenges this quarter:

- Sixty-five affordable homes were completed in Q2; 44 for affordable rent and 21 for shared ownership; and 153 for the first six months of the year against a target of 138.
- The council tax collection rate appears to have rebounded. The service collected 58.6% of the council tax due in the year compared to 57.7% a year ago.
- The Food Safety Team is up to date with high risk inspections which have been prioritised along with new business in line with the Food Safety Agency's recovery plan. The backlog of medium risk inspections is being tackled with the support of additional resources.

2.6. The data team is close to completing the verification exercise on the Council's waste management data and reconciliation with other sources and outputs. The team expects to be able to provide further details including revisions to the waste management indicators to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2022.

2.7. A full report of service performance is attached at **Annex A**.

### **3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1. None

### **4. RISK ASSESSMENT**

4.1. None

### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

5.1. None

### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1. None

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Delivering great services locally

PERFORMANCE REPORT:  
**July 2021 - September 2021**

## 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	(Snapshot) Number of households in emergency accommodation under 28 days	Number of fly tips collected
Customer satisfaction – web	(Snapshot) Number of households in emergency accommodation 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 within timescales	Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales
Percentage of telephone calls answered within 20 seconds	Percentage of minor planning applications determined within timescales	Residual household waste per household (kg)
Telephone abandon rate	Percentage of other planning applications determined within timescales	(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 Council Tax Support new 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 Council Tax Support change events	Number of visits to leisure centres	
(Cumulative) Average number of days taken to process housing benefit changes of circumstances	Number of gym memberships	
(Cumulative) Percentage of housing benefit overpayment due to LA error/Admin delay		

## A note on performance benchmarking

Benchmarking can be a useful tool for driving improvement; by comparing our performance with other similar organisations, we can start a discussion about what good performance might look like, and why there might be variations, as well as learning from other organisations about how they operate (process benchmarking).

A selection of readily available benchmarking data for the most recent period (2019-20) was included in the 2020-21 Q4 performance report on a trial basis. The 2020-21 benchmarking data has started to be released and will continue over the year until around December 2021. An annual exercise will be undertaken to update the CIPFA benchmarking charts and the Shire Districts' median /top quartile lines.

Two comparator groups that are commonly used to benchmark Councils' performance are: all shire district councils and CIPFA Nearest Neighbours (NN). The CIPFA NN Model is based on family groups; it adopts a scientific approach to measuring the similarity between councils taking into account a range of demographic and socio-economic characteristics. The standard model provides the 15 nearest neighbours to each council. In contrast, the all shire districts comparator group is a much larger dataset of 192 councils, and there will inevitably be a much greater variation between the councils in this group.

When we embark on performance benchmarking, it is important to understand that we are often looking at one aspect of performance i.e. the level of performance achieved. Although the CIPFA NN Model groups councils on the basis of similarity, these factors are external and based on 'place'. The model does not take into account how services are resourced or compare in terms of quality or level of service delivered, for example, how satisfied are residents and customers? Furthermore, each council is unique with its own vision, aim and priorities, and services operate within this context.

Therefore, benchmarking data should be viewed as a 'guide' and as a starting point for discussion. It is important to understand performance within context, and there will be a variety of internal factors that determine performance including costs, workloads and quality.

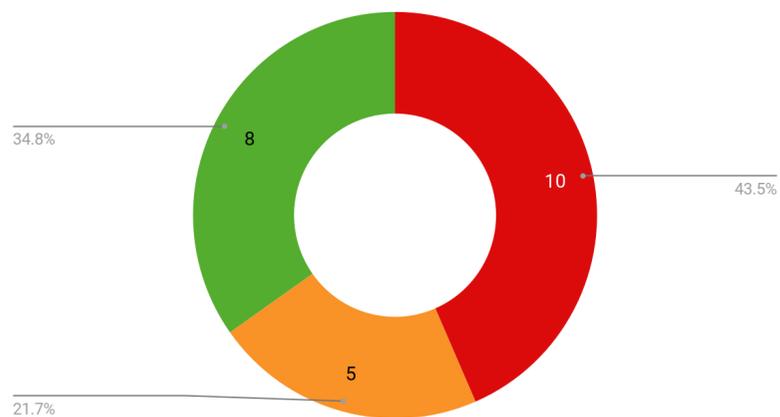
### Note

The data benchmarks have been extracted from LG Inform, a benchmarking tool, which contains a range of routinely published data. The median and top (best 25%) quartile lines are based on annual outturns but applied to the quarterly data.

# KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

## At a glance...

Summary of Performance



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### OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Performance continues to be mixed for a third consecutive quarter. The main issue has been lack of capacity due to both high workloads as a result of both internal (improvement work /new systems) and external factors (Covid-19 related, economic, 'stamp duty holiday') and vacant posts in some services.

Additional resources have been secured in particular over the last quarter to support services to reduce the backlog of work, and services are reporting that workloads have become more manageable, although it will take time for performance to improve. In addition, some services have been successful in the recruitment to vacant posts.

The Planning service has an improvement programme in place which has already delivered significant improvements in the validation of applications, and a service re-designer has commenced work to improve processes in Land Charges. Although it is difficult to resolve the resilience issues in Customer services, the switch in focus to improving digital take up is expected to reduce call volumes and improve performance

Indicators with targets	Status
Customer satisfaction - phones	Green
Customer satisfaction - F2F	Green
% of calls responded to within 20 seconds	Red
Abandoned call rate	Red
CT collection rate	Green
NNDR collection rate	Red
Average days to process CTS new claims	Red
Average days to process CTS change events	Red
Average days to process HB change events	Red
% HB overpayment	Red
Households in emergency accommodation under 28 days	Orange
Households in emergency accommodation over 28 days	Orange
% major planning applications determined within time	Green
% minor planning applications determined within time	Orange
% other planning applications determined within time	Red
% planning appeals allowed	Green
Affordable homes delivered	Green
% land charge searches dispatched within time	Red
Leisure visits	Green
Gym memberships	Orange
% high risk notifications assessed within time	Green
% high risk food premises inspected within time	n/a
Residual waste per household (kg)	No data
% overall recycling rate	No data
Missed bins per 100,000	Red
Parking enforcement	Orange

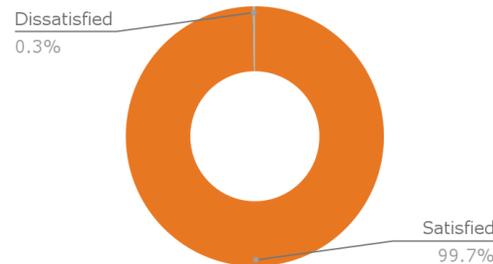
# CUSTOMER SERVICE

## Customer satisfaction

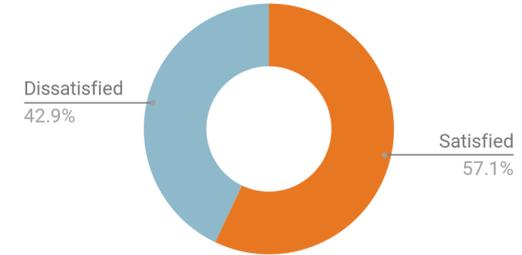
Face to face - 12 respondents



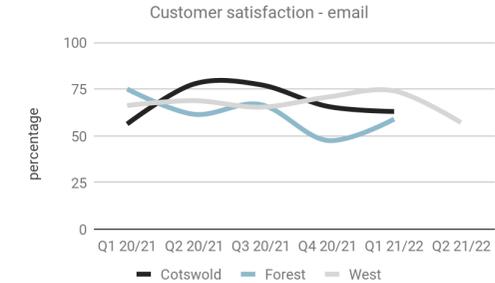
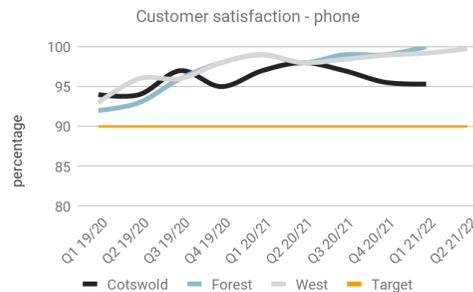
Phone - 377 respondents



Email - 177 respondents



### What's the trend?



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### OBSERVATION

Council offices and the Town Centre shop re-opened to customers from 12 April 2021, and although footfall continues to be relatively low, face to face surveys re-commenced at the end of July.

Overall, satisfaction ratings for services delivered via the phone continue to be high; this Council ranked within the top 10 councils on the GovMetric Telephone Channel Satisfaction Index for August 2021.

Satisfaction ratings for services delivered via email is indicating a slight downward trend. There were just 25 comments left by the 76 dissatisfied customers, 18 of which related to the waste and recycling service, and eight of these referred to missed collections or waiting for containers (see Missed bins per 100,000 commentary). In addition, if the case is transferred to the back office, the case is closed by the Advisor, and this will generally be before the case has been resolved by the back office which can cause confusion. Some improvements are expected as In Cab technology will address this issue for waste and recycling cases as Ubico will close the case once it has been resolved.

Reporting of website satisfaction has been suspended while the service looks into other methods for reporting on web based services and the website itself. It has been agreed that this indicator is not a good measure of satisfaction for services delivered via the website due to the extremely low number of responses, a large proportion of which is not accompanied by qualitative data to understand the nature of the dissatisfaction

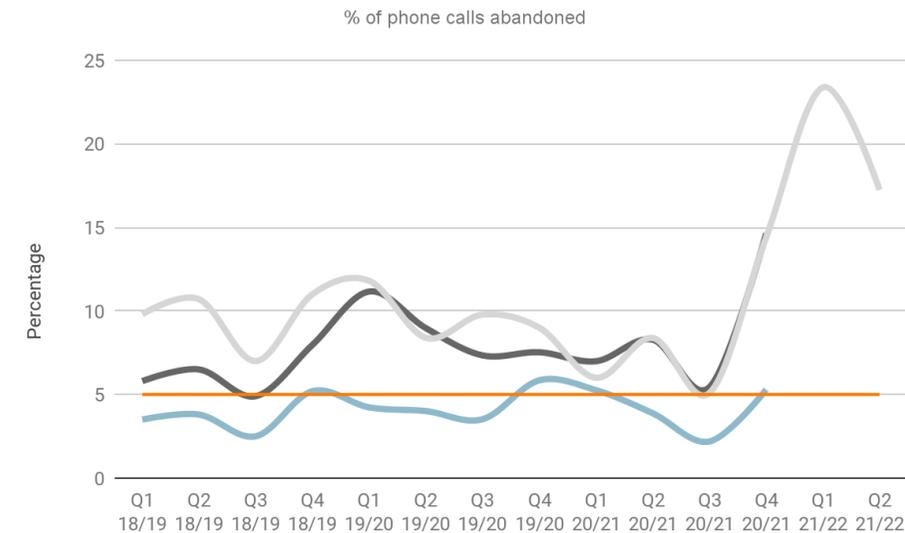
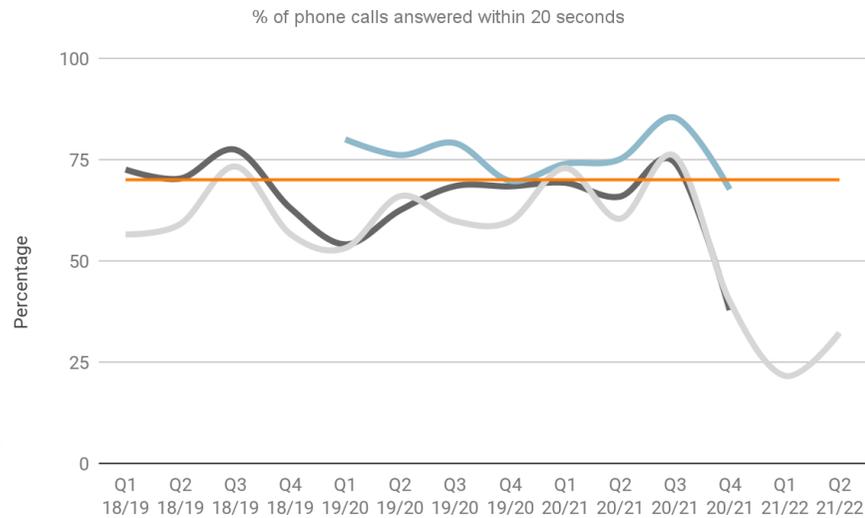
## Telephone calls - response and abandonment

Target

Cotswold

Forest of Dean

West Oxfordshire



### OBSERVATION

There was a small improvement in performance in Q2.

Many staff in this service take opportunities to progress in the organisation, and recruitment is ongoing to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to deliver the service, however, we need to be mindful that it takes up to six months to train new staff.

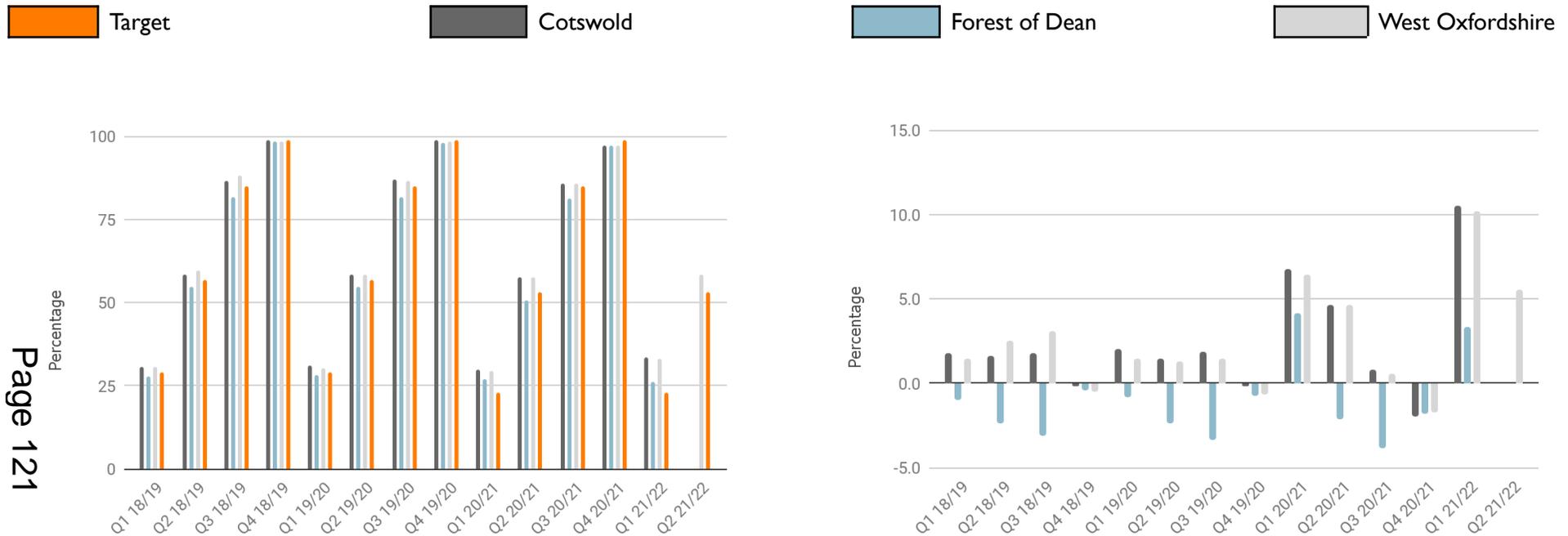
Although the service is continuing to collect this type of metric, the focus has switched to ensuring that satisfaction for our services remains high, and developing a framework for measuring digital take-up so that we can understand better the impact of digitisation on demand for customer services. The Channel Choice project has commenced, and the processes will be reviewed in services with high call volumes in order to reduce call length time as well as the need for customer contact.

The service is also identifying 'quick wins' to reduce call waiting time, for example, improvements to call waiting messages have been implemented. The caller now receives a tailored message for the service s/he is calling about that signposts to easier ways to complete the transaction, which will be digital/online in most cases.

Note: Following a review of performance indicators at the end of 2020-21, these indicators are no longer collected and reported for Cotswold and Forest

## Revenues and Benefit

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



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**OBSERVATION:**

The collection rate appears to be returning to more normal levels, and is up on the same period of the previous year. However, the end of furlough, the removal of the Universal Credit uplift, and higher utility costs could potentially affect the collection rate. The service continues to support residents, 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.

Recovery action re-commenced at the beginning of Q1; and Magistrates Courts are open for liability order hearings

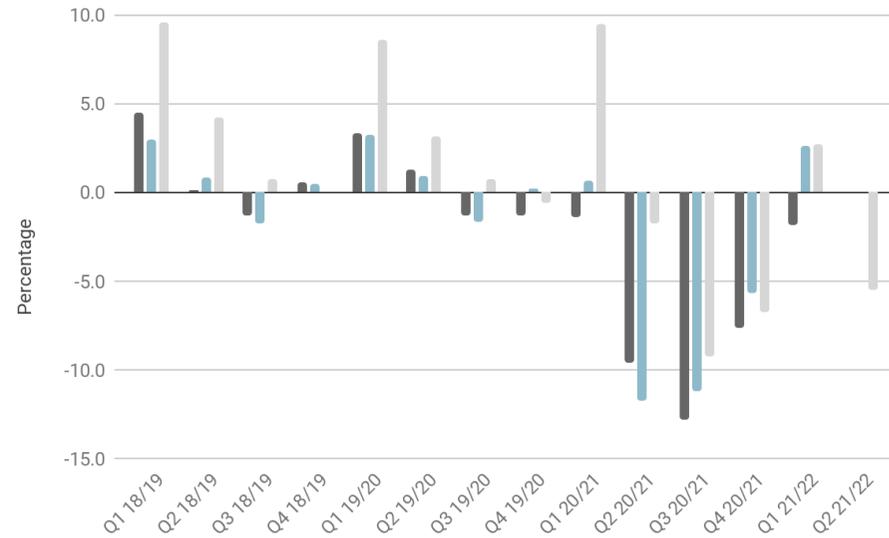
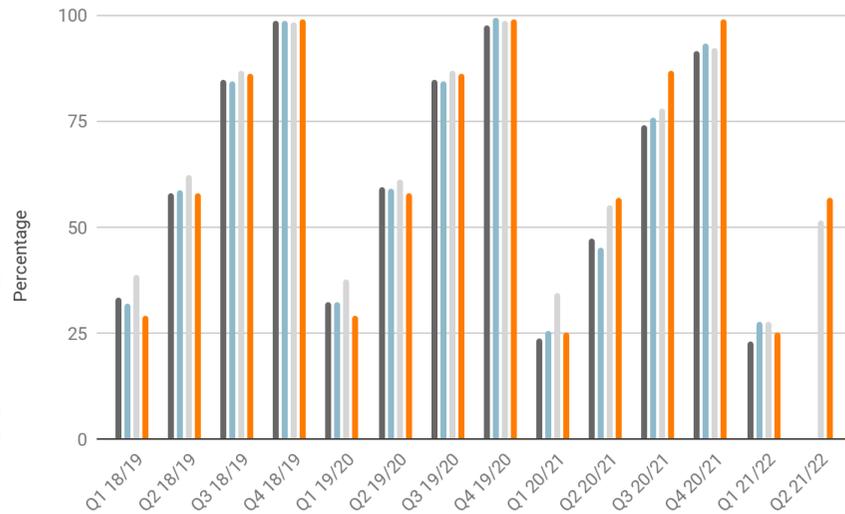
**(Cumulative) Percentage of business rates collected & the difference between the percentage of business rates collected and the target**

Target

Cotswold

Forest of Dean

West Oxfordshire



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**OBSERVATION:**

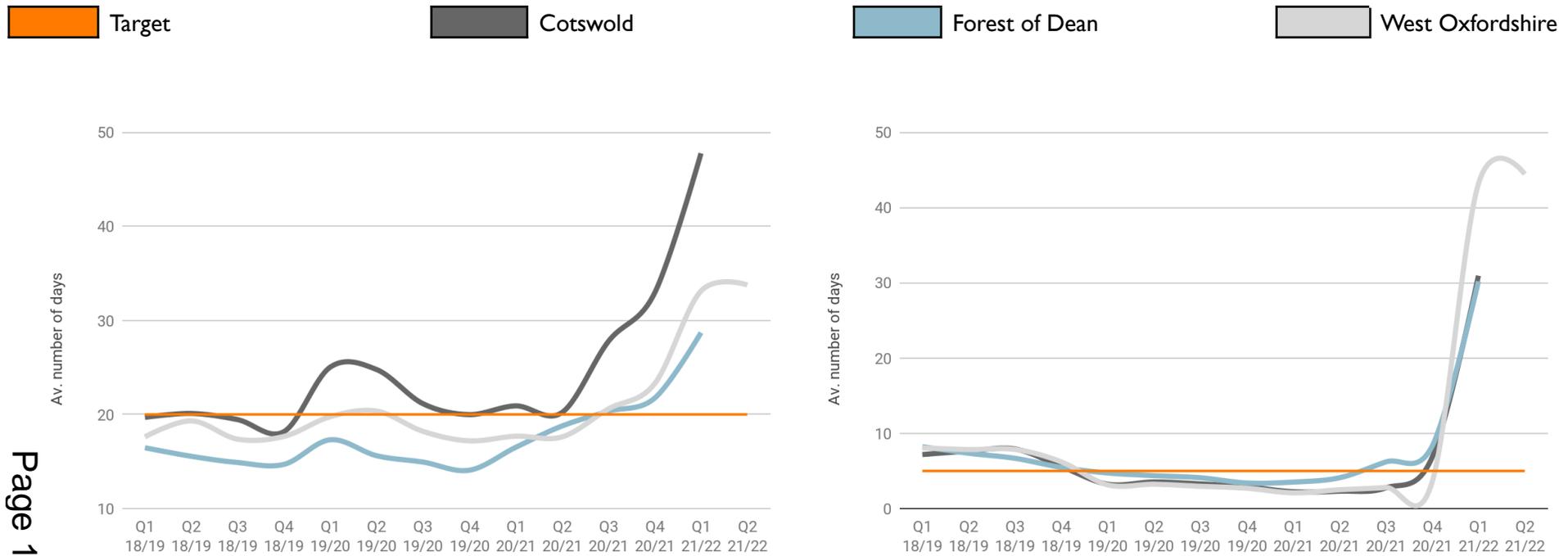
At the end of Q2, the collection of business rates continues to be lower than pre-Covid times. There is a backlog of business rates work due to the implementation of the revenues and benefits system, and reduced capacity within the team due to 50% of resource being allocated to processing business grants. The team is now almost back at capacity, and backlogs are improving, with a plan in place to bring backlogs down across the service.

The collection rate is expected to remain depressed as the Council has had to make some refunds due to changes in rateable value, as well as businesses struggling financially.

The service is continuing to support businesses; sending out reminders, phoning and emailing businesses to encourage them to contact the Council so that we can support them via manageable repayment plans. The Magistrates Courts are open for liability order hearings which will mean the Council can take formal recovery action and enforce debts that are owed.

During the pandemic, the Government helped certain businesses with 100% business rate relief; which was reduced to 66% at the end of June 2021 and will be in place for the remainder of the financial year

**(Cumulative) Average number of days taken to process Council Tax Support new claims and change events**



**OBSERVATION:**

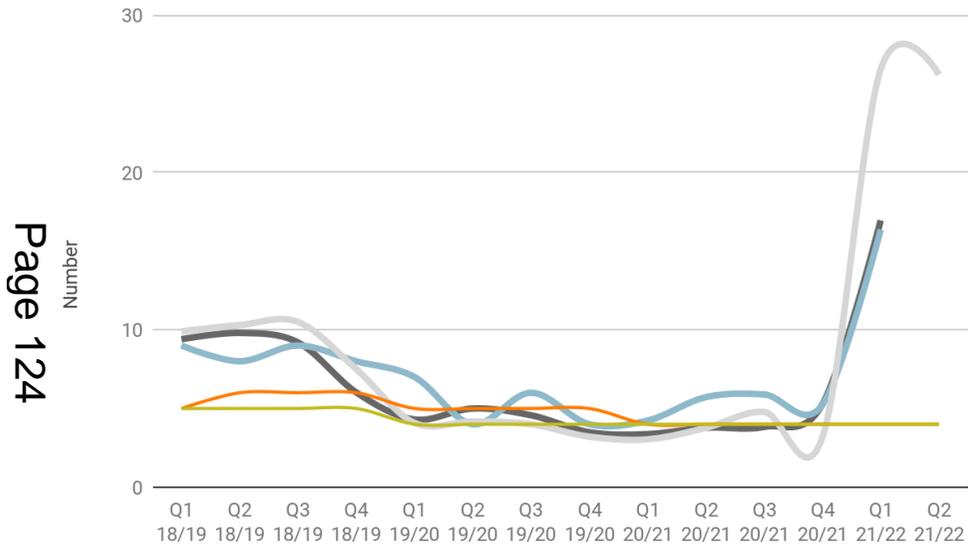
With the injection of additional resources during the quarter, the backlog of work is being managed and is reducing. In addition, three experienced temporary staff have either taken up their positions or will do shortly, and will work across the partnership.

The backlog was created following the implementation of the new benefits system, which was exacerbated by a software failure that prevented the automatic upload of changes of circumstances. Although a partial fix was applied nationally, all councils are awaiting a further fix which is expected to be released in November. In the interim, some cases are being processed manually. A recovery plan is in place which should result in an improvement in performance although this will not be notable this year, aided by the soft launch of the open portal in November; this facility will allow clients to self-serve, and therefore reduce the burden in the back office.

The team is still involved in systems work related to the new benefits system, processing 'Test and Trace' claims (until the end of March 2022) and supporting the administration of discretionary housing grants to the most vulnerable residents in the District

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

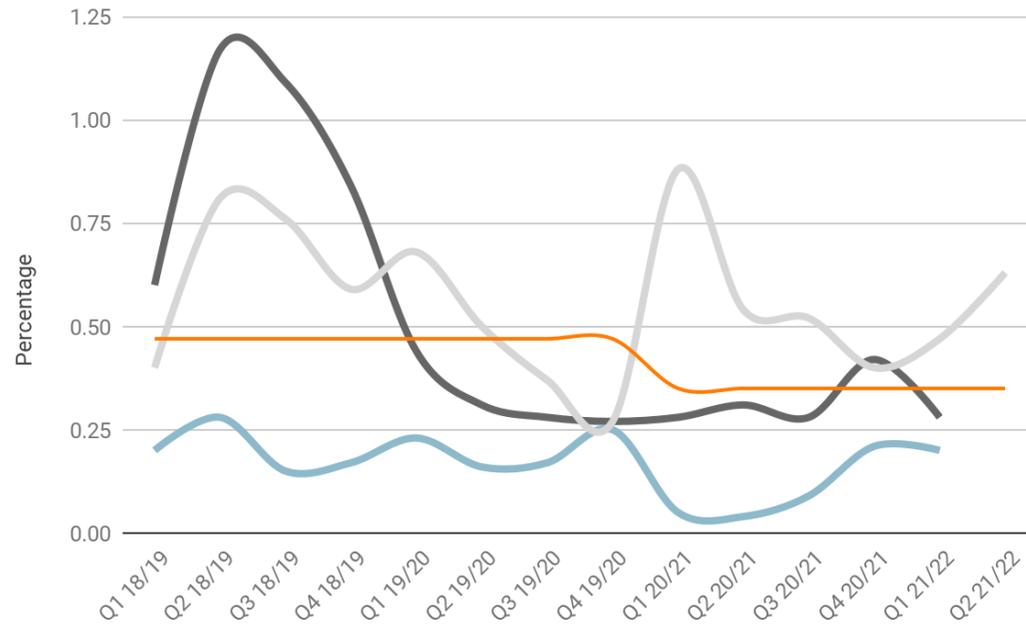
Target
  Cotswold
  Forest of Dean
  West Oxfordshire
  Shire Districts' Median



**OBSERVATION:**  
Please see commentary for Council Tax new claims and changes

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

Target
  Cotswold
  Forest of Dean
  West Oxfordshire



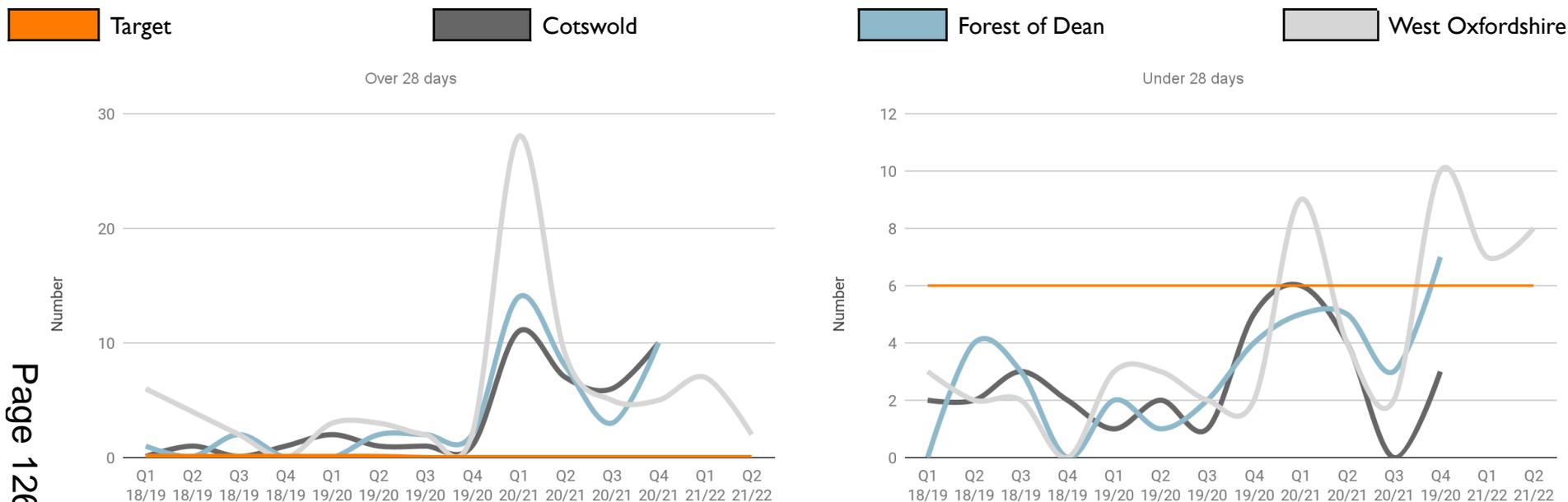
**OBSERVATION:**

Performance has fallen due to an increase in workload which has resulted in 'admin delay'. A backlog of work was created by the implementation of the new benefits system as well as the increase in benefit changes related to Universal Credit claims during Covid-19. The majority of changes are being assessed manually while all councils await a further system release in November. Once fixed, the majority of changes will be automated and processed the same day which will improve performance.

Note: the national target is 0.47%. In 2020-21, the service set a more stringent target of 0.35%

## Housing Support

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



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#### OBSERVATION:

During the national lockdowns, the number of households in emergency accommodation increased as councils were required to place all clients who were rough sleeping or at risk of imminent homelessness into emergency accommodation, regardless of priority need, and who had approached the Council. At the end of each lockdown, the numbers decreased, as exit plans were created to move households into more secure tenancies including housing association, supported accommodation, and private rented accommodation. Local Authorities are still being asked by the Government to ensure that anyone confirmed to be rough sleeping receives a swift offer of accommodation, however these numbers have now very much declined into a more manageable amount.

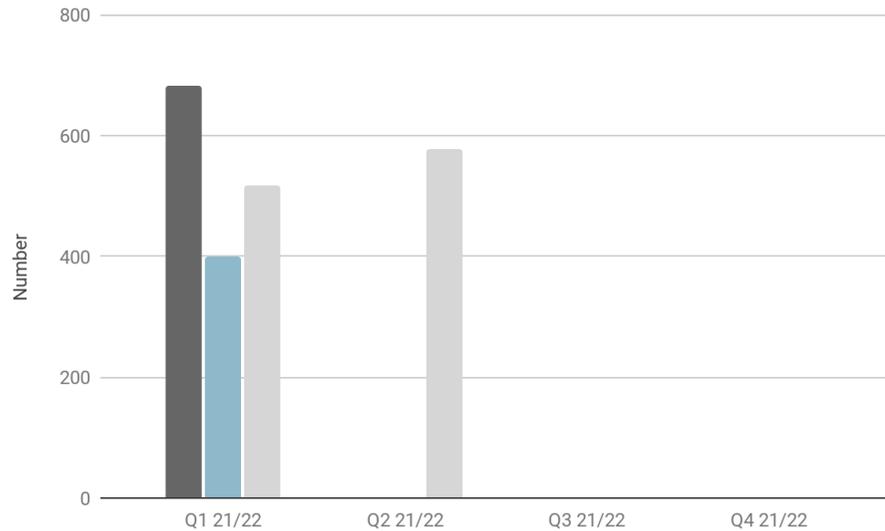
The numbers in emergency accommodation are reducing due to a focus on prevention in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act; and the use of specialist temporary accommodation officers who are able to offer dedicated support and bespoke solutions for helping clients move on successfully from emergency accommodation. However, the availability of social housing stock is low due to low turnover and households not moving as much due to the Eviction ban; and it is often difficult to place clients in private rented accommodation as these properties are usually not affordable and have rents over and above allowable benefits, and require a guarantor.

The Eviction ban was lifted on 1 October 2021 so numbers may rise with more families and domestic abuse cases coming through for re-housing. Going into the winter, the Council will need to make provision for rough sleepers as part of its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol response.

The Old Court House, a property with 15 self-contained units is expected to become available in December 2021 and will help to reduce the numbers in emergency accommodation further.

Note: Following a review of performance indicators at the end of 2020-21, these indicators are no longer collected and reported for Cotswold and Forest

**(Snapshot) Number of Long Term Empty properties**



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**OBSERVATION:**

Following the transition of the new Revenues and Benefits system from Northgate to Civica, inconsistencies in historical reporting were identified, and work to both cleanse and de-duplicate the data was undertaken, as well as improvements to the system to enable detailed analysis of the data. Therefore, reporting commences from Q1.

The relatively high numbers may be a result of delayed renovation works, sales and lets caused by Covid-19, and the retirement property market, in particular, was affected as this sector of the market was self-isolating. It is also likely that the Council is not always informed when new builds have sold (80 new build properties owned by Sage were recently removed from the list as they were found to be occupied) and there are some Housing Association properties that are awaiting demolition.

A range of proactive work is being undertaken to both reduce the number of LTE properties in the District as well as ensuring that the Council's data is up to date. The LTE officer contacts landlords, homeowners and builders to offer advice e.g. to explain discounts and the options available to them, and eligibility for reduced VAT on renovations. Those with properties empty for over two years have been specifically targeted with letters asking them to make contact with the Council.

The use of GIS mapping has helped to identify clusters and understand the broader picture, enabling more effective tackling of the issue. However, it is difficult to keep the numbers down as those properties that are removed from the LTE list, are quickly replaced with properties that have just moved into the LTE category. The Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny received a report on LTE properties on 18 October

## Planning and Strategic Housing

### (Cumulative) Percentage of major planning applications determined

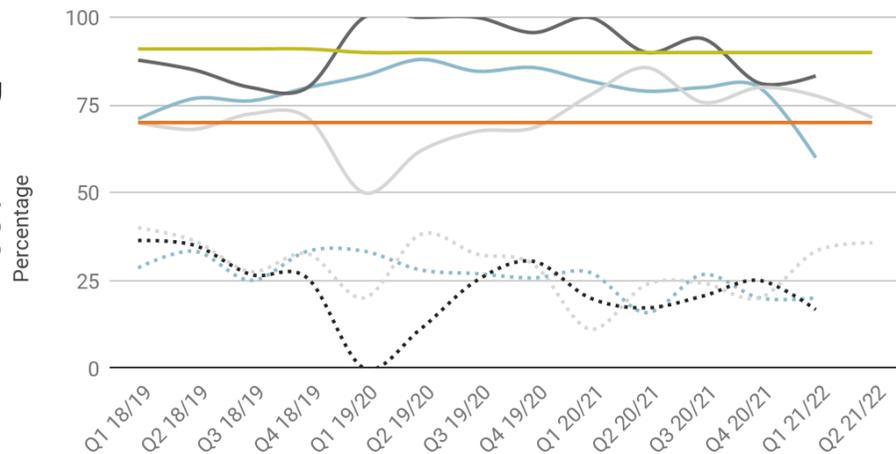
% of all applications completed within an agreed timeframe



% of all application completed within 13 weeks



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#### 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

#### OBSERVATION:

Five major applications were determined in Q2 compared to 12 in Q2 in the previous year.

Due to a high level of applications, capacity and vacant posts, performance has reduced.

During Q2, the service had four vacant posts, in addition, the Council agreed to fund an additional two posts to meet resourcing requirements to deal with the higher caseload, and to provide an improved career structure to support the recruitment and retention of planning staff. Five career graded posts have been recruited to, with the majority starting in Q3.

Site visits are taking place and while infection rates remain high, staff are taking extra precautions.

The increased capacity over the next few weeks will help to restore performance to previous levels, however; new staff will need to undergo training and the backlog of applications will need to be cleared before this can happen. We expect to see an improvement in performance in Q4.

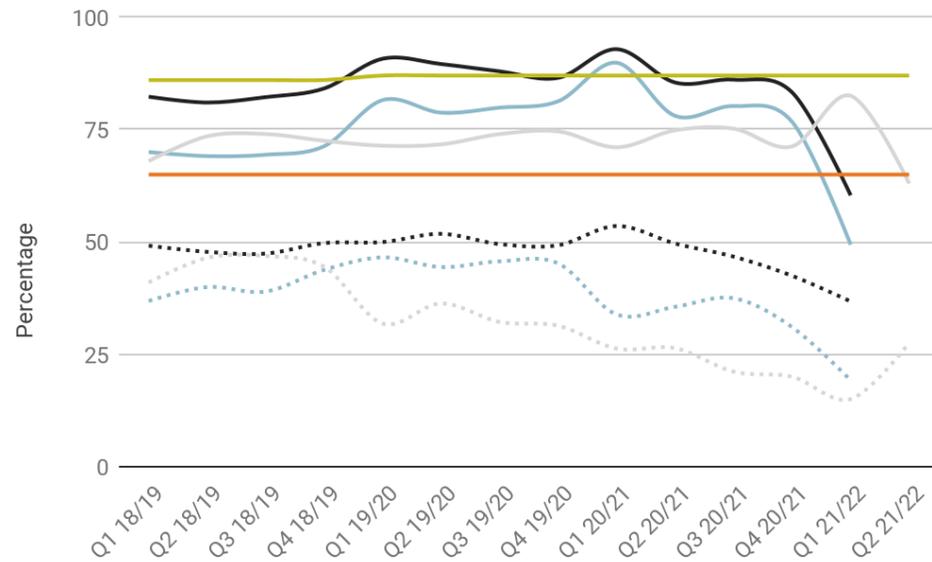
An improvement action plan for the next 12 months is in place across the whole of the DM service which will be overseen by both the Group and Business Manager

## (Cumulative) Percentage of minor planning applications determined

% of all applications completed within agreed timescales



% of all applications completed within 8 weeks



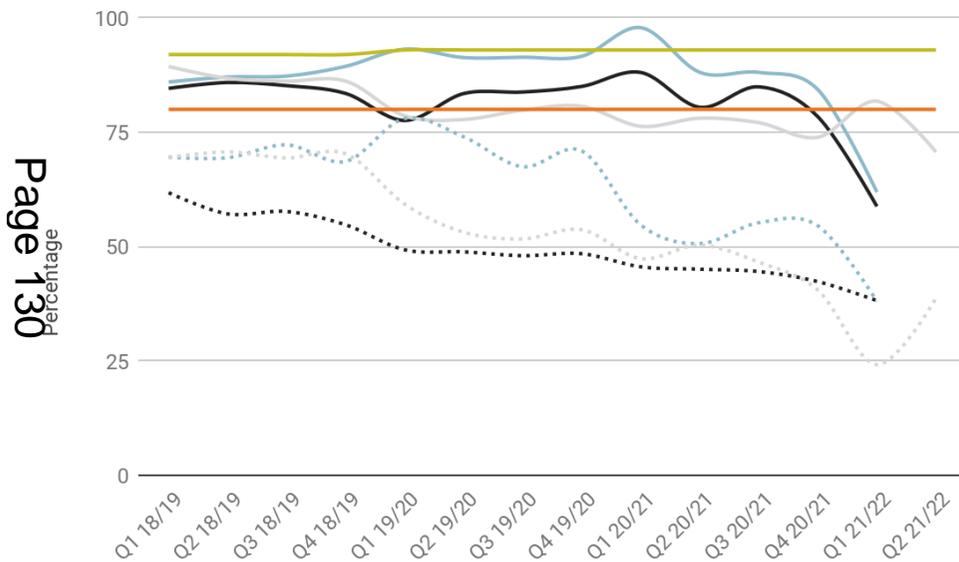
**OBSERVATION:**  
 106 minor applications were determined in Q2 compared to 83 in Q2 of the previous year.  
 Due to a high level of applications, capacity and vacant posts, performance has reduced. Successful appointments during the quarter will increase capacity over the next few months but the backlog will need to be cleared before we see improvements.  
 See Observation for Major applications for further explanation

## (Cumulative) Percentage of other planning applications determined

% of all applications completed within agreed timescales



% of all applications completed within 8 weeks



### OBSERVATION:

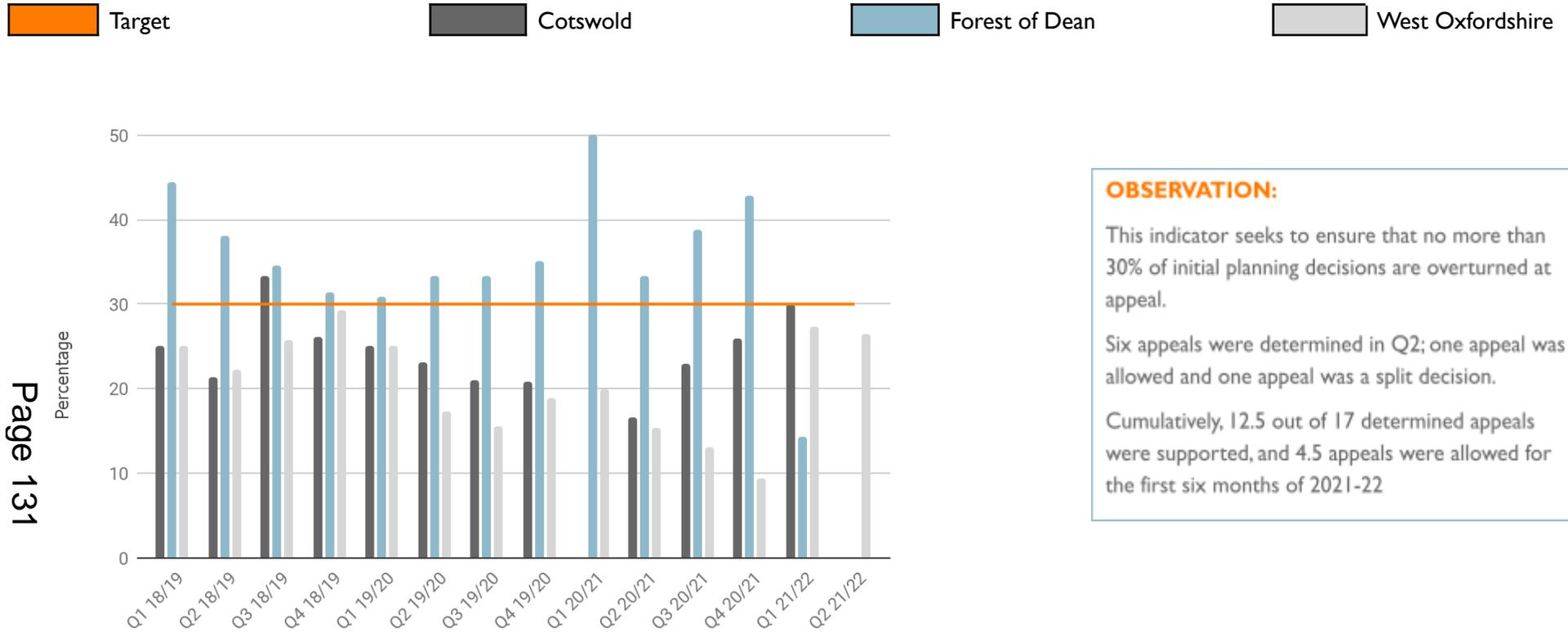
361 other applications were determined in the quarter compared to 247 in Q2 of the previous year.

These applications are mostly householder applications including garage conversions, loft conversions, extensions and garden rooms.

Due to a high level of applications, capacity and vacant posts, performance has reduced. Successful appointments during the quarter will increase capacity over the next few months but the backlog will need to be cleared before we see improvements.

See Observation for Major applications for further explanation

**(Cumulative) Percentage of planning appeals allowed**



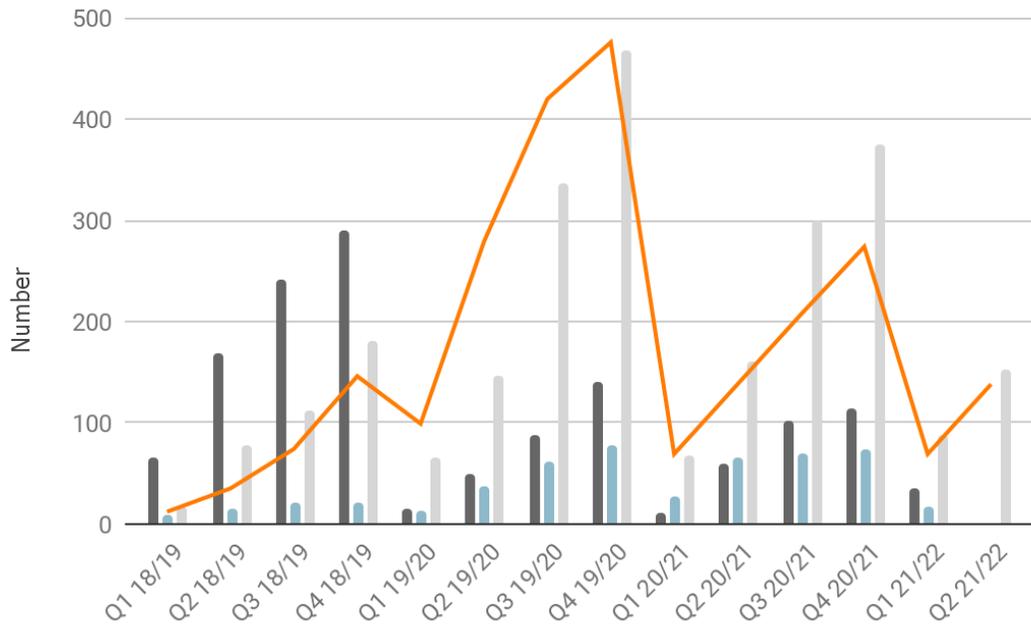
**OBSERVATION:**

This indicator seeks to ensure that no more than 30% of initial planning decisions are overturned at appeal.

Six appeals were determined in Q2; one appeal was allowed and one appeal was a split decision.

Cumulatively, 12.5 out of 17 determined appeals were supported, and 4.5 appeals were allowed for the first six months of 2021-22

**(Cumulative) Number of affordable homes delivered**



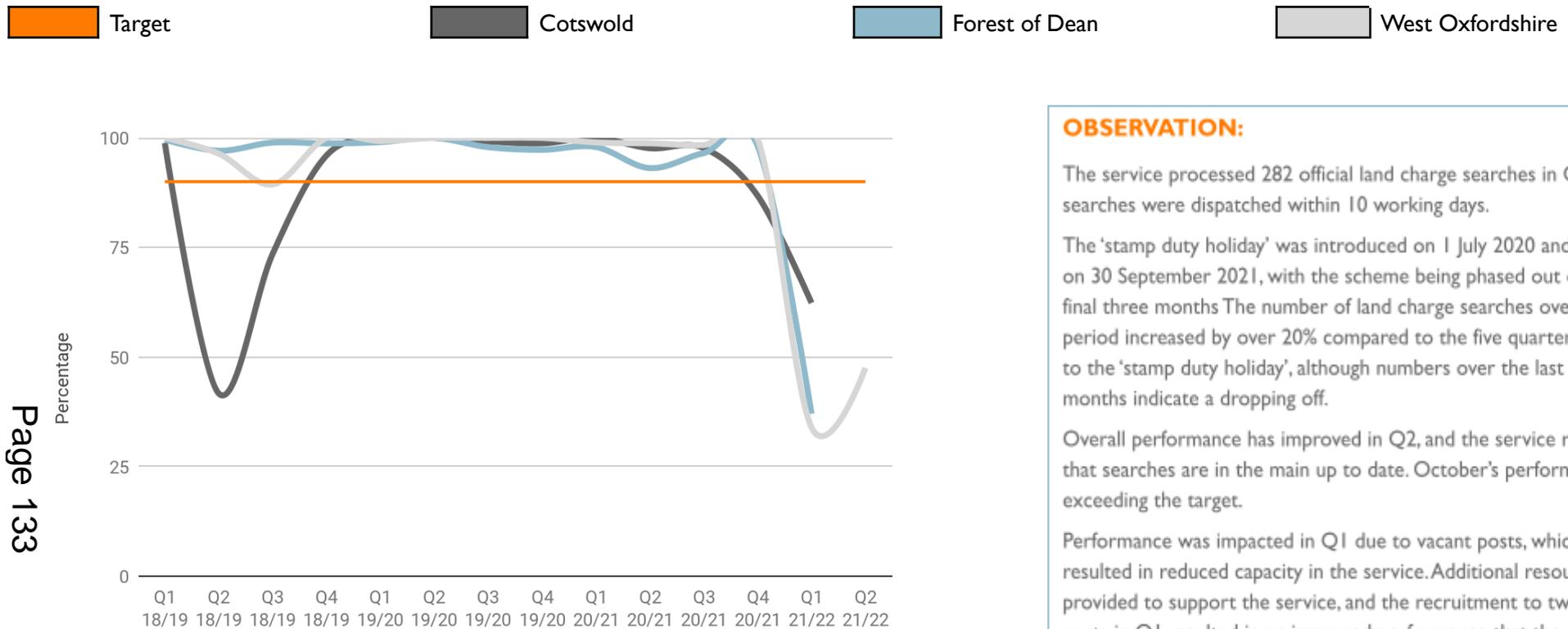
**OBSERVATION:**

Sixty-five affordable homes were completed in Q2; 44 affordable rent and 21 shared ownership. The completions included 14 at Bampton, 10 at Downs Rd, Witney; and nine each at E Carterton and Shilton Road, Buford.

The total completions for the first six months of the year was 153 affordable homes against a target of 138.

Developers are still experiencing delays in obtaining materials (concrete, roof tiles, plasterboard, kitchens, windows, and doors) which had a slight effect on the number of completed homes in Q2

## Percentage of land charge searches dispatched within 10 working days



### OBSERVATION:

The service processed 282 official land charge searches in Q2; 134 searches were dispatched within 10 working days.

The 'stamp duty holiday' was introduced on 1 July 2020 and ended on 30 September 2021, with the scheme being phased out over the final three months. The number of land charge searches over this period increased by over 20% compared to the five quarters prior to the 'stamp duty holiday', although numbers over the last six months indicate a dropping off.

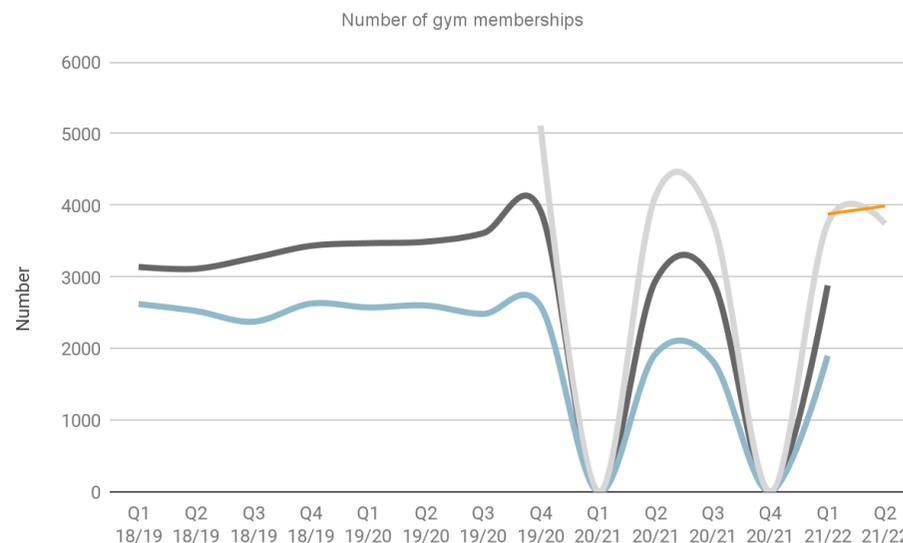
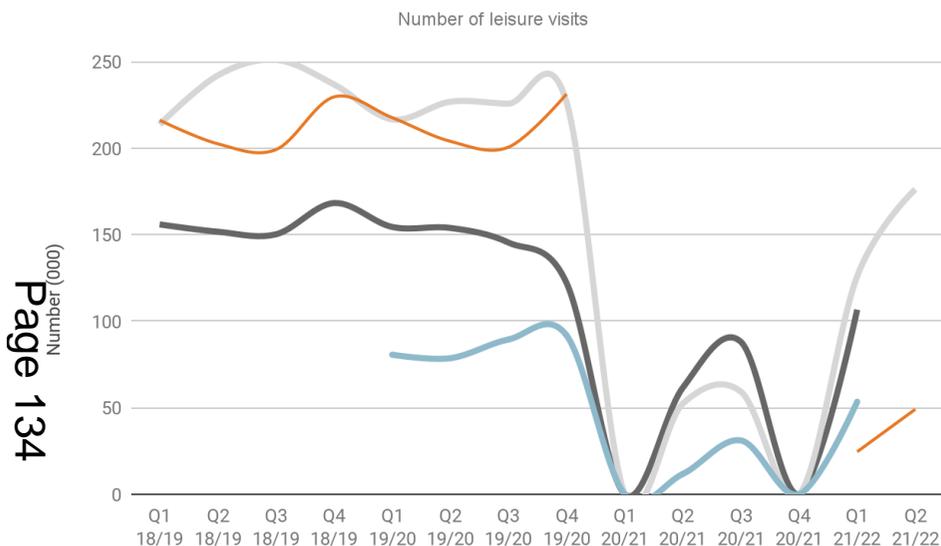
Overall performance has improved in Q2, and the service reports that searches are in the main up to date. October's performance is exceeding the target.

Performance was impacted in Q1 due to vacant posts, which resulted in reduced capacity in the service. Additional resources provided to support the service, and the recruitment to two vacant posts in Q1 resulted in an improved performance that the service was unable to sustain as some of the more complex tasks required more experienced staff. In addition, the service was responding to a growing number of enquiries from the public.

The new starters will undergo further training in October, and the additional resources to support the service will remain in place as a temporary measure. A service re-designer has started to review the land charge search process to identify where improvements can be made especially around the way customers communicate with us.

## Leisure

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



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#### OBSERVATION:

Leisure Centre usage for the facilities in West Oxfordshire has been consistent this quarter, and is tracking at around 75% of the same quarter in 2019/20. The total number of active Gym Memberships fell by approximately 3% following a slight rise in Q1; and the total membership numbers are still down to approximately 70% when compared to this time in 2019/20.

The Windrush is continuing to face a challenge with membership sales due to competition from PureGym, and Witney Lakes Resort has recently invested in a range of leisure facilities including new exercise studios. In comparison, Chipping Norton Leisure Centre has high membership levels, while Carterton has shown growth in usage and has maintained the level of gym members. GLL is revising its marketing and promotions for Witney with consideration to the new local provision of PureGym, which is a self-serve 'no frills' gym offer, and Witney Lakes Resort.

Some Covid protocols are still in place in the centres such as sanitising stations and nightly 'fogging' of areas, and mask wearing has become an advisory measure. Casual swimming continues to be operated in bookable sessions to prevent crowding in the changing rooms and this system seems to be preferable to a lot of swimmers as it makes visits more predictable (guaranteed lane space, changing/showering space etc.).

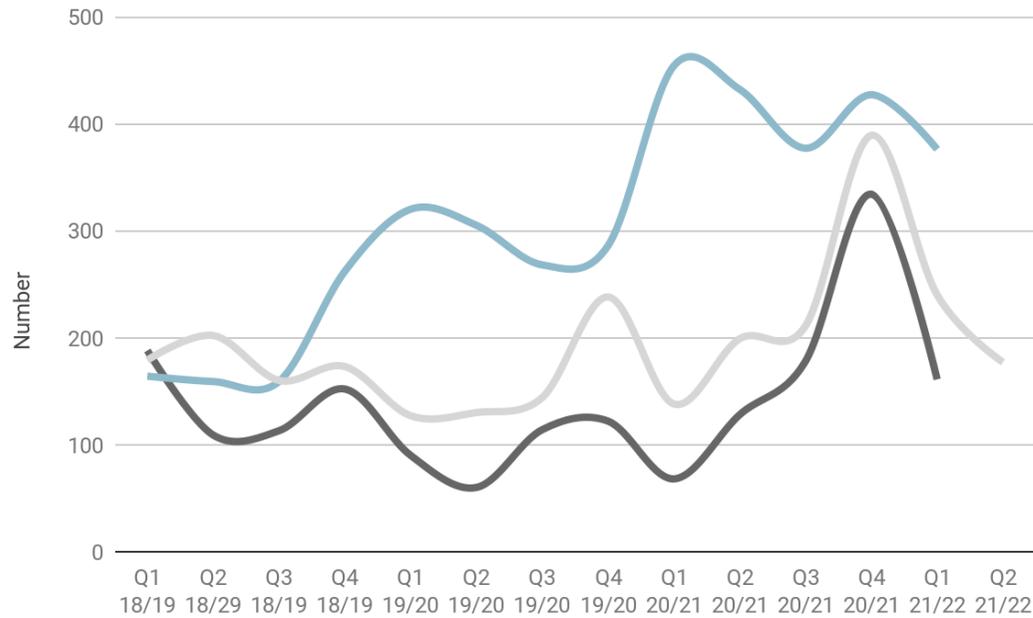
Preparations are being made for any potential Covid issues in the coming months. GLL has advised that it is revising its recovery forecasts as the sector is facing multiple challenges (utility price increases, low staff levels, reduced usage, uncertainty around winter closures, etc.).

Note: Gym memberships were frozen during the first and third lockdowns. No targets were set for 2020-21

## Environmental and Regulatory

### Number of fly tips collected

Cotswold      Forest of Dean      West Oxfordshire



#### OBSERVATION:

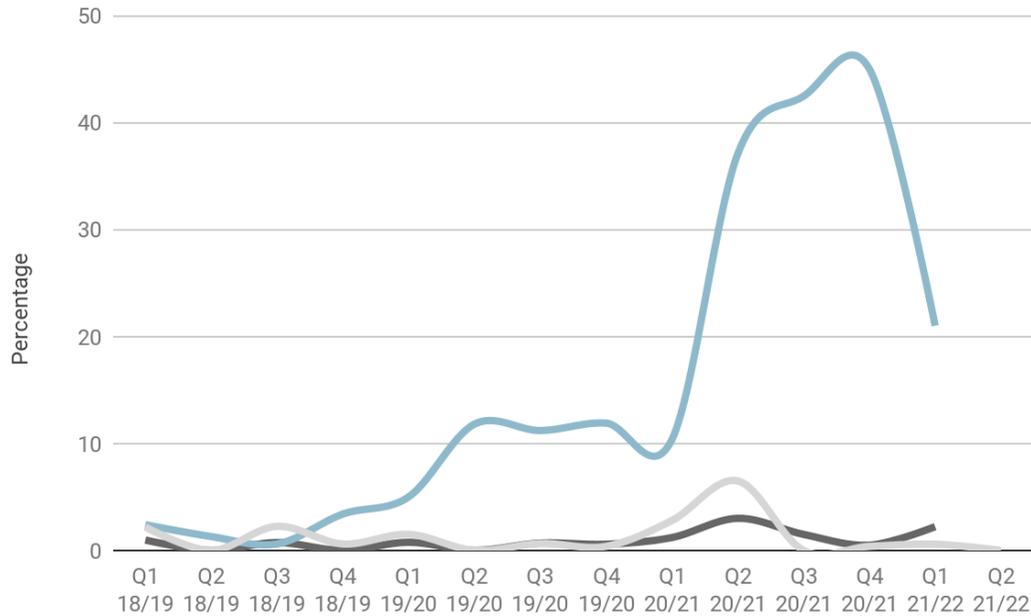
An increase in fly tips was reported nationally which coincided with the start of Covid-19, and this appeared to be reflected locally.

Over the last six months, the number of fly tip collected by Ubico has decreased which may reflect the lifting of restrictions.

Note: This data source does not contain all types of fly tips e.g. asbestos, at all locations e.g. bring sites. Forest of Dean appears to collect a higher number of fly tips than Cotswold and West as it counts fly tips at bring sites

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

Cotswold
  Forest of Dean
  West Oxfordshire



**OBSERVATION:**

The number of notifications increased during 2020-21 and reached 521 in Q4, but has since reduced and was 398 in the most recent quarter.

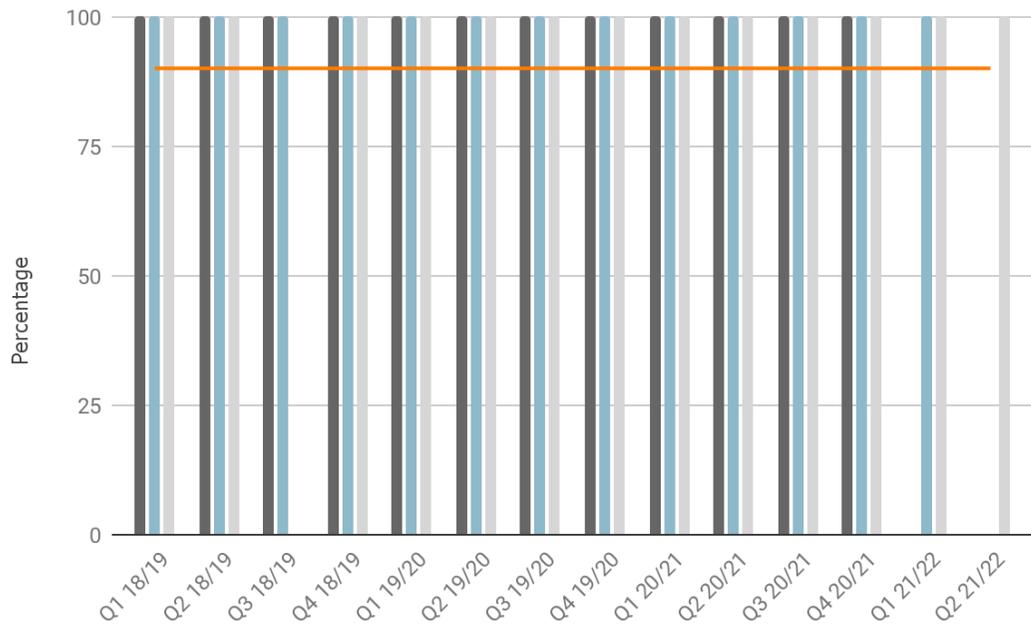
No enforcement action was taken in Q2. This was due to reported fly tips not having evidence present for investigation, as well as resourcing levels within the service. Officers have been prioritising anti-social behaviour and private sector housing cases, as these cases can often have a significant impact on those affected.

The service takes a risk based approach to fly tipping, and will only investigate fly tips where there might be evidence present. These numbers tend to be low, and the fly tips where evidence is found is a small proportion of this low number.

Instead, the Council prioritises the removal of fly tips, and targeted work is carried out when necessary e.g. bring sites.

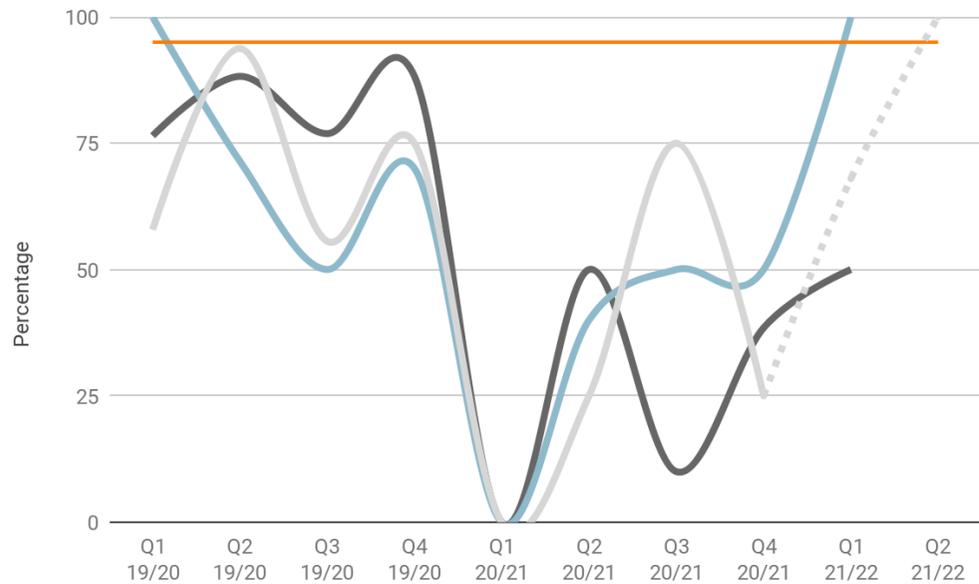
Cotswold and West operate a small multidisciplinary team, although Cotswold will shortly have a dedicated enviro-crime team. Forest of Dean has operated a dedicated Community Warden team for some time

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



**OBSERVATION:**  
 Two notifications of a potential illegal eviction and no water to a Private Water Supply. Both were assessed within one day

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



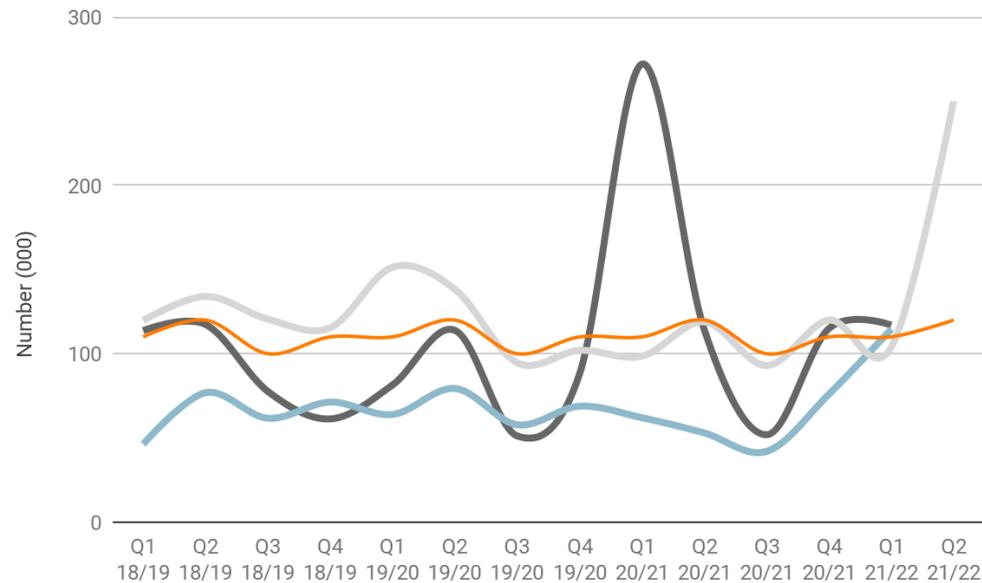
### OBSERVATION:

No high risk premises were due a food inspection in Q1 or Q2.

The service is prioritising inspections for high risk premises and new businesses in line with the FSA recovery plan. The small backlog of high risk premises inspections that had built up during the Covid-19 lock downs has been cleared and all new ones are being completed within the 28 day timescale.

Previously, the service had been unsuccessful in recruiting to permanent senior posts, so as an interim measure, two contractors have been appointed to help reduce the backlog of medium risk inspections across the partnership whilst the service is in the process of recruiting to two career graded posts

## Number of missed bin per 100,000 scheduled collections



### OBSERVATION:

Over the last two years, the number of missed bins per 100,000 collections has broadly remained within the target.

There was a steep increase in missed bins this quarter due to a combination of reasons including positive Covid-19 cases and a shortage of HGV drivers, and the fuel shortage.

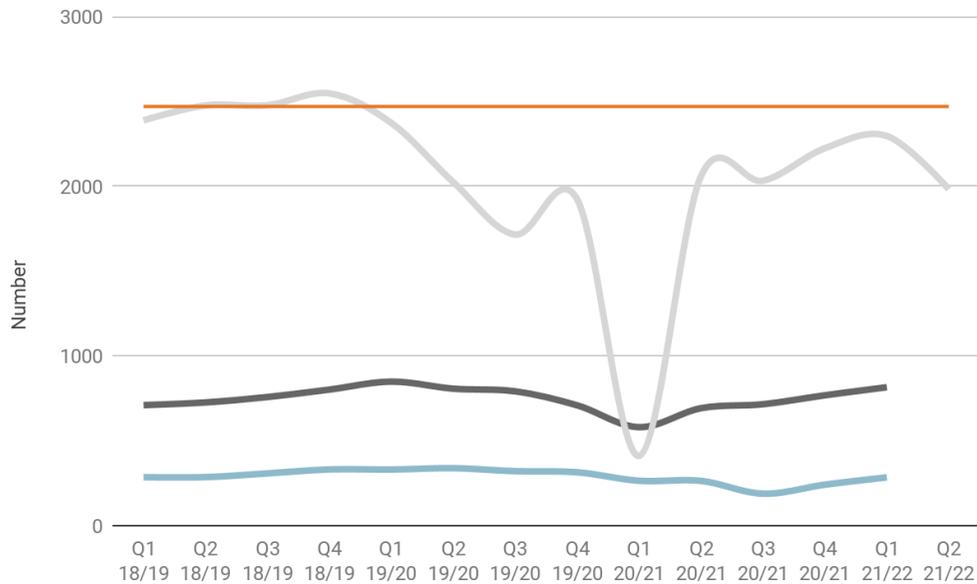
The fuel shortage had a major impact on waste and recycling collections. In addition to fuel refilling limits, Ubico had to use smaller vehicles as there are only three BP (contracted) garages in the District that can be accessed by full size waste vehicles. The smaller vehicles have less capacity and required multiple trips to be made which created a delay in collections, and therefore repeat reports of missed bins.

The use of agency staff and crew members who are unfamiliar with the allocated rounds will also have contributed to the increase in the number of misses.

The service reports that improvements are already evident. The introduction of In-Cab technology on 29 September is expected to improve efficiency in service delivery including reducing the number of misses by providing crew members with assistance to find all of the properties on their particular round.

## Parking

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



#### OBSERVATION:

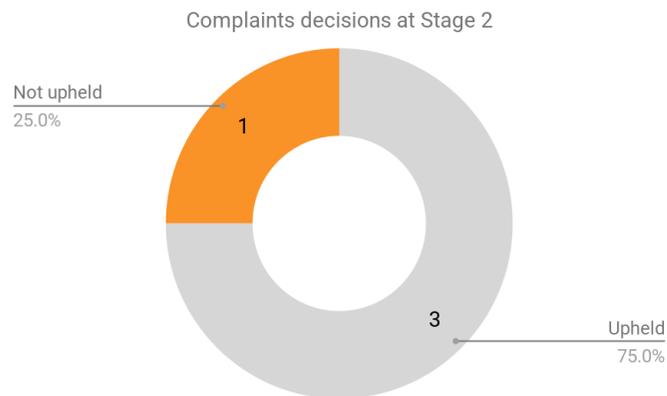
The Team returned to full enforcement activities in April.

Although usage levels have increased since the lifting of restrictions, they have not yet returned to pre-Covid levels. Therefore, the number of enforcement hours undertaken is lower.

The number of enforcement hours reduced further in Q2 due to a vacant post which is in the process of being recruited to.

This indicator has been set to 'Amber' to recognise that car park usage levels are lower than pre-Covid times, and therefore the corresponding enforcement hours will be lower

## 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

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Stage	Decision	Response time (days)
Development Management	Complaint regarding lack of response to emails	It was found that the Council had failed to respond to emails from the complainant on three occasions, and an apology was offered	2	Upheld	10
Parking	Complainant unhappy with conduct of a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO), and unhappy with lack of response to email communications about the alleged conduct	Upon investigation, it was concluded that the conduct of the CEO had been unacceptable and an apology was offered. An apology was also offered for the lack of response.	2	Upheld	9
Development Management	Complaint regarding delay to planning application, and subsequent lack of response to requests for updates	It was found that there had been a delay in processing the application due to a backlog of applications, as well as a lack of response to requests for updates. An apology was offered, and the service lead is now working with the complainant to rectify the situation.	2	Upheld	10



By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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